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Negative Dialectics

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTES

Translators, the crucial intermediaries of global cultural exchange, are subject to a unique set of dangers and opportunities in the multinational era. Structurally, translators occupy a position analogous to the global currency and credit markets. At their best, they facilitate a truly equal cultural exchange, in which the achievements of one culture are made available to another. At their worst, they censor the original text, short-circuiting the flow of ideas, mediations and aesthetic achievements. The task of the translator, to paraphrase Walter Benjamin's landmark essay on translation, is to think not only what is being translated, but the historical constellations in which it is said; put simply, to transcode a complex cultural matrix, instead of just the words, phrases or even individual meanings. This, of course, is impossible, but good translations nourish themselves on precisely the impossibility in question. This is why the first law of translation is, "change nothing", while the second is "anything goes". It is the epic struggle between the two extremes which results in translations worthy of the name; anything less just isn't worth the paper it's printed on. Strange as it sounds, good translations are actually rather like the false-color images of distant planets relayed by spacecraft: Neptune and Pluto wouldn't actually *look* like that to the naked eyes of an astronaut cruising the dim outer reaches of the solar system in person, but the reprocessed and rescaled image does justice to the reality, by making the inexperienceable nevertheless experienceable after all.

All these issues are exacerbated to the breaking point by Adorno's texts, which are mind-boggling complex, breathtakingly beautiful meditations on what it means (as well as what it *doesn't* mean) to be a socially responsible citizen of the total system. Thinking, said Brecht, is one of the greatest pleasures of life, and on this score Adorno, who certainly had his share of disagreements with Central Europe's greatest modernist playwright, would not only concur, but match Brecht's own aesthetic praxis step for dialectical step by writing some of the most gorgeous theory ever written. Though I've done my best to render something of the subtlety, grace, tact and sheer power of Adorno's original, bear in mind that what you're reading is nothing but the false-color bitmap image, as it were, of the planetary surface of the original.

In the following text, I've used the standard philosophical translations for terms wherever possible, e.g. Anschauung is rendered as intuition, Austausch is exchange, Seiendes is existent, etc. As much of Adorno's gorgeous, intricately poetic grammar has been preserved as possible, by using "the latter" and "the former" in place of pronouns, which are marked by gender in German, thus allowing for complex sentences to be arranged in compact form; the pronouns of the text has also been gender-balanced, so far as this is possible (i.e. by substituting "one" or "they" for "he"). Certain terms have also been given more spin in English, to carry across their contextual meaning (i.e. Ordnung is usually translated as "social order" instead of the colorless, bland "order"). Allgemeine is usually "general" and Allgemeinheit "generality" or "universality"; the delightfully untranslatable term Schein (appearance, semblance, as well as a financial note or bill; "seemingness" might come the closest) is always and everywhere marked as follows: "appearance [Schein]", whereas the mundane Erscheinung (ordinary, everyday appearance) is usually translated as "appearance" and, more rarely, as "phenomenon", depending on the context. The equally untranslatable Geist ("mind", "spirit") is rendered in capitalized form as "Spirit", following the standard Hegel translations. I have, however, made a point of translating geistlich and related adjectives as "intellectual" wherever possible, due to the specific conditions of Anglo-Saxon culture, i.e. the fact that the culture of the Cold War constantly defamed the word "intellectual", to the point where it has become vital to defend and rehabilitate the term, in order to defend the dignity of thinkers and thinking generally.

Anglo-saxon culture is also at issue in one of the most common terms Adorno uses, namely Bann, "spell", translated herein as the deliberately malign, archaic "bane" rather than "spell", "charm" or "magic" (with the one exception that "Bannkreis" is rendered as "magic circle"). The reason is that the multinational media and information culture has absorbed massive amounts of mythology and folklore into itself, effectively rendering these terms harmless, something apparent everywhere from Jimi Hendrix's classic line in *Purple Haze*: "Am I happy, or in misery/ whatever it is, that girl put a spell on me" to the endless references to software wizards and listserv trolls. The word bane has resisted this incorporation, at least so far, while remaining close enough to the original to stick.

Selected nouns were expanded into clauses, to give the philosophical feel of the original, i.e. “das Unvermittelte” might be rendered as “that which is immediate” rather than simply “the immediate”, depending on the context. Individuum is usually translated as “the individuated”, with only a few exceptions, due to the fact that Adorno is constantly playing off the objective overtones of the term (it means the individual in an abstract, categorical sense) against the more subjective Einzelne or Individual (“individual” in the sense of a concrete person). Sachverhalt has been translated as “matter-at-hand”, except for a few cases where the context overwhelming suggested its associated meaning of an existential, abstract “state of affairs”; Sache, literally the “thing” or “matter”, in the sense of a set of immediate facts or data, has a direct, immediately material ring in German which “state of affairs” doesn’t quite capture. Other minor points: Technik is “technics”, a perfectly good word referring to the totality of technical knowledge and praxis, not technology or technique. Finally, all the Greek, Latin, French and Italian terms have been translated, and the Greek terms given their Latin spellings; philosophical terms in Greek were translated with the assistance of the superb Perseus Digital Library, available at <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu>.

– Dennis Redmond

October 2001

Editorial Note 2021: The following text converts Adorno’s two hundred footnotes, originally organized by section, into standard book-length footnotes. All original notations (e.g. the use of “ibid” are preserved so far as possible. Adorno’s forty-six asterisked notes have also been numbered and included as footnotes. Note that the page numbers next to each section in bold font, as well as the page numbers listed next to the asterisked note, refer to the original German text published by Suhrkamp Verlag.

PROLOGUE

The formulation “negative dialectics” transgresses against tradition. Already in Plato dialectics intended to establish something positive through the thought-means of the negation; the figure of a negation of the negation named this precisely. The book would like to emancipate dialectics from these types of affirmative essence, without relinquishing anything in terms of determinacy. The development of its paradoxical title is one of its intentions.

What in accordance with the conception of philosophy would be the foundation, the author develops only after a great deal of explication of what that conception presumes would be raised on a foundation. This implies the critique of the concept of the foundation, as well as of the primacy of substantive thought. Its self-consciousness achieves its movement solely in its consummation. It requires what, according to the ground rules of the Spirit which always remain in effect, is secondary.

What is given herein is not solely a methodology of material labor of the author; according to the theory of negative dialectics, no continuum exists between the former and the latter. However such a discontinuity, and what instructions may be read out of it for thinking, will indeed be dealt with. The procedure is not grounded, but justified. The author lays, so far as he can, his cards on the table; this is by no means the same thing as the game.

When Benjamin in 1937 read the part of the *Metacritique of Epistemology* which the author had finished at that time – the last chapter of the published work – he commented, one had to journey through the icy wasteland of abstraction in order to definitively arrive at concrete philosophizing. Negative dialectics now indicates such a path, retrospectively. Concretion was for the most part smuggled into contemporary philosophy. By contrast the largely abstract text wishes to vouch for its authenticity no less than for the explanation of the author’s concrete mode of procedure. If one speaks in the newest aesthetic debates of anti-drama and anti-heroes, then *Negative Dialectics*, which holds itself distant from all aesthetic themes, could be called an anti-system. With logically consistent means, it attempts to put, in place of the principle of unity and of the hegemony of the supra-ordinated concept, that which would be outside of the bane of such unity. Since the author has trusted himself to follow his own intellectual impulses, he

felt it to be his task to break through the delusion of constitutive subjectivity by means of the power of the subject; he no longer wished to put off this task. To reach stringently across the official division of pure philosophy and what is relevant to the matter [Sachhaltigem] or what is formally scientific, was one of the determining motives therein.

The introduction expounds the concept of philosophical experience. The first section starts out from the state of the ontology which dominates today in Germany. It is not judged from above, but is comprehended out of its need, which is no less problematic for its part, and criticized immanently. The second section proceeds from the results to the idea of a negative dialectics and its position in relation to several categories, which it preserves as well as qualitatively transforms. The third section then carries out models of negative dialectics. They are not examples; they do not simply illuminate general considerations. By leading towards what is relevant to the matter, they would like to simultaneously do justice to the substantive intention of what is at first dealt with generally, out of necessity, in contrast to the usage of examples as something indifferent in themselves, which Plato introduced and which philosophy has ever since merely repeated. While the models are supposed to clarify what negative dialectics would be, and to drive this latter, according to its own concept, into the realm of reality, they elucidate, not dissimilar to the so-called exemplary models, key concepts of philosophical disciplines, in order to centrally intervene in these. A dialectics of freedom will do this for the philosophy of ethics; "World-Spirit and Natural History" for that of history; the last chapter circles, feeling its way, around metaphysical questions, in the sense of the axial revolution of the Copernican turn, by means of critical self-reflection.

Ulrich Sonneman is working on a book which is supposed to be entitled *Negative Anthropology*. Neither he nor the author knew beforehand about the coincidence. It refers to a compulsion in the thing itself.

The author is prepared for the resistance, which *Negative Dialectics* will provoke. Without rancor, he does not begrudge the joy of all those, both hither and yonder [i.e. on both sides of the Berlin Wall], who will proclaim that they had always said it and now the author would be confessing it.

Frankfurt, Summer 1966

INTRODUCTION

ON THE POSSIBILITY OF PHILOSOPHY 15–16

Philosophy, which once seemed outmoded, remains alive because the moment of its realization was missed. The summary judgement that it had merely interpreted the world is itself crippled by resignation before reality, and becomes a defeatism of reason after the transformation of the world failed. It guarantees no place from which theory as such could be concretely convicted of the anachronism, which then as now it is suspected of. Perhaps the interpretation which promised the transition did not suffice. The moment on which the critique of theory depended is not to be prolonged theoretically. Praxis, delayed for the foreseeable future, is no longer the court of appeals against self-satisfied speculation, but for the most part the pretext under which executives strangle that critical thought as idle which a transforming praxis most needs. After philosophy broke with the promise that it would be one with reality or at least struck just before the hour of its production, it has been compelled to ruthlessly criticize itself. What once, against the appearance [Schein] of the senses and every outwards-oriented experience, felt itself to be that which is purely unnaive, has for its part become as naive as those miserable candidates Goethe received a hundred and fifty years ago, who nourished themselves on speculation. The introverted thought-architect lives behind the moon which extroverted technicians have confiscated. In the face of an immeasurably expanded society and the progress of positive cognition of nature, the conceptual structures in which, according to philosophic mores, the totality is supposed to be housed, resemble remnants of simple commodity society amidst industrial late capitalism. The meanwhile completely mismatched relationship (since degraded to a mere topos) between each Spirit and power, strikes the attempt to comprehend this hegemony by those inspired with their own concept of the Spirit with futility. The very will to do so betokens a power-claim which countermands what is to be understood. The retrogression of philosophy to a narrow scientific field, rendered necessary by the rise of specific scientific fields, is the single most eye-opening expression of its historical fate. Had Kant, in his words, freed himself from the scholastic concept of philosophy into its world-concept,¹ then this has regressed under compulsion to its scholastic concept.

1 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* [Kritik der reinen Vernunft], 2nd Edition, WW III, Academy Edition (Third Premise of the Transcendental Doctrine of Method

Where it confuses this latter with the world-concept, its pretensions degenerate into sheer ludicrousness. Hegel knew this, in spite of the teaching of the absolute Spirit to which he assigned philosophy, as a mere moment of reality, as an activity in the division of labor, and thereby restricted it. Since then, its own narrowness and discrepancy to reality has emerged out of this, and all the more so, the more thoroughly it forgot this delimitation and expunged it from itself as something alien, in order to justify its own position in a totality which it monopolizes as its object, instead of recognizing how very much its immanent truth depends on such, down to its innermost composition. Only the philosophy which dispenses with such naivete is the slightest bit worth thinking further. Its critical self-reflection may not stop however before the highest achievements of its history. It needs to be asked if and whether, following the collapse of the Hegelian one, it would even be possible anymore, just as Kant investigated the possibility of metaphysics after the critique of rationalism. If the Hegelian doctrine of the dialectic represented the impossible goal of showing, with philosophical concepts, that it was equal to the task of what was ultimately heterogenous to such, an account is long overdue of its relationship to dialectics, and why precisely his attempt failed.

DIALECTICS NOT A STANDPOINT 16–18

No theory escapes the market anymore: each one is offered as a possibility among competing opinions, all are made available, all snapped up. Thought need no more put blinders on itself, in the self-justifying conviction that one's own theory is exempt from this fate, which degenerates into narcissistic self-promotion, than dialectics need fall silent before such a reproach and the one linked to it, concerning its superfluity and randomness as a slapdash method. Its name says to begin with nothing more than that objects do not vanish into their concept, that these end up in contradiction with the received norm of the *adaequatio*. The contradiction is not what Hegel's absolute idealism unavoidably transfigured it into: no Heraclitean essence. It is the index of the untruth of identity, of the vanishing of the conceptual into the concept. The appearance [Schein] of identity dwells however in thinking itself as a pure form from within. To think means to identify. Conceptual schemata self-contentedly push aside what thinking wants to comprehend. Its appearance [Schein] and its truth delimit themselves. The former

[Drittes Hauptstück der Transzendentalen Methodenlehre]).

is not to be summarily removed, for example by vouchsafing some existent-in-itself outside of the totality of thought-determinations. There is a moment in Kant, and this was mobilized against him by Hegel, which secretly regards the in-itself beyond the concept as something wholly indeterminable, as null and void. To the consciousness of the phenomenal appearance [Scheinhaftigkeit] of the conceptual totality there remains nothing left but to break through the appearance [Schein] of total identity: in keeping with its own measure. Since however this totality is formed according to logic, whose core is constructed from the proposition of the excluded third, everything which does not conform to such, everything qualitatively divergent assumes the signature of the contradiction. The contradiction is the non-identical under the aspect of identity; the primacy of the principle of contradiction in dialectics measures what is heterogenous in unitary thinking. By colliding against its own borders, it reaches beyond itself. Dialectics is the consistent consciousness of non-identity. It is not related in advance to a standpoint. Thought is driven, out of its unavoidable insufficiency, its guilt for what it thinks, towards it. If one objected, as has been repeated ever since by the Aristotelian critics of Hegel,² that dialectics for its part grinds everything indiscriminately in its mill down into the mere logical form of the contradiction, overlooking – even Croce argued this³ – the true polyvalence of that which is not contradictory, of the simply different, one is only displacing the blame for the thing onto the method. That which is differentiated appears as divergent, dissonant, negative, so long as consciousness must push towards unity according to its own formation: so long as it measures that which is not identical with itself, with its claim to the totality. This is what dialectics holds up to the consciousness as the contradiction. Thanks to the immanent nature of consciousness, that which is in contradiction has itself the character of inescapable and catastrophic nomothetism [Gesetzmässigkeit: law-abiding character]. Identity and contradiction in thinking are welded to one another. The totality of the contradiction is nothing other than the untruth of the total identification, as it is manifested in the latter. Contradiction is non-identity under the ban [Bann] of the law, which also influences the non-identical.

2 See F.A. Trendelenburg, *Logical Investigations* [Logische Untersuchungen], Vol. I, Leipzig 1870, pp 43, 167.

3 See Benedetto Croce, *What is Living and Dead in Hegel's Philosophy* [Lebendiges und Totes in Hegels Philosophie], Translation by K. Büchler, Heidelberg 1909, pp 66, 68, 72, 82.

REALITY AND DIALECTICS 18–19

This law is however not one of thinking, but real. Whoever submits to dialectical discipline, must unquestionably pay with the bitter sacrifice of the qualitative polyvalence of experience. The impoverishment of experience through dialectics, which infuriates mainstream opinion, proves itself however to be entirely appropriate to the abstract monotony of the administered world. What is painful about it is the pain of such, raised to a concept. Cognition must bow to it, if it does not wish to once again degrade the concretion to the ideology, which it really begins to become. Another version of dialectics satisfied itself with its lackluster renaissance: with its derivation in the history of ideas from the Kantian aporias and that which was programmed into the systems of his successors, but not achieved. It is to be achieved only negatively. Dialectics develops the difference of the particular from the generality, which is dictated by the generality. While it is inescapable to the subject, as the break between subject and object drilled into the consciousness, furrowing everything which it thinks, even that which is objective, it would have an end in reconciliation. This would release the non-identical, relieving it even of its intellectualized compulsion, opening up for the first time the multiplicity of the divergent, over which dialectics would have no more power. Reconciliation would be the meditation on the no-longer-hostile multiplicity, something which is subjective anathema to reason. Dialectics serves reconciliation. It dismantles the logical character of compulsion, which it follows; that is why it is denounced as pan-logism. In its idealistic form it was bracketed by the primacy of the absolute subject as the power, which negatively realized every single movement of the concept and the course of such in its entirety. Such a primacy of the subject has been condemned by history, even in the Hegelian conception, that of the particular human consciousness, which overshadowed the transcendental ones of Kant and Fichte. Not only was it suppressed by the lack of power of the waning thought, which failed to construe the hegemony of the course of the world before this latter. None of the reconciliations, however, from the logical one to the political-historical one, which absolute idealism maintained – every other remained inconsequential – was binding. That consistent idealism could simply not otherwise constitute itself than as the epitome of the contradiction, is as much its logically consistent truth as the punishment, which

its logicity incurs as logicity; appearance [Schein], as much as necessary. Reopening the case of dialectics, whose non-idealistic form degenerated in the meantime to dogma just as the idealistic ones degenerated into educational baggage, does not solely determine the contemporary relevance of a historically established mode of philosophizing or of the philosophical structure of the objects of cognition. Hegel reconstituted the right and capacity of philosophy to think substantively, instead of settling for the analysis of empty and in the emphatic sense null and void forms of cognition. Its contemporary version falls back, wherever anything at all substantive is dealt with, either into whatever mundane world-view is handy or into that formalism, that “indifference”, against which Hegel rebelled. The development of phenomenology, which was once animated by the need for content, into one which dismissed any sort of content as polluting the invocation of being, is historical evidence for this. Hegel’s substantive philosophizing had as its fundament and result the primacy of the subject or, in the famous formulation from the introduction to the *Logic*, the identity of identity and non-identity.⁴ To him, the determinate particular was determinable by the Spirit, because its immanent determination was supposed to be nothing other than the Spirit. Without this supposition, philosophy would, according to Hegel, be incapable of cognizing that which is substantive and essential. If the idealistically-achieved concept of dialectics did not hide experiences which, contrary to Hegel’s own emphasis, are independent from the idealistic apparatus, then nothing would remain of philosophy than the unavoidable renunciation which rejects the substantive insight, restricts itself to the methodology of science, declares this latter to be philosophy and thereby virtually cancels itself out.

INTEREST OF PHILOSOPHY 19–21

Philosophy has, at this historical moment, its true interest in what Hegel, in accordance with tradition, proclaimed his disinterest: in the non-conceptual, the individual and the particular; in what, ever since Plato, has been dismissed as transient and inconsequential and which Hegel stamped with the label of lazy existence. Its theme would be the qualities which it has degraded to the merely contingent, to *quantité négligeable* [French: negligible quantity]. What is urgent for the concept is what it does not encompass, what its abstraction-mechanism

eliminates, what is not already an exemplar of the concept. Bergson as well as Husserl, the standard-bearers of philosophical modernity, innervated this, but shrank away from it back into traditional metaphysics. Bergson created, by fiat, a different type of cognition for the sake of the non-conceptual. The dialectical salt was washed away in the undifferentiated flow of life; that which was materially solidified was dismissed as subaltern, instead of being understood along with its subalternity. Hatred of the rigid general concept produced a cult of irrational immediacy, of sovereign freedom amidst unfreedom. He designed both of his cognitive modes as dualistically against one another as the doctrines of Descartes and Kant, which he repudiated, had ever been; the causal-mechanical one remained, as pragmatic knowledge, as little illuminated by the intuitive one as the bourgeois establishment from the relaxed, easy-going attitude of those who owe their privileges to that establishment. The celebrated intuitions themselves appear as something rather abstract in Bergson's philosophy, hardly moving beyond the phenomenal consciousness of time, which already underwrote Kant's chronological-physical one; in Bergson's insight, spatialized time. In fact, the intuitive mode of conduct of the Spirit, although somewhat difficult to develop, does continue to exist as the archaic rudiments of mimetic reactions. What transpired before its past promises something beyond the hardened present. Intuitions succeed, however, only desultorily. Every cognition, even Bergson's own, requires the rationality which he so despised, precisely if they are ever to be concretized. Duration raised to an absolute, pure becoming, the *actus purus* [Latin: pure act], recoils into the same timelessness which Bergson chastises in metaphysics since Plato and Aristoteles. It did not occur to him that what he gropes for, if it is not to remain a *Fata Morgana*, could only be viewed through the instrumentarium of cognition, through the reflection upon its own means, and degenerates into sheer caprice in a procedure which is, from the very beginning, unmediated to that of the cognition. – The logician Husserl, on the other hand, sharply contrasted the mode by which one becomes aware of the essence against the generalizing abstraction. He had a specific intellectual experience in mind, which was supposed to be able to descry the essence in the particular. The essence, however, to which this referred, did not differentiate itself in the slightest from that of the then-current general concept. A crass discrepancy reigns between the functional organization of the apperception

[Wesensschau] and its terminus ad quem [Latin: end-point]. Neither break-out attempt succeeded in moving beyond idealism: Bergson oriented himself, just like his positivistic arch-enemies, towards the *données immédiates de la conscience* [French: immediate facts of the consciousness], Husserl likewise towards the phenomena of the stream of consciousness. The former as well as the latter remained frozen in the demesne of subjective immanence.⁵ What is to be insisted on against both is what each tries to conjure up in vain; pace Wittgenstein, to say what cannot be said. The simple contradiction of this demand is that of philosophy itself: it qualifies the latter as dialectics, before it embroils itself in its specific contradictions. The work of philosophical self-reflection consists of working out this paradox. Everything else is signification, post-construction, today as in Hegel's time pre-philosophical. A faith, as always subject to question, that philosophy would still be possible; that the concept could leapfrog the concept, the preparatory stages and the final touches, and thereby reach the non-conceptual, is indispensable to philosophy and therein lies something of the naivete, which ails it. Otherwise it would have to capitulate and with it everything to do with the Spirit. Not even the simplest operation could be thought through, there would be no truth, everything would be emphatically nothing. Whatever of the truth can be gleaned through concepts beyond their abstract circumference, can have no other staging-grounds than that which is suppressed, disparaged and thrown away by concepts. The utopia of cognition would be to open up the non-conceptual with concepts, without making it the same as them.

THE ANTAGONISTIC WHOLE 21–22

Such a concept of dialectics casts doubt on its possibility. The anticipation of universal movement in contradictions seems, however varied, to teach the totality of the Spirit, precisely the identity-thesis just nullified. The Spirit, which would unceasingly reflect on the contradiction in things, ought to be this itself, if it is to be organized according to the form of the contradiction. The truth, which in the idealistic dialectic drives past every particularity as something false in its one-sidedness, would be that of the whole; if it were not already thought out, then the dialectical steps would lose their motivation and direction. Against this one must

5 See Theodor W. Adorno, *Against Epistemology* [Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie], Stuttgart 1956.

counter that the object of intellectual experience would itself be the antagonistic system, something utterly real, and not just by virtue of its mediation to the cognizing subject which rediscovers itself therein. The compulsory constitution of reality which idealism projected into the regions of the subject and Spirit is to be retranslated back out of these. What remains of idealism is that society, the objective determinant of the Spirit, is just as much the epitome of subjects as their negation. In it they are unknowable and disempowered; that is why it is so desperately objective and a concept, which idealism mistakes as something positive. The system is not that of the absolute Spirit, but of the most conditioned of those who have it at their disposal, and cannot even know how much it is their own. The subjective pre-formation of the material social production-process, entirely separate from its theoretical constitution, is that which is unresolved, irreconcilable to subjects. Their own reason which produces identity through exchange, as unconsciously as the transcendental subject, remains incommensurable to the subjects which it reduces to the same common denominator: the subject as the enemy of the subject. The preceding generality is true so much as untrue: true, because it forms that “ether”, which Hegel called the Spirit; untrue, because its reason is nothing of the sort, its generality the product of particular interests. That is why the philosophical critique of identity steps beyond philosophy. That it requires, nonetheless, what is not subsumed under identity – in Marxian terminology, use-value – so that life can continue to exist even under the ruling relations of production, is what is ineffable in utopia. It reaches deep into that which secretly forswears its realization. In view of the concrete possibility of utopia, dialectics is the ontology of the false condition. A true one would be emancipated from it, as little system as contradiction.

DISENCHANTMENT OF THE CONCEPT 23–24

Philosophy, Hegel’s included, invites the general objection that insofar as it would have compulsory concepts as its material, it already characterizes itself in advance as idealistic. As a matter of fact none of them, not even extreme empiricism, can haul off the *facta bruta* [Latin: brute facts] and present them like anatomical cases or physics experiments; none, as so many paintings tempt one to believe, glue specific things onto the text. But the argument in its formal generality grasps the concept as fetishistically as the manner in which it naively explicates itself within

its domain, as a self-sufficient totality, which philosophical thinking cannot do anything about. In truth all concepts, even philosophical ones, move towards what is non-conceptual, because they are for their part moments of the reality, which necessitated – primarily for the purpose of controlling nature – their formation. That which appears as the conceptual mediation from the inside, the preeminence of its sphere, without which nothing could be known, may not be confused with what it is in itself. Such an appearance [Schein] of the existent-in-itself lends it the movement which exempts it from the reality, within which it is for its part harnessed. The requirement that philosophy must operate with concepts is no more to be made into a virtue of this priority than, conversely, the critique of this virtue is to be the summary verdict over philosophy. Meanwhile, the insight that its conceptual essence would not be its absolute in spite of its inseparability is again mediated through the constitution of the concept; it is no dogmatic or even naively realistic thesis. Concepts such as that of being in the beginning of Hegel's *Logic* indicate first of all that which is emphatically non-conceptual; they signify, as per Lask's expression, beyond themselves. It is in their nature not to be satisfied by their own conceptuality, although to the extent that they include the non-conceptual in their meaning, they tend to make this identical to itself and thereby remain entangled in themselves. Their content is as immanent in the intellectual sense as transcendent in the ontical sense to such. By means of the self-consciousness of this they have the capacity of discarding their fetishism. Philosophical self-reflection assures itself of the non-conceptual in the concept. Otherwise this latter would be, after Kant's dictum, null, ultimately no longer the concept of something and thereby void. The philosophy which recognizes this, which cancels out the autarky of the concept, strikes the blinders from the eyes. That the concept is a concept even when it deals with the existent, hardly changes the fact that it is for its part enmeshed in a non-conceptual whole against which it seals itself off solely through its reification, which indeed created it as a concept. The concept is a moment like any other in dialectical logic. Its mediated nature through the non-conceptual survives in it by means of its significance, which for its part founds its conceptual nature. It is characterized as much by its relation to the nonconceptual – as in keeping with traditional epistemology, where every definition of concepts ultimately requires non-conceptual, deictic moments – as the

contrary, that the abstract unity of the *onta* subsumed under it are to be separated from the *ontical*. To change this direction of conceptuality, to turn it towards the non-identical, is the hinge of negative dialectics. Before the insight into the constitutive character of the non-conceptual in the concept, the compulsion of identity, which carries along the concept without the delay of such a reflection, dissolves. Its self-determination leads away from the appearance [Schein] of the concept's being-in-itself as a unity of meaning, out towards its own meaning.

"INFINITY" 24–27

The disenchantment of the concept is the antidote of philosophy. It prevents its overgrowth: that of becoming the absolute itself. An idea is to be refunctioned which was bequeathed by idealism and, more than any other, corrupted by it, that of the infinite. It is not for philosophy to reduce the phenomenon to a minimum set of axioms, exhausting things according to scientific usage; Hegel's polemic against Fichte, that the latter started out from a "dictum", registers this. On the contrary it wishes to literally immerse itself into that which is heterogenous to it, without reducing it to prefabricated categories. It would like to adhere as closely to this as the program of phenomenology and of Simmel vainly wished for: it aims at undiminished realization [Entausserung: realization, relinquishment]. Philosophical content is to be grasped solely where philosophy does not mandate it. The illusion that it could captivate the essence in the finitude of its determinations must be given up. Perhaps the word infinite dropped so quickly from the tongues of the idealistic philosophers because they wished to hush up gnawing doubts about the threadbare finitude of their conceptual apparatus, even Hegel's, in spite of his intent. Traditional philosophy believes it possesses its object infinitely, and thereby becomes as philosophy finite, conclusive. A different one ought to cashier that claim, no longer trying to convince itself and others that it has the infinite at its disposal. Instead of this it would become, put delicately, infinite to the extent that it refuses to define itself as a corpus of enumerable theorems. It would have its content in the polyvalence of objects not organized into a scheme, which impinge on it or which it seeks out; it would truly deliver itself over to them, would not employ them as a mirror, out of which it rereads itself, confusing its mirror-image with the concretion. It would be nothing other than the full, unreduced experience in the medium of conceptual reflection; even the

“science of the experience of consciousness” would degrade the content of such experiences to examples of categories. What spurs philosophy to the risky exertion of its own infinity is the unwarranted expectation that every individual and particular which it decodes would represent, as in Leibniz’s monad, that whole in itself, which as such always and again eludes it; to be sure, in the manner of a prestabilized disharmony rather than harmony. The metacritical turn against *prima philosophia* [Latin: originary philosophy] is at the same time one against the finitude of a philosophy, which blusters about infinity and pays no heed to it. Cognition holds none of its objects completely. It is not supposed to prepare the fantasm of a whole. Thus it cannot be the task of a philosophical interpretation of works of art to establish their identity with the concept, to gobble them up in this; the work however develops itself through this in its truth. What may be glimpsed in this, be it the formal process of abstraction, be it the application of concepts to what is grasped under their definitions, may be of use as technics in the broadest sense: for philosophy, which refuses to suborn itself, it is irrelevant. In principle it can always go astray; solely for that reason, achieve something. Skepticism and pragmatism, latest of all Dewey’s strikingly humane version of the latter, recognized this; this is however to be added into the ferment of an emphatic philosophy, not renounced in advance for the sake of its test of validity. Against the total domination of method, philosophy retains, correctively, the moment of play, which the tradition of its scientification would like to drive out of it. Even for Hegel this was a sore point, he reproached “...types and distinctions, which are determined by pure accident and by play, not by reason.”⁶ The non-naïve thought knows how little it encompasses what is thought, and yet must always hold forth as if it had such completely in hand. It thereby approximates clowning. It may not deny its traces, not the least because they alone open up the hope of that which is forbidden to it. Philosophy is the most serious of all things, but not all that serious, after all. What aims for what is not already *a priori* and what it would have no statutory power over, belongs, according to its own concept, simultaneously to a sphere of the unconstrained, which was rendered taboo by the conceptual essence. The concept cannot otherwise represent the thing which it repressed, namely mimesis, than by appropriating something of this latter in

its own mode of conduct, without losing itself to it. To this extent the aesthetic moment is, albeit for totally different reasons than in Schelling, not accidental to philosophy. Not the least of its tasks is to sublimate this in the committalness [Verbindlichkeit] of its insights into what is real. This latter and play are its poles. The affinity of philosophy to art does not justify the borrowing of this by the former, least of all by virtue of the intuitions which barbarians consider the prerogative of art. Even in aesthetic labor they hardly ever strike in isolation, as lightning-bolts from above. They grow out of the formal law of the construction; if one wished to titrate them out, they would melt away. Thinking by no means protects sources, whose freshness would emancipate it from thought; no type of cognition is at our disposal, which would be absolutely divergent from that which disposes over things, before which intuitionism flees panic-stricken and in vain. The philosophy which imitated art, which wanted to become a work of art, would cancel itself out. It would postulate the identity-claim: that its objects vanish into it, indeed that they grant their mode of procedure a supremacy which disposes over the heterogeneous as a priori material, while the relationship of philosophy to the heterogeneous is virtually thematic. What art and philosophy have in common is not form or patterning procedures, but a mode of conduct which forbids pseudomorphosis. Both keep faith with their own content through their opposition; art, by making itself obdurate against its meaning; philosophy, by not clinging to anything immediate. The philosophical concept does not dispense with the longing which animates art as something non-conceptual and whose fulfillment flees from its immediacy as appearance [Schein]. The concept, the organon of thought and nevertheless the wall [Mauer: external wall] between this and what is to be thought through, negates that longing. Philosophy can neither circumvent such negation nor submit itself to it. What is incumbent on it, is the effort to go beyond the concept, by means of the concept.

SPECULATIVE MOMENT 27–29

Even after renouncing idealism, it [philosophy] cannot dispense with speculation, albeit in a wider sense than Hegel's all too positive one,*⁷ which idealism exalted

7 "If by the way skepticism is often considered even today the irresistible enemy of all positive knowledge at large and thereby also of philosophy, insofar as positive cognition is concerned, then it is to be noted against this that it is in fact merely the finite, abstractly grasped thought, which need fear skepticism and is not capable of countering the same, whereas by contrast philosophy contains the skeptical as a moment in itself, namely as the

and which fell into disrepute along with it. Positivists are quick to write off Marxist materialism, which is one of objective laws of essence, which by no means proceed from immediate data or sets of axioms, as speculation. In order to purify oneself from the suspicion of ideology, it has recently become more advantageous to call Marx a metaphysician than a class enemy. But the safe ground is a fantasm, where the truth-claim demands that one rise above it. Philosophy is not to be fobbed off with theorems which would like to talk it out of its essential interests instead of satisfying these, even if it were only by saying no. The counter-movements against Kant since the 19th century have felt this, although over and over again compromising this through obscurantism. The resistance of philosophy requires however development. Even music, and probably every art, does not instantly satisfy the impulse which animates the opening bar, but only in its articulated course. To this extent it practices, however much it is itself appearance [Schein] as a totality, a critique of appearance [Schein] through this, of the presence of content in the here and now. Such mediation befits philosophy no less. If it presumes to speak too quickly, then it is stricken with the Hegelian verdict of empty profundity. Whoever recites profundities, is no more profound than a novel is metaphysical, just because it reports on the metaphysical views of its characters. To demand of philosophy that it direct itself to the question of existence or other keynote themes of Western metaphysics is a crude fetishism of the materials. Though it is not to be separated from the objective dignity of those themes, there is however no guarantee that its treatment would correspond to the great objects in question. It has so much to fear from the well-worn paths of philosophical reflection, that its emphatic interest seeks refuge in ephemeral objects, not yet overdetermined by intentions. The traditional philosophical problematic is certainly to be negated, fettered as this is to such questions. The world which is objectively knotted into a totality does not release the consciousness. It unceasingly pins the latter down, from whence it wishes to escape; the thinking, however, which starts happy-go-lucky from the beginning, unencumbered by the historical form of its problems,

dialectical. Philosophy does not remain standing however at the merely negative result of dialectics, as is the case with skepticism. This latter mistakes its result, in that it holds fast to such as pure, i.e. as abstract negation. Since the dialectic has the negative as its result, so is this latter, just as a result, at the same time the positive, for it contains the same thing from which it results, as sublated in itself, and is not the same without it. This however is the fundamental determination of the third form of logic, namely the speculative or positive reasoning." Hegel, WW 8, Pg. 194 ff.

falls prey to these that much more. Philosophy partakes of the idea of profundity only by virtue of its thinking breath. The model for this is, in modern times, the Kantian deduction of the pure concept of understanding, whose author, with abysmally apologetic irony, described as “somewhat profoundly put”.⁸ Profundity, too, is a moment of dialectics, no isolated quality, as Hegel did not fail to notice. According to a dreadful German tradition, thoughts which swear allegiance to the theodicy of Evil and Death figure as profound. What is silenced and swept under the rug is a theological terminus ad quem [Latin: end-point], as if its result, the confirmation of transcendence, would decide the dignity of thought, or else the mere being-for-itself, similarly for the immersion into interiority; as if the withdrawal from the world were unproblematically as one with the consciousness of the grounds of the world. By contrast, resistance to fantasies of profundity, which throughout the history of the Spirit were always well-disposed to the existing state of affairs, which they found too dull, would be its true measure. The power of the existent constructs the facades into which the consciousness crashes. It must try to break through them. This alone would snatch away the postulate from the profundity of ideology. The speculative moment survives in such resistance: what does not allow itself to be governed by the given facts, transcends them even in the closest contact with objects and in the renunciation of sacrosanct transcendence. What in thought goes beyond that to which it is bound in its resistance is its freedom. It follows the expressive urge of the subject. The need to give voice to suffering is the condition of all truth. For suffering is the objectivity which weighs on the subject; what it experiences as most subjective, its expression, is objectively mediated.

PORTRAYAL [DARSTELLUNG: PORTRAYAL, BUT ALSO DEPICTION, PRESENTATION] 29–31

This may help to explain why portrayal [Darstellung] is not a matter of indifference or external to philosophy, but immanent to its idea. Its integral moment of expression, non-conceptually-mimetic, becomes objectified only through portrayal – language. The freedom of philosophy is nothing other than the capacity of giving voice to this unfreedom. If the moment of expression tries

8 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* [Kritik der reinen Vernunft], 1st Edition WW IV, Academy Edition, pg 11.

to be anything more, it degenerates into a point of view; were it to relinquish the moment of expression and the obligation of portrayal, it would converge with science. Expression and stringency are not dichotomous possibilities for it. They need each other, neither is without the other. The expression is relieved of its contingency by thought, on which it works just as thought works on it. Thinking becomes, as something which is expressed, conclusive only through linguistic portrayal; what is laxly said, is badly thought. Through expression, stringency is compelled from what is expressed. It is not an end in itself at the latter's expense, but carries it off out of the thingly bad state of affairs, for its part an object of philosophical critique. Speculative philosophy without idealistic substruction demands fidelity to stringency, in order to break the latter's authoritarian power-claim. Benjamin, whose original sketch of the Arcades project combined incomparable speculative power with micrological proximity to the substance of the matter [Sachgehalten], remarked later in a correspondence concerning the first, authentically metaphysical layer of that work, that it could only be realized as something "impermissibly 'poetic'".⁹ This declaration of capitulation designates the difficulty of philosophy which does not wish to go astray, as much as the point where its concept is to be pushed further. It was probably due to the wholesale adoption of dialectical materialism as a world-view, as it were, with closed eyes. That Benjamin did not however decide on a definitive outline of the Arcades project is a reminder that philosophy is more than just bustle, only where it exposes itself to total failure, as the response to the absolute security which is traditionally smuggled in secretly. Benjamin's defeatism towards his own thought was conditioned by a remainder of undialectical positivity, which he secretly carried along from his theological phase, its form unchanged, into his dialectical one. In contrast, Hegel's equating of negativity with the thought, which philosophy shielded from the positivity of the sciences as much as from amateurish contingency, has its experience-content. To think is, already in itself and above all particular content, negation, resistance against what is imposed on it; this is what thinking inherited from the relationship of labor to its raw material, its Ur-image. If ideology encourages thought more than ever to wax in positivity, then it slyly registers the fact that precisely this would be contrary to thinking and that it requires the friendly word of advice from social

authority, in order to accustom it to positivity. The effort which is implied in the concept of thinking itself, as the counterpart to the passive intuition, is already negative, the rejection of the overweening demand of bowing to everything immediate. The judgement and the conclusion, the thought-forms whose critique thought cannot dispense with either, contain critical sprouts in themselves; their determination is at most simultaneously the exclusion of what they have not achieved, and the truth which they wish to organize, repudiating, though with doubtful justification, what is not already molded by them. The judgement that something would be so, is the potential rejection that the relation of its subject and its predicate would be expressed otherwise than in the judgement. Thought-forms want to go beyond what is merely extant, "given". The point which thinking directs against its material is not solely the domination of nature turned spiritual. While thinking does violence upon that which it exerts its syntheses, it follows at the same time a potential which waits in what it faces, and unconsciously obeys the idea of restituting to the pieces what it itself has done; in philosophy this unconsciousness becomes conscious. The hope of reconciliation is conjoined to irreconcilable thinking, because the resistance of thinking against the merely existent, the domineering freedom of the subject, also intends in the object what, through its preparation to the object, was lost to this latter.

RELATION TO SYSTEM 31-33

Traditional speculation has developed the synthesis of what, on Kantian grounds, was thought of as a chaotic polyvalence, ultimately attempting to shake off any sort of content. In contrast the telos of philosophy, that which is open and unveiled, is as anti-systematic as its freedom to relay the phenomena, with which it non-violently [unbewehrt] absorbs. It continues to pay heed to the system, to the extent that what is heterogenous to it faces it as a system. The administered world moves in this direction. The system is the negative objectivity, not the positive subject. In a historical phase where the systems, insofar as they take content seriously, have been relegated to the ominous realm of thought-poetry and have left only the pale outline of organizational schematas behind, it is difficult to really imagine what once drove the philosophical Spirit towards the system. The virtue of partisanship ought not to hinder the consideration of the history of philosophy from recognizing how superior this latter was to its

opponents, for over two hundred years, rationalistic or idealistic; they appear, in comparison, trivial. The systems carry it out, interpret the world; the others actually insist only: that won't do; they resign, refraining [Versagen: to refrain, to fail] in both senses of the term. If they had had more truth in the end, this would have bespoken the transience of philosophy. It is incumbent on it, in any case, to wrest such truth from subalternity and to use it to combat those philosophies which not only puff themselves up as something higher; even materialism bears the marks, to this day, that it was invented in Abdera. According to Nietzsche's critique, the system documents only the narrow-mindedness of the educated, who compensated for their political powerlessness by means of the conceptual construction of an administrative right-of-domain, as it were, over the existent. But the systematic need – that which prefers not to disport itself with the *membra disiecta* [Latin: dissected members] of knowledge, but achieves it absolutely, whose claim is already involuntarily raised in the conclusiveness of every specific judgement – was at times more than the pseudomorphosis of the Spirit into irresistibly successful mathematical, natural-scientific methods. In the history of philosophy the systems of the seventeenth century had an especially compensatory purpose. The same ratio which, in unison with the interests of the bourgeois class, smashed the feudal order of society and its intellectual reflection, scholastic ontology, into rubble, promptly felt the fear of chaos while facing the ruins, their own handiwork. They trembled before what ominously continued under their realm of domination and which waxed in proportion to their own power. This fear shaped the earliest beginnings of the mode of conduct entirely constitutive of bourgeois thought, of hurriedly neutralizing every step towards emancipation through the strengthening of the social order. In the shadows of the incompleteness of its emancipation, the bourgeois consciousness had to fear being cashiered by a more progressive class; it suspected that because it was not the entire freedom, it only produced the travesty of such; that is why it expanded its autonomy theoretically into the system, which at the same time took on the likeness of its compulsory mechanisms. The bourgeois ratio undertook to produce the social order out of itself which it had already negated outside. Once produced, however, this latter is already nothing of the sort any more; therefore insatiable. The system was just such a nonsensically-rationally produced social

order: a set-up [Gesetztes] which appears as a being-in-itself. Its origins had to be relocated into a formal thinking which was split off from its content; it could not otherwise exert its mastery over the material. The philosophical system was from the very beginning antinomical. Its very first signs were delimited by its own impossibility; exactly this had condemned, in the earlier history of the modern systems, each to annihilation by the next. The ratio which, in order to push itself through as a system, rooted out virtually all qualitative determinations which it referred to, ended up in irreconcilable contradiction with the objectivity to which it did violence, by pretending to comprehend it. It became all the more removed from this, the more completely it subjugated this to its axioms, finally to the one of identity. The pedantry of all systems, all the way to the architectonic ponderousness of Kant and, in spite of his program, even Hegel, are marks of an a priori conditional failure, documented with incomparable honesty by the rifts of the Kantian system; in Moliere pedantry is already the centerpiece of the ontology of the bourgeois Spirit. What shrinks back from the identity of the concept in what is to be comprehended, compels this to outrieten [French: excessive] organization, so that no doubts are raised as to the unimpeachable seamlessness, closure and acribia of the thought-product. Great philosophy was always accompanied by the paranoid zeal to tolerate nothing but itself, and to pursue this with all the ruses of its reason, while this constantly withdraws further and further from the pursuit. The slightest remainder of non-identity would suffice, totally according to its concept, to deny identity. The excrescences of the systems since the Cartesian pineal gland and the axioms and definitions of Spinoza, already filled to the brim with the entire rationalism which he then deductively extracts, proclaim by their untruth that of the systems themselves, their madness.

IDEALISM AS RAGE 33–35

The system by which the sovereign Spirit thought to transfigure itself has its Ur-history in that which is pre-intellectual, in the animal life of the species. Predators are hungry; the pounce onto the prey is difficult, often dangerous. The animal needs, as it were, additional impulses in order to dare this. These fuse with the displeasure [Unlust] of hunger into rage at the victim, whose expression is designed to terrify and weaken the latter. During the progression to humanity this is rationalized through projection. The animal rationale [French: rational animal]

which is hungry for its opponent, already the fortunate owner of a super-ego, must have a reason. The more completely that what it does follows the law of self-preservation, the less it may confess the primacy of this to itself and others; otherwise its laboriously achieved status as a *zoon politikon* [Greek: political animal] loses, as modern German puts it, credibility. The life-form to be devoured must be evil. This anthropological schemata has been sublimated all the way into epistemology. In idealism – most obviously in Fichte – the ideology unconsciously rules that the non-Ego, l'autrui [French: the others], finally everything reminiscent of nature, is inferior, so that the unity of the thought bent on preserving itself may gobble it up, thus consoled. This justifies its principle as much as it increases the desire. The system is the Spirit turned belly, rage the signature of each and every idealism; it distorts even Kant's humanity, dispelling the nimbus of that which is higher and more noble in which this knew how to clothe itself. The opinion of the person in the middle is the sibling of contempt for human beings: to let nothing go undisputed. The sublime inexorability of moral law was of a piece with such rationalized rage at the non-identical, and even the liberal Hegel was no better, when he walled off the superiority of the bad conscience, from those who demurred from the speculative concept, the hypostasis of the Spirit.¹⁰ What was emancipatory in Nietzsche, a true turning-point of Western thinking, which later versions merely usurped, was that he expressed such mysteries. The Spirit, which throws off its rationalization – its bane – ceases by virtue of its own self-reflection to be that which is radically evil, which irritates it in the Other. – The process, however, wherein the systems decomposed by means of their own insufficiency, counterpoints a social one. As the exchange-principle the bourgeois ratio came to resemble that which it made commensurable – wished to identify – with itself, the real one of the systems, with increasing albeit potentially murderous success, leaving less and less outside. What proved to be idle in theory was ironically confirmed by praxis. This is why the talk of the crisis of the system has become so popular as an ideology, even among those types who previously could not issue forth enough rancorous bombast against the aperçu, according to the system's own

10 “The thinking or conception, which only sees a determinate being, existence [Dasein] before it, is to be referred back to the afore-mentioned beginnings of science, which Parmenides made, which his conception and therein also the conception of subsequent eras discussed and raised to that of pure thought, to being as such, and thus created the element of science.” (Hegel, *WW* 4, Page 96)

already obsolete ideal. Reality is not supposed to be construed anymore, because it would be all too thoroughly construed. Its irrationality, which strengthens itself under the pressure of particular rationalities – disintegration through integration – provides pretexts for this. If society could be seen through as a closed and hence irreconcilable system to its subjects, it would become all too embarrassing to those subjects, as long as they were anything of the sort. The alleged existential angst is the claustrophobia of the system become society. Its system-character, yesterday still the shibboleth of scholastic philosophy, is strenuously denied by its adepts; they shamelessly pass themselves off as spokespersons for free, primordial, where possible non-academic thinking. Such misuse does not annul the critique of the system. All emphatic philosophy had, in contrast to the skeptical kind, which renounced emphasis, one thing in common, that it would be possible only as a system. This has crippled philosophy scarcely less than its empirical currents. Whatever it might be able to appropriately judge is postulated before it arises. System, the form of portrayal of a totality in which nothing remains external, sets the thought in absolute opposition to each of its contents and dissolves the content in thought: idealistically, before any argumentation for idealism.

DOUBLE CHARACTER OF THE SYSTEM 35–36

Critique does not simply liquidate the system. At the height of the Enlightenment, D'Alembert had reason to differentiate between *esprit de système* [French: spirit of the system] and *esprit systématique* [French: systemic spirit], and the method of the Encyclopedia took this into account. Not only the trivial motive of an attachment which instead crystallizes out in what is unattached speaks for the *esprit systématique*; it is not only that it satisfies the bureaucratic ambition to stuff everything into its categories. The form of the system is adequate to the world in which the content eludes the hegemony of thought; unity and unanimity are however at the same time the oblique projections of a contented, no longer antagonistic condition on the coordinates of dominating, repressive thinking. The double meaning of philosophical systematics leaves no choice but to transpose the energy of thought once unbound from the philosophical systems into the open determination of particular moments. This was not exactly foreign to Hegelian logic. The micro-analysis of the individual categories, appearing simultaneously as their objective self-reflection, was supposed to allow each and every concept to

pass over into others, regardless of anything laid out from above. The totality of this movement meant the system to him. Between this concept, as the one which concludes and thereby brings to a halt, and the one of the dynamic, which creates out of the subject by pure autarkic production, which constitutes all philosophic systematics, prevails contradiction as well as affinity. Hegel could balance the tension between the static and the dynamic only by means of the construction of the principle of unity, that of the Spirit, as something at the same time existent in itself and pure becoming, under the recuperation of the Aristotelean-scholastic *actus purus* [Latin: pure act]. The inadequacy of this construction – subjective production and ontology, nominalism and realism, syncopated to the Archimedean point – also hinders system-immanently the dissolution of that tension. Nevertheless such a philosophical system-concept towers over the merely scientific systematic which demands ordered and well-organized representations from thought, the consistent construction of disciplinary fields, without however strictly insisting on the inner unity of the moments, from the object's point of view. As prejudiced as this postulate is in the presupposition of the identity of everything existent with the cognizing principle, so too does that postulate, once burdened as in the manner of the idealistic speculation, legitimately recall the affinity of objects to each other, which is rendered taboo by the scientific need for order in order to yield to the surrogate of its schemata. What the objects communicate in, instead of each being the atom to which classificatory logic reduces it, is the trace of the determination of objects in themselves, which Kant denied and which Hegel wished to reestablish against Kant through the subject. To comprehend a thing itself, not to merely fit it in, to register it in a system of relationships, is nothing other than to become aware of the particular moment in its immanent context with others. Such anti-subjectivism stirs beneath the crackling shell of absolute idealism, in the impulse to open up the thing in question, by recourse to how they became. The concept of a system recalls, in inverted form, the coherence of the non-identical, which is exactly what is damaged by deductive systematics. Critique of the system and asystematic thinking are superficial, so long as they do not make it possible to unbind the power of coherence, which the idealistic systems signed over to the transcendental subject.

SYSTEM ANTINOMICAL 36–39

The system-producing ego principle, the prescribed method purified of every sort of content, was from time immemorial the ratio. It is not delimited by anything outside of it, nor through so-called intellectual orders. If idealism attested to its principle of positive infinity at all of its stages, then it made the constitutive nature of thinking, its historical autonomization, into metaphysics. It eliminated everything heterogenous in the existent. This defined the system as pure becoming, pure process, ultimately as that absolute creation which Fichte, to this extent the authentic systematizer of philosophy, declared philosophy as being. Already in Kant the emancipated ratio, the progressus ad infinitum, was held together solely through the at least formal recognition of the non-identical. The antinomy of totality and infinity – for the restless Ad infinitum explodes the self-contained system, which nevertheless exists solely thanks to the infinite – is that of idealistic essence. It mimics a central feature of bourgeois society. This too must, in order to preserve itself, to stay the same, to “be”, constantly expand, go further, push the borders ever further, respect no limits, not stay the same.¹¹ It has been demonstrated to it that as soon as it reached a level where it could no longer dispose over non-capitalist realms outside of itself, then according to its own concept it would have to sublate itself. This makes it clear why, Aristoteles notwithstanding, the modern concept of dynamics was as inappropriate to antiquity as the system. Even in Plato, who chose the aporetic form for so many of his dialogues, both could be imputed only retrospectively. The censure which Kant consequently applied to the old man is not simply logical, as he held, but historical: modern through and through. On the other hand systematics is so ingrown into the modern consciousness that even the anti-systematic efforts of Husserl, which took the field under the name of ontology, and from which fundamental ontology later branched off, irresistibly reverted back into the system, at the price of its formalization. Thus delimited by each other, the static and dynamic essence of the system are always in conflict. If the system really was in fact closed, and tolerated nothing outside of its magic circle, then it becomes, be it ever so dynamically conceived, finite as a positive infinity, static. That it sustains itself as

11 See Karl Marx, *Capital* [Kapital] Vol 1, Berlin 1955, pg 621. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Communist Manifesto* [Kommunistisches Manifest], Stuttgart 1953, pg 10.

such, as Hegel praised his own for doing, brings it to a halt. Closed systems have to be, put crudely, done. The drolleries for which Hegel is always taken to task, that world-history was consummated in the Prussian state, are neither mere aberrations for ideological purposes nor irrelevant in regards to the whole. In their necessary absurdity, the emphatic unity of system and dynamic falls apart. This latter, by negating the concept of the limit and assuring itself, in the realm of theory, that something would always still be outside, also has the tendency to disavow the system, its product. It would not be unfruitful to examine the history of recent philosophy under this aspect, namely how it managed to deal with the antagonism between the static and dynamic in the system. The Hegelian one was not truly in itself one of becoming, but was already implicitly preconceived in each particular determination. Such assurance condemned it to untruth. Consciousness must immerse itself unconsciously, as it were, into the phenomena on which it takes a position. Therein indeed dialectics transforms itself qualitatively. Systematic unanimity would fall apart. The phenomenon would no longer remain what it nevertheless remains in Hegel, in spite of all declarations to the contrary, namely an example of its concept. The thought would be burdened with more labor and effort than in Hegel's definition, because to him thought always only extracted out of its objects what was already thought. In spite of the program of realization [Entäußerung], it satisfies itself in itself, whirring right along as often as it demands the contrary. If the thought truly realized itself [enttäusern] in the thing, if this counted for something and not its category, then the object itself would begin to speak under the thought's leisurely glance. Hegel had objected to epistemology, that one becomes a smith only by smithing, in the consummation of the cognition of what resists this, the atheoretical, as it were. In this he is to be taken at his word; this alone would return to philosophy what Hegel called the freedom towards the object [Freiheit zum Objekt], which this latter lost under the bane of the concept of freedom, the sense-positing autonomy of the subject. However the speculative power to blast open that which is irresolvable is that of the negation. Solely in it does the systematic movement live on. The categories of the critique of the system are at the same time those which comprehend the particular. What has once legitimately stepped beyond the particularity in the system has its place outside of the system. The gaze which becomes aware, by

interpreting the phenomenon, of more than what it merely is, and solely thereby, what it is, secularizes metaphysics. Only a philosophy in fragment form would give the illusionary monads sketched by idealism what is their due. They would be representations [Vorstellungen] of the totality, which is inconceivable as such, in the particular.

ARGUMENT AND EXPERIENCE 39–42

The thought which may positively hypostasize nothing outside of the dialectical consummation overshoots the object with which it no longer has the illusion of being one with; it becomes more independent than in the conception of its absoluteness, in which the sovereign and the provisional shade into one another, each dependent on the other. Perhaps the Kantian exemption of the intelligible sphere from every immanence aimed for this. Immersion into the particular, dialectical immanence raised to an extreme, requires as one of its moments the freedom to also step out of the object, the freedom which the claim of identity cuts off. Hegel would have abjured this; he relied upon the complete mediation in objects. In the praxis of cognition, the resolution of the irresolvable, the moment of such transcendence of thought comes to light in that solely as a micrology does it employ macrological means. The demand for committalness [Verbindlichkeit] without system is that for thought-models. These are not of a merely monadological sort. The model strikes the specific and more than the specific, without dissolving it into its more general master-concept. To think philosophically is so much as to think in models; negative dialectics is an ensemble of model-analyses. Philosophy debases itself into apologetic affirmation the moment it deceives itself and others over the fact that whatever sets its objects into motion must also influence these from outside. What awaits within these, requires a foothold in order to speak, with the perspective that the forces mobilized from outside, and in the end every theory applied to the phenomena, would come to rest in those. To this extent, too, philosophical theory means its own end: through its realization. There is no lack of related intentions throughout history. The French Enlightenment was endowed by its highest concept, that of reason, with something systematic under the formal aspect; however the constitutive entanglement of its idea of reason with that of an objectively reasonable arrangement of society deprives the system of the pathos, which it only regained when reason renounced the idea of its

realization and absolutized itself into the Spirit. Thinking akin to the encyclopedia, as something rationally organized and nevertheless discontinuous, unsystematic and spontaneous, expressed the self-critical Spirit of reason. It represented what was erased from philosophy, as much through its increasing distance from praxis as through its incorporation into the academic bustle: worldly experience, that eye for reality, whose moment is also that of thought. The freedom of the Spirit is nothing else. Thought can no more do without the element of the *homme de lettres* [French: person of education] which the *petit bourgeois* scientific ethos maligns, than without what the scientific philosophies misuse, the meditative drawing-together, the argument, which earned so much skepticism. Whenever philosophy was truly substantial, both moments appeared together. From a distance, dialectics could be characterized as the effort raised to self-consciousness of letting itself be permeated by such. Otherwise the specialized argument degenerates into the technics of non-conceptual experts in the midst of the concept, just as nowadays so-called analytic philosophy, memorizable and copyable by robots, is disseminated academically. What is immanently argumentative is legitimate where it registers the integrated reality become system, in order to oppose it with its own strength. What is on the other hand free in thought represents the authority which is already aware of what is emphatically untrue of that context. Without this knowledge it would not have come to the breakout, without the appropriation of the power of the system it would have failed. That both moments do not seamlessly meld into one another is due to the real power of the system, which includes that which also potentially surpasses it. However the untruth of the context of immanence discloses itself in the overwhelming experience that the world, which is as systematically organized as if it were truly that realized reason Hegel so glorified, simultaneously perpetuates the powerlessness of the Spirit, apparently so all-powerful, in its old unreason. The immanent critique of idealism defends idealism, to the extent it shows how far it is defrauded by itself; how much that which is first, which is according to such always the Spirit, stands in complicity with the blind primacy of the merely existent [Seiendes]. The doctrine of the absolute Spirit immediately promotes this latter. – The scientific consensus would probably concede that even experience would imply theory. It is however a “standpoint”, at best hypothetical. Conciliatory representatives of

scientivism demand what they call proper or clean science, which is supposed to account for these sorts of presuppositions. Exactly this demand is incompatible with intellectual experience. If a standpoint is demanded of the latter, then it would be that of the diner to the roast. It lives by ingesting such; only when the latter disappears into the former, would there be philosophy. Until this point theory embodies that discipline in intellectual experience which already embarrassed Goethe in relation to Kant. If experience relied solely on its dynamic and good fortune, there would be no stopping. Ideology lurks in the Spirit which, dazzled with itself like Nietzsche's Zarathustra, irresistibly becomes well-nigh absolute. Theory prevents this. It corrects the naivete of its self-confidence, without forcing it to sacrifice the spontaneity which theory for its part wishes to get at. By no means does the difference between the so-called subjective share of intellectual experience and its object vanish; the necessary and painful exertion of the cognizing subject testifies to it. In the unreconciled condition, non-identity is experienced as that which is negative. The subject shrinks away from this, back onto itself and the fullness of its modes of reaction. Only critical self-reflection protects it from the limitations of its fullness and from building a wall [Wand: interior wall] between itself and the object, indeed from presupposing its being-for-itself as the in-itself and for-itself. The less the identity between the subject and object can be ascertained, the more contradictory what is presumed to cognize such, the unfettered strength and open-minded self-consciousness. Theory and intellectual experience require their reciprocal effect. The former does not contain answers for everything, but reacts to a world which is false to its innermost core. Theory would have no jurisdiction over what would be free of the bane of such. The ability to move is essential to consciousness, not an accidental characteristic. It signifies a double procedure: that of the inside out, the immanent process, the authentically dialectical, and a free one, something unfettered which steps out of dialectics, as it were. Neither of them are however disparate. The unregimented thought has an elective affinity to dialectics, which as critique of the system recalls to mind what would be outside of the system; and the energy which dialectical movement in cognition unleashes is that which rebels against the system. Both positions of consciousness are connected to one another through each other's critique, not through compromise.

THE VERTIGINOUS 42-43

A dialectics which is no longer “pinned”¹² to identity provokes, if not the objection of bottomlessness, which is to be recognized by its fascist fruits, then that of the vertiginous. This feeling has been central to great modern poetry since Baudelaire; philosophy, runs the anachronistic suggestion, ought not to participate in any such thing. You’re supposed to say what you want; Karl Kraus had to learn that the more exactly each of his sentences was expressed, the more the reified consciousness bemoaned just such precision, as making their heads swim. The meaning of such complaints is to be grasped in a usage of the dominant opinion. This refers to present alternatives in such a way that one would have to choose between one or the other. Administrations frequently reduce decisions over plans submitted to it to a simple yes or no; administrative thinking has secretly become the longed-for model of one which pretends to be free of such. But it is up to philosophical thought, in its essential situations, not to play along. The given alternative is already a piece of heteronomy. Only that consciousness whose decision is moralistically presumed in advance would be able to judge the legitimacy of alternative demands. The insistence on professing to a standpoint is the extended coercion of the conscience into theory. It corresponds to a coarsening. Not even the truth of the great theorems can survive the uprooting of their scaffolding; Marx and Engels for example objected mightily to the dilution of their dynamic class-theory and its sharpened economic expression by the simpler opposition of rich and poor. The essence is falsified by the resume of that which is essential. A philosophy which reduces itself to what Hegel already mocked – accommodating its readers by declarations, of what one would now have to think – conjoins itself to the onrushing regression, without even keeping pace with such. Behind the anxiety of where things need to be taken on stands, for the most part, only aggression, the desire to take things on, just as the schools historically devoured each other. The equivalent of guilt and penance has transposed itself onto the sequence of thought. Exactly this assimilation of the Spirit into the dominating principle is what philosophical reflection must see through. Traditional thinking and the platitudes of the sound human understanding which it left behind, after perishing philosophically, demand a coordinate-system, a “frame of reference” [in

12 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* [Kritik der reinen Vernunft], 2nd Edition, WW III, pg 109.

English], in which everything finds its place. Not too much value is attached to the intelligibility of the coordinate-system – it may even be expressed in dogmatic axioms – insofar as every reflection is localizable and unaffiliated [ungedeckte] thoughts are kept at a distance. In contrast to this, the cognition throws itself à fond perdu [French: into the depths] at objects, so as to be fruitful. The vertigo which this creates is an index veri [Latin: index of truth]; the shock of the revelation, the negativity, or what it necessarily seems to be amidst what is hidden and monotonous, untruth only for the untrue.

FRAGILITY OF THE TRUTH 43–45

The demolition of the systems and of the system is no formal-epistemological act. What in any case the system wished to supply in the details is to be sought out solely in these. Neither whether it is still there, nor what it might be, is granted to thought in advance. Therein the thoroughly misused talk of the truth as something concrete would at last come into its own. It compels thinking to linger before the smallest of all things. Not about the concrete, but on the contrary out from this, is what needs to be philosophized. The dedication to the specific object becomes suspect however due to a lack of an unequivocal position. What is different from the existent is regarded by such as witchcraft, while in the false world nearness, homeland and security are for their part figures of the bane. With these human beings fear they will lose everything, because they have no other happiness, also none within thought, than what you can hold on to yourself, perennial unfreedom. What is demanded is at the very least a piece of ontology in the midst of its critique; as if not even the smallest unaffiliated [ungedeckte] insight could better express what is wished for, than a “declaration of intention” [in English] which stays at that. This confirms an experience in philosophy which Schoenberg noted in traditional musical theory: you only really learn from this how a passage begins and ends, but nothing about it itself, its trajectory. Analogous to this, philosophy ought not to reduce itself to categories but in a certain sense should compose itself [komponieren: to compose musically]. It must continually renew itself in its course, out of its own power just as much as out of the friction with that which it measures itself by; what it bears within itself is decisive, not the thesis or position; the web, not the inductive or deductive, one-track course of thought. That is why philosophy is essentially not reportable. Otherwise it would be superfluous; that

it for the most part allows itself to be reported, speaks against it. But a mode of conduct which protects nothing as the first or the secure, and yet, solely by power of the determination of its portrayal, makes so few concessions to relativism, the brother of absolutism, that it approaches a doctrine, causes offence. It drives past Hegel, whose dialectic must have everything, and yet also wished to be *prima philosophia* (and in the identity-principle, the absolute subject, was indeed this), to the breaking-point. The jettisoning of that which is first and solidified from thought does not absolutize it as something free-floating. Exactly this jettisoning attaches it all the more to what it itself is not, and removes the illusion of its autarky. The falsity of the jettisoned rationality which runs away from itself, the recoil of Enlightenment into mythology, is itself rationally determinable. Thinking is according to its own meaning the thinking of something. Even in the logical abstraction-form of the Something, as something which is meant or judged, which for its part does not claim to constitute anything existent, indelibly survives that which thinking would like to cancel out, whose non-identity is that which is not thinking. The ratio becomes irrational where it forgets this, hypostasizing its own creations, the abstractions, contrary to the meaning of thinking. The commandment of its autarky condemns it to nullity, in the end to stupidity and primitivity. The objection of bottomlessness needs to be turned against the intellectual principle which preserves itself as the sphere of absolute origins; there however, where ontology, Heidegger first and foremost, hits bottomlessness, is the place of truth. It sways gently, fragile due to its temporal content; Benjamin penetratingly criticized Gottfried Keller's *Ur-bourgeois* maxim that the truth cannot run away from us. Philosophy must dispense with the consolation that the truth cannot be lost. One which cannot fall into the abyss, of which the fundamentalists of metaphysics prattle – it is not that of agile sophistics but that of insanity – turns, under the commandment of its principle of security, analytical, potentially into tautology. Only those thoughts which go to extremes can face up to the all-powerful powerlessness of certain agreement; only mental acrobatics relate to the thing, which according to the *fable convenu* [French: agreed-upon fiction] it holds in contempt for the sake of its self-satisfaction. No unreflective banality can, as the imprint of the false life, still be true. Every attempt today to hold back thought, for the sake of its utility, by talk of its smug overwroughtness

and non-committal aspect [Unverbindlichkeit], is reactionary. The argument can be summarized in its vulgar form: if you want, I can give you any number of such analyses. Therein each becomes devalued by every other. Peter Altenberg gave the answer to someone who in a similar fashion was suspicious of his compressed forms: but I don't want to. The open thought is unprotected against the risk of going astray into what is popular; nothing notifies it that it has adequately satisfied itself in the thing, in order to withstand that risk. The consistency of its execution, however, the density of the web, enables it to hit what it should. The function of the concept of certainty in philosophy has utterly recoiled. What once wished to overtake dogma and tutelage through self-certainty became the social insurance policy of a cognition which does allow anything to happen. Nothing in fact happens to anything which is completely unobjectionable.

AGAINST RELATIVISM 45-48

In the history of philosophy, epistemological categories have repeatedly been transformed into moral ones; Fichte's interpretation of Kant is the most striking example, though far from the only one. Something similar occurred with logical-phenomenological absolutism. For fundamental ontologists the offence of bottomless thought is relativism. Dialectics opposes this as sharply as it does absolutism; not by seeking a middle position between the two, but through the extremes, which convict them of untruth according to their own ideas. To proceed in this manner against relativism is long overdue, because its critique was for the most part so formally applied, that it permitted the fiber of relativistic thinking to remain more or less untouched. The popular argument against Spengler since Leonard Nelson, that relativism presupposes an absolute, namely its own validity and thus contradicts itself, is wretched. It confuses the general negation of a principle with its own ascent to an affirmation, without consideration of the specific difference of the positional value of both. It would be more fruitful to cognize relativism as a delimited form of consciousness. At first it was that of bourgeois individualism, which for its part took the mediated individual consciousness through the generality for the ultimate and thus accorded the opinions of every single individual the same right, as if there were no criterion of their truth. The abstract thesis of the conditionality of every thought is to be most concretely reminded of that of its own, the blindness towards the supra-

individual moment, through which individual consciousness alone becomes thought. Behind this thesis stands a contempt of the Spirit which prefers the primacy of material relationships, as the only thing which should count. The father's reply to the uncomfortable and decided views of his son is, everything is relative, that money, as in the Greek saying, maketh the man. Relativism is vulgar materialism, thought disturbs the business. Utterly hostile towards the Spirit, such an attitude remains necessarily abstract. The relativity of all cognition can only be maintained from without, for so long as no conclusive cognition is achieved. As soon as consciousness enters into a determinate thing and poses its immanent claim to truth or falsehood, the presumably subjective contingency of the thought falls away. Relativism is null and void simply because, what it on the one hand considers popular and contingent, and on the other hand holds to be irreducible, originates out of objectivity – precisely that of an individualistic society – and is to be deduced as socially necessary appearance [Schein]. The modes of reaction which according to relativistic doctrine are unique to each individual, are preformed, always practically the bleating of sheep; especially the stereotype of relativity. Individualistic appearance [Schein] is then extended by the cannier relativists such as Pareto to group interests. But the strata-specific bounds of objectivity laid down by the sociology of knowledge are for their part only deducible from the whole of the society, from that which is objective. If Mannheim's late version of sociological relativism imagined it could distill scientific objectivity out of the various perspectives of social strata with "free-floating" intelligence, then it inverts that which conditions into the conditioned. In truth divergent perspectives have their law in the structure of the social process, as one of a preestablished whole. Through its cognition they lose their non-committal aspect. An entrepreneur who does not wish to be crushed by the competition must calculate so that the unpaid part of the yield of alienated labor falls to him as a profit, and must think that like for like – labor-power versus its cost of reproduction – is thereby exchanged; it can just as stringently be shown, however, why this objectively necessary consciousness is objectively false. This dialectical relationship sublates its particular moments in itself. The presumed social relativity of the intuitions obeys the objective law of social production under private ownership of the means of production. Bourgeois skepticism, which embodies relativism as a doctrine,

is narrow-minded. Yet the perennial hostility to the Spirit is more than a feature of subjective bourgeois anthropology. It is due to the fact that the concept of reason inside of the existing relations of production, once emancipated, must fear that its own trajectory will explode this. This is why reason delimits itself; during the entire bourgeois epoch, the idea of the autonomy of the Spirit was accompanied by its reactive self-loathing. It cannot forgive itself for the fact that the constitution of the existence it controls forbids that development into freedom, which lies in its own concept. Relativism is the philosophical expression of this; no dogmatic absolutism need be summoned against it, the proof of its own narrowness crushes it. Relativism was always well-disposed towards reaction, no matter how progressive its bearing, already displaying its availability for the stronger interest in antiquity. The critique of relativism which intervenes is the paradigm of determinate negation.

DIALECTICS AND THE SOLIDIFIED 48-50

Unfettered dialectics does not dispense with anything solid any more than Hegel. Rather it no longer accords it primacy. Hegel did not emphasize it so much in the origins of his metaphysics: it was supposed to emerge at the end, as the thoroughly illuminated whole. That is why his logical categories have their own peculiar double character. They are emergent, self-sublating and at the same time a priori, invariant structures. They are brought into harmony with the dynamic through the doctrine of an immediacy which reproduces itself anew at every dialectical level. Hegel's already critically tinged theory of a second nature is not lost to negative dialectics. It takes the unmediated immediacy, the formations, which society and its development present to thought, *tel quel* [French: as such], in order to reveal their mediations through analysis, according to the measure of the immanent difference of the phenomena to what they claim, for their own part, to be. That which holds itself together as solid, the "positive" of the young Hegel, is the negative of such analyses, just like his. Thought, archenemy of that positivity, is still characterized as the negative principle in the preface to the *Phenomenology*.¹³ Even the simplest reflection leads to this: what does not think,

13 "The activity of distinction is the power and labor of understanding, of the most wonderful and greatest, or rather of the absolute power. The circle in which it remains enclosed and contains its moments as substance, is the immediate and for that reason not wonderful relationship. But that accidental things separated from their own realm, things bound up which are truly real only in their context with others, that these

but yields itself to the intuition, tends towards the bad positive by virtue of that passive constitution, which in the critique of reason indicated the sensory source of the right of knowledge. To perceive something so, simply as it offers itself, while renouncing reflection, is always potentially tantamount to recognizing it, as it is; by contrast, virtually every thought causes a negative movement. In Hegel to be sure the primacy of the subject over the object remains, despite all assertions to the contrary, undisputed. It is merely hidden in the semi-theological word Spirit [Geist: mind, spirit], in which the memory of individual subjectivity cannot be erased. The Hegelian *Logic* foots the bill for this in its thoroughly formal character. While it must according to its own concept be substantive, it excises, in its effort to be everything at the same time, metaphysics and a doctrine of categories, the determinate existent out of itself, in which its beginnings could have legitimated itself; therein not so far away from Kant and Fichte, who Hegel never tired of denouncing as the spokespersons for abstract subjectivity. The *Science of Logic* is for its part abstract in the simplest sense; the reduction of general concepts already uproots in advance the counter-force [Widerspiel] to such, that which is concrete, which idealistic dialectics boasts of harboring in itself and developing. The Spirit wins the battle against the non-existent enemy. Hegel's slighting remark on contingent existence, the Krugian feather which philosophy scorns to deduce out of itself and yet must, is a "stop thief". Since Hegelian logic always had to do with the medium of the concept and only generally reflected on the relationship of the concept to its content, the non-conceptual, it is already assured in advance of the absoluteness of the concept, which it was bent on proving. The more the autonomy of subjectivity is seen through critically, the more it becomes aware of itself as something mediated for its part, the more conclusive the obligation of thought to take up what solidity has brought to it, which it does not have in itself. Otherwise there could not even be that dynamic, by which dialectics moved the burden of that which is solid. Not every experience which appears to be primary is to be denied point-blank. If the experience of consciousness wholly lacked what Kierkegaard defended as naivete, then thinking would do that which is expected of it by what is established, would go astray in itself, and would become quite naïve. Even termini such as Ur-experience, compromised through phenomenology and

achieve a genuine existence and a particulated [abgesonderte] freedom, is the monstrous power of the negative; it is the energy of thought, of the pure I." (Hegel, *WW* 2, page 33)

neo-ontology, designate something true, while they haughtily damage it. If they did not spontaneously create resistance against the façade, heedless of their own dependencies, then thought and activity would only be dim copies. What in the object goes beyond the determinations laid upon it by thinking, returns firstly to the subject as something immediate; where the subject feels itself to be quite certain of itself, in the primary experience, it is once again least of all a subject. That which is most subjective of all, the immediately given, eludes its grasp. Yet such immediate consciousness is neither continuously held fast nor positive pure and simple. For consciousness is at the same time the universal mediation and cannot leap, even in the *données immédiates* [French: given facts] which are its own, over its shadow. They are not the truth. The confidence that the whole seamlessly emerges out of that which is immediate, solid and simply primary, is idealistic appearance [Schein]. To dialectics immediacy does not remain what it immediately expresses. It becomes a moment instead of the grounds. At the opposite pole, the same thing happens to the invariants of pure thought. Solely a childlike relativism would dispute the validity of formal logic or mathematics and denounce them, because they have come to be, as ephemeral. However the invariants whose own invariance is something produced are not to be peeled out of what varies, as if one had all truth in one's hands. This grew together with that which is substantive to the matter [Sachhaltigen], which changes, and its immutability is the deception of *prima philosophia* [Latin: originary philosophy]. While invariants do not melt away into the historical dynamic in quite the same way as in consciousness, they are moments in it; they pass over into ideology, as soon as they are solidified as transcendence. Explicitly idealistic philosophy is by no means always ideology. It hides in the substruction of something primary, almost indifferent as to which content, in the implicit identity of concept and thing, which the world then justifies, even when the dependence of consciousness on being is summarily taught.

PRIVILEGE OF EXPERIENCE 50–53

In sharp contrast to the usual scientific ideal, the objectivity of dialectical cognition needs more subject, not less. Otherwise philosophical experience shrivels. But the positivistic spirit of the epoch is allergic to this. Not everyone is supposed to be capable of such experience. It is held to be the prerogative of

individuals, determined through their natural talents and life-history; to demand this as the condition of cognition, so runs the argument, would be elitist and undemocratic. It is to be conceded that not everyone in fact is capable of the same sort of philosophical experiences, in the way that all human beings of comparable intelligence ought to be able to reproduce experiments in the natural sciences or mathematical proofs, although according to current opinion quite specific talents are necessary for this. In any case the subjective quotient of philosophy, compared with the virtually subjectless rationality of a scientific ideal which posits the substitutability of everyone with everyone else, retains an irrational adjunct. It is no natural quality. While the argument pretends to be democratic, it ignores what the administered world makes of its compulsory members. Only those who are not completely modeled after it can intellectually undertake something against it. The critique of privilege becomes a privilege: so dialectical is the course of the world. It would be fictitious to presume that everyone could understand or even be aware of all things, under historical conditions, especially those of education, which bind, spoon-feed and cripple the intellectual forces of production many times over; under the prevailing image-poverty; and under those pathological processes of early childhood diagnosed but by no means changed by psychoanalysis. If this was expected, then one would arrange cognition according to the pathic features of a humanity, for whom the possibility of experience is driven out through the law of monotony, insofar as they possessed it in the first place. The construction of the truth according to the analogy of the *volonté de tous* [French: popular will] – the most extreme consequence of the subjective concept of reason – would betray everyone of everything which they need, in everyone's name. To those who have had the undeserved good fortune to not be completely adjusted in their inner intellectual composition to the prevailing norms – a stroke of luck, which they often enough have to pay for in terms of their relationship to the immediate environment – it is incumbent to make the moralistic and, as it were, representative effort to express what the majority, for whom they say it, are not capable of seeing or, to do justice to reality, will not allow themselves to see. The criterion of truth is not its immediate communicability to everyone. The almost universal compulsion to confuse the communication of that which is cognized with this former, all too often ranking the latter as higher,

is to be resisted; while at present, every step towards communication sells truth out and falsifies it. In the meantime, everything to do with language labors under this paradox. Truth is objective and not plausible. So little as it immediately falls into anyone's lap, and so much as it requires subjective mediation, what counts for its imbrication is what Spinoza all too enthusiastically proclaimed for the specific truth: that it would be the index of itself. It loses its privileged character, which rancor holds against it, by not allowing itself to be talked out of the experiences to which it owes itself, but rather allows itself to enter into configurations and explanatory contexts which help make it evident or convict it of its inadequacies. Elitist arrogance has not the least place in philosophical experience. It must give an account of how much, according to its own possibility in the existent, it is contaminated with the existent, with the class relationship. In it, the chances which the universal desultorily affords to individuals turn against that universal, which sabotages the universality of such experience. If this universality were established, the experience of all particulars would thus be transformed and would cast aside much of the contingency which distorted them until that point, even where it continues to stir. Hegel's doctrine, that the object would reflect itself in itself, survives its idealistic version, because in a changed dialectics the subject, disrobed of its sovereignty, virtually becomes thereby the reflection-form of objectivity. The less that theory comes across as something definitive and all-encompassing, the less it concretizes itself, even with regard to thinking. It permits the dissolution of the systemic compulsion, relying more frankly on its own consciousness and its own experience, than the pathetic conception of a subjectivity which pays for its abstract triumph with the renunciation of its specific content would permit. This is congruent with that emancipation of individuality borne out of the period between the great idealisms and the present, and whose achievements, in spite of and because of the contemporary pressure of collective regression, are so little to be remanded in theory as the impulses of the dialectic in 1800. The individualism of the nineteenth century no doubt weakened the objectifying power of the Spirit – that of the insight into objectivity and into its construction – but also endowed it with a sophistication, which strengthens the experience of the object.

QUALITATIVE MOMENT OF RATIONALITY 53–54

To yield to the object is so much as to do justice to its qualitative moments. The scientivistic objectification tends, in unity with the quantifying tendency of all science since Descartes, to flatten out qualities, to transform them into measurable determinations. Rationality itself is to an increasing extent equated more mathematico [Latin: in mathematical terms] with the capability of quantification. As much as this took into account the primacy of the triumphant natural sciences, so little does it lie in the concept of the ratio in itself. It is blinded not the least because it blocks itself off from qualitative moments as something which is for its part to be rationally thought. Ratio is not a mere *sunâgôgê* [Greek: gathering, assembly], the ascent from disparate phenomena [Erscheinungen] to the concept of its species.¹⁴ It demands just as much the capacity of distinction. Without it the synthetic function of thinking, abstractive unification, would not be possible: to aggregate what is the same means necessarily to separate it from what is different. This however is the qualitative; the thought which does not think this, is already cut off and at odds with itself. Plato, the first to inaugurate mathematics as a methodological model, still gave powerful expression to the qualitative moment of the ratio at the beginning of the European philosophy of reason, by endowing *sunâgôgê* [Greek: gathering, assembly] next to *diairesis* [Greek: a dividing] with equal rights. They follow the commandment, that consciousness ought, in keeping with the Socratic and Sophistic separation of *physei* [Greek: by nature] and *thesei* [Greek: thesis], snuggle up to the nature of things, instead of proceeding with them arbitrarily. The qualitative distinction is thereby not only absorbed by the Platonic dialectic, into its doctrine of thinking, but interpreted as a corrective to the violence of quantification run amok. A parable from the *Phaedros* is unambiguous on this score. In it, the thought which arranges and non-violence are balanced. One should, so runs the argument, in the reversal of the conceptual movement of the synthesis, “have the capacity, to divide into species corresponding to its nature, to carry out the cut according to the joints, and not attempt, after the manner of a bad cook, to shatter every member”.¹⁵ That qualitative moment is preserved as a substrate of what is quantified in all quantification, which as Plato

14 See Eduard Zeller, *The Philosophy of the Greeks* [Die Philosophie der Griechen], 2.1, Tübingen 1859, pg 390.
15 Pg. 265.

cautions should not be smashed to pieces, lest the ratio, by damaging the object which it was supposed to obtain, recoil into unreason. In the second reflection, the rational operation accompanies the quality as the moment of the antidote, as it were, which the limited first reflection of science withheld from philosophy, as suborned to this latter as it is estranged from it. There is no quantifiable insight which does not first receive its meaning, its terminus ad quem [Latin: end-point], in the retranslation into the qualitative. Even the cognitive goal of statistics is qualitative, quantification solely the means. The absolutization of the quantifying tendency of the ratio tallies with its lack of self-consciousness. Insistence on the qualitative serves this, rather than conjuring up irrationality. Later Hegel alone showed an awareness of this, without any retrospective-romantic inclinations, at a time to be sure when the supremacy of quantification was not yet so widespread as today. For him, in accordance with the scientific formulation, “the truth of quality [is] itself quantity”.¹⁶ But he cognized it in the *System of Philosophy* as a “determination indifferent to being, extraneous to it”.¹⁷ It retains its relevance in the quantitative; and the quantum returns back to the quality.¹⁸

QUALITY AND THE INDIVIDUATED [INDIVIDUUM] 54–57

The quantifying tendency corresponded on the subjective side to the reduction of that which was cognized to something universal, devoid of qualities, to that which was purely logical. Qualities would no doubt first be truly free in an objective condition which was no longer limited to quantification and which no longer drilled quantification into those forced to intellectually adapt to such. But this is not the timeless essence which mathematics, its instrument, makes it appear as. Just like its claim to exclusivity, it became transient. The qualitative subject awaits the potential of its qualities in the thing, not its transcendental residue, although the subject is strengthened solely thereto by means of restrictions based on the division of labor. The more meanwhile its own reactions are denounced as presumably merely subjective, the more the qualitative determinations in things escape cognition. The ideal of the distinction [Differenzierten] and the nuanced, which cognition never completely forgot down to the latest developments in spite of all “science is

16 Hegel, WW 4, pg 402.

17 Hegel, WW 8, pg 217.

18 See WW 4, page 291.

measurement" [in English], does not solely refer to an individual capacity, which objectivity can dispense with. It receives its impulse from the thing. Distinction means that someone is capable of discerning in this and in its concept even that which is smallest and which escapes the concept; solely distinction encompasses the smallest. In its postulate, that of the capability to experience the object – and distinction is the subjective reaction-form of this become experience – the mimetic moment of cognition finds refuge, that of the elective affinity of the cognizer and that which is to be cognized. In the entire process of the Enlightenment this moment gradually crumbled. But it does not completely remove it, lest it annul itself. Even in the concept of rational cognition, devoid of all affinity, the grasping for this concordance lives on, which was once kept free of doubt by the magical illusion. Were this moment wholly extirpated, the possibility of the subject cognizing the object would be utterly incomprehensible, the jettisoned rationality thereby irrational. The mimetic moment for its part however blends in with the rational in the course of its secularization. This process summarizes itself in the distinction. It contains the mimetic capability of reaction in itself as well as the logical organ for the relationship of genus, species and *differentia specifica* [Latin: specific difference]. Therein the capability of distinction retains as much contingency as every undiminished individuality does in regards to the universal one of its reason. This contingency meanwhile is not so radical as the criteria of scientivism would wish. Hegel was peculiarly inconsistent when he arraigned the individual consciousness, the staging-grounds of intellectual experience, which animated his work, as the contingent and that which is limited. This is comprehensible only out of the desire to disempower the critical moment which is tied to the individual Spirit. In its particularization he felt the contradictions between the concept and the particular. Individual consciousness is always, and with reason, the unhappy one. Hegels aversion towards this denies the very state of affairs [Sachverhalt] which he underlined, where it suited him: how much the universal dwells within that which is individual. According to strategic necessity he denounces the individuated as if it were the immediate, whose appearance [Schein] he himself is destroying. With this however the absolute contingency of individual experience disappears, too. It would have no continuity without concepts. Through its participation in the discursive medium it is, according to

its own determination, always at the same time more than only individual. The individuated becomes the subject, insofar as it objectifies itself by means of its individual consciousness, in the unity of itself as well as in its own experiences: animals are presumably bereft of both. Because it is universal in itself, and as far as it is, individual experience also reaches into that which is universal. Even in epistemological reflection the logical generality and the unity of individual consciousness reciprocally condition one another. This affects however not only the subjective-formal side of individuality. Every content of the individual consciousness is brought to it by its bearer, for the sake of its self-preservation, and reproduces itself with the latter. Through self-awareness it is possible for the individual consciousness to emancipate itself, to expand itself. What drives it to this is the misery, that this universality tends to exert its hegemony in individual experience. As a "reality check" experience does not simply mirror the impulses and wishes of the individual, but also negates them, so that it would survive. That which is general in the subject is simply not to be grasped any other way than in the movement of particular human consciousness. If the individuated were simply abolished by fiat, no higher subject purified of the dross of contingency would emerge, but solely one which unconsciously follows orders. In the East the theoretical short-circuit in the view of the individuated has served as the pretext for collective repression. The Party is supposed to have a cognitive power a priori superior to that of every individual solely due to the number of its members, even if it is terrorized or blinded. The isolated individual [Individuum] however, unencumbered by the ukase, may at times perceive the objectivity more clearly than a collective, which in any case is only the ideology of its committees. Brecht's sentence, the Party has a thousand eyes, the individual only two, is as false as any bromide. The exact imagination of a dissenter can see more than a thousand eyes wearing the same red-tinted glasses, who then mistake what they see with the universality of the truth and regress. The individuation of cognition resists this. The perception of the object depends not only on this, on the distinction: it is itself constituted from the object, which demands its *restitutio in integrum* [Latin: restitution in whole] in it, as it were. Nevertheless the subjective modes of reaction which the object needs require for their part the unceasing corrective in the object. This occurs in the self-reflection, the ferment of intellectual experience.

The process of philosophical objectification would be, put metaphorically, vertical, intra-temporal, as opposed to the horizontal, abstract quantifying one of science; so much is true of Bergson's metaphysics of time.

SUBSTANTIALITY [INHALTLICHKEIT] AND METHOD 57–58

That generation, also Simmel, Husserl, and Scheler, sought in vain for a philosophy which, receptive to the objects, would render itself substantive. What tradition dismissed is what tradition desired. This does not obviate the methodological consideration, of how substantive particular analysis stands in relation to the theory of dialectics. The idealistic-identity-philosophical avowal that the latter dissolves itself in the former is unconvincing. Objectively, however, the whole which is expressed by theory is contained within the particular to be analyzed, not first through the cognizing subject. The mediation of both is itself substantive, that through the social totality. It is however also formal due to the abstract nomothetism [Gesetzmässigkeit] of the totality itself, that of exchange. Idealism, which distilled its absolute Spirit out of this, encrypted something true at the same time, that this mediation encounters phenomena as a compulsory mechanism; this lurks behind the so-called constitution-problem. Philosophical experience does not have this universal immediately, as appearance, but as abstractly as it objectively is. It is constrained towards the exit of the particular, without forgetting what it does not have, but knows. Its path is doubled, similar to the Heraclitean one, the upwards and the downwards. While it assures itself of the real determination of the phenomena through its concept, it cannot profess this ontologically, as what is true in itself. It is fused with what is untrue, with the repressive principle, and this lessens even its epistemological dignity. It forms no positive telos in which cognition would halt. The negativity of the universal solidifies for its part the cognition into the particular as that which is to be rescued. "The only thoughts which are true are those which do not understand themselves." [Self-citation of Adorno's *Minima Moralia*] In their inalienably general elements, all philosophy, even those with the intention of freedom, carries along the unfreedom in which that of society is prolonged. It has the compulsion in itself; however this latter alone protects it from regression into caprice. Thinking is capable of critically cognizing the compulsory character immanent to it; its own

inner compulsion is the medium of its emancipation. The freedom towards the object, which in Hegel resulted in the disempowerment of the subject, is first of all to be established. Until then, dialectics diverges as method and as one of the thing. Concept and reality are of the same contradictory essence. What tears society apart antagonistically, the dominating principle, is the same thing which, intellectualized, causes the difference between the concept and that which is subordinated under it. The logical form of the contradiction however achieves that difference, because every one which does not suborn itself to the unity of the dominating principle, according to the measure of the principle, does not appear as a polyvalence which is indifferent to this, but as an infraction against logic. On the other hand the remainder of the divergence between philosophic conception and follow-through also testifies to something of the non-identity, which neither permits the method to wholly absorb the contents, in which alone they are supposed to be, nor intellectualizes the contents. The preeminence of content reveals itself as the necessary insufficiency of the method. What as such, in the form of general reflection, must be said, in order not to be defenseless against the philosophy of the philosophers, legitimates itself solely in the follow-through, and is negated therein in turn as method. Its surplus is with respect to its content abstract, false; Hegel already had to accept this discrepancy in the preface to the *Phenomenology*. The philosophical ideal would be to render the accounting one would give for what one does superfluous, by doing it.

EXISTENTIALISM 58–61

The most recent attempt to break out of conceptual fetishism – out of academic philosophy, without letting go of the claim of committalness [Verbindlichkeit] – went under the name of existentialism. Like fundamental ontology, from which it separated itself through political engagement, it remained idealistically biased; it retained by the way something accidental in relation to philosophical structure, replaceable through a contrary politics, so long as this satisfied the *Characteristica formalis* [Latin: formal characteristic] of existentialism. There are partisans both here and there [hüben und drüben: i.e. West and East Germany, respectively]. No theoretical borderline on decisionism is drawn. Nevertheless the idealistic component of existentialism is for its part a function of politics. Sartre and his friends, critics of society and unwilling to limit themselves to theoretical critique,

did not fail to see that Communism, wherever it came to power, entrenched itself as a system of administration. The institution of the centralized state-party is a mockery of everything which was once thought concerning the relationship to the power of the state. That is why Sartre staked everything on the moment which was not permitted by the ruling praxis; spontaneity, in the language of philosophy. The less that social power-distribution gave it an objective chance, the more exclusively did he extol the Kierkegaardian category of the decision. The latter received its meaning from its terminus ad quem [Latin: end-point], from Christology; in Sartre it becomes the absolute which it was once supposed to serve. In spite of his extreme nominalism¹⁹ Sartre's philosophy organized itself in its most effective phase according to the old idealistic category of the subject's freely-conceived act [Tatbehandlung]. Similar to Fichte, existentialism is indifferent towards every objectivity. Social relationships and conditions consistently became tacked-on albeit timely additions in Sartre's plays, structurally however hardly more than an occasion for the action. This was condemned by Sartre's philosophical objectlessness to an irrationality which the tireless Enlightener intended least of all. The conception of absolute freedom of decision is as illusory as that of the absolute I, which was to derive the world out of itself. The most modest political experience would suffice to make the situations constructed as foils for the decisions of heroes start wobbling like stage backdrops. Not even theatrically could sovereign decisions of this sort be postulated in concrete historical imbrication. A field general who decided to cease committing acts of cruelty just as irrationally as he used to carry these out, who broke off the siege of a city already betrayed to him in advance and founded a utopian community, would be, if not killed by mutinous soldiers, then surely dismissed by his superiors, even in the wildest times of the farcical, romanticized era of the German renaissance. It is only too true that

19 Hegel's restitution of conceptual realism, all the way to the provocative defense of the ontological proof of God, was reactionary according to the ground-rules set by an unreflective Enlightenment. Meantime the course of history has justified his anti-nominalistic intent. In contrast to the crude scheme of Scheler's sociology of knowledge, nominalism crossed over for its part into ideology, that of the eye-blinking "But that doesn't exist", which official science is wont to deploy as soon as embarrassing entities such as class, ideology and nowadays even society are mentioned. The relationship of genuine critical philosophy to nominalism is not invariant, it changes historically with the function of skepticism (see Max Horkheimer, "Montaigne and the Function of Skepticism", in: *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung*, VII. 1938, passim). Every fundamentum in re [Latin: fundamental basis] ascribed to the concept of the subject is idealism. Nominalism separated itself from it only there, where idealism raised an objective claim. The concept of a capitalist society is no flatus vocis [Latin: bowdlerized speech].

Goetz, bragging like Nestroy's Holofernes, who learned the lesson of the freely-conceived act in the massacre of the City of Light, put himself at the disposal of an organized popular movement, the transparent likeness of those against which Sartre played absolute spontaneity. The man in the window [Butzenscheibemann] thus once again commits the atrocities – only now openly with the blessing of philosophy – which he had forsworn out of freedom. The absolute subject does not escape from its entanglement: the fetters which it would like to tear apart, those of domination, are as one with the principle of absolute subjectivity. It is to Sartre's honor that this manifests itself in his plays, against his philosophical masterwork; his plays disavow the philosophy whose theses they deal with. The follies of political existentialism however, like the phraseology of the depoliticized German kind, have their philosophic basis. Existentialism raised that which was unavoidable, the mere existence of human beings, to a way of thinking which the individual is supposed to choose without determinable reasons for the choice, and also without having any other sort of choice. Where existentialism teaches more than such tautologies, it joins in common with the subjectivity existent for itself, as that which is alone substantial. The schools which take derivatives of the Latin *existere* [Latin: to exist] as their device, would like to summon up the reality of corporeal experience against the alienated particular science. Out of fear of reification they shrink back from what has substantive content. It turns unwittingly into an example. What they subsume under *epoché* [Greek: suspension] revenges itself by exerting its power behind the back of philosophy, in what this latter would consider irrational decisions. The non-conceptual particular science is not superior to thinking purged of its substantive content; all its versions end up, a second time, in precisely the formalism which it wished to combat for the sake of the essential interest of philosophy. It is retroactively filled up with contingent borrowings, especially from psychology. The intention of existentialism at least in its radical French form would not be realizable at a distance from substantive content, but in its threatening nearness to this. The separation of subject and object is not to be sublated through the reduction to human nature, were it even the absolute particularization. The currently popular question of humanity, all the way into the Marxism of Lukacsian provenance, is ideological because it dictates the pure form of the invariant as the only possible answer, and were this latter

historicity itself. What human beings are supposed to be, is always only, what they were: they are chained to the cliff of their past. They are not only what they were and are, but just as much what they could be; no determination reaches far enough to anticipate that. How little the schools grouped around existence, even the extreme nominalistic ones, are capable of that realization [Entausserung], which they long for in the recourse to the particular human existence, is confessed by the fact that they universally-conceptually philosophize that which does not vanish into its concept, that which is contrary to it, instead of thinking it through. They illustrate existence [Existenz] in the existing [Existierenden].

THING, LANGUAGE, HISTORY 61-63

How to think otherwise than this has its distant and shadowy Ur-model in languages, in the names which do not categorically overreach the thing, admittedly at the price of their cognitive function. Undiminished cognition wishes that which one has been already drilled to renounce, and what the names which are too close to such obscure; resignation and deception complete one another ideologically. Idiosyncratic exactness in the choice of words, as if they should name the thing, is not the least of the reasons that portrayal [Darstellung] is essential to philosophy. The cognitive grounds for such insistence of expression before *tode ti* [Greek: individual thing, this-here] is its own dialectic, its conceptual mediation in itself; it is the point of attack for comprehending what is nonconceptual in it. For the mediation in the midst of what is non-conceptual is no remainder of a complete subtraction, nor is it something which would refer to the bad infinity of such procedures. On the contrary, the mediation is the *hyle* [Greek: primary matter] of its implicit history. Philosophy creates, wherever it is still legitimate, out of something negative: that in its attitude of things-are-so-and-not-otherwise, the indissolubility before which it capitulates, and from which idealism veers away, is merely a fetish; that of the irrevocability of the existent. This dissolves before the insight that things are not simply so and not otherwise, but came to be under conditions. This becoming disappears and dwells in the thing, and is no more to be brought to a halt in its concept than to be split off from its result and forgotten. Temporal experience resembles it. In the reading of the existent as a text of its becoming, idealistic and materialistic dialectics touch. However, while idealism justifies the inner history of immediacy as a stage of the concept,

it becomes materialistically the measure not only of the untruth of concepts, but also that of the existing immediacy. What negative dialectics drives through its hardened objects is the possibility which their reality has betrayed, and yet which gleams from each one of these. Yet even in the most extreme efforts to express the history congealed in the things in language, the words used for this remain concepts. Their precision is a surrogate of the selfness of the thing, never wholly present; a gap yawns between it and what it wants to conjure. Thus the dregs of caprice and relativity in the choice of words as well as in portrayal [Darstellung] generally. Even in Benjamin concepts have a tendency of hiding their conceptuality in an authoritarian manner. Only concepts can fulfill what the concept hinders. Cognition is a *trósas iasêta* [Greek: wounded healing]. The determinate failure of all concepts necessitates the citation of others; therein originate those constellations, into which alone something of the hope of the Name has passed. The language of philosophy approaches this latter through its negation. What it criticizes in words, its claim to immediate truth, is almost always the ideology of the positive, existing identity of the word and the thing. Even the insistence on the specific word and concept, as the iron gate to be unlocked, is solely a moment of such, though an indispensable one. In order to be cognized, that which is internalized, which the cognition clings to in the expression, always needs something external to it.

TRADITION AND COGNITION 63–65

It is no longer possible to paddle along in the mainstream – even the word sounds dreadful – of modern philosophy. The recent kind, dominant until today, would like to expel the traditional moments of thought, dehistoricizing it according to its own content, assigning history to a particular branch of an established fact-collecting science. Ever since the fundament of all cognition was sought in the presumed immediacy of the subjectively given, there have been attempts, in thrall to the idol of the pure presence, as it were, to drive out the historical dimension of thought. The fictitious one-dimensional Now becomes the cognitive ground of inner meaning. Under this aspect, even the patriarchs of modernity who are officially viewed as antipodes are in agreement: in the autobiographical explanations of Descartes on the origin of his method and in Bacon's idol-theory. What is historical in thinking, instead of reining in the timelessness of objectivated logic, is equated with superstition, which the citation of institutionalized clerical

tradition against the inquiring thought in fact was. The critique of authority was well founded. But what it overlooked was that the tradition of cognition was itself as immanent as the mediating moment of its objects. Cognition distorts these, as soon as it turns them into a tabula rasa by means of objectifications brought to a halt. Even in the concretized form in opposition to its content, it takes part in the tradition as unconscious memory; no question could simply be asked, which would not vouchsafe the knowledge of what is past and push it further. The form of thinking as an intra-temporal, motivated, progressive movement resembles in advance, microcosmically, the macrocosmic, historical one, which was internalized in the structure of thought. Among the highest achievements of the Kantian deduction was that he preserved the memory, the trace of what was historical in the pure form of cognition, in the unity of the thinking I, at the stage of the reproduction of the power of imagination. Because however there is no time without that which is existent in it, what Husserl in his late phase called inner historicity cannot remain internalized, pure form. The inner historicity of thought grew along with its content and thereby with the tradition. The pure, completely sublimated subject would be on the other hand that which is absolutely traditionless. The cognition which experienced only the idol of that purity, total timelessness, coincides with formal logic, would become tautology; it could not grant even a transcendental logic any room. Timelessness, towards which the bourgeois consciousness strives, perhaps as compensation for its own mortality, is the zenith of its delusion. Benjamin innervated this when he strictly forswore the ideal of autonomy and dedicated his thinking to a tradition, albeit to a voluntarily installed, subjectively chosen one which dispenses with the same authority, which it indicts autarkic thought of dispensing with. Although the counter-force [Widerspiel] to the transcendental moment, the traditional one is quasi transcendental, not a point-like subjectivity, but rather that which is actually constitutive, in Kant's words the mechanism hidden in the depths of the soul. Among the variants of the all too narrow concluding questions of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, one ought not to be excluded, namely how thought, by having to relinquish tradition, might be able to preserve and transform such;²⁰

20 See Theodor W. Adorno, *Theses on Tradition* [Thesen über Tradition], in: *Island Almanac for the Year 1966* [Insel Almanach auf das Jahr 1966], Frankfurt 1965, pg 21.

intellectual experience is nothing else. The philosophy of Bergson, and even more so Proust's novel, abandoned themselves to this, only for their part under the bane of immediacy, out of loathing for that bourgeois timelessness which anticipates the abolition of life in advance of the mechanics of the concept. The methexis of philosophy in tradition would be however solely its determinate repudiation [Verneinung]. It is constructed by the texts which it criticizes. In them, which the tradition brings to it and which the texts themselves embody, its conduct becomes commensurable with tradition. This justifies the transition from philosophy to interpretation, which enshrines neither what is interpreted nor raises the symbol to the absolute, but seeks what might be really true there, where thought secularizes the irretrievable Ur-model of holy texts.

RHETORIC 65-66

Through the now apparent, now latent delimitation to texts, philosophy confesses to what it vainly denied under the ideal of the method, its linguistic essence. In its modern history, it is -- analogous to tradition -- denigrated as rhetoric. Tossed aside and degraded into a means of realizing effects, it was the bearer of lies in philosophy. The contempt for rhetoric atoned for the guilt in which this latter, since antiquity, had incurred through that separation from the thing itself which Plato complained about. But the prosecution of the rhetorical moment through which the expression was to be rescued as thought contributed no less to its technification, to its potential abolition, than the cultivation of rhetoric which disdained the object. Rhetoric represents in philosophy what cannot otherwise be thought except in language. It maintains itself in the postulates of portrayal [Darstellung], by which philosophy differentiates itself from the communication of already cognized and solidified contents. It is in danger, like everything which represents, because it slides easily towards the usurpation of what thought cannot directly obtain from the portrayal. It is incessantly corrupted by convincing purposes, without which however the relation of thinking to praxis would once again disappear from the thought-act. The allergy against expression in the entire official philosophical tradition, from Plato to the semanticists, conforms to the tendency of all Enlightenment, to punish that which is undisciplined in the gesture, even deep into logic, as a defense-mechanism of reified consciousness. If the alliance of philosophy with science tends towards the virtual abolition of

language, and therein of philosophy itself, then it cannot survive without its linguistic effort. Instead of splashing about in linguistic falls, it reflects on such. There is a reason why linguistic sloppiness – scientifically put: the inexact – is wont to ally itself with the scientific mien of incorruptibility through language. For the abolition of language in thought is not its demythologization. Thus deluded, philosophy sacrifices with language whatever might have related to its thing otherwise than as mere signification; only as language is that which is similar capable of cognizing the similar. The permanent denunciation of rhetoric by nominalism, for which the name bears not the least similarity to what it says, is not meanwhile to be ignored, nor is an unbroken rhetorical moment to be summoned against such. Dialectics, according to its literal meaning language as the organ of thought, would be the attempt to critically rescue the rhetorical moment: to have the thing and the expression approach one another almost to the point of non-differentiability. It appropriates what historically appeared as the defect of thought, its never-to-be-broken context in language, for the power of thought. This inspired the phenomenologies, when they, naïve as ever, wanted to assure themselves of the truth in the analysis of words. In the rhetorical quality, culture, society, and tradition animate thought; what is point-blank anti-rhetorical is allied with the barbarism in which bourgeois thought ended. The defamation of Cicero, even Hegel's antipathy against Diderot testify to the resentment of those whose attempts to freely raise themselves up were struck down by life-and-death necessity, and to whom the body of language counted as sinful. In dialectics the rhetorical moment takes, contrary to the vulgar viewpoint, the side of content. Dialectics seeks to master the dilemma between the popular opinion and that which is non-essentializingly [wesenslos] correct, mediating this with the formal, logical one. It tends however towards content as that which is open, not already decided in advance by the scaffolding: as protest against mythos. That which is monotonous is mythic, ultimately diluted into the formal juridicality of thinking [Denkgesetzlichkeit]. The cognition which wishes for content, wishes for utopia. This, the consciousness of the possibility, clings to the concrete as what is undistorted. It is what is possible, never the immediately realized, which obstructs utopia; that is why in the middle of the existent it appears abstract. The inextinguishable color comes from the not-existent. Thinking serves it as a piece

of existence, as that which, as always negatively, reaches out to the not-existent. Solely the most extreme distance would be the nearness; philosophy is the prism, in which its colors are caught.

PART I: RELATIONSHIP TO ONTOLOGY

I. THE ONTOLOGICAL NEED

QUESTION AND ANSWER 69–73

The ontologies in Germany, particularly the Heideggerian one, remain influential to this day, without the traces of the political past giving anyone pause. Ontology is tacitly understood as the readiness to sanction a heteronomous social order, exempted from the justification of consciousness. That such considerations are denied a higher place, as misunderstanding, a falling astray into the ontic, and a lack of radicalism in the question, only reinforces the dignity of the appeal: ontology seems all the more numinous, the less it solidifies into a definite content, which the impertinent understanding would be permitted to get a hold of. Intangibility turns into unassailability. Whoever refuses to follow suit, is suspected of being someone without a fatherland, without a homeland in being, indeed not so differently from the idealists Fichte and Schelling, who denigrated those who resisted their metaphysics as inferior. In all of its mutually combative schools, which denounce each other as false, ontology is apologetic. Its influence could not be understood, however, if it did not meet an emphatic need, the index of something omitted, the longing that the Kantian verdict on the knowledge of the absolute ought not to rest there. When in the early days of the neo-ontological movements the resurrection of metaphysics was spoken of with theological sympathy, this was still crudely but openly evident. The Husserlian will to replace the *intentio obliqua* [Latin: oblique intention] with the *intentio recta* [Latin: direct intention], to turn to the things themselves, already had a touch of this; what in the critique of reason delimited the borders of the possibility of cognition was nothing other than the recollection of the capacity of cognition itself, which the phenomenological program at first wished to dispense with. In the “draft” of the ontological constitution of subject areas and regions, finally in the “world as the epitome of all existence”, the will clearly stirred to grasp the whole without the borders dictated by its cognition; the *eidé* [Greek: form, kind], which became Heidegger’s existential [Existentialien] in *Being and Time*, is supposed to comprehensively anticipate what those regions, all the way to the highest, actually were. The unspoken assumption was that the drafts of reason could sketch out the structure of all fullness of the existent; second reprise of the old philosophy

of the absolute, the first of which was post-Kantian idealism. At the same time however the critical tendency continued to have an effect, less against dogmatic concepts than as the effort to no longer set forth or construe the Absoluta [Latin: absolutes] which had relinquished their systematic unity and were set in opposition each other, but to receptively receive and describe them, from the standpoint of the positivistic ideal of science. Therein absolute knowledge became once again, as in Schelling, intellectual intuition. One hopes to cancel out the mediations, instead of reflecting on them. The non-conformist motive, that philosophy need not compartmentalize itself into its branches – those of organized and immediately applicable science – capsized into conformism. The categorical construct, exempt from any sort of critique, as the scaffolding of existing relationships, is confirmed as absolute, and the unreflective immediacy of the method lends itself to every sort of caprice. The critique of criticism becomes pre-critical. Hence the intellectual mode of conduct of the permanent “Back to”. The absolute becomes what it least of all would like and what indeed critical truth said it was, something natural-historical, out of which the norms to be adapted to could be quickly and crudely inferred. In contrast the idealistic school of philosophy denied what one would expect of philosophy, by those who take it up unprepared. This was the flip side of its scientific self-responsibility, imposed on it by Kant. The consciousness of this, that a philosophy run as a specialty niche, which dismisses the questions of those who have turned to it for the answers only it can provide as idle, has nothing to do with people any more, could already be glimpsed in German idealism; it is expressed without collegial discretion by Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard, and Nietzsche broke off every accord with academia. Under this aspect, the contemporary ontologies are not simply making the anti-academic tradition of philosophy their own, by asking, as Paul Tillich once put it, questions about what concerns one unconditionally. They have academically established the pathos of the non-academic. In them, the comfortable shudder at an impending world-catastrophe is combined with the soothing feeling of operating on solid, possibly even philologically secure ground. Audacity, ever the prerogative of youngsters, knows enough to cover itself by general accord and through the most powerful educational institutions. Out of the entire movement, the opposite became of what its beginnings seemed to promise. The concern with the relevant rebounded into an

abstraction, which could in no way be trumped by any neo-Kantian methodology. This development is not to be separated from the problematic of the need itself. It is so little to be placated by that philosophy as once by the transcendental system. That is why ontology has surrounded itself with its miasma. In keeping with an old German tradition, it considers the question more important than the answer; where it owes what it has promised, it has raised its failure for its part to a consoling existential. In fact questions have a different weight in philosophy than in the particular sciences, where they are abolished through their solution, while their rhythm in the history of philosophy would be more akin to duration and forgetting. This does not mean, however, as in the constant parroting of Kierkegaard, that the existence of the questioner would be that truth, which searches in vain for the answer. Rather in philosophy the authentic question almost always includes in a certain manner its answer. It does not follow, as in research, an if-then pattern of question and answer. It must model its question on that which it has experienced, so that it can catch up to it. Its answers are not given, made, produced: the developed, transparent question recoils in them. Idealism would like to drown out precisely this, to always produce, to “deduce” its own form and if possible every content. By contrast, the thinking which does not claim to be an origin, ought not to hide the fact that it does not produce, but gives back what it, as experience, already has. The moment of expression in thinking prevents it from dealing more mathematico [Latin: in mathematical terms] with problems, and then serving up apparent solutions. Words like problem and solution ring false in philosophy, because they postulate the independence of what is thought from thinking exactly there, where thinking and what is thought are mediated by one another. Only what is true, can truly be understood philosophically. The fulfilling completion of the judgement in which understanding occurs is as one with the decision over true and false. Whoever does not participate in the judging of the stringency of a theorem or its absence does not understand it. It has its own meaning-content, which is to be understood, in the claim of such stringency. Therein the relationship of understanding and judgement distinguishes itself from the usual temporal order. There can be no judging without the understanding any more than understanding without the judgement. This invalidates the schema, that the solution would be the judgement, the problem the mere question, based

on understanding. The fiber of the so-called philosophical proof is itself mediated, in contrast to the mathematical model, but without this simply disappearing. For the stringency of the philosophical thought bids its manner of procedure to measure itself by its conclusive forms. Proofs in philosophy are the effort, to procure a committalness [Verbindlichkeit] to what is expressed, in that the latter becomes commensurable to the means of discursive thinking. It however does not purely follow from these: the critical reflection of such productivity of thought is itself a content of philosophy. Although in Hegel the claim to the derivation of the non-identical out of identity is raised to an extreme, the thought-structure of the great *Logic* implies the solutions in the way that the problems are posed, instead of presenting the results after settling all accounts. While he sharpened the critique of analytical judgement to the thesis of its “falsehood”, everything is an analytical judgement for him, the turning to and fro of the thought without the citation of anything extraneous to it. That the new and the different would be the old and familiar, is a moment of dialectics. So evident its context with the identity-thesis, so little is it circumscribed by this. The more the philosophical thought yields itself to its experience, the closer it approaches, paradoxically, the analytic judgement. To become aware of a desiderata of cognition is mostly this cognition itself: the counterpart of the idealistic principle of perpetual production. In renunciation of the traditional apparatus of the proof, by stressing the knowledge which is already known, philosophy establishes that it is by no means the absolute.

AFFIRMATIVE CHARACTER 73–74

The ontological need guarantees so little of what it wishes as the misery of the hungry does of food. However no doubt of such a guarantee plagued a philosophical movement, which could not have foreseen this. Therein was not the least reason it ended up in the untrue affirmative. “The dimming of the world never achieves the light of being.”²¹ In those categories to which fundamental ontology owes its resonance and which they for that reason either deny or so sublimate, that they can no longer give rise to unwelcome confrontations, is to be read how much they are the imprints of something missing and not produced, however much they are its complementary ideology. However the cult of being, or at least the attraction

21 Martin Heidegger, *From the Experience of Thinking* [Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens], Pfullingen 1954, pg 7.

which the word exerts as something superior, lives from this, that functional concepts really have come more and more to repress substantive concepts, as once in epistemology. Society has become the total functional context which liberalism once thought it was; what is, is relative to what is other, irrelevant in itself. The horror of this, the dawning consciousness that the subject is losing its substantiality, prepares it to listen to the assertion that being, covertly equated with that substantiality, survives as something which cannot be lost in the functional context. What ontological philosophizing attempts to awaken, to conjure, as it were, is however hollowed out by real processes, the production and reproduction of social life. The effort to theoretically vindicate humanity and being and time as Ur-phenomena does not halt the destiny of the resurrected ideas. Concepts, whose substrate is historically passed by, were thoroughly and penetratingly criticized even in the specifically philosophical area as dogmatic hypostases; as with Kant's transcendence of the empirical soul, the aura of the word being-there [Dasein: existence], in the paralogism chapter; the immediate recourse to being in the one on the amphiboly of the concept of reflection. Modern ontology does not appropriate that Kantian critique, does not drive it further through reflection, but acts as if it belonged to a rationalistic consciousness whose flaws a genuine thinking had to purify itself of, as if in a ritual bath. Despite this, in order to rope in critical philosophy, an immediate ontological content is imputed to this latter. Heidegger's reading of the anti-subjectivistic and "transcending" moment in Kant is not without legitimation. The latter raises the objective character of his mode of questioning programmatically in the preface to the *Critique of Pure Reason* and left no doubt of it in carrying out the deduction of the pure concept of understanding. It does not vanish, in what the conventional history of philosophy terms the Copernican turn; the objective interest retains primacy over the subjectively directed, happenstance cognition, in a dismembering of the consciousness in empirical style. By no means however is this objective interest to be equated with a hidden ontology. Against this speaks not only the critique of the rationalistic one in Kant, which granted room for the concept of a different one if need be, but that of the train of thought of the critique of reason itself. This has the consequence that objectivity – that of cognition and that of the incarnation of everything cognized – is mediated subjectively. It indeed tolerates the assumption

of an in-itself beyond the subject-object polarity, but leaves it quite intentionally so indeterminate, that no sort of interpretation however cobbled together could possibly spell an ontology out of it. If Kant wished to rescue that *kosmos noetikos* [Greek: cosmos of the intellect] which the turn to the subject attacked; if his work bears to this extent an ontological moment in itself, it nonetheless remains a moment and not the central one. His philosophy would like to achieve that rescue with the power of that which threatens what is to be rescued.

DISEMPowerMENT OF THE SUBJECT 74–76

Ontology's return to life due to objectivistic intention was supported by what admittedly least of all suited its concept: the fact that the subject became to a large extent ideology, which concealed the objective functional context of society and assuaged the suffering of the subjects under it. To this extent, and not just today, the not-I is drastically suborned to the I. Heidegger's philosophy omits this, but registers it: in his hands that historical primacy becomes the ontological preeminence of being of pure and simple, above everything ontic, everything real. He also prudently refrained from turning back the Copernican turn, that to the idea, before everyone's gaze. He zealously separated his version of ontology from objectivism, his anti-idealistic attitude from realism, whether it be critical or naïve.²² Unquestionably, the ontological need was not to be levelled out to anti-idealism, according to the battle lines of the academic schools. But under its impulses, perhaps the most enduring was the disavowal of idealism. The anthropocentric way of thinking about life has been shaken. The subject, philosophical self-reflection, has appropriated the critique of geocentrism, as it were, dating back to centuries earlier. This motif is more than a merely superficial world-view, so easily as it was exploited in world-viewing terms. Overweening syntheses between philosophical developments and the ones of the natural sciences are of course offensive: they ignore the growing independence of physical-mathematical formal languages, which are no longer accessible to the intuition, or indeed any categories immediately commensurable to human consciousness. Nevertheless the results of modern cosmology have radiated far and wide: all conceptions, which would make the universe resemble the subject or even deduce its pride of place therein, are relegated

22 See Heidegger, *On the Essence of the Fundamental* [Vom Wesen des Grundes], Frankfurt am Main 1949, pg 14.

to naivete, comparable to the cranks or paranoids who consider their little town to be the center of the world. The grounds of philosophical idealism, the control of nature itself, has lost the certainty of its omnipotence precisely because of its unstoppable expansion during the first half of the twentieth century; as much because the consciousness of human beings lagged behind and the social order of their relationships remained irrational, as because it took the measurement of what was achieved, whose minuteness was measurable only by comparison to what was not achievable. The suspicion and presentiment are universal, that the control of nature weaves ever more tightly through its advance the catastrophe which it also intended to ward off; the second nature, into which society has overgrown. Ontology and the philosophy of being are – next to other and coarser ones – modes of reaction in which consciousness hopes to escape from that entanglement. But they have a fatal dialectic in themselves. The truth, which exiled humanity from the midpoint of creation and which reminds it of its powerlessness, strengthens the feeling of powerlessness as subjective modes of behavior, causing human beings to identify themselves with it, and thereby further reinforces the bane of second nature. The naïve belief in being, the ignominiously ideological [weltanschaulich] derivative of critical apprehension, really does degenerate into what Heidegger once defined incautiously as membership-in-being [Seinsgehoerigkeit: belonging-in-being]. They feel themselves to be facing the All, but cling at the slightest provocation to everything particular, insofar as it is energetic enough to convict the subject of its own weakness. Its readiness to turn a blind eye to the catastrophe which originates in the context of the subject itself, is the revenge for the vain wish to spring out of the cage of its subjectivity. The philosophic leap, Kierkegaard's Ur-gesture, is itself the caprice by which it imagines to escape the subjugation of the subject under being. Only where the subject is also, in Hegel's words, somehow there, is its bane lessened; it perpetuates itself in that which would be simply different from the subject, just as the *deus absconditus* [Latin: absent god] always bore traces of the irrationality of mythical deities. Light falls on the restorative tendencies of today's philosophies from the kitschy exoticism of cobbled-together world-views, as in for example the astonishingly consumable Zen Buddhism. Similar to this, these simulate a position of thought which the stored-up history in subjects makes it impossible to assume. The delimitation of

the Spirit to what is open and achievable in its historical level of experience is an element of freedom; non-conceptual meandering embodies the opposite. Doctrines which unhesitatingly run away from the subject into the cosmos are along with the philosophies of being far more compatible with the hardened constitution of the world, and the chances of success in it, than the slightest bit of self-reflection of the subject on itself and its real imprisonment.

BEING, SUBJECT, OBJECT 76–78

To be sure Heidegger saw through the illusion which sustained the popular success of ontology: that the state of the *intentio obliqua* [Latin: oblique intention] could simply be chosen out of a consciousness in which nominalism and subjectivism are sedimented, by one that, above all, became what it is only by self-reflection. He bypassed the alternative with the doctrine of being, which maintained that it was beyond the *intentio recta* [Latin: direct intention] and *intentio obliqua* [Latin: oblique intention], beyond the subject and object, as well as the concept and the existent. Being is the highest concept – for whoever says being, does not have it, but merely the word – and would nevertheless be privileged before all conceptuality, by virtue of the moments thought along with the word being, which do not exhaust themselves in the abstractly achieved conceptual unity of characteristics. Although at least the mature Heidegger took no more note of it, his talk of being presupposes the Husserlian doctrine of the categorical intuition or apperception [*Wesensschau*]. According to the structure which Heidegger's philosophy ascribed to being, solely by means of such an intuition could it be unsealed or unveiled, to use the language of the school; Heidegger's emphatic being would be the ideal of what yields to ideation. The critique contained in that doctrine of classificatory logic as the unity of characteristics of that which is grasped under the concept remains in force. But Husserl, whose philosophy held itself within the boundaries of the division of labor and left, despite all so-called foundational questions, the concept of strict science unexamined until its late phase, sought, via the latter's ground-rules, to bring whatever had its own meaning in the critique of such into immediate agreement; "he wanted to eat the cake and have it too" [in English]. His method, expressly stated as such, would like to imbue the classificatory concepts through the mode in which the cognition assures itself, with what it cannot have as something classificatory, as the mere preparation of the given, but would have

solely through the comprehension of the thing itself, which in Husserl oscillates between something intramental and something opposed to such in the immanence of consciousness. Husserl is not, as was customary in his lifetime, to be reproached as irrationalistic, due to the non-scientificity of the categorical intuition – his oeuvre as a whole opposes irrationalism – but rather its contamination with science. Heidegger noted this and took the step which Husserl hesitated to take. He thereby cast off the rational moment which Husserl guarded,²³ and, in this respect quite similar to Bergson, tacitly undertook a procedure which sacrificed the relation to the discursive concept, an inalienable moment of thought. Therein he covered over the weakness of Bergson, who juxtaposed two disparate modes of cognition, each unmediated by the other, in that by mobilizing the allegedly higher dignity, which was bestowed on the categorical intuition, he removed the epistemological one as pre-ontological, along with the question concerning its legitimation. The discomfort with the epistemological preliminary question becomes the legal writ to simply eliminate this; for him dogmatics simply turns, in contrast to the tradition of its critique, into a higher wisdom. This is the origin of Heidegger's archaicism. The ambiguity of the Greek word for being, dating back to the Ionian non-differentiation between materials, principles and pure essence, is not booked as an inadequacy but as the superiority of what is originary. It is supposed to heal the concept of being from the wounds of its conceptuality, the division of the thought and what is to be thought.

ONTOLOGICAL OBJECTIVISM 78–79

What however appears as if it had its place in the epoch of the world before the original sin of subjectivizing and concretizing metaphysics, becomes *contra coeur* [French: against its own wishes] the crass In-Itself. The subjectivity, which abjures itself, recoils into objectivism. No matter how painstakingly such thinking evades the criticist controversy, by adding both antithetical positions in equal measure to the loss of being, the sublimation of its concepts, restless continuation of the Husserlian reduction, relinquishes what is meant with being, all individualized existences as much as all traces of rational abstraction. In the tautology which this being is tantamount to, the subject is driven off: “Yet being – what is being? It is

Itself.”²⁴ Being necessarily approximates such tautology. It becomes no better if one opts for it with clever candor and declares it a pledge of the deepest profundity. Every judgement, even the analytical kind as Hegel showed, bears the claim in itself, whether it wishes or no, of predicating something which is not simply identical with the mere subject-concept. If the judgement ignores this, then it breaks the contract, which it signed in advance through its form. This however becomes unavoidable in the concept of being, as modern ontology handles it. It “ends up in caprice, ‘being’, which precisely in its purity is meaningful only in the exact opposite of pure immediacy, namely as something mediated through and through, foisting this off as the immediate pure and simple”.²⁵ Being must be determined only through itself, because it cannot be touched with concepts, would neither be “mediated”, nor allows itself to be immediately demonstrated according to the model of the sensible conscience; in lieu of any critical authority for being, there is only the repetition of the pure name. The residuum, the presumably undistorted essence²⁶ comes to be similar to an *archê* [Greek: beginning, origin] similar to the type which the motivated movement of the thought had to dismiss. That a philosophy denies being metaphysics, does not decide, as Heidegger once registered against Sartre,²⁷ as to whether it is or not, but does justify the suspicion that something untrue is hiding in the refusal to admit to its metaphysical content. The new beginning from a presumed zero point is the mask of strenuous forgetting, sympathy with barbarism is not extraneous to it. That the older ontologies decayed, the scholastic ones just as much as their rationalist successors, was no contingent change of world-view or thought-style; this is what the same historical relativism, against which the ontological need once rose up, believed. No sympathy with Plato’s enthusiasm in regards to the resignatory, particular-scientific characteristics of Aristoteles defuses the objection against the doctrine of ideas as the duplication of the world of things; no plea for the blessings of order clears away the difficulties which the relationship between *tode ti* [Greek: individual thing, this-here] and *prôtê ousia* [Greek: primary substance]

24 Heidegger, *Plato’s Doctrine of the Truth* [Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit], 2nd Edition, Bern 1954, pg 76.

25 Karl Heinz Haag, *Critique of Modern Ontology* [Kritik der neueren Ontologie], Stuttgart 1960, pg 73.

26 See Heidegger, *What does it mean to think?* [Was heisst Denken?], Tübingen 1954, pg 57.

27 Ibid. pg 72.

causes in Aristotelean metaphysics; they are derived rather from the unmediated nature of the determinations of being and the existent, which modern ontology resolutely and naively restored. Just as little could the demand for objective reason alone, be it ever so legitimate, think the Kantian critique of the ontological proof of God out of existence. The Eleatic transition to the concept of being glorified today was, in regard to hylozoism, already Enlightenment, something glossed over by Heidegger. However the intention to wipe all this away by regressing to the holy dawn of time prior to the reflection of critical thought, would like solely to circumvent the philosophical compulsion which, once grasped, would prevent the neutralization [Stillung] of the ontological need. The will not to be spoon-fed, to experience something essential from philosophy, is deformed through answers which are tailored according to the need, in the shadows between the legitimate obligation, to provide bread, not stones, and the illegitimate conviction that bread has to exist, because it must.

DISAPPOINTED NEED 80–83

That the philosophy oriented towards the primacy of the method remains satisfied with such preliminary questions, and for that reason possibly also feels as a basic science on safe ground, only creates the illusion that the preliminary questions, and philosophy itself, scarcely have consequences any more for cognition. The reflections on the instrument have long since ceased to touch upon what is scientifically cognized, but solely upon what would be cogizable at all, the validity of scientific judgements. That which is definitely cognized is something subaltern to such a reflection, a mere constitutum [Latin: what is constituted]; while deriving its claim from this, in whose general constitution it immerses itself, it leaves it indifferent. The first formula in which this was expressed was the famous Kantian one, “the transcendental idealist” is “an empirical realist”.²⁸ The admiration of the *Critique of Pure Reason*’s attempt to ground experience was deaf to the declaration of bankruptcy, that the immeasurable tension of that critique would itself be *adiaphorou* [Greek: indifferent] with respect to the content of the experience. It encouraged only the normal functioning of the understanding and the corresponding view of reality; incidentally Heidegger still

28 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* [Kritik der reinen Vernunft], WW IV, Academy Edition, pg 233.

opts for the “normally thinking person”.²⁹ Few of the inner-worldly intuitions and judgements of “common sense” [in English] are taken out of circulation. “Kant wished to prove, in a manner which would offend ‘all the world’, that ‘all the world’ was right: – that was the secret joke of this soul. He wrote against the learned in favor of the popular prejudices of the people, but for the learned and not for the people.”³⁰ [Aphorism 193 from Nietzsche’s *Joyful Science*] Defeatism hamstring the specifically philosophical impulse to explode something true out from behind the idols of the conventional consciousness. The scorn of the amphiboly chapter against the presumptuousness which wished to cognize what is innermost to things, the self-satisfied manly resignation by which philosophy settles down in the mundus sensibilis [Latin: sensible world] as something external, is not merely the enlightening negative reply to that metaphysics which confused the concept with its own reality, but also the obscurantist one to those which do not capitulate to the façade. Something of the recollection of this best of all moments, which critical philosophy did not so much forget, as zealously excise in honor of the science which it wished to found, survives in the ontological need; the will not to allow the thought to be robbed of that, for whose sake it has been thought. Since the irrevocable sundering of the sciences from idealistic philosophy, the successful ones seek no more legitimation than the statement of their methods. Their self-exegesis turns science into a *causa sui* [Latin: cause in itself], accepting itself as a given and also sanctioning thereby its existing form in the division of labor, whose insufficiency nevertheless cannot remain hidden forever. The intellectual sciences in particular fall prey to irrelevancy and non-conceptuality in countless specific investigations, due to the borrowed ideal of positivity. The partition between solitary disciplines such as sociology, economics and history allows the interest of cognition to disappear in pedantically drawn and overblown trench-battles. Ontology remembers this, but no longer wishes, having grown cautious, to breathe life into that which is essential by the speculative thought of the thing. Rather, it is supposed to spring forth as a given, as tribute to the ground-rules of positivity, which the need wants to go beyond. Many adepts of science expect a decisive completion from ontology, without this needing to touch on scientific procedures.

29 Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* [Einführung in die Metaphysik], Tübingen 1958, pg 31.

30 Nietzsche, *Collected Works* [Gesammelten Schriften], Munich 1924, Volume 12, pg 182, Aphorism 193.

If Heideggerian philosophy claimed in its later phase to rise above the traditional distinction between essence and facts, it mirrors the well-founded irritation at the divergence of the essential and factual sciences, of the mathematical-logical and substantive disciplines, which blossom in scientific activity disconnectedly next to each other, although the cognitive ideal of one would be incompatible with the other. But the antagonism between the exclusive scientific criteria and the absolute claim of a doctrine of essence or later that of being will not vanish at the mere behest to do so. It opposes its adversary abstractly, afflicted with the same deficiencies of the consciousness within the division of labor, as the cure it passes itself off as. What it provides against science, is not its self-reflection, not even, as Walter Broecker evidently thought, something imposed over such, with necessary movement, as what is qualitatively different. It comes, in the terms of the old Hegelian parable against Schelling, straight out of the pistol, an addition to science, which summarily finishes this latter off, without really changing anything. Its distinguished turn from science ultimately only confirms the supremacy of such, similar to how irrational slogans counterpoint the scientific-technological activities of Fascism. The transition from the critique of the sciences to that which is essential as to being disregards in turn whatever could have been essential in the sciences, and robs the need of what it seemed to grant. By distancing itself from everything substantive [Sachhaltigen] even more fearfully than Kant ever did, ontological philosophizing permits less unregimented insight than idealism in its Schellingesque and even Hegelian form. The social consciousness in particular, though philosophically inseparable to the antique ontologies, is denounced as heterodoxy, as the engagement with the merely existent and *metabasis eis allo genos* [Greek: change into another genus]. Heidegger's hermeneutics adopted the turn against epistemology which Hegel inaugurated in the introduction to the *Phenomenology* as his own.³¹ But the reservations of transcendental philosophy against a substantive one, which forbids content to cross its threshold as merely empirical, survive in his program to raise being from the existent, and to explicate being itself, despite all the protests to the contrary.³² Fundamental ontology eludes itself not the least because it holds up an ideal of "purity" which stemmed from

31 See Heidegger, *Stray Paths* [Holzwege], Frankfurt am Main 1950, pg 121.

32 See Heidegger, *Being and Time* [Sein und Zeit], 6th Edition, Tübingen 1949, pg 27.

the methodologization of philosophy – the latest link of the chain was Husserl – as the contrast of being to the existent, nevertheless philosophizing as if over something substantive. This habitus was to be reconciled with that purity only in a realm where all determinable distinctions, indeed all content blurred together. Haunted by Scheler's weaknesses, Heidegger does not permit *prima philosophia* [Latin: originary philosophy] to be crassly compromised by the contingency of the material, the transience of the momentary eternities. But nor does he renounce the concretion originally heralded by the word existence.³³ The distinction between the concept and the material is supposed to be the original sin, while it perpetuates itself in the pathos of being. Among its other functions, such as emphasizing its higher dignity in relation to the existent, one should not underestimate the fact that it simultaneously carries the memory of the existent, from which it wished to be raised up, as one of something prior to differentiation and antagonism. Being tempts alluringly, eloquent as wind-blown leaves in bad poetry. But what it praises harmlessly slips out of its grasp, while it is insisted upon philosophically like something it owns, over which the thought, which thinks it, has no control. That dialectic which allows the pure particularization and the pure generality to pass into each other simultaneously, both similarly indeterminate, is silenced and

33 Guenther Anders (*The Antiquation of Humanity*, Munich 1961, Pg. 186, 220, 326, and above all: "On the Pseudo-Concreteness of Heidegger's Philosophy", in: *Philos. & Phenomenol. Research*, Vol. VIII, Nr. 3, pg. 337) criticized the pseudo-concreity of fundamental ontology years ago. The word concretion, charged with the utmost affect in the German philosophy between the wars, was saturated with the spirit of its time. Its magic employed that feature of the Homeric nekia, where Odysseus, in order to get the shadows to talk, feeds them with blood. Presumably the effectiveness of "blood and soil" was not really based on the appeal to the origin. The ironic overtone which accompanied the formula from the beginning betrayed the consciousness of the threadbare appearance of the archaic under the conditions of high capitalist production. Even the Black Corps snickered at the beards of the ancient Teutons. The temptation of the appearance [Schein] of the concrete was, rather, something not exchangeable, not fungible. That phantasm arose in the middle of a world driving itself towards monotony; a phantasm, because it did not touch the ground of the exchange-relationship; otherwise those who longed for it would have felt quite threatened by what they called leveling out, the principle, unknown to them, of capitalism, which they accused their opponents of. The obsession with the concept of the concrete bound itself up with the incapacity to achieve it in thought. The conjuring word replaced the thing. To be sure Heidegger's philosophy still employed the pseudos of that kind of concretion; because *tode ti* [Greek: individual thing, this-here] and *ousia* [Greek: substance] would be indistinguishable, he equates, as was already projected in Aristoteles, one with the other, according to the need and *thema probandum* [Latin: theme to be proven]. The merely existent becomes something nugatory, rid of the defect of being the existent, raised to being, its own pure concept. Being by contrast, by excluding every delimiting content, no longer needs to appear as a concept, but counts immediately as the *tode ti* [Greek: individual thing, this-here]: concrete. Both moments, once absolutely isolated, have no *differentia specifica* [Latin: specific difference] in relation to one another and become exchangeable; this *quid pro quo* is a central feature of Heidegger's philosophy.

exploited in the doctrine of being; indeterminacy is rendered as a mythical panzer [Panzer: ancient sword, also WW II German tank].

"LACK AS GAIN" 83–84

Heidegger's philosophy, amidst all aversion to what he calls Man, in whose name anthropology is supposed to denounce the circulation-sphere, resembled a highly developed credit system. One concept borrows from another. The state of suspense which results from this renders the pose of a philosophy ironic, which feels so close to the ground that it prefers the German "thinking" [Denken] to the foreign word "philosophy" [Philosophie]. As in a faded joke, where the debtor has the upper hand over the creditor because the latter is dependent on the ability of the former to repay, Heidegger squeezes a blessing from everything he owes. That being would be neither a factum nor a concept exempts it from critique. Whatever could be picked on is dismissed as a misunderstanding. The concept borrows from the factual an "air" [in English] of proper plenitude, of that which is not just thought up or tacked together – a.k.a. of the in-itself; the existent of the Spirit, which synthesizes it, the aura of the more than factual being – a.k.a. the consecration of transcendence; and just this structure hypostasizes itself as something higher than the reflective understanding which slices the existent and concept from each other with the dissecting-knife. Even the meagerness of what all this leaves Heidegger in hand, he coins into an advantage: it is one of the pervasive invariants of his philosophy, although never named as such, to revalue every lack of content, every non-possession of a cognition into an index of profundity. Involuntary abstractness presents itself as voluntary vow. "The thinking", so runs the tract on Plato's doctrine of the truth, "is on the descent to the poverty of its provisional essence"³⁴ – as if the emptiness of the concept of being were the fruit of the monastic chastity of that which was original, unconditioned by the aporias of thought. Being however, which is supposed to be no concept at all, or at least an entirely specific one, is the aporetic one³⁵ pure and simple. It transforms what is more abstract into what is more concrete and hence more true. Heidegger confesses in his own language what this asceticism is all about,

³⁴ Heidegger, *Plato's Doctrine of the Truth* [Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit], ibid. pg 119.

³⁵ See Theodor W. Adorno, *Against Epistemology* [Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie], Stuttgart 1956, pg 168.

in formulations which criticize him far more cuttingly than any hostile critique: "Thinking draws inconspicuous furrows into language with its sayings. They are even more inconspicuous than the furrows, which the slow-footed man of the land draws through the fields."³⁶ In spite of such affected humility not even theological risks are undertaken. The attributes of being do indeed resemble, like the absolute idea of old, the ones transmitted by the deity. But the philosophy of being guards itself from the existence of such. So archaistic the whole, so little does it wish to reveal itself to be unmodern. Instead it participates in modernity as the alibi of the existent, of that to which being transcended and yet which is supposed to be sheltered therein.

NO-MAN'S LAND 85-86

Substantive philosophizing since Schelling was founded on the identity-thesis. Only if the epitome of the existent, finally the existent itself, the moment of the Spirit, is reducible to subjectivity; only if the thing and the concept are identical in the higher realm of the Spirit, could one proceed according to Fichte's axiom, that the a priori is at the same time the a posteriori. However Heidegger runs into the historical judgement on the identity-thesis at the very conception. To his phenomenological maxim, that thought should bow to what it is given or in the end "sent" – as if the thought could not penetrate the conditions of such a sending – the possibility of construction is taboo, of the speculative concept which grew together with the identity-thesis. Husserl's phenomenology already labored under the desire to break free from epistemology, under the slogan "to the things themselves". Husserl expressly named his doctrine non-epistemological³⁷ just as Heidegger later called his non-metaphysical, but shuddered before the transition into substantiality more than any Marburg neo-Kantian, who might find the infinitesimal method of help in making such a transition. Like Husserl, Heidegger sacrifices empirics [Empirie], pushing aside everything which would not,

36 Heidegger, *Plato's Doctrine of the Truth* [Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit], *ibid.* pg 119.

37 He expounds, in the phenomenological fundamental considerations of the *Ideas*, his method as a structure of operations, without deducing it. The caprice thereby conceded, which he wished to remove only in his late phase, is unavoidable. If the procedure was to be deduced, it would reveal itself as being that "from above", that it at no price wished to be. It would violate that quasi-positivistic "to the things themselves". These latter meanwhile by no means necessitate the phenomenological reductions, which for that reason assume the form of something posited any which way. In spite of all the preserved "jurisdiction [Rechtsprechung] of reason" they lead to irrationalism.

in the words of the former, be eidetic phenomenology, onto the unphilosophical particular sciences. But he extends the bane even to the Husserlian *eidê* [Greek: form, kind], to the highest, fact-free, conceptual unity of the factual, in which traces of substantiality are intermixed. Being is the contraction of essences. Ontology ends up due to its own consistency in a no-man's land. It must eliminate the a posteriori, nor is it supposed to even be logic, as a doctrine of thinking and a particular discipline; every thinking step would take it over the point, at which it hoped to satisfy itself alone. In the end it scarcely dares to predicate anything, even of being. Therein appears less any mystical meditation than the privation of a thought, which wishes to go to its Other and can permit itself nothing, for fear of losing what it claims. Philosophy turns tendentially into a ritual pose. In it indeed stirs something true, its falling silent.

UNSUCCESSFUL MATERIALITY-AT-HAND [SACHLICHKEIT] 86–87

The historical innervation of materiality-at-hand [Sachlichkeit] as a mode of conduct of the Spirit is not foreign to the philosophy of being. It would like to break through the intermediary layer of subjective positions, which has become a second nature, the walls [Waende: interior walls] which thinking has built around itself. There are echoes of this in the Husserlian program, and Heidegger agreed with it.³⁸ The achievement of the subject, which founded the cognition in idealism, gives rise to irritation after the latter's downfall as a dispensable ornament. Therein fundamental ontology remained just like phenomenology the unwilling heir of positivism.³⁹ In Heidegger, the matter-at-hand does a somersault: he is intent to philosophize purely from the things, without form, as it were, and thereby these dissolve for him. The surfeit of the subjective prison of cognition gives rise to the conviction that what is transcendent to subjectivity would be immediate for it, without being soiled by the concept. Analogous to romantic currents like the later Jugendbewegung [youth-movement] fundamental ontology mistakes itself for being anti-romantic in the protest against the delimiting and obscuring moment of subjectivity; it wishes to overcome this with a militaristic manner

38 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *ibid.* pg 35.

39 See Adorno, *ibid.* pg 135.

of speaking, something Heidegger does not shrink from.⁴⁰ Because subjectivity however cannot think its mediations out of existence, it wishes them back in the stages of consciousness, which lie prior to the reflection on subjectivity and mediation. This fails. Where they thought to cling subjectlessly, as it were, to what the things themselves show, doing justice to what is material, originary and New Functionalist [neusachlich] alike, they eliminate all determinations from what is thought, just as Kant once did from the transcendental thing-in-itself. They gave offense as the work of merely subjective reason as much as the descendants of the particular existent. Contradictory desiderata collide and reciprocally annihilate each other. Because neither speculative thinking, as whatever might be posited from thought, is allowed, nor, as in the reverse case, is an existent insisted on which, as a piece of the world, would compromise the precedence of being, the thought does not dare to think of anything other than something totally empty, far more of an X than the old transcendental subject ever was, which always carried along with it the memory of the existing consciousness, “egoity”, as the unit of consciousness. This X, the absolutely inexpressible, removed from all predicates, becomes an ens realissimum [Latin: most real being] under the name of being. In the compulsory nature of the aporetic construction of the concept, against the will of the philosophy of being, Hegel’s judgement on being is brought down on it: it is indistinguishably one with nothingness, and Heidegger by no means deceived himself about this. However existential ontology is not however to be reproached with that nihilism,⁴¹ which to its horror the left existentialists interpreted it as, but that it presents the nihility of its highest word as a positivum [Latin: what is positive].

ON CATEGORICAL INTUITION 87–90

However much being is compressed into a single dimensionless point, through permanent caution from either side, the procedure does have its fundamentum in re [Latin: fundamental basis]. Categorical intuition, the innervation of the concept, is a reminder that the categorically constituted facts of the matter [Sachverhalten], which traditional epistemology knew solely as syntheses, must always correspond to a moment beyond the sensory *eidé* [Greek: form, kind]. To

⁴⁰ See Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics* [Einführung in die Metaphysik], ibid. pg 155.

⁴¹ Ibid. pg 154.

this extent they always have something immediate, reminiscent of what can be intuited [*Anschaulichkeit*: concreity, what can be concretely grasped]. So little as a simple mathematical statement is valid without the synthesis of the figures, between which the equation is posed, so little would – Kant neglects this – the synthesis be possible, unless the relationship of the elements corresponded to this synthesis, regardless of the difficulties in which such a manner of speaking entangles itself according to current logic; unless, put drastically and at the risk of being misunderstood, both sides of the equation in fact equalled one another. This matching is no more to be spoken of outside of the thinking synthesis than a rational synthesis would be without that correspondence: a textbook case of “mediation”. That one wavers in the reflection, as to whether thinking would be an activity and not on the contrary, precisely in its effort, something which measures itself, refers to this. What is spontaneously thought is, inseparable from this, something which appears. If Heidegger had emphasized the aspect of the appearance [*Erscheinens*] against its complete reduction to thought, that would be a salutary corrective on idealism. But he isolates therein the moment of the matter-at-hand [*Sachverhalt*], gets hold of it, in Hegel’s terminology, just as abstractly as idealism synthesized it. Hypostasized, it ceases to be a moment, and becomes in the end what ontology, in its protest against the division between the concept and the existent, least of all wished to be: reified. It is however according to its own character genetic. The Hegelian doctrine of the objectivity of the Spirit, product of the historical process, permits something like an intuitive relationship to what is intellectual, as many idealists rediscovered, the late Rickert for example. The more insistently the consciousness feels assured of the realized objectivity of what is intellectual, instead of attributing it to the reflecting subject as a “projection”, the closer it comes to a binding physiognomy of the Spirit. Such forms become a second immediacy to a thinking which does not draw all determinations to one side and disqualify what it faces. The doctrine of categorical intuition relied all too naively on this; it confused that second immediacy with a first. Hegel went far beyond this in the logic of essences; it treated the essence as much as something which sprang from being as something which was independent of this, as a kind of existence, as it were. By contrast, Husserl’s demand, tacitly taken up by Heidegger, for the pure description of intellectual matters-at-hand – to take them for what

they claim to be, and only as that – dogmatizes such matters-at-hand, as if what is intellectual, by reflecting, is once more thought, would not become something different. Without hesitation it is maintained that thinking, inalienable activity, could have an object at large which is not at the same time something produced by being thought. Idealism, already preserved in the concept of the pure intellectual matter-at-hand, is potentially reshaped into ontology. However with the substruction of purely accepting thought the claim of phenomenology to which the entire school owed its effect collapses: that it does not think up, but researches, describes, is not an epistemology, in short, does not bear the stigma of the reflecting intelligence. The arcanum of fundamental ontology however, being, is the allegedly pure self-providing categorical matter-at-hand, raised to the highest formulation. – Phenomenological analysis was for a long time aware of the fact that the synthesizing consciousness has something receptive about it. What belongs together in the judgement allows itself to be cognized in examples, not merely comparatively. The immediacy of the insight is not to be disputed in its own right, rather its hypostasis. The sharpest light falls on the species, when something primary emanates from a specific object: in it the tautology dissolves, which knows nothing else of the species, than how it is defined. Without the moment of immediate insight Hegel's remark, that the particular is the general, would remain mere assertion. Phenomenology since Husserl rescued it, albeit at the cost of its complement, of the reflecting element. Its apperception however – the later Heidegger shied away from the slogan of the school, which produced him – involves contradictions which are not to be resolved for the sake of peace and quiet from the nominalistic or the realistic side. On the one hand, ideation has an elective affinity to ideology, the smuggling of immediacy through that which is mediated, which clothed it with the authority of the absolute, evident being-in-itself, unimpeachable by the subject. On the other hand the apperception names the physiognomic gaze at intellectual matters-at-hand. It legitimates the fact that the intellectual is not constituted by means of the cognizing consciousness directed at this, but is objectively grounded in itself, far beyond the individual prime mover, in the collective life of the Spirit and according to its immanent laws. That objectivity of the Spirit is adequate to the moment of the immediate gaze. As something already preformed in itself, it can look at itself just like at sensory things.

But this intuition is so little absolute and irrefutable as that of sensory things. Husserl has no qualms ascribing that which flashes from the physiognomy, like the a priori Kantian synthetic judgement, to necessity and universality, as in science. What however the categorical intuition, fallibly enough, contributes to, would be the comprehension of the thing itself, not its classificatory preparation. The *pseudos* [Greek: falsity] is not the non-scientificity of the categorical intuition, but its dogmatic scientificization. Under the ideational gaze, the mediation stirs which was frozen in the appearance [Schein] of the immediacy of the intellectually given; therein the apperception is close to the allegorical consciousness. As the experience of that which has come to be in what presumably merely is, it would be almost the exact opposite of what it is used for: not the trusting acceptance of being, but its critique; the consciousness not of the identity of the thing with its concept, but of the rift between both. What the philosophy of being swears by, as if it were the organ of the pure and simple positive, has its truth in negativity. – Heidegger's emphasis on being, which is not supposed to be any mere concept, can be supported by the indissolubility of the judgement-content in judgements as previously Husserl did to the ideal unity of the species. The positional value of such exemplary consciousnesses may indeed rise historically. The more socialized the world, the more tightly its objects are spun with general determinations, the more the particular matter-at-hand is tendentially, as Günther Anders remarked, immediately transparent in its generality; the more can be described by micrological immersion in it; a state of facts of nominalistic bent indeed, which is strictly opposed to the ontological intent, although it may have given rise to the apperception without this latter's knowledge. If however this procedure always and again exposes itself to the particular scientific objection, to the in the meantime long since automatized reproach of the false or overhasty generalization, then this is not only the fault of the thought-habits which have long misused their scientific ethos to modestly ordain the matter-at-hand from outside, as the rationalization that they are no longer in this, or do not understand them. Insofar as empirical investigations concretely confront the anticipation of the concept, the medium of exemplary thought, with the fact that what is viewed out of something particular, quasi immediate, possesses no generality as something categorical, Husserl's method just as much as Heidegger's is convicted of its failing, that it shrinks from that test

and yet flirts with it with the language of research, making it sound as if it had submitted itself to the test.

BEING THESEI [GREEK: THESIS] 90–92

The assertion that being, ordained before every abstraction, would be no concept or at the very least something qualitatively superior, suppresses the fact that every immediacy, which always reproduces itself in all mediations according to the doctrine of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, is a moment, not the entirety of the cognition. No ontological draft can get by without absolutizing specific moments which are scraped together. If cognition is an interweaving of the synthetic thought-function and what it synthesizes, neither of them independent from the other, then no immediate mindfulness, which Heidegger stipulated as the sole legal writ of a philosophy worthy of the name, can succeed either, unless by virtue of the spontaneity of the thought, which he spurned. If no reflection had content without something immediate, then it would pause non-committally [unverbindlich] and arbitrarily without reflection, without the thinking, distinguishing determination of what the presumably purely demonstrative being meant to a passive, not-thinking thought. The artificial sound of pronunciamenti [Italian: pronouncements], that it deconceals itself or alights [lichte], is due to the fictional character of what is asserted. If the thinking determination and fulfillment of the presumed Ur-word, its critical confrontation with what it aims for, is not possible, then this indicts all talk of being. It is not thought, because in the indeterminacy which it demands it is simply unthinkable. That however the philosophy of being turns unachievability into unassailability, the exemption from the rational process into transcendence in regards to the reflecting understanding, is an act of violence as clever as it is desperate. More determinedly than the phenomenology which stops at the halfway mark, Heidegger would like to break out of the immanence of consciousness. His breakout however is one into a mirror, blind towards the moment of the synthesis in the substrate. He fails to note that the Spirit, which in the Eleatic philosophy of being worshipped by Heidegger professed to be identical with being, is already contained as an implication of meaning in what it presents as that pure selfness, which faced opposite it. Heidegger's critique of the tradition of philosophy becomes objectively contrary to what it promises. By suppressing the subjective Spirit, and therein necessarily also the material, the facticity, on which the synthesis

confirms itself; by pretending that what is articulated according to these moments is something unified and absolute, it becomes the reverse of “destruction”, of the demand to disenchant that which is artificial in the concepts of human beings. Instead of diagnosing human relationships therein, it confuses these with the *mundus intelligibilis* [Latin: intelligible world]. It repeatedly preserves what it rejects, the thought-forms which, according to its own program, are supposed to be removed as coverings. On the pretext of bringing what lies beneath them to light, it imperceptibly turns once more into that In-itself, into which it has anyway already become to the reified consciousness. What acts as if it is destroying the fetishes, is destroying only the conditions of seeing through them as fetishes. The apparent breakout terminates in what it flees from; the being in which it culminates is *thesei* [Greek: thesis]. In the ceding of being, of what is intellectual mediated, to the accepting glance [Schau], philosophy converges with the flatly irrationalistic one of life. The sign of irrationality would not by itself be as one with philosophical irrationalism. That is the mark which the insuperable non-identity of subject and object leaves on cognition, which postulates the predicative judgement of identity through its mere form; also the hope contrary to the hegemony of the subjective concept. But irrationality remains just like this the function of the ratio and the object of its self-critique: what slips through the net, is filtered by such. Even the philosophemes of irrationalism rely on concepts and thereby on a rational moment, which would be incompatible with them. Heidegger evades what needs to be done, according to one of the motives of dialectics, in that he usurps a standpoint beyond the difference of subject and object, in which the inadequacy of the ratio to what is thought is revealed. Such a leap however fails with the means of reason. Thought cannot conquer any position wherein the separation of subject and object which lies in every thought, in thinking itself, would immediately disappear. That is why Heidegger’s moment of truth levels out into just another world-view of irrationalism. Philosophy demands today as in Kant’s time the critique of reason through this, not its banishment or abolition.

“MEANING OF BEING” 93–94

Under the banning of thought, thinking sanctions what merely is. The genuinely critical need of thought, to awaken from the phantasmagoria of culture, is ensnared, canalized, steered into false consciousness. The culture in whose environs it grew

stopped thought from asking, what's it all about, and what for – roughly put, that of its meaning, which becomes ever more urgent, the less such meaning is obvious to human beings, and the more completely the cultural bustle replaces it. Instead of this, the now-things-are-so-and-not-otherwise is enthroned of what, as culture, claims to have meaning. Under the weight of its existence, the issue of whether the meaning which it claims would be realized, is insisted upon as little as the issue of its own legitimacy. On the other hand fundamental ontology steps forwards as the spokesperson of the interest which was spirited away, of “the forgotten”. This is not the least of the reasons for its aversion to epistemology, which is quick to rank that interest among the prejudices. Nevertheless it cannot annul epistemology any way it wishes. In the doctrine of existence – of subjectivity – as the royal road to ontology, there secretly rises up once again the old subjective inquiry, which had been humbled by ontological pathos. The claim of the phenomenological methods to disempower the tradition of Western philosophizing is still bound up in the latter, and scarcely deceives itself over this; for the effect of originality it may thank the progress of forgetting under those who appeal to it. The turn in the question of the meaning of existence or its traditional variants, why is there anything at all, and not nothing? – is of phenomenological origin: it is ceded to the analysis of meaning of the word being. What it, or existence, would in any case mean, would be as one with the meaning of being or existence; something which is itself already as culturally immanent as the meanings which semantics deciphers in languages is denounced, as if it had escaped from the relativity of something artificial as much as from the meaninglessness of the merely existent. That is the function of Heidegger's version of the doctrine of the primacy of language. That the sense of the word being would immediately be the meaning of being is a bad equivocation. To be sure equivocations are not merely imprecise expressions.⁴² The consonance of words does indeed refer to a similarity. Both senses of meaning are interwoven. Concepts, instruments of human thought, cannot make sense, if sense is itself negated, if every memory of something objective, beyond the mechanisms of the formation of concepts, is driven out. Positivism, to which concepts are only exchangeable, accidental tokens, drew the consequences from this and extirpated the truth in honor of truth. Certainly the counter-position taken by the philosophy

42 See Theodor Adorno, *Three Studies on Hegel* [Drei Studien zu Hegel], Frankfurt 1963, pg 127.

of being reproves the folly of its reason. But the unity of the equivocal becomes visible solely through its implicit differentiation. It is discarded in Heidegger's talk of meaning. He follows therein his inclination to hypostasis: he lends the appearance [Schein] of unconditionality to findings from the sphere of what is conditioned by the mode of their expression. This becomes possible through the iridescent shimmer of the word being. If true being is conceived of as radically *chôris* [Greek: separately] from the existent, then it is identical with its meaning: one need only cite the meaning of what is essential [Wesenheit] to being and one has the meaning of being itself. According to this scheme the breakout attempt out of idealism is imperceptibly revoked, the doctrine of being regresses into one of a thinking which removes everything from being, which would be different from pure thought. In order to make any sort of sense of being, which is perceived as absent, the compensatory offer is made of what is constituted in advance as the realm of meaning in the analytic judgement, the doctrine of interpretation. That concepts, in order to be anything of the sort, must mean something, serves as the vehicle for the fact that their *hypokeimeuon* [Greek: underlying ground, substratum] – being itself – must have meaning, because it would not otherwise be given than as a concept, as linguistic signification. That this concept is not supposed to be a concept but immediate, veils the semantic meaning in ontological dignity. "The talk of 'being' never understands these names in the sense of a species, under whose empty generality the historically conceived doctrine of the existent belongs as special cases. 'Being' speaks ever and anon as sent and thereby permeated by tradition."⁴³ Such philosophies derive their consolation from this. It is the magnet of fundamental ontology, far beyond its theoretical content.

ONTOLOGY SUBORNED 94–96

Ontology would like to restore the social order exploded by the Spirit, including its authority, from out of the Spirit. The expression "draft" [Entwurf: draft, design, sketch] betrays its tendency to negate freedom out of freedom: transsubjective committalness [Verbindlichkeit] is delivered over to an act of constitutive subjectivity. This all too apparent absurdity could be expressed by the later Heidegger only dogmatically. The memory of subjectivity is uprooted from the concept of the

⁴³ Heidegger, *Identity and Difference* [Identität und Differenz], 2nd Edition, Pfullingen 1957, pg 47.

draft: "That which is thrown [Werfende] in the draft [Entwurf] is not humanity, but being itself, which sends humanity into the everyday existence [Eksistenz] of the exist-ence [Da-Sein] as its essence."⁴⁴ To Heidegger's mythologization of being as the sphere of sending⁴⁵ is added the mythical hubris, which proclaims the decreed plan of the subject as one of the highest authority, passing itself off as the voice of being. The consciousness which does not experience this is disqualified as "forgetfulness of being".⁴⁶ Such proscriptive claims of social order harmonize with the Heideggerian thought-structure. Only as an act of violence against thought does it have a chance. For the loss which resonates in the kitschy expression forgetfulness of being was no stroke of destiny but motivated. What is mourned, the legacy of the early *archai* [Greek: ancient, old], melted away from the consciousness, which wrenched itself away from nature. Mythos itself becomes apparent as deception; the deception alone can concretize it, and the command. It is supposed to realize the self-stylization of being as a Beyond of the critical concept and yet at the same time the legal title, which heteronomy requires, so long as something survives of Enlightenment. The suffering under what Heidegger's philosophy registers as the loss of being is not only the untruth; he would scarcely have sought succor from Hölderlin otherwise. The society, according to whose own concept the relations of human beings are to be founded in freedom, without freedom being realized to this day, is as paralyzed as defective. In the universal exchange-relationship all qualitative moments are flattened out, whose epitome could be something like a structure. The more overweening the power of institutional forms, the more chaotic the life which they hem in and deform in their own image. The production and reproduction of life, including everything which bears the name of the superstructure, are not transparent to that reason, whose reconciled realization would only be one with a social order worthy of human beings, one without violence. The old, naturally-spawned orders have either passed away or outlived their own legitimation for ill. By no means is the course of society anywhere so anarchic, as it still seems in the constantly irrational contingency of the individual destiny. But its objectified juridicality [Gesetzlichkeit]

44 Heidegger, *Plato's Doctrine of the Truth* [Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit], *ibid.* pg 84.

45 Heidegger, *Plato's Doctrine of the Truth* [Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit], *ibid.* pg 75.

46 Heidegger, *Plato's Doctrine of the Truth* [Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit], *ibid.* pg 84.

is the adversary of a constitution of existence, in which one could live without fear. Even the ontological drafts feel this, projecting it onto the victims, the subjects, and frantically drowning out the apprehension of objective negativity by means of the tidings of order in itself, all the way to the most abstract one of all, the structure of being. Everyplace the world is preparing to pass over into the horror of social order, not into what the apologetic philosophies overtly or covertly lament as its opposite. That freedom remained largely an ideology; that human beings are powerless before the system and are not capable of determining their life and that of the whole through reason; indeed that they cannot even think the thought of such, without suffering even more, ensorcells their rebellion into its inverted form: they invidiously prefer the worse to the appearance [Schein] of something better. The contemporary philosophies have their share in contributing to this. They already feel themselves in tune with the dawning order of the mightiest interests, while they, like Hitler, tragically bear the lonely risk. That they pose as metaphysically homeless and bound up in nothingness, is the ideology of justification as much as of the social order, which causes humanity to despair and threatens it with physical extermination. The resonance of a resurrected metaphysics is anticipatory agreement with that oppression, whose victory lies in the social potential of the West and was long ago achieved in the East, where the thought of realized freedom is twisted into unfreedom. Heidegger promotes a bondage thinking and rejects the use of the word humanism, with the standard gesture against the market of public opinion. He thereby takes his place in the common front of those who rail against the isms. It might well be asked if he does not wish for that reason merely to abolish the talk of humanism, which is horrid enough, because his doctrine wishes to end the matter.

PROTEST AGAINST REIFICATION 96–99

In spite of their authoritarian intentions, the ontologies, enriched by a few experiences, seldom praise hierarchy as openly as in the times when a student of Scheler published a work on “The World of the Middle Ages and Us”. The tactic of covering all flanks harmonizes with a social phase, whose relations of domination are only half-heartedly founded in a past stage of society. The power-seizure reckons with the anthropological end-products of bourgeois society and needs them. Just as the Fuehrer rises above the atomized people, rails

against snobbery and, in order to perpetuate himself, occasionally changes the guards, so too did hierarchical sympathies disappear since the dawning era of the ontological renaissance into the hegemony and solitude of being. This too is not merely ideology. The anti-relativismus dating back to Husserl's text on the foundation of logical absolutism, the *Prolegomena to Pure Logic*, is intermixed with an aversion against static, thingly [dinghaft] thinking, expressed in German idealism and Marx, but in the meantime at first neglected by the early Scheler and the earliest sprouts of modern ontology. In any case the relevance of relativism has lessened; there is less chatter about it, too. The philosophical need has passed over imperceptibly from one of substantive matter [Sachgehalt] and solidity into one of evading the reification of the Spirit which was carried out by society and categorically dictated by its members, through a metaphysics which condemns such reification, delimiting it through the appeal to an original which cannot be lost, and thereby does so little harm to it as ontology does to the scientific bustle. Nothing remains of the compromised eternal values except confidence in the sanctity of being, whose essence is prior to everything thingly. For the sake of its contemptible inauthenticity in view of thingly being, which is supposed to be dynamic in itself, to "occur", the reified world is considered unworthy, as it were, of transformation; the critique of relativism is exorbitantly raised into the denunciation of the progressive rationality of Western thought, including subjective reason. The time-tested hue and cry already being raised in the public opinion against the subversive intellect allies itself with the one against what is materially [dinghaft] alienated: both ever played to the other. Heidegger is at once hostile towards things and anti-functional. At no price is being supposed to be a thing and yet, as the metaphor indicates over and over again, the "soil", something solid.⁴⁷ Therein becomes apparent, that subjectivization and reification do not merely diverge, but are correlates. The more that which is cognized becomes functionalized as the product of cognition, the more completely the moment of movement in it is reckoned to the subject as its activity; the object, to the result of the labor congealed in it, something dead. The reduction of the object to mere material, which precedes all subjective synthesis as its necessary condition, sucks its own dynamic out of it; it is immobilized as something disqualified, robbed of

⁴⁷ But see Heidegger, *On the Essence of the Fundamental* [Vom Wesen des Grundes], *ibid.* pg 42, 47.

whatever would allow movement to be predicated. It is not for nothing that Kant named a whole class of categories as dynamic.⁴⁸ The material however, exclusive of dynamics, is no mere immediacy but, despite the appearance [Schein] of its absolute concreity, mediated through abstraction, first pierced through, as it were. Life is polarized according to that which is entirely abstract and entirely concrete, while it would exist solely in the tension between them; both poles are equally reified, and even what is left of the spontaneous subject, the pure apperception, ceases to be a subject through its dissolution from every living I, as Kant thought of the I, and passes over in its logicity, autonomized, into the hegemonic paralysis. Only, Heidegger's critique of reification summarily charges the reflecting and realizing intellect of what has its origin in reality, which is itself reified along with its world of experience. What the Spirit does, is not the fault of its irreverent presumptuousness, but it gives back what it is compelled to by the context of reality, in which it itself forms only a moment. To slide back reification into being and the history of being, thereby mourning as fate and consecrating what self-reflection and the praxis it can spark would perhaps like to change, is solely untruth. Indeed the doctrine of being hands down, legitimately against positivism, what the entire history which it slanders grounded, notably Kant and Hegel: that the dualism of the inner and outer, of subject and object, of essence and appearance, of concept and fact are not absolute. Their reconciliation however is projected onto the irretrievable origin and thereby the dualism itself, against which the whole was conceived, is hardened contrary to the reconciling impulse. The dirge over the forgetfulness of being is the sabotage of reconciliation; the mythic impenetrable history of being, in which hope still clings, denies this. Its fatality is to be broken through as the context of deception.

FALSE NEED 99–100

This context of deception extends however not only to the ontological drafts but just as much to the needs, to which they are bound and out of which they indistinctly read something like the surety of their theses. Need itself, the intellectual one not less than the material one, is open to critique, since even hard-boiled naivete can no longer be certain that social processes are still directed immediately towards supply and demand, and thereby towards needs. As little as these are something

invariant, non-deducible, so little do they guarantee their satisfaction. The appearance [Schein] in them and the illusion that where they register themselves, they must also be sated, goes back to the same false consciousness. Insofar as they are produced heteronomously, they have a share in ideology, were they ever so tangible. Indeed that which is real is not to be cleanly peeled out of the ideological, if the critique does not wish for its part to succumb to ideology, that of the simple natural life. Real needs can objectively be ideologies, without rendering this as a legal mandate to negate them. For in the needs themselves something reacts in the human beings who are recorded [erfassten] and administered, wherein they are not entirely recordings [erfasst sind], the surplus of the subjective share, which the system did not entirely master. Material needs ought to be taken seriously even in their topsy-turvy form, caused by overproduction. Even the ontological need has its real moment in a condition in which human beings do not have the capacity to rationally – meaningfully – know or recognize the necessity which alone rules their behavior. The false consciousness of needs aims at something which self-aware subjects would not need, and compromises thereby every possible fulfillment. To false consciousness can be added, that it passes off what is unattainable as attainable, complementarily to the possible attainment of needs, which it is forbidden. At the same time these sorts of inverted needs intellectually demonstrate the suffering unaware of itself in material privation. It must push for its abolition, as much as the need by itself fails to do so. The thought without need, which wants nothing, would be nugatory; but thinking out of the need becomes confused, if the need is conceived merely subjectively. Needs are a conglomerate of the true and the false; the true thought would be the one, which wished for what is right. If there is any truth to the doctrine which says needs are to be read not as any natural condition but against the so-called cultural standard, then what also hides in this are the relations of social production along with its bad irrationality. This latter is to be relentlessly criticized against intellectual needs, the ersatz for everything which has been withheld. Modern ontology is an ersatz in itself: what promises to be beyond the approach of idealism remains latent idealism and prevents its incisive critique. Not only the primitive wish-fulfillments, which the culture-industry feeds the masses without the latter ever quite believing in them, are generally ersatz. Deception has no borders there, where the official cultural canon places

its goods, in the presumed sublime of philosophy. The most urgent of its needs today seems to be that for something solid. It inspires the ontologies; it is what they take the measure of. It has its right in this, that one wishes to have security, to not be buried by a historical dynamic against which one feels powerless. That which is immovable would like to conserve that which is condemned as old. The more hopelessly the existing social forms block this longing, the more irresistibly does despairing self-preservation strike a philosophy, which is supposed to be both in one, despairing and self-preservation. The invariant structures are created in the spitting image of omnipresent terror, the vertigo of a society threatened by total destruction. If the threat vanished, then its positive inversion would most likely disappear along with it, itself nothing other than its abstract negative.

WEAKNESS AND SUPPORT 100–103

The need is more specific for a structure of invariant reactions relating to the conception of the loss of forms in the world, originally drawn up by conservative culture-critique in the nineteenth century and popularized since then. Art-historical theses like that of the extinction of the power to form styles fed them; it spread from aesthetics into a view of the whole. What the art-historians assumed is by no means conclusive, i.e. that this loss actually was one, and not instead a mighty step towards the unleashing of the productive forces. Aesthetically revolutionary theoreticians like Adolf Loos still dared to express this at the beginning of the century;⁴⁹ only the frightened consciousness of those cultural critics who swore by the existing culture forgot it. The lament over the loss of ordering forms increases with their power. The institutions are mightier than ever; they have long since produced something like the neon-lit style of the culture-industry, which spreads over the world like the Baroque style once did. The undiminished conflict between subjectivity and forms reverses itself under the hegemony of the latter into the consciousness which experiences itself as powerless, which no longer trusts itself to change the institutions and their intellectual mirror-images, into identification with the aggressor. The lament over the loss of forms in the world, the prelude to the call for a binding social order, which the subject tacitly expects from outside, heteronomously, is, insofar as the assertion is more than mere

49 See Adolf Loos, *Collected Writings* [Sämtliche Schriften], Vol 1, Vienna-Munich 1962, pg 278.

ideology, not the fruit of the emancipation of the subject but of its failure. What appears as formless to a constitution of the existent modeled solely after subjective reason is what subjugates the subjects, the pure principle of being-for-others, of the commodity form. For the sake of universal equivalence and comparability it debases all qualitative determinations in all places, leveling tendentially. The same commodity form however, the mediated domination of human beings over human beings, solidifies the subjects in their lack of autonomy; their autonomy and the freedom towards the qualitative would go together. Under the spotlight of modern art style reveals its repressive moments. The need for form borrowed from such deceptively glosses over what is bad in it, what is compulsory. The form, which does not justify its right to exist in itself by means of its transparent function, but is only posited, just so that there would be form, is untrue and thereby also inadequate as form. The Spirit, which one wishes to persuade that it would be hidden in them, is potentially beyond them. Only because the attempt to arrange the world such that it no longer obeyed the form-categories contrary to the most advanced consciousness failed, must such prevailing categories frantically be made their own thing. Because however the Spirit cannot completely repress their inadequacy, it opposes the contemporary, crassly visible heteronomy against another one, be it past, be it abstract, with values as *causae sui* [Latin: causing themselves] and the fantasm of their reconcilability with living beings. The hatred for radical modern art, in which restorative conservatism and fascism constantly chime together blissfully, rests on this, that they are reminders of that which was missed, bringing to light the dubiousness of the heteronomous structural ideal through its pure existence. Socially, the subjective consciousness of human beings is too weak to explode the invariants in which it is imprisoned. Instead of this it adjusts itself to them, while mourning its absence. Reified consciousness is a moment in the totality of the reified world; the ontological need its metaphysics, even when, according to its doctrinal content, it exploits the same critique of reification, nowadays grown cheap. The form of invariance as such is the projection of what is paralyzed in that consciousness. Incapable of the experience of anything not already contained in the repertory of monotony, it coins immutability into the idea of something eternal, that of transcendence. The emancipated consciousness, which indeed no one has in a state of unfreedom; one, which had control of itself, as truly autonomous as it

hitherto only pretended to be, would not be constantly afraid of losing itself to an Other – secretly, to the powers which rule it. The need for support, for the alleged substantial, is not as substantial as its self-justification would like; rather, the sign of the weakness of the I, familiar to psychology as a typical injury nowadays of human beings. Whoever was no longer oppressed from without and from within would not seek support, perhaps not even from themselves. Subjects, who might rescue something of freedom even under heteronomous conditions, suffer less from the lack of support than the unfree ones, who charge this only too happily to freedom, as freedom's fault. If humanity no longer had to make themselves into the equivalents of things, they would need neither a thingly [dinghaft] superstructure, nor would they have to designate themselves, following the model of thingliness [Dinglichkeit], as invariant. The doctrine of invariance eternalizes how little has changed, its positivity as what is bad. To this extent the ontological need is false. Probably metaphysics would dawn on the horizon only after the fall of invariants. But the consolation is of little help. What would be right on time, has no time to spare, there is no waiting on what is decisive; whoever relies on this, encounters the separation of the temporal and the eternal. Because it is false and nevertheless the answers, which it requires, are blocked by the historical moment, all questions which have to do with consolation have an antinomical character.

II. BEING AND EXISTENCE

IMMANENT CRITIQUE OF ONTOLOGY 104–107

The critique of ontological need drives towards the immanent one of ontology. Nothing which attacks the philosophy of being generally, from outside, would have any power over it, instead of meeting it on its own turf – after Hegel's desiderata, turning its own power against itself. The motivations and results of Heidegger's thought-movements permit their reconstruction in retrospect, even where they are not expressed; to be sure hardly any one of his sentences lacks positional value in the functional context of the whole. To that extent he is the successor of the deductive systems. The latter's history already has a wealth of concepts realized from the course of thought, even when one cannot put a finger on the matter-at-hand [Sachverhalt] which would correspond to them; the speculative moment of philosophy originates out of the necessity of forming them. That which is petrified in the thought-movement is to be rendered fluid once more, by repeatedly following up on its validity, as it were. It does not suffice to demonstrate to the philosophy of being that, in regards to what it calls being, there would be no such thing. For it postulates no such "giving" [Geben]. Instead, such a blindness of being would need to be deduced in reply to the claim of irrefutability, which employs that blindness. Even the meaninglessness, whose establishment stirred the triumphal cry of positivism, is meaningful in the philosophy of history. Because the secularization of the theological content once deemed objectively binding is not to be revoked, its apologist seeks to rescue it through subjectivity. The Reformation's doctrine of belief already virtually did so; it was surely the defining figure of the Kantian philosophy. Since then Enlightenment has progressed irresistibly, subjectivity has itself become drawn into the process of demythologization. The chance for rescue sank thereby to a limit-point. Paradoxically its hope has been ceded to its sacrifice, to an unconditional and at the same time self-reflecting secularization. Heidegger's approach is true, to the extent that he submits to this in the negation of traditional metaphysics; he becomes untrue, where he, not at all so different from Hegel, speaks as if what was thereby to be saved was immediately present. The philosophy of being fails as soon as it proclaims a meaning in being, which that thinking dissolved according to its own testimony, to which being itself is still attached as the conceptual

reflection, ever since it has been thought. The meaninglessness of the word being, at which sound common sense is wont to sneer, is not to be ascribed to thinking too little or to an irresponsible scattershot thinking. Deposited in it is the impossibility of grasping or producing positive meaning in the thought, which was the medium of the objective dissolution of meaning. If one sought to complete the Heideggerian distinction between being and its logically circumscribing concept, one would be left, after the subtraction of the existent as well as the categories of abstraction, with something unknown in hand, which has no advantage over the Kantian concept of the transcendental thing in-itself except the pathos of its invocation. Therein however the word thinking, which Heidegger may not renounce, becomes as devoid of content as what is to be thought: thinking without the concept is nothing of the sort. That this being, whose thinking would according to Heidegger be the true task, blocks itself off from every thought-determination, hollows out the appeal to think it. Heidegger's objectivism, the curse of the bane over the thinking subject, is the true reversed-image of such. In sentences which are meaningless to positivists, change [Wechsel: change, also financial note] is presented to the epoch; they are false for this reason, that they claim to be meaningful, resounding like the echo of something which has content in itself. Meaning does not dwell in the innermost cell of Heidegger's philosophy; while it expounds itself as the knowledge of salvation, it is what Scheler called the knowledge of domination. To be sure Heidegger's cult of being did have, polemically against the idealistic one of the Spirit, the critique of its self-deification as its prerequisite. The Heideggerian being however, almost indistinguishable from Spirit, its antipode, is no less repressive than this; only more opaque than such, whose principle was transparency; hence even less capable of critical self-reflection of the dominating essence than the philosophies of the Spirit. The electrical charge of the word being in Heidegger fits nicely with the praise bestowed by a neutralized culture on human beings who are devout or faithful pure and simple, as if devotion and belief were merits in themselves, irregardless of the truth of what is believed in. This neutralization comes into its own in Heidegger: ritual devotion to being completely cancels out the content, which was noncommittally dragged along in half or entirely secularized religions. Nothing is left of religious customs in Heidegger, who drills them in, than the general strengthening of dependence and

submissiveness, surrogates of the objective law of form of thinking. While the structure permanently recedes, it does not leave its adepts, just like logical positivism. With the facts expropriated of everything which made them more than facts, Heidegger thus takes charge of the waste-product, as it were, of the evaporating aura. It guarantees to philosophy something like a post-existence, insofar as it occupies itself with the *eu kai pau* [Greek: well and ended, well and finished] as its specialty. The expression of being is nothing other than the feeling of that aura, one indeed without stars, which shed light on it. In it, the moment of mediation becomes isolated and thereby immediate. Mediation is however so little to be hypostasized as the poles of subject and object; it is valid solely in their constellation. Mediation is mediated through that which is mediated. Heidegger overstretches it into a non-objective objectivity, as it were. He settles in an imaginary intermediary realm between the obtuse sensibility of the *facta bruta* [Latin: brute facts] and the twaddle of the world-view. The concept of being, which does not want to give voice to its mediations, becomes the non-essence, the repetition of the existent, which Aristoteles saw through in the Platonic idea, the essence *par excellence*. From this is exacted whatever is ascribed to being. While the emphatic claim of being to pure essentiality thus becomes invalid, the existent, which dwells inextinguishably in being without, in the Heideggerian version, having to confess to its ontic character, partakes of that ontological claim parasitically. That being would demonstrate itself, that it would be passively received by the subject, is borrowed from the old data of epistemology, which were supposed to be something factual, something ontic. However that which is ontic simultaneously casts aside the trace of contingency in the sacred district of being, which previously permitted its critique. By virtue of the logic of the philosophic aporia, without waiting for the ideological supplement of the philosopher, it displaces the empirical hegemony of the existent as such into that which is intrinsic [*Wesenhafte*]. The conception of being as an entity, whose thinking determination invariably misses what is thought by cutting it into pieces and thereby, according to the current political term, subverts it, hearkens back to the Eleatic unity of conclusiveness just like the system once did and today the world. Contrary to the intent of the systems, however, the unity of what is conclusive is heteronomous: unattainable by the rational will as well as by individuals based on that social total subject, which until

this day has not been realized. In the statically renewed society, thereby indicated, no new motifs seem to be swelling the stockpile of apologetic ideology; rather the current ones are so diluted and rendered unrecognizable, that they can be disavowed from contemporary experience only with difficulty. If the fallbacks and artful dodges of philosophy project the existent on being, then the existent is happily justified; if it is punished with contempt as the mere existent, then it will be permitted to foment the bad state of affairs [Unwesen] outside without hindrance. Highly sensitive dictators did not do otherwise by avoiding visits to concentration camps, whose functionaries earnestly followed their orders.

COPULA 107–111

The cult of being lives by the ancient ideology of the *idola fori* [Latin: idols of the marketplace]: that which thrives in the darkness of the word being and the forms derived from it. “Is” establishes the context of the existential judgement between the grammatical subject and the predicate and thereby suggests something ontic. At the same time, taken purely by itself, as the copula, it means the general categorical matter-at-hand of a synthesis, without representing something ontic. That is why it has no qualms about adding itself to the ontological side of the ledger. Heidegger draws the ontological purity from the logicity of the copula, thus suiting his allergy against the factual; from the existential judgement however the memory of the ontic, which then permits it to hypostasize the categorical achievement of the synthesis as a given fact. To the “is” there does indeed correspond a “matter-at-hand”: in every predicative judgement the “is” has its meaning just as much as the subject and the predicate. The “matter-at-hand” is however intentional, not ontic. The copula fulfills itself according to its own meaning solely in the relation between the subject and the predicate. It is not independent. By confusing it for something beyond that through which it alone becomes meaningful, Heidegger is overcome by that thingly [dinghaft] thinking, against which he rebelled. In that he solidifies what is meant by the “is” into the absolute ideal in-itself – exactly that of being – what is represented by the subject and predicate of the judgement, once torn loose from the copula, would have the same rights. Both would experience their synthesis through the copula merely superficially; the concept of being was thought up precisely against this. Subject, copula, predicate would once again, as in obsolete logic, be conclusive in themselves,

finished particularities, according to the model of things. In truth however the predication is not added in, but by coupling both together, is also what they would be in themselves, if this “would be” could somehow be conceived without the synthesis of the “is”. This is what bars the extrapolation from the copula to a preordained essence of “being”, just as much as to a “becoming”, the pure synthesis. That extrapolation rests on an interpretive-theoretical confusion: that the general meaning of the copula “is”, the constant grammatical token for the synthesis of the judgement, achieves the specific one, that of the “is” in every judgement. By no means do both coincide. To this extent the “is” could be compared to occasional expressions. Its generality is a promissory note on the particularity, the general form for the consummation of particular judgements. The nomenclature takes this into account, in that it already reserves the scientific terminus “copula” for that generality and for the specific achievement, which the judgement always has to achieve, precisely the “is”. Heidegger fails to notice the difference. Therein the specific achievement of the “is” becomes merely something like a mode of appearance of that generality. The distinction between the category and the content of the existential judgement melts away. The substitution of the general grammatical form for the apophantic content transforms the ontic achievement of the “is” into an ontological one, a mode of being of being. If one neglects however what is postulated in the sense of “is”, the mediated and mediating achievement in the particular, then there would remain no other sort of substrate left to that “is”, except the abstract form of mediation at large. This pure becoming, in Hegel’s words, is so little an Ur-principle as any other, unless one wishes to drive out Parmenides with Heraclitus. The word being has an overtone, which only the arbitrary definition could fail to hear; it lends the Heideggerian philosophy its chromata [Klangfarbe: tone-color]. Every existent is more than what it is; being, in contrast to the existent, is a reminder of this. Because nothing is existent, which does not, by being determined and itself determining, require an other, which it is not itself – for by itself alone there would be nothing to determine – it points beyond itself. Mediation is simply another word for this. Heidegger however seeks to rein in that which points beyond itself and reduces what it points towards to rubble. For him imbrication becomes its absolute opposite, the *prôtê ousia* [Greek: primary substance]. In the word being, the epitome of that which is, the copula

is concretized. One could so little speak of the “is” without “being” as vice versa. The word points to the objective moment, which conditions the synthesis in every predicative judgement, in which it nevertheless first crystallized. But being is so little independent in regards to the “is” as that matter-at-hand is in the judgement. Language, which Heidegger correctly takes for more than mere signification, testifies by virtue of the dependence of its forms against what he squeezes out of it. If grammar links the “is” with the substrate-category of being as its asset: that something is, then it reciprocally uses being solely in relation to all of what is, not in itself. To be sure the appearance [Schein] of what is ontologically pure is reinforced by the fact that every analysis of judgements leads towards two moments, neither of which is to be reduced to the other – no more so than, metalogically, subject and object.⁵⁰ The thought fascinated by the chimera of an absolute first will eventually be inclined to claim even that irreducibility itself as that which is ultimate. In Heidegger’s concept of being there are echoes of the reduction to irreducibility. But it is a formalization, which does not mesh with what is being formalized. It says, taken on its own behalf, nothing more than the

50 The subject-object relation in the judgement, as something purely logical, and the relationship of subject and object, as something epistemological-material, are first of all to be strictly distinguished; the terminus subject means something almost contradictory in the former and latter. In the theory of judgement it is the basic assumption on which something is predicated; in contrast to the act of judgement and that which is judged in the synthesis of the judgement, in a certain sense the objectivity by which thinking is confirmed. Epistemologically however the subject means the thought-function, many times over also that existent which thinks and which is to be excluded from the concept of the I only at the price that it ceases to mean, what it means. But this distinction involves in spite of everything a close kinship of what is distinguished. The constellation of a matter-at-hand found in the judgement – in the language of phenomenology, “that which is judged as such” – and the synthesis, which is based on that matter-at-hand, just as much as it produces it, is a reminder of the material one of the subject and object. These differentiate themselves similarly, are not to be reduced to the pure identity of the one or the other side, and condition each other there reciprocally, because no object is determinable without the determination which makes it into such, the subject, and because no subject can think anything which it cannot confront, not excepting even the subject itself: thinking is chained to the existent. The parallel between logic and epistemology is more than a mere analogy. The pure logical relationship between matter-at-hand and synthesis, which would know space-time facticity irregardless of existence, is in truth an abstraction of the subject-object relation. This is what the viewpoint of pure thinking focuses on, neglecting all particular ontic matters-at-hand, without this abstraction having any power however over the something which occupies the empty place of substantiality, and which indeed means something substantial, no matter how generally this is named, only becoming what it itself means through what is substantial. The methodological procedure of the abstraction has its limit in the meaning of what it wishes to hold in hand as pure form. The trace of the existent is inextinguishable in the formal-logical “something”. The form Something is formed according the model of the material, of the *tode ti* [Greek: individual thing, this-here]; it is the form of the material and insofar requires that which is metalogical according to its own purely logical meaning, for which the epistemological reflection strove as the counter-pole of thought.

negative, that the moments of judgement, whenever judged, do not pass over into each other on one side or the other; that they are not identical. Outside of this relationship of moments of judgement, irreducibility is nothing, nothing at all can be thought under it. That is why no ontological priority can be imputed to it in relation to the moments. The paralognism lies in the transformation of that negative, that no single moment is to be reduced to the other, into something positive. Heidegger reaches the very borders of the dialectical insight into the non-identity in identity. But he does not carry through the contradiction in the concept of being. He suppresses it. Whatever could be thought under being, mocks the identity of the concept with that which it means; but Heidegger maltreats it as identity, as itself pure being, excluding all its otherness. He hushes up the non-identity in absolute identity like a family scandal. Because the "is" is neither merely subjective function nor something thingly [Dinghaftes], something existent, according to traditional thinking has no objectivity, Heidegger calls it being, that which is third. The transition ignores the intention of the expression which Heidegger humbly believes to have explicated. The cognition, that the "is" would be no mere thought and no mere existent, does not permit its transfiguration into something transcendent in relation to one of these two determinations. Every attempt to even think the "is", were it in the palest of generalities, leads to the existent here and into concepts there. The constellation of moments is not to be reduced to a singular essence; what dwells within it, is itself not essence. The unity, which the word being promises, lasts only so long, as it is not thought, as long as its meaning, in line with Heidegger's own method, is not analyzed; any such analysis will bring to light what disappeared in the abyss of being. If the analysis of being itself becomes taboo, then the aporia passes over into subreption. In being, the absolute is supposed to be thought, but only because it is not to be thought, would it be the absolute; only because it magically blinds the cognition of the moments, does it seem to be beyond the moments; because reason cannot think its best, it becomes, to itself, the worst.

NO TRANSCENDENCE OF BEING 111–114

In truth all particular concepts are, contrary to the linguistic atomism of Heidegger, the faithful believer in the whole, already entwined in themselves along with the judgements which classifying logic neglected; the old tripartite

scheme of logic divided into concept, judgement and conclusion is an archaicism just like the system of Linnaeus. Judgements are no mere synthesis of concepts, for no concept is without a judgement; Heidegger overlooks this, perhaps under the bane of scholasticism. However in the mediatedness [Vermitteltheit] of being as well as the “is” hides the subject. Heidegger ignores this idealistic moment, if you will, and thereby raises subjectivity to something given prior to the subject-object dualism, something absolute. That every analysis of the judgement leads to the subject and object, creates no region beyond those moments, which would be in itself. It results in the constellation of those moments, no higher nor even more general third. It can certainly be argued, in Heidegger’s sense, that the “is” would not be thingly, not *ta houta* [Greek: to the wound], not an existent, not an objectivity in the usual sense of the term. For without the synthesis the “is” has no substrate; in the matter-at-hand in question no *tode ti* [Greek: individual thing, this-here] could be pointed to which would correspond to it. Therefore, goes the conclusion, the “is” ought to indicate that third, precisely that of being. This however is wrong, a coup of self-satisfied semantics. The false conclusion becomes flagrant, in that such a presumably pure substrate of the “is” cannot be thought. Every attempt to do so lands in mediations, from which the hypostasized being would like to be exempt. The conclusion however that it cannot be thought, Heidegger books as a net gain, an addition to the metaphysical dignity of being. Because it refuses thinking, it would be the absolute; because it cannot, in best Hegelian manner, be reproduced as a subject or object without a remainder, it would be beyond the subject and object, although if it were independent of them, it could not at all be. Reason, which cannot think it, is in the end itself defamed, as if thought could ever be separated from reason. It is indisputable, that being would not simply be the epitome of what is, of what is the case. Such an anti-positivistic insight does justice to the surplus of the concept over facticity. No concept could be thought, indeed none would even be possible without the “more”, which makes language into language. What in the meantime resonates in the word being, as opposed to *ta houta* [Greek: to the wound]: that everything would be more than it is, means imbrication, not something transcendent to it. That is what it becomes in Heidegger, who adds it to the particular existent. He follows the dialectic to the point that neither subject nor object would be

something immediate and ultimate, but springs out of it, by reaching beyond them for something immediate, something first. Thinking becomes archaistic, as soon as it transfigures what in the scattered existent is more than itself into the metaphysical *archê* [Greek: beginning, origin]. As a reaction to the loss of the aura,⁵¹ this latter, as that which points beyond itself in things, is refunctionalized by Heidegger into a substrate and thereby made the same as the things. He prescribes a repositioning of the shudder which, long before the mythical nature-religions, prepared the sacred commingling [In-ein-ander]: *mana*⁵² is recuperated out of the German name “being”, as if the dawning powerlessness resembled that of the pre-animistic primitives towards thunder and lightning. Heidegger secretly obeys the law that with advancing rationality the constantly irrational society reaches ever further back. Wiser for experience, he avoids the Romantic Pelagianism of Klages and the powers of Oskar Goldberg and flees from the region of tangible superstition into a twilight, in which not even mythologemes like that of the reality of images can take shape anymore. He escapes the critique, without dispensing with the advantages of the origin; this is pushed back so far, that it seems to be timeless and hence ubiquitous. “But that / won’t do.”⁵³ There is no other way to break out of history than through regression. Its goal, the oldest of all, is not what is true but the absolute appearance [Schein], the obtuse entanglement in a nature, whose impenetrable opacity merely parodies the supernatural. Heidegger’s transcendence⁵⁴ is absolutized immanence, obdurate against its own immanence-character. That appearance [Schein] requires explanation; how it is that the purely deduced, the mediated, being, can hijack the insignia of the *ens concretissimum* [Latin: most concrete being]. It is based on the fact that the poles of traditional epistemology and metaphysics, the pure this-right-here [Diesda] and

51 Developed by Walter Benjamin, *Writings Volume 1* [Schriften I], Frankfurt 1955, pg 366, 426.

52 See Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* [Dialektik der Aufklärung], Amsterdam 1947, pg 26.

53 Hölderlin, WW2, published by Friedrich Beissner, Stuttgart 1953, pg 190.

54 “Being as the fundamental theme of philosophy is no species of an existent, and yet it concerns every existent. Its ‘universality’ is to be sought higher. Being and the structure of being lie beyond every existent and every possible existing determination of an existent. Being is the *transcendens* [Latin: what transcends] pure and simple. The transcendence of being as being-there [Daseins] is a distinctively superior one, insofar as the possibility and necessity of the most radical individuation lies in it. Every disclosure of being as *transcendens* [Latin: transcendental] is transcendental cognition. Phenomenological truth (the disclosedness of being) is *veritas transcendentalis* [Latin: transcendental truth].” (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 6. Ed., Tübingen 1949, Pg. 38)

pure thought, are abstract. Both are so far removed from so many determination that little more can be said of them, if the judgement wishes to proceed by what it judges. Therein both poles seem indistinguishable from each other, and this permits the imperceptible substitution of one in place of the other, depending on what is to be demonstrated. The concept of the existent pure and simple, according to its ideal without any categories, in its complete lack of qualifications, need only delimit itself to nothing existent, and can thus call itself being. Being however, as absolute concept, does not need to legitimate itself as being: with every circumscription it would delimit itself and violate its own meaning. That is why it can be garbed with the dignity of the immediate as much as the *tode ti* [Greek: individual thing, this-here] with that which is intrinsic [Wesenhaften]. Heidegger's entire philosophy plays out between these two extremes, indifferent to each other.⁵⁵ But against his will the existent ends up prevailing over being. This latter is kept alive by the forbidden fruit, as if this were Freya's apples. While being, for the sake of its auratic absoluteness, does not wish to be contaminated with anything existent, only therein does it become that immediacy which delivers the legal title of the claim to absoluteness, that being always means so much as: the existent pure and simple. As soon as the talk of being adds anything at all to the pure invocation, it stems from the ontic. The rudiments of material ontology in Heidegger are temporal; are something which has come to be and which are transient, as Scheler before.

55 That in spite of its contact with Hegel it detours around the dialectic, lends it the appeal of achieved transcendence. Bulletproof against the dialectical reflection, though incessantly touching on it, it runs its household according to traditional logic and charges itself, after the model of the predicative judgement, with upholding the character of solidity and unconditionality of that which would be merely a moment to dialectical logic. For example, according to an initial formulation (see Heidegger, *Being and Time*, op.cit. pg 13), being-there [Dasein] is supposed to be that which is ontic, that which is existing, which has the – secretly paradoxical – advantage of being ontological. Being-there is a German and ashamed variant of subject. It did not escape Heidegger, that it is as much the principle of mediation as unmediated, that as the constituents [Latin: what constitutes] it presupposes the constitutum [Latin: what is constituted], facticity. The matter-at-hand is dialectical; Heidegger translates it at any cost into the logic of non-contradictoriness. Out of the mutually contradictory moments of the subject, two attributes are made, which he attaches to it as though to a substance. This however is of assistance to the ontological dignity: the undeveloped contradiction becomes the surety of something higher in itself, because it does not follow the conditions of discursive logic, in whose language it is translated. By means of this projection the substance called being is supposed to be something positive, as far beyond the concept as beyond the fact. Such positivity could not withstand its dialectical reflection. These sorts of schemata are the *topoi* [Greek: place, position] of fundamental ontology in its entirety. It derives transcendence beyond thinking as much as beyond facts from the fact that dialectical structures are expressed and hypostasized undialectically, as if they were simply to be named.

EXPRESSION OF THE INEXPRESSIBLE 114–116

Justice would at any rate be done to the concept of being only if the genuine experience which its instauration realizes is understood: the philosophic spur to express the inexpressible. The more anxiously philosophy blocks itself from that spur, its peculiarity, the greater the temptation to directly go after the inexpressible, without the labor of Sisyphus, which would not be the worst definition of philosophy, and which is the source of so much mockery of it. Philosophy itself, as a form of the Spirit, contains a moment with a deep affinity to that which is suspended, as in Heidegger's assumption of what is to be meditated over, which also prevents the meditation. For philosophy is far more specifically a form, than the history of its concept would have one presume, in which it seldom incorporates in reflection, aside from a layer of Hegel, its qualitative difference from science, the doctrine of science, and logic, with which it is nonetheless intertwined. Philosophy consists neither of *vérités de raison* [French: truths of reason] nor of *vérités de fait* [French: truths in fact]. Nothing which it says bows to the tangible criteria of a case of being; its theses on what is conceptual are so little the logical matter-at-hand than those on what is factual are empirical research. It is fragile also because of its distance. It cannot be nailed down. Its history is one of permanent failure, to the extent that it abandoned itself over and over, terrorized by science, to what is tangible. It earned its positivistic critique by the appeal to scientificity, which science reproaches it for; that critique errs, in that it confronts philosophy with a criterion, which is not its own, wherever it may have followed its own idea. It does not however renounce the truth, but illuminates the scientific one as limited. What is suspended in it is determined by this, that in its distance from the verifying cognition it is not non-committal [*unverbindlich*], but leads its own life of stringency. It seeks this in what it is not itself, what opposes it, and in the reflection on what positive cognition views with bad naivete as committal [*verbindlich*]. Philosophy is neither scientific procedure nor the thought-poetry to which positivism, with a ludicrous oxymoron, would like to degrade it, but is a form just as mediated by what it is divergent from as by what it sublates. What is suspended is nothing other than the expression of the inexpressible in itself. Therein it is truly the sibling of music. That which is suspended is scarcely capable of being put into words; this may have caused the philosophers, with the

partial exception of Nietzsche, to gloss over it. It is more the prerequisite for the comprehension of philosophic texts than its definitive characteristic. It originated historically and may yet fall silent, just as music threatens to do. Heidegger innervated this and literally transformed what is specific to philosophy, perhaps because it is on the point of going extinct, into a niche, an objectivity of quasi superior social rank: the philosophy which recognizes that it neither judges over facticity nor over judgements the way other things are judged, and which is not even entirely certain of its object, would like to have its positive content, as it were, beyond the factum, concept and judgement alike. What is suspended in thought is thereby raised up to the inexpressible itself, which it wishes to express; that which is nonobjectified, to the penciled-in [umrissenen] object of its own essence; and thereby damaged. Under the weight of tradition, which Heidegger wishes to shake off, the inexpressible becomes expressible and compact in the word being; the objection against reification is reified, divorced from thinking and irrational. By treating the inexpressible of philosophy as immediately thematic, Heidegger dams this up all the way back to the revocation of consciousness. As punishment the blocked-up wellspring which he wishes to dig out runs dry, its trickle scantier than any insight of the presumably destroyed philosophies, which incline towards the inexpressible through their mediations. What was ascribed to the scantiness of time, through the misuse of Hoelderlin, is that of the thinking which imagines itself to be beyond time. The immediate expression of the inexpressible is nugatory; where its expression had weight, as in great music, its seal was that which slips away and is transient, and it was attached to the course, not to the signifying "that's it". The thought, which wishes to think the inexpressible through the sacrifice of thought, falsifies it into that which it would like least to be, the gratuitous absurdity [Unding] of an utterly abstract object.

THE CHILD'S QUESTION 116–118

The child, fundamental ontology could argue, if it wasn't too ontic-psychological to do so, inquires into being. The reflection drives this out of it, and the reflection of the reflection would like, as ever in idealism, to render compensation for this. But the doubled reflection hardly asks immediately, as the child does. Philosophy paints the latter's conduct with the anthropomorphism, as it were, of the adult, as that of the childhood of the entire species, as pretemporal-supratemporal.

What it labors under is its relationship to the words, which it appropriates with an effort scarcely imaginable anymore at a later age, rather than the world, which in its earliest phases is somewhat familiar to it as one of action-objects. It wishes to assure itself of the meaning of words, and the occupation with them, probably something psychoanalytically explicable, its kobold-like, nagging stubbornness, leads it to the relationship of the word and the thing. It may pester its mother with the embarrassing problem of why the bench is called a bench. Its naivete is unnaive. As language, culture migrates into the earliest impulses of its consciousness; a mortgage on all talk of originality. The meaning of the words and their truth-content, their “position towards objectivity” are not yet sharply defined from each other; to know what the word bench means, and what a bench really is – which does include the existential judgement – is one and the same to that consciousness or not at all differentiated, and which by the way in countless cases can be distinguished only with difficulty. Oriented to the storehouse of words it has acquired, childhood immediacy is to this extent mediated in itself, the preformed boring into the why, into the first. Speech is experienced as *physei* [Greek: by nature], “taken for granted” [in English], not as *thesei* [Greek: thesis]; in the beginning is fetishism, and the hunt for the beginning always remains yoked to this. To be sure that fetishism is hardly to be seen through, because everything thought is at any rate also linguistic, unreflective nominalism as false as the realism which endows fallible language with the attributes of a revealed one. It is in Heidegger’s favor that there is no non-linguistic in-itself; that therefore language is in the truth, this latter is not in language, as something merely signified by such. But the constitutive share of language in the truth does not establish any identity of both. The power of language proves itself by the expression and thing stepping out of each other in the reflection.⁵⁶ Language becomes an office of truth only in the consciousness of the non-identity of the expression with what is meant. Heidegger denies that reflection; he halts after the first step of linguistic-philosophical dialectics. His thinking is also repositioning in this, that it would like to reestablish the power of the name by a ritual of naming. This power however is not of the sort present in contemporary secularized languages, which would permit the subject to do so.

56 See Hermann Schweppenhäuser, *Studies on Heidegger’s Theory of Language* [Studien über die Heideggersche Sprachtheorie], in: *Archives on Philosophy* 7 [Archiv für Philosophie 7], 1957, pg 304.

Through secularization the subjects have withdrawn the name from them, and their intransigence necessitates the objectivity of language, not the philosophical trust in God. It is more than a sign only through its signifying power, there where it most exactly and densely holds what is meant. It is, only insofar as it becomes, in the continuous confrontation of expression and thing; Karl Kraus proceeded similarly, though he himself may have been inclined to an ontological view of language. Heidegger's procedure however is, in Scholem's phrase, Teutonic Kabbalistics. He treats the historical languages, as if they were those of being, as romantically as anyone who is violently anti-romantic. His manner of destruction falls silent before the unnoticed philological cultural formation [Bildung: education], which he at the same time suspends. Such consciousness affirms what surrounds it, or at least makes its peace with it; genuine philosophical radicalism, wherever it historically emerged, is the product of doubt. The radical question which destroys nothing but this last, is itself illusory [scheinhaft].

QUESTION OF BEING 118–121

Underlying Heidegger's emphatic expression of the word being is his old category of authenticity, which indeed was hardly mentioned later on. The transcendence of being as opposed to the concept and the existent wishes to dissolve the desiderata of authenticity, as that which would not be appearance [Schein], neither institutionally organized nor inapplicable. It is protested, with good reason, that the historical development of philosophy flattened out the distinction between essence and appearance [Schein], the inherent impulse of philosophy as the *thaumaxein* [Greek: wonder, marvel], as dissatisfaction with the façade. Unreflective Enlightenment negated the metaphysical thesis of essence as the true world behind appearances with the no less abstract counter-thesis, that the essence would be, as the epitome of metaphysics, the appearance [Schein]: as if the appearance [Schein] were for that reason the essence. By virtue of the division of the world, the law of division – what is authentic – is hidden. The positivism which adjusts to this, by cancelling out what is not hidden, what is a datum, as mythos and subjective projection, thereby reinforces illusoriness [Scheinhaftigkeit] as once did the doctrines, which consoled the suffering in the mundus sensibilis [Latin: sensible world] with the assertion of the noumenal. Heidegger felt something of this mechanism. But what is authentic, which he misses, recoils instantly into

positivity, authenticity as a conduct of consciousness which, by emigrating from the profane, powerlessly imitates the theological habitus of the ancient doctrine of essences. The hidden essence is rendered proof against the suspicion that it would be the bad state of affairs. There is no consideration which dares to mention that the categories of so-called massification, developed in *Being and Time* as much as in Jaspers' paperback on the intellectual situation of the time, could themselves be that hidden absurdity which makes human beings into what they are; they must then be scolded by philosophy, because they have forgotten the essence. The resistance against reified consciousness, which still resonates in the pathos of authenticity, is broken. The remainder of the critique is unleashed against the appearance, namely the subjects; the essence remains undisturbed, whose guilt is laid to those who are merely represented and which reproduces itself. – While fundamental ontology would not be distracted from the *thaumazein* [Greek: wonder, marvel], it blocks the answer, as to what really is authentic, through the form of the question. It is not for nothing that this is shuffled off onto the *dégoutanten* [French: disgusting] terminus, the question of being. It is mendacious, because the corporeal interest of every individual – the naked one of Hamlet's monologue, as to whether the individual is absolutely annihilated with death or whether he has the hope of the Christian *non confundar* [Latin: non confundar in aeternum, "I shall not perish in eternity"] – is appealed to, but what Hamlet means by to be or not to be is replaced by the pure essence, which swallows up existence. In that the existential ontologies, in phenomenological custom, make something thematic, with a full palette of descriptions and distinctions, they satisfy the interest and distract from it. "The question of being", says Heidegger, "aims thus at an a priori condition of possibility not only of the sciences, which research through the existent as such and such an existent and therein always ever move in an understanding of being, but also for the condition of possibility of the ontologies which lie before the ontic sciences and ground them. All ontology, no matter how rich and firmly-compacted a system of categories it may dispose over, remains fundamentally blind and an inversion of its innermost intent, if it has not sufficiently explicated the meaning of being and comprehended this explanation as its fundamental task."⁵⁷ Through the overextension of what serves up phenomenological ponderousness in such

57 Heidegger, *Being and Time* [Sein und Zeit], 6th Edition, Tübingen 1949, pg 11.

sentences as the question of being, whatever could be conceived under the word is forfeited, and that conception becomes if possible even more devalued into the frenetic entanglement which recuses the renunciation as a higher wisdom, as the authentic answer to the question it ducked. In order to be all too authentic, the so-called question of being shrinks what it styles as the sole native-born meaning of being down to a dimensionless point. It transforms itself into the ban against going beyond itself, and ultimate going beyond that tautology, which in Heidegger manifests itself as the fact that the self-revealing being says nothing other than being, over and over again.⁵⁸ Heidegger would even pass off the tautological essence of being if possible as something superiores [Latin: superior] to the determinations of logic. But it is to be developed out of aporetics. As Husserl before him, Heidegger unthinkingly bows to desiderata of thinking placed next to each other, which, in the history of the metaphysics which he put out of circulation in all too sovereign a fashion, proved to be incompatible: to the pure, that which is free of all empirical admixture and hence absolutely valid, and to the immediate, the purely given, irrefutable because it lacks the conceptual supplement. Thus Husserl combined the program of a “pure”, namely eidetic, phenomenology with that of the self-given fact of the apparent object. The title “pure phenomenology” already assembles contradictory norms. That it wished to be no epistemology, but a position arranged entirely the way it pleased, relieved it of thinking through the relationship of its categories. In this regard Heidegger differs from his teacher only insofar as he relocates the contradictory program away from its Husserlian staging-grounds, the consciousness, and into the transcendence of consciousness, a conception which by the way was already anticipated by the preponderance of the noema in Husserl’s middle period. However the incompatibility of the pure and that which was graphically concrete [Anschauliches] compelled the substrate of its unity to be chosen so indeterminately, that it no longer contained any moment in which either of the two demands could belie the other. That is why the Heideggerian being may be neither existing nor a concept. It must pay for the unimpeachability thereby achieved with its nihility, with an unattainability by every thought and every intuition, which leaves nothing left in hand except for

the self-sameness of the mere name.⁵⁹ Even the endless repetitions which abound in Heidegger's publications are to be ascribed less to his honesty than to aporetics. Only through the determination can a phenomenon reach beyond itself. What remains completely indeterminate, is said over and over again as a substitute for this, like gestures, which have no affect on their objects of action, but are repeated over and over again as a senseless ritual. The philosophy of being shares this ritual of repetition with mythos, which it would happily be.

VOLTE [FRENCH: SUDDEN ABOUT-FACE] 121–123

The dialectic of being and the existent – that no being can be thought without the existent and no existent without mediation – is suppressed by Heidegger: the moments, which are not, without one being mediated by the other, are to him immediately the One, and this one is positive being. But the sum does not check. The debtor-relationship of the categories is put on trial. Driven out by the pitchfork, the existent returns; the being which is purified from the existent is an Ur-phenomenon only for so long as it nevertheless has the existent in itself, which it excludes. Heidegger deals with this with a master-stroke; it is the matrix of his thought in its entirety. His philosophy lays hands on the well-nigh indissoluble moment of the existent with the terminus ontological difference. “What in any case is to be understood under such a ‘being’, which is presumably completely independent of the sphere of the ontic, must remain unsettled. Its determination would draw it into the dialectic of subject and object, from which it is supposed to be exempted. In this indeterminacy, in what is probably the most central place of Heideggerian ontology, lies the reason that the extremes of being and the existent must also remain necessarily indeterminate towards each other, so that it cannot even be said, wherein their difference lies. The talk of the ‘ontological difference’ reduces itself to the tautology, that being would not be the existent, because it is being. Heidegger consequently makes the mistake which he reproaches Western metaphysics for, namely that what being would mean as distinct from the existent,

59 “The excess of objectivity, which it” – being – “is ascribed, allows this to appear in its complete emptiness: ‘as empty opinion of everything pure and simply’. Only by means of a quid pro quo – specifically, that modern ontology submerges the meaning, which comes towards being as what is meant, under it – does being mean anything without the opinion-forming subject. Arbitrary subdivision, therefore subjectivity, thereby proves to be its principale vitale [French: vital principle]. Ontology is not capable of conceptualizing being other than from the existent, but it suppresses exactly this conditionality.” (Karl Heinz Haag, *Critique of Modern Ontology*, Stuttgart, pg. 69)

would remain unsaid.”⁶⁰ Under the breath of philosophy the existent becomes an ontological factual state ⁶¹ [Tatbestand], the dimmed and hypostasized expression of the fact that being can so little be thought without the existent as, in keeping with Heidegger’s founding thesis, the existent without being. Therein he executes his volte [French: sudden about-face]. The privation of ontology, which cannot make do without what opposes it, without what is ontic; the dependency of the ontological principle on its counterpart, the inalienable skandalon [Latin: scandal] of ontology, becomes a piece of its inventory. Heidegger’s triumph over other, less canny ontologies is the ontologization of the ontic. That no being is without the existent, is reduced to the form, that the being of the existent belongs to the essence of being. Therein something true turns into untruth: the existent into an essence. Being arrogates to itself what on the other hand it would not like to be in the dimension of its being-in-itself, of the existent whose conceptual unity always means the meaning of the word being anyway. The entire construction of the ontological difference is a Potemkin village. It is constructed solely to have all doubts in absolute being brushed aside that much more sovereignly, by means of the thesis of the existent as being’s mode of being.⁶² By reducing everything individually existent to its concept, that of the ontic, what makes it into the existent, in contrast to the concept, consequently disappears. The formal general-conceptual structure of the talk of the ontic and all its equivalents takes the place of the content of that concept, which is heterogenous to what is conceptual. What

60 Karl Heinz Haag, *Critique of Modern Ontology* [Kritik der neueren Ontologie], Stuttgart 1960, pg 71.

61 Heidegger’s doctrine of the privileging of being-there over the ontic, which would be simultaneously ontological; of the presence of being, hypostasizes being from the start. Only if being, as he wishes it, became independent as something which precedes being-there, does being-there receive that transparency of being which this is nevertheless supposed to uncover. To this extent too the presumed overcoming of subjectivism is surreptitious. Despite Heidegger’s reductive plan the doctrine of the transcendence of being served to once more smuggle precisely the ontological primacy of subjectivity into the existent, which the language of fundamental ontology abjures. Heidegger was being consistent when he later changed the course of the analysis of being-there in the sense of the undiminished primacy of being, which cannot be grounded in the existent, because according to him being simply is not. Thereby everything fell by the wayside, to be sure, which made him effective, but that effect had already passed into the authority of the later works.

62 “...unless it otherwise belonged to the truth of being, that being never essences [west: Heideggerian neologism based on archaic verb “wesen”, literally “to essence”] without the existent, that an existent is never without being.” (Heidegger, *What is Metaphysics?*, 5. Ed., Frankfurt am Main 1949, pg 41.) [Heidegger’s original text was written in 1943; text is also available in the “Nachwort zu: ‘Was ist Metaphysik?’” in *Wegmarken*, Gesamtausgaben, Band 9, Frankfurt am Main © 1976, pg. 306.]

makes this possible is the fact that the concept of the existent – therein not at all dissimilar from Heidegger's celebrated one of being – is the same one which encompasses the purely and simply non-conceptual, circumscribing what does not exhaust itself in the concept, without however ever expressing its difference from what is encompassed. Because "the existent" is the concept for everything existent, the existent becomes itself a concept, an ontological structure which merges seamlessly into that of being. The ontologization of the existent is reduced to its most precise formulation in *Being and Time*: "The 'essence' of being-there [Dasein] lies in its existence [Existenz]." ⁶³ The outcome of the definition of being-there, of that which exists qua that which exists, through the concepts being-there and existence, is that what is precisely not intrinsic in being-there, is not ontological, but would indeed be ontological. The ontological difference is removed by virtue of the conceptualization of what is non-conceptual into non-conceptuality.

MYTHOLOGY OF BEING 123–124

Ontology will cease to be disturbed by the ontic, only when it is of a kind with it. The subreption grounds the precedence of ontology before the ontological difference: "But here it is not a question of an opposition between existentia and essentia, because both of these metaphysical determinations of being, let alone their relationship, are not even in question." ⁶⁴ That which presumably precedes the ontological difference in Heidegger falls, in spite of the assurance to the contrary, on the side of the essence [Essenz]: by denying the distinction which expresses the concept of the existent, the concept exalted by what is non-conceptual, which it is supposed to have under itself. This becomes clear in another passage of the tract on Plato. He directs the question of existence away from this and transforms it into one of essence: "The statement, 'Humanity exists', does not answer the question, as to whether humanity really would be or not, but answers the question of the 'essence' [Wesen] of humanity." ⁶⁵ The talk of the "not-yet" there, where the antithesis of existence and essence is rejected, ⁶⁶ is no accidental temporal metaphor for something which is non-temporal. In fact it is archaic thinking, that of the Ionian Hylozoists far more than of the Eleatics; in the sketchy philosophemes

63 Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *ibid.* pg 42.

64 Heidegger, *Plato's Doctrine of the Truth* [Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit], 2nd Edition, Bern 1954, pg 68.

65 *Ibid.* pg 70.

66 See *ibid.* pg 68.

handed down by the former, existence and essence are murkily intermixed. The labor and effort of the metaphysics of antiquity, from the Parmenidical one, which had to separate thinking and being in order to be able to identify them, down to the Aristotelian one, consisted of imposing the separation [Scheidung]. Separation is demythologization, mythos the deceptive unity of what is undifferentiated. Because however the inadequacy of the Ur-principles in explaining the world denoted therein caused its analytical exegesis [Auseinanderlegung], and thereby caught the magical extra-territoriality of being, as one vagabond between essence and facts in the web of concepts, Heidegger must for the sake of the privilege of being condemn the critical labor of the concept as a history of decay, as if philosophy could occupy a historical standpoint beyond history, while it nevertheless on the other hand is supposed to obey a history, which is itself ontologized as existence. Heidegger is anti-intellectual out of systemic compulsion, anti-philosophical out of philosophy, just as contemporary religious revivals are inspired not by the truth of their teachings but by the philosophy that it would be good to have religion. The history of thought is, however far back it is traced, a dialectic of enlightenment. That is why Heidegger does not halt, resolutely enough, at one of its stages, as he might perhaps have been tempted to in his youth, but plunges with a Wellesian time-machine into the abyss of archaicism, in which everything is to be everything and can mean everything. He reaches out towards mythos: his own, though, remains one of the twentieth century, the appearance [Schein] which history unmasked it as, and which becomes striking in the complete incompatibility of mythos with the rationalized form of reality, in which every consciousness is delimited. It presumes to a mythological condition, as if this were even possible, without itself being the same thing. What is registered with Heidegger's concept of being is the mythical one of fate: "The arrival of the existent rests in the fate of being."⁶⁷ The much-praised non-differentiation of existence and essence in being is thereby called by name, as what it is: the blindness of the natural context, the doom of enchaining [Verkettung: chaining, interconnection], the absolute negation of transcendence, which quavers in the talk of being. The appearance [Schein] in the concept of being is this transcendence; its basis however is that Heidegger's determinations, deducted from being-there, from the necessity of real

human history to this day, dispense with the recollection of these. They become moments of being itself and thereby something preordained [Vorgeordnet] to that existence. Their astral power and splendor is just as cold to the humiliation and fallibility of historical reality, as this latter is sanctioned as immutable. The celebration of what is meaningless as meaningful is mythical; the ritual repetition of natural contexts in symbolic individual actions, as if they were thereby supernatural. Categories like fear, which is at least not to be stipulated, that it would have to last forever, become by means of their transfiguration constituents of being as such, something preordained [Vorgeordnetes] to every existence, their a priori. They install themselves as precisely the “meaning”, which in contemporary social conditions is not to be positively and immediately named. What is meaningless is endowed with meaning, in that the meaning of being is supposed to arise precisely in its counter-force [Widerspiel], in mere existence, as its form.

ONTOLOGIZATION OF THE ONTICAL 125–128

The special ontological position of being-there was anticipated by Hegel by means of the idealistic thesis of the preeminence of the subject. Hegel exploits the fact that the non-identical for its part would only be determined as a concept; it is thereby dialectically cleared away for him, reduced to identity: that which is ontic, ontological. Linguistic shadings in the *Science of Logic* are quick to betray this. Space and time are, as the third note to “Becoming” expounds in reference to Jacobi, “expressly determined as indeterminate, which – in order to return to its simplest form – is being. Precisely this indeterminacy is however what makes out its determination; for indeterminacy is opposed to determinacy; it is therewith as what is opposed itself the determinate, or the negative, and indeed the pure, completely abstract negative. This indeterminacy or abstract negation, which being thus has in itself, is what external as well as inner reflection expresses, in that it equates it with nothingness, declares it as an empty thought-figure [Gedankending], as nothingness. – Or one may express it, that because being is that which is devoid of determination, it is not the (affirmative) determinacy, which it is, not being, but nothingness.”⁶⁸ Indeterminacy is tacitly used as a synonym for the indeterminate. That which it is a concept of disappears in its concept; it becomes equated to the indeterminate as its determination, and this permits the

68 Hegel, WW4, pg 110.

identification of the indeterminate with nothing. Therein in truth the absolute idealism is already presupposed, which logic would have to prove. Something similar is true of Hegel's refusal to begin with the something instead of with being. Trivial, that the non-identical is no immediacy, that it is mediated. But Hegel fails to do justice to his own insight at central points. It says, the non-identical would indeed be identical – as itself something mediated – but nevertheless non-identical, the Other in regard to all its identifications. He does not carry out the dialectic of the non-identical, while he however has the intention elsewhere of defending the pre-critical term of speech against that of reflection-philosophy. His own concept of the non-identical, to him the vehicle for turning it into the identical, into self-sameness, has its inalienable content in its opposite; that is why he hurriedly brushes this away. What he expressly established in the text on difference, in order to immediately integrate it into his own philosophy, turns into the weightiest objection against this. Hegel's absolute system, which relies on the perennial resistance of the non-identical, negates itself, against its own self-understanding. Truly no identity is without the non-identical, while this former, as something total, ascribes to itself ontological preeminence in his work. The elevation of the mediatedness [Vermitteltheit] of the non-identical into its absolute conceptual being assists it therein. Instead of theory bringing the indissoluble to what is its own in concepts, it swallows it by subsumption under its general concept, that of indissolubility. The necessary condition of being related [Verwiesensein] of identity to the non-identical, as Hegel nearly achieved it, is the objection against all identity-philosophy. The Aristotelean category of steresis becomes its trump card and its doom. What necessarily diverges from the abstract concept: that it is not capable of being the non-conceptual itself, he accounts for as a merit, as something higher, as Spirit, in contrast to what it is forcibly abstracted from. What is lesser is supposed to be truer, as later on in the self-justifying Heideggerian ideology of the magnificence of simplicity. The apology for scantiness is however not merely one for a thinking which has once more shrunk to a point, but has its precise ideological function. The affectation of noble simplicity, which warms to the dignity of poverty and of the frugal life, suits the continuing absurdity of real scarcity in a society, whose state of production no longer permits the appeal that there are simply not enough goods to go around. By flirting with the *Rhenish*

Home Companion, philosophy, barred by its own concept from unnaivete, helps it around this: in its history of being, scarcity gleams as that which is higher pure and simple, or at the very least *ad kalendas Graecus* [Latin: the first of the month, by the Greek calendar]. Already in Hegel, what resulted through abstraction counted as the more substantial. He treats the material according to the same topos, even in the transition to existence.⁶⁹ Because its concept would be indeterminate, lacking as concept precisely what is meant by it, all light is shed on its form. Hegel fits this into Western metaphysics, at its outermost limits. Engels saw this, but drew the reversed, equally undialectical conclusion, that the material would be the first being.⁷⁰ The concept of first being itself deserves dialectical critique. Heidegger repeats the Hegelian sleight-of-hand maneuver. Only the latter practiced it openly, while Heidegger, who wishes to be no idealist, nebulously conceals the ontologization of the ontic. The mainspring, however, which garbs what is less in the concept as its more, is in each case the old Platonic denial, that the non-sensible would be the higher. Logic sublimates that ascetic ideal to the extreme and at the same time fetishizes it, devoid of the tension with the sensible, in which the ascetic ideal has its truth against the deception of its franchised [konzessionierter: licensed] fulfillment. The concept, which becomes pure by elbowing aside its content, secretly functions as the model of an arrangement of life wherein, in spite of all progress of the apparatus – to which the concept corresponds – at no price may poverty be eliminated. If ontology were at all somehow possible, then ironically, as the epitome of negativity. What remains equivalent to itself, pure identity, is what is bad; mythical doom is timeless. Philosophy was, as its secularization, its slave, in that it reinterpreted the immutable as the good with gigantic euphemisms, all the way to the theodicies of Leibniz and Hegel. If one wished to draw up an ontology and thereby follow the basic matter-at-hand, whose repetition makes it into an invariant, then it would be horror. An ontology of culture would above all have to take up, where culture at large failed. Philosophically legitimate ontology would have its place more in the construction of the culture-industry than in that of being; good, only that which has escaped ontology.

69 See additionally Werner Becker, *The Dialectic of Foundation and the Foundational in Hegel's Science of Logic* [Die Dialektik von Grund und Begründetem in Hegels Wissenschaft der Logik], Frankfurt Dissertation 1964, pg 73.

70 See Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in the Doctrine of Marx* [Der Begriff der Natur in der Lehre von Marx], in: *Frankfurt Contributions to Sociology* [Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie], Vol 11, Frankfurt 1962, pg 22.

FUNCTION OF THE CONCEPT OF THE EXISTENT 128–130

The ontologization of the ontic is the primary aim of the doctrine of existence. Since this last, after the age-old argument, cannot be deduced out of the essence, it is supposed to be itself essential. Existence is raised up higher than Kierkegaard's model, but thereby blunted in contrast to the latter. Even the Biblical sentence, that by their fruits ye shall know them, resounds in the temple of existence like its profanation and must fall silent. Existence no longer stands antithetical to the concept of being's mode of being, what is painful in it is removed. It receives the dignity of the Platonic idea, but also the bulletproof nature of what cannot be thought differently, because it is not something thought but would simply be there. Therein Heidegger and Jaspers concur. The latter guilelessly confesses the neutralization of existence against Kierkegaard: "I... felt in his negative decisions... the opposite of everything, which I loved and wished, which I was ready and not ready to do."⁷¹ Even Jasperlian existentialism, which did not allow itself to be infected by the *pater subtilis* [Latin: paternal distinction] in the construction of the concept of being, understood itself from the very beginning as the "inquiry into being";⁷² both could, without being untrue to themselves, make the sign of the cross before what in Paris, in the sign of existence, drove all too rashly for its taste from the lecture-rooms into the bistros⁷³ and there made itself sound far less respectable. To be sure, as long as critique remains standing by the thesis of the non-ontologizability of the ontic, it is itself merely a judgement over invariant structural relationships, too ontological, as it were; that was the philosophical motive of Sartre's turn towards politics. The movement after the Second World War, which called itself existentialist and staged itself as an avant-garde, had something powerless, something shadowy about it. Existentialism, which the German establishment suspects of being subversive, has a likeness to the beards of its followers. They costume themselves as oppositional, the youth as cave-people, who no longer play along with the swindle of culture, while they are really only donning the out-of-fashion emblems of patriarchal dignity of their grandfathers.

71 Karl Jaspers, *Philosophy* [Philosophie], Berlin-Göttingen-Heidelberg 1956, Vol 1, pg xx.

72 Ibid. pg 4.

73 See *ibid.* pg xxiii, and Heidegger, *On Humanism* [Über den Humanismus], Frankfurt am Main 1949, pg 17.

What is true in the concept of existence is the objection against a condition of society and scientific thinking, which virtually drives out the unregimented experience, the subject as a moment of cognition. Kierkegaard's protest against philosophy was also one against the reified consciousness from which, in his words, subjectivity has gone out: against philosophy he also perceived its interest. This repeats itself anachronistically in the existentialist schools in France. The meanwhile really disempowered and internally weakened subjectivity is isolated and – complementary to the Heideggerian hypostasis of its counter-pole, that of being – hypostasized. The division of the subject proceeds no differently from that of being, unmistakable in the Sartre of *Being and Nothingness*, towards the illusion of the immediacy of what is mediated. As mediated as being is by the concept and therein by the subject, so mediated is, in the reverse case, the subject by the world in which it lives, so powerless and merely internalized too is its decision. Such powerlessness permits the victory of the thingly bad state of affairs [dinghafte Unwesen] over the subject. The concept of existence impressed many as an approach to philosophy, because it seemed to bind together what is divergent: the reflection on the subject, which would constitute every cognition and thereby everything existent, and the concrete individuation, immediate to every individual subject, to its experience. The divergence of both irritated the subjective approach as a whole: the constitutive subject calls down the reproach that it would be merely deduced from the empirical and hence of no use in grounding it and any other empirical existence [Dasein]; to that which is individuated [Individuum], that it would be an accidental piece of the world and would lack the essential necessity, which it requires in order to encompass the existent and if possible to produce it. Existence or, in demagogic jargon, humanity [Mensch], appears to be as general, the essence common to all human beings, as specific, insofar as this generality can neither be imagined nor even thought through otherwise than in its particularization, the determinate individuality. Before all cognitive critique however, in the simplest reflection on the concept of humanity in intentione recta [Latin: in its correct intention], this Eureka loses its status as evidence. What humanity is, is not to be presumed. It is nowadays mere function, unfree, regressing behind everything with which it is stamped as invariant, be it even the defenseless neediness on which many anthropologists swear. It carries along the disfigurements which it experienced

over millennia as a social legacy. If the essence of humanity were deciphered from its contemporary constitution, then this would sabotage its possibility. A so-called historical anthropology would scarcely suffice any longer. It would indeed have an insight into the nature of coming to be and conditionality, but would shuffle this off onto the subjects, under the abstraction of the dehumanization, which made them into what they are, and which continues to be tolerated in the name of a *qualitas humana* [Latin: human quality]. The more concretely anthropology appears, the more deceptive it becomes, indifferent towards that in human beings which is by no means grounded within them as the subject but rather in the process of desubjectivization, which since time immemorial ran parallel with the historical formation of the subject. The thesis of arrivierter [French: new-fangled] anthropology, that humanity would be open – seldom does it lack the invidious side-glance at animals – is empty; they pass off their own indeterminacy, their *fallissement* [French: archaic term for bankruptcy] as something determinate and positive. Existence is a moment, not the whole, against which it was thought up and from which, once severed, it seized the unredeemable pretension of the whole as soon as it stylized itself as philosophy. That it cannot be said, what humanity really is, is no especially sublime anthropology but a veto against every sort.

“EXISTENCE ONTOLOGICAL IN ITSELF” 130–131

While Kierkegaard nominalistically plays off existence against essence, as the weapon of theology against metaphysics, existence, the immediate individual, is to him considered endowed with meaningfulness, quite in keeping with the dogma that the person is made in the image of God. He polemicizes against ontology, but the existent, as the existence of “that individual”, sucks its attributes dry. The initial reflections of *Sickness Unto Death* do not characterize existence all that much differently from its exaltation in *Being and Time*; the Kierkegaardian “transparency” of the subject, consciousness, is the legal title for its ontologization: “Being itself, to which the existent conducts itself as such-and-such and always somehow conducts itself, we call existence”,⁷⁴ or literally: “Existence [Dasein] is on the grounds of its existential determination ‘ontological’ in itself.”⁷⁵ The concept of subjectivity iridescently shimmers no less than that of being and thus

⁷⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *ibid.* pg 12.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.* pg 13.

is to be attuned to the latter any which way. Its ambiguity permits the existent to be equated to being's mode of being and thus analyzes the ontological difference away. Existence [Dasein] is then called ontic, by virtue of its spatio-temporal individuation, ontological as the logos. What is dubious in Heidegger's inference from the existent into being is that "at the same time", which his talk of the "multiple preeminence" of "being-there" [Dasein] "before all other existents" implies. The fact that the subject is determined by consciousness does not mean that what consciousness cannot be detached from is totally consciousness, transparent, "ontological". No something, only propositions could be at all ontological. That which is individuated, which has consciousness, and whose consciousness would not be without it, remains spatio-temporal, facticity, existent; not being. The subject lies hidden in being, for it is a concept, not immediately given: the particular human consciousness however lies hidden in the subject and thereby that which is ontic. That this existent can think, does not suffice to strip it of its determination as an existent, as if it were immediate intrinsic. It is precisely "in itself" not "ontological", for this selfness postulates that which is ontic, which the doctrine of ontological preeminence eliminates.

NOMINALISTIC ASPECT 131-132

To be critiqued is not merely the fact that the ontological concept of existence extirpates the non-conceptual, by exalting it to its concept, but also the positional value which the non-conceptual moment thereby conquers. Nominalism, one of the roots of existential philosophy of the Protestant Kierkegaard, endows Heideggerian ontology with the attractive power of what is not speculative. Just as that which exists is falsely conceptualized in the concept of existence, so too is that which exists ascribed a complementary preeminence before the concept, from which the ontological concept of existence once more profits. If what is individuated is socially mediated appearance [Schein], so too are its epistemological forms of reflection. Why the individual consciousness of every speaking person, which already presupposes a linguistic generality in the participle "my", which it denies through the primacy of its particularity, is supposed to be prior to anything else, is unfathomable; the sheer contingency, which impels it to commence with the consciousness, in which it just happened to grow up, turns into a grounds of necessity for it. As Hegel saw early on, the limitation of the "my" implies a priori

the relation to that other, which was supposed to be excluded. Society is prior to the subject. That it mistakes itself as an existent prior to society is its necessary deception and says something merely negative about society. In the “my” the property relationship is linguistically perpetuated, has all but become a logical form. Without the moment of the general, which the “my” points to by distinguishing itself from it, the pure *tode ti* [Greek: individual thing, this-here] is as abstract as the generality which the isolated *tode ti* scolds as empty and nugatory. The philosophical personalism of Kierkegaard, and perhaps also its Buberian offshoot, senses the latent chance of metaphysics in nominalism; however, consistent Enlightenment recoils into mythology at the place where it absolutizes nominalism, instead of dialectically penetrating its thesis – there, where it breaks off the reflection in the belief of something ultimately given. Such a cessation of reflection, the positivistic pride in one’s own naivete, is nothing other than non-reflective self-preservation, turned into a recalcitrant concept.

EXISTENCE AUTHORITARIAN 132–134

The concept of that which is existential [Existentielle], though Heidegger prefers to the already ontologized existential [Existential] of being-there qua being, is governed by the conception that the measure of the truth would not be any sort of objectivity, but the pure being-so and acting-so of the thinker. The subjective reason of the positivists is ennobled, by stripping away its moment of reason. Jaspers unceremoniously joined Kierkegaard in this respect; though Heidegger’s objectivism hardly subscribes to the proposition that subjectivity would be the truth, this rings through however in the analysis of the existential in *Being and Time*. What contributed to its German popularity was the fact that the radical pose and the sacred tone could be recombined into the newly-minted ideology of a person who was authentic and rocksolid [Kernigen], qualities which individuals in the spirit [Geist] of privilege reserve for themselves with sly dim-wittedness. If subjectivity dissolves solidified preordained substances by its – in Kant’s term, functional – essence, its ontological affirmation assuages the fear of these. Subjectivity, the functional concept *kat’ hexochên* [Greek: what is preeminent, what leads], becomes something absolutely solid, as was already by the way presupposed in Kant’s doctrine of the transcendental unity. But truth, the constellation of subject and object, in which both penetrate each other, is

as little to be reduced to subjectivity, as in the reverse case to that being, whose dialectical relationship to subjectivity Heidegger attempts to erase. What is true in the subject develops itself in relation to what it is itself not, by no means through the one-upping affirmation of its being-so. Hegel knew this, but the school of repristination abhors it. If the truth really were in fact subjectivity, if the thought really were nothing but the repetition of the subject, then it would be nugatory. The existential exaltation of the subject eliminates this, for the sake of what could arise in it. It thereby delivers itself over to relativism, over which it thinks itself to be superior, and brings the subject down to its impenetrable contingency. Such irrational existentialism pounds its chest and scapegoats intellectuals, by confessing itself to be one: "But the philosopher braves the talk, that there is no objective distinction between genuine, philosophically originary speaking [Sprechen] and empty intellectuality. While humanity as the Researcher [der Mensch als Forscher] always has generally valid criteria for its results and has its satisfaction in the inescapability of their validity, it has as the Philosopher [er als Philosoph] only the ever-subjective criterion of its own being to distinguish empty speaking from existence-awakening speaking. Hence the ethos of theoretical endeavor in the sciences and in philosophy is different at its very root."⁷⁶ Excluding what is other from it, which it has dispensed with, existence, which proclaims itself willy-nilly as the criterion of thought, thus secures the validity of its decrees in authoritarian fashion, just as the political praxis of dictators does to the world-view of the day. Through the reduction of thought to the thinker, its course, in which it would first become thought and in which alone subjectivity would live, is brought to a halt. It becomes reified as the threshed-out grounds of truth. This could already be heard in the ring of the old-fashioned word personalism. Thinking makes itself into what the thinker is already in advance, into a tautology, into a form of regressive consciousness. The utopian potential of thought would be, rather, that thought, mediated through the reason incorporated in individual subjects, would break through the narrowness of the thinker. It is its best power, to surpass the weak and fallible thinker. It is hamstrung – since Kierkegaard to obscurantist ends – by the existential concept of truth, propagating provincialism as the power to truth; that is why the cult of existence blossoms in the provinces of all countries.

76 Jaspers, *Philosophy*, *ibid.* pg 264.

"HISTORICITY" 134–136

Ontology has long cashed the opposition of the concept of existence against idealism. The existent, which was once supposed to testify against the sanctity of the idea made by human beings, is outfitted with the much more ambitious sanctity of being itself. Its ether ennoble it in advance in contrast to the conditions of material existence, which Kierkegaard meant with the "moment", when he confronted the idea with existence. Through the absorption of the concept of existence into being, indeed already by its philosophical preparation to a general concept worthy of discussion, that history is once more spirited away which, in Kierkegaard, who did not regard the Left Hegelians as insignificant, broke into the speculation under the sign of theology, in the paradoxical touching of time and eternity. The ambivalence of the doctrine of being: that it simultaneously deals with the existent, and ontologizes it, thus expropriating it of all its nonconceptuality by recourse to its *characteristica formalis* [Latin: formal characteristics], also determines its relationship to history.⁷⁷ On the one hand the salt of what is historical is removed by its transposition into the existential of historicity, the claim of all *prima philosophia* [Latin: originary philosophy] extended to a doctrine of invariants over that which varies: historicity brings history to a halt in the unhistorical, heedless of the historical conditions, which undergird the inner composition and constellation of the subject and object.⁷⁸ This then permits the verdict over sociology. It is distorted, as previously Husserl's psychology, into the relativization extraneous to the thing itself, which would damage the upstanding labor of thought: as if real history were not stored up in the core of everything

77 "Only the existent, which is intrinsically future-oriented in its being, so that it can be free for its death, shattering on this by letting itself be thrown back onto its factual 'there', that is to say only the existent, which as something future-oriented has been equi-originary, can, by handing down to itself the inherited possibility, overtake its own thrownness [Geworfenheit] and be momentarily of 'its time'. Only authentic temporality, which is at the same time finite, makes something like fate, that is to say authentic historicity possible." (Heidegger, *Being and Time*, *ibid.* Pg 385).

78 Fundamental ontology convicts itself of a historical and social moment in its linguistic form, which is not for its part to be reduced in turn to the pure *essentia* [Latin: essence] of historicity. The linguistic-critical findings of *Jargon of Authenticity* are for that reason those against philosophical content. The sheer randomness which Heidegger smuggles into the concept of the draft, the immediate legacy of phenomenology since its transition to a material discipline, becomes flagrant in the results: the specific determinations of being-there and existence in Heidegger, which he credits to the condition humaine [French: human condition] and considers the key of a true doctrine of being, are not as stringent as he posits, but deformed by what is contingently private. The false tone drowns this out, and by doing so thereby confesses it.

which is to be cognized; as if every cognition which seriously resists reification would not bring paralyzed things into flux, precisely thereby becoming aware of the history in them. On the other hand the ontologization of history once again permits the power of being to be ascribed to indiscriminate historical power, and thereby to justify the subjugation to historical situations, as if it were the behest of being itself. Karl Löwith has highlighted this aspect of the Heideggerian view of history.⁷⁹ That history can accordingly be ignored or deified as need be, is a practical political consequence of the philosophy of being. Time itself, and thereby transience, is both transfigured and absolutized by the existential-ontological drafts as eternal. The concept of existence, as the intrinsicality of transience, of the temporality of the temporal, keeps existence at bay by its naming. Once treated as a phenomenological problem-title, then it is already integrated. These are the latest consolations of philosophy, a kind of mythical euphemism; the falsely resurrected belief, that the bane of what is natural would be thereby broken, by soothingly imitating it. Existential thought crawls into the cave of a long-past mimesis. Therein it accommodates nonetheless the most catastrophic prejudice of the history of philosophy, which it laid off like a superfluous employee, namely the Platonic one, that what is imperishable must be the good; which says nothing more than, whoever is currently mightier in a permanent state of war is right. If Plato's pedagogy meanwhile cultivated the martial virtues, these were however answerable in the Gorgias dialogue to the highest idea of all, to that of justice. But in the darkened heavens of the doctrine of existence no star shines anymore.

79 "The quotation marks, by which Heidegger marks 'its time' in the above citation, are presumably to indicate that it is not dealing with any sort of random 'deployment' [Einsatz: commitment, operation] to a momentary, up-to-date, urgently pressing 'today', but with the decisive time of an authentic moment, whose decisive character results from the distinction between vulgar and existential time and history. But how can one unequivocally distinguish in a given case, whether time is an 'originary' moment or only a pressing 'today' in the course and trajectory of world-events? The decisiveness, which does not know what it has decided, provides no answer. It has already happened more than once, that those who are resolute have committed themselves to something, which was claimed to be fateful and decisive, and yet was merely vulgar and not worth the sacrifice. How can one draw, while inside a thoroughly historical thinking, the borders between 'authentic' history and that which happens 'vulgarly', and be able to unequivocally distinguish between the self-chosen destiny and the non-chosen vicissitudes, which befall human beings or lure [verführen] them into a momentary choice and decision? And has not vulgar history clearly enough revenged itself for Heidegger's contempt for today's merely extant existence [Vorhandene], when it lured him in a vulgarly decisive moment to take on the leadership of the Freiburg university under Hitler and to transport the most authentic, decisive being-there into a 'German being-there', in order to practice the ontological theory of existential historicity on the ontic ground of truly historical, that is to say political events?" (Karl Löwith, *Heidegger, Thinker in Needy Times*, Frankfurt am Main 1953, Pg. 49)

Existence is sanctified without that which sanctifies. Nothing is left of the eternal idea, which the existent is to share or through which it is supposed to be conditioned, but the naked affirmation of what it is anyway: the affirmation of power.

PART II. NEGATIVE DIALECTICS: CONCEPT AND CATEGORIES

INDISSOLUBILITY OF THE SOMETHING 139–140

No being [Sein] without existents [Seiendes]. The Something as the necessary substrate of the concept in thinking, also that of being, is the utmost abstraction – not to be abolished by any further thought-process – of what is substantive, which is not identical with thought; without the Something, formal logic cannot be thought. It is not to be purified of its metalogical rudiment.⁸⁰ That substantive which the form of what is at large [Überhaupt] in thought would like to shake off, the supposition of its absolute form, is illusionary. Constitutive to what is substantive [Sachhaltiges] for the form is above all the substantial experience of what is substantive. Correlatively, the pure concept, the function of thought, is not to be radically separated at the subjective counter-pole from the existent “I”. The *prôtou pseudos* [Greek: proto-falsity] of idealism since Fichte was that the movement of the abstraction would permit the discarding of what is abstracted from. It is eliminated from thought, exiled from the latter’s home domain, not annihilated in itself; the belief in this is magical. Thinking without what is thought would countermand its own concept and that which is thought indicates in advance the existents, which were supposed to be posited in the first place by absolute thinking: a simple *hósteron proteron* [Greek: what is after is what is before]. This would remain offensive to the logic of non-contradictoriness; solely dialectics can comprehend it in the self-critique of the concept. It is objectively caused by epistemology, by the content of what is discussed in the critique of reason, and for that reason survives the downfall of idealism, which culminated in it. The thought leads to the moment of idealism, which is contrary to this; it does not permit itself to be dissolved back into the thought. The Kantian conception still permitted dichotomies such as that between form and content, subject and

80 Hegel refuses to begin with the something instead of with being in the first note to the first Trias of the *Logic* (see Hegel, WW 4, *ibid.* especially pg 89, also pg 80). He thus prejudices the entire work, which wishes to expound the primacy of the subject, in its own sense, idealistically. The dialectic would scarcely run any other way for him, even if he started, as would correspond to the work’s fundamentally Aristotelian assumptions, from the abstract something. The conception of such a something in its own right may attest to greater tolerance in regards to the non-identical than that of being, but is scarcely less mediated. Rather than remaining standing by the concept of the something, its analysis ought to move further in the direction of what it thinks: towards the non-conceptual. Hegel meanwhile cannot bear even the minimal trace of non-identity in the approach of the *Logic*, which the word “something” recalls.

object, without being put off by the mutual mediatedness [Vermitteltheit] of the opposing pairs; it did not notice its dialectical essence, the contradiction implied in its meaning. It was Heidegger's teacher Husserl who so sharpened the idea of a priori-ty that, against his will as much as Heidegger's, the dialectic of the *eidê* [Greek: form, kind] was to be derived from its own claim.⁸¹ If dialectics has however become inescapable, then it cannot remain glued to its principle like ontology and transcendental philosophy, as a pivotal structure, however modifiable. The critique of ontology does not aim at any other ontology, nor even at one which is non-ontological. Otherwise it would merely posit an Other as what is simply and purely first; this time not the absolute identity, being, the concept, but the non-identical, the existent, facticity. Therein it would hypostasize the concept of the non-conceptual and treat it counter to what it means. Foundational philosophy, *prôtê philosophia* [Greek: originary philosophy] necessarily carries the primacy of the concept with itself; what withholds itself from it, also departs from the form of a philosophizing allegedly based on a foundation. Philosophy could remain pacified by the thought of the transcendental apperception, or even by being, so long as those concepts were identical with the thought that it thinks. If such identity is dismissed in principle, then it drags down the tranquillity of the concept as something ultimate in its fall. Because the fundamental character of every general concept dissolves before the determinate existent, philosophy may no longer hope for totality.

NECESSITY OF THE SUBSTANTIVE 140–142

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, sensation occupied the place of the indissolubly ontic as the something. However sensation has no sort of preeminence of cognitive dignity before any other real existent. Its “my”, accidental to its transcendental analysis and tied to ontic conditions, is mistaken for a legal claim by the experience which is entangled in its reflection-hierarchy, nearest to itself; as if what any particular human consciousness presumed as the ultimate were really an ultimate in itself, as if every other particular human and limited consciousness could not claim the same privilege for its sensations. If the form however, the transcendental subject, is supposed to strictly require sensation in order to function and thus to

81 See Theodor W. Adorno, *Against Epistemology* [Zur Metakritik der Erkenntnistheorie], Stuttgart 1956, pg 97.

judge accurately, then it would be quasi ontologically attached not only to the pure apperception but just as much to its counter-pole, to its matter. This ought to shatter the entire doctrine of the subjective constitution, to which, following Kant, matter cannot be traced back. The idea of something immutable, identical to itself, would also thereby collapse. It is derived from the domination of the concept, which wished to be constant towards its content, precisely its "matter", and for that reason is blind to such. Sensations, the Kantian matter, without which the forms could not even be imagined, which are therefore the conditions of the possibility of cognition in their own right, have the character of that which is transient. The non-conceptual, inalienable from the concept, disavows its being-in-itself and transforms it. The concept of the non-conceptual cannot pause by itself, in epistemology; this necessitates the substantiality [Sachhaltigkeit] of philosophy. Whenever it was master of itself, it dealt with the historically existent as its object, not first in Schelling and Hegel, but *contre coeur* [French: against its own will] already in Plato, who baptized the existent as the non-existent and yet wrote a doctrine of the state, in which eternal ideas are closely tied to empirical determinations such as the exchange of equivalents and the division of labor. Today it has become customary to make the academic distinction between a regular, proper philosophy, which would deal with the highest concepts, even if they deny their conceptuality, and a merely genetic, extra-philosophical relation to society, whose notorious prototypes would be the sociology of knowledge and the critique of ideology. The distinction is as unfounded as the need for regular philosophy is for its part suspect. It is not merely that by belatedly trumpeting its purity, it turns away from everything in which it once had its substance. Rather the philosophical analysis strikes immanently, in what is innermost to the presumably pure concepts and their truth-content, into that which is ontic, before which the claim of purity shudders and, with arrogant mien, cedes to the particular sciences. The smallest ontic residuum in the concepts, which regular philosophy stirs in vain, compels it to reflectively include what is existent there [Daseiende] in itself, instead of making do with its mere concept and believing itself to be safe there from what it means. Philosophical thinking has for its content neither the remainder after the cancellation of space and time, nor general findings about what is spatio-temporal. It crystallizes in the particular, in what is determined in

space and time. The concept of the existent pure and simple is merely the shadow of the false one of being.

PEEPHOLE METAPHYSICS 142–144

Wherever an absolute first is taught, there is always talk of something inferior, something absolutely heterogenous to it, as its logical correlate; *prima philosophia* [Latin: originary philosophy] and dualism go together. In order to escape this, fundamental ontology must try to keep its first at a distance from determination. What was first for Kant, the synthetic unity of the apperception, suffered the same fate. To him every determination of the object is an investment of subjectivity in non-qualitative multiplicity, irregardless of the fact that the determining acts, which count for him as spontaneous achievements of transcendental logic, also model themselves [*sich anbidden*] on a moment which they themselves are not; irregardless of the fact that what is to be synthesized does so only by requiring and permitting this last out of itself. The active determination is not something purely subjective, and that is why the triumph of the sovereign subject, which dictates laws to nature, is hollow. Because however in truth subject and object do not firmly oppose one another, as in the Kantian outline, but penetrate each other reciprocally, the degradation of the thing to something chaotically abstract by Kant also affects the power which is supposed to form it. The bane which the subject exerts becomes just as much one over the subject; both pursue the Hegelian fury of disappearance. In the categorical achievement it expended and impoverished itself; in order to be able to determine, to articulate what opposes it, so that it would become the Kantian object, it must dilute itself to the mere generality for the sake of the objective validity of that determination, amputate it from itself no less than from the object of cognition, so that this would be reduced to its concept according to program. The objectivating subject shrinks down into a point of abstract reason, finally into the logical non-contradictoriness, which for its part has no meaning independent of the determinate object. The absolute first necessarily remains as indeterminate as its opposite; no investigation of what is concretely precedent reveals the unity of what is abstractly antithetical. Rather the rigid dichotomical structure crumbles by virtue of the determinations of each pole as the moment of its own opposite. The dualism is already given in the philosophical thought and as inescapable, as the process by which it becomes false

in thought. Mediation is merely the most general, itself inadequate expression for this. – If however the claim of the subject that it is the first, which surreptitiously inspired ontology, is cashiered, then what is secondary according to the schema of traditional philosophy is no longer secondary, in a double sense subordinate. Its denigration was the flip side of the triviality that everything existent would be colored by the observer, its group or species. In truth the cognition of the moment of subjective mediation into what is objective implies the critique of the notion of a glance into the pure in-itself, which, forgotten, lurks behind that triviality. Western metaphysics was, except for heretics, peephole metaphysics. The subject – itself only a limited moment – was locked for all eternity in itself, as punishment for its deification. It gazes into the darkened heavens, in which the star of the idea or that of being would arise, as through the embrasures of a tower. It is precisely the wall around the subject however which throws the shadow of what is thingly [Dinghaften] over everything which it conjures, which subjective philosophy powerlessly combats again. Whatever of experience may be carried along in the word being, is expressible only in configurations of existents, not by the allergy against such; otherwise the content of philosophy becomes the impoverished result of a process of subtraction, no different from the erstwhile Cartesian certainty of the subject, the thinking substance. One cannot see out. What would be beyond, appears only in the materials and categories within. That is where the truth and untruth of the Kantian philosophy would step out of each other. It is true, in that it destroys the illusion of the immediate knowledge of the absolute; untrue, in that it describes this absolute with a model, that would correspond to an immediate consciousness, were it merely the *intellectus archetypus* [Latin: archetypal intellect]. The demonstration of this untruth is the truth of post-Kantian idealism; this latter however is in turn untrue in its equation of subjectively mediated truth to the subject, as if its pure concept were being itself.

NON-CONTRADICTIONESS NOT HYPOSTASIZABLE 144–146

These sorts of considerations seem to give rise to a paradox. Subjectivity, thinking itself, would not be explained by itself but rather by the factual, especially by society; but the objectivity of cognition in turn could not be without thinking, subjectivity. Such a paradox originates from the Cartesian norm that the explanation ought

to ground what comes later, or at least logically later, in what comes earlier. The norm is no longer binding [verbindlich]. According to its measure the dialectical matter-at-hand [Sachverhalt] would be the simple logical contradiction. But the matter-at-hand is not to be explained according to a hierarchical ordering schemata, called up from outside. Otherwise the explanatory attempt presupposes the explanation, which it first needs to find; presupposing non-contradictoriness, the subjective thought-principle, as inherent to what is thought, to the object. In certain respects dialectical logic is more positivistic than the positivism which condemns it: it respects the object which is to be thought as thought, even there, where it does not follow the rules of thought. Its analysis is tangential to the rules of thought. Thought need not remain content with its own juridicality [Gesetzlichkeit]; it has the capacity to think against itself, without sacrificing itself; were a definition of dialectics possible, this might be one worth suggesting. The armature of thinking need not remain ingrown to it; it reaches far enough to see through the totality of its logical claim as delusion. What is seemingly unbearable about this, that subjectivity would presuppose the factual, but objectivity the subject, is unbearable only to such delusion, to the hypostasis of the relationship of cause and effect, of the subjective principle which the experience of the object does not mesh with. The dialectic, as a philosophical mode of procedure, is the attempt to unravel the knot of that which is paradoxical with the oldest medium of the Enlightenment, the ruse [List: cunning]. It is no accident that the paradox was the bowdlerized form of dialectics since Kierkegaard. Dialectical reason follows the impulse to transcend the natural context and its delusion, which perpetuates itself in the subjective compulsion of logical rules, without imposing its rule on it: without sacrifice and revenge. Even its own essence is something which has come to be and as transient as antagonistic society. To be sure antagonism is no more limited to society than suffering. So little as dialectics is to be extended to nature as a universal explanatory principle, so little nevertheless are two kinds of truth to be maintained next to each other, the dialectical one inside society and one indifferent towards it. The separation of social and extra-social being, oriented to the compartmentalization of the sciences, deceptively veils the fact that blind natural-rootedness perpetuates itself in heteronomous history.⁸² Nothing leads out

82 See *World-spirit and Natural History* [Weltgeist und Naturgeschichte], text (pp 295-353).

of the dialectical context of immanence than it itself. Dialectics meditates critically on itself, reflects on its own movement; otherwise Kant's legal claim against Hegel would never expire. Such a dialectics is negative. Its idea names the difference from Hegel. Identity and positivity coincided in the latter; the inclusion of everything non-identical and objective in the subjectivity, which is expanded and exalted to the absolute Spirit, is supposed to achieve the reconciliation. On the other hand the power of the whole which is effective in every particular determination is not only its negation but also the negative, the untrue. The philosophy of the absolute, total subject is particular.⁸³ The reversibility of the identity-thesis, which is inherent in this, counteracts its intellectual principle. If the existent is to be totally deduced from the Spirit, then the latter would be doomed to become similar to the mere existent, which it meant to contradict: otherwise the Spirit and the existent would not harmonize. Precisely the insatiable identity-principle perpetuates the antagonism by means of the suppression of what is contradictory. What tolerates nothing that would not be like itself, thwarts the reconciliation for which it mistakes itself. The act of violence of making something the same reproduces the contradiction which it stamps out.

RELATIONSHIP TO LEFT HEGELIANISM 146-147

First Karl Korsch and later the functionaries of Diamat have objected that the turn to non-identity would be, due to its immanent-critical and theoretical

83 The word identity had several meanings in the history of modern philosophy. Once it designated the unity of personal consciousness: that an I remained the same in all its experiences. This is what the Kantian "I think, which all my conceptions should be able to follow along" meant. Then again identity was supposed to be what was juridically the same in all rational beings, thinking as the logical generality; furthermore, the self-sameness of every thought-object, the simple $A=A$. Finally, epistemologically: that the subject and object, however mediated, go together. The first two layers of meaning are by no means strictly separate from each other, not even in Kant. This is not the fault of a lax usage of speech. Rather, identity indicates the point of indifference of the psychological and logical moment in idealism. The logical generality as that of thinking is tied to individual identity, without which it would not come to be, because otherwise nothing which is past could be maintained in something which is present, nothing at all could remain the same. The recourse to this, which presupposes once more the logical generality, is one of thinking. The Kantian "I think", the individual moment of unity, always requires the supra-individual generality. The individual-I is One only by virtue of the universality of the numerical principle of the unitary [Einheit]; the unity [Einheit] of consciousness itself the reflection-form of logical identity. That an individual consciousness would be One, is valid only under the logical presupposition of the excluded third: that it is not supposed to be something else. To this extent its singularity is super-individual, simply in order to be possible. Neither of the two moments has priority over the other. If there were no identical consciousness, no identity of the particularization, there would be so little a generality as the reverse. This epistemologically legitimates the dialectical conception of the particular and the general.

character, an insignificant nuance of neo-Hegelianism or of the historically obsolete Hegelian Left; as if the Marxist critique of philosophy had dispensed with this, while at the same time the East cannot do without a statutory Marxist philosophy. The demand for the unity of theory and praxis has irresistibly debased the former to a mere underling, eliminating from it what it was supposed to have achieved in that unity. The practical visa-stamp demanded from all theory became the stamp of the censor. In the famed unity of theory-praxis, the former was vanquished and the latter became non-conceptual, a piece of the politics which it was supposed to lead beyond; delivered over to power. The liquidation of theory by dogmatization and the ban on thinking contributed to bad praxis; that theory should win back its independence is the interest of praxis itself. The relationship of both moments to each other is not settled for once and for all, but changes historically. Today, since the hegemonic bustle cripples and denigrates theory, theory testifies in all its powerlessness against the former by its mere existence. That is why it is legitimate and hated; without it, the praxis which constantly wishes to change things could not itself be changed. Whoever scolds theory as anachronistic, obeys the topos of dismissing as outmoded what was thwarted and remains painful. Therein precisely the course of the world is reconfirmed, which it is the very idea of theory not to obey, and the theoretical target is missed, even when it is successfully abolished, whether positivistically or by power-decree. The rage at the recollection of a theory which carries its own weight is by the way not far removed from the short-windedness of intellectual customs on the western side. The fear of epigonality and of the academic odor that clings to every reprise of motives codified in the philosophy of history has long led the various schools to advertise themselves as something which has never yet existed. Precisely that strengthens the fatal continuity of what already exists. So dubious however a procedure is, which insists all the more loudly on Ur-experiences the quicker its categories are delivered from the social mechanism, so little too are thoughts to be equated with what they originate from; this habit is equally a piece of origin-philosophy. Whoever struggles against forgetting, only indeed against the historical one, not, as Heidegger, against that of being and thereby the extra-historical one; against the universally expected sacrifice of a previously achieved freedom of consciousness, advocates no intellectual-historical restoration. That history has

stepped past positions, is honored as a judgement over their truth-content only by those to whom history is called the world-court. Often what has been cast aside, but theoretically not absorbed, reveals its truth-content only later. It becomes the sore of the dominating health; this leads back to it over and over again in changed situations. What remained theoretically inadequate in Hegel and Marx became part of historical praxis; that is why it is to be theoretically reflected upon anew, instead of the thought bowing irrationally to the primacy of praxis; this was itself an eminently theoretical concept.

"LOGIC OF DISASSEMBLY" [LOGIK DES ZERFALLS] 148–149

The farewell to Hegel becomes palpable in a contradiction concerning the whole, which is not programmatically settled as a particular one. The critic of the Kantian separation of form and content, Hegel wanted a philosophy without a detachable form, without a method implemented independently from the thing, and yet proceeded methodically. In fact the dialectic is neither solely a method nor something real in the naïve understanding of the term. Not a method: for the unreconciled thing, which lacks precisely that identity which the thought surrogates, is contradictory and blocks every attempt at unanimous interpretation. This thing, not the organizational drive of thought, is the impetus to dialectics. Not something simply real: for contradictoriness is a reflection-category, the thinking confrontation of concept and thing. Dialectics as a procedure means, to think for the sake of what was once experienced in the thing as a contradiction and against it in contradictions. A contradiction in reality, it is a contradiction against these. Such a dialectics is however no longer compatible with Hegel. Its movement does not tend towards identity in the difference of every object from its concept; rather it suspects something identical in it. Its logic is one of disassembly [Zerfalls]: of the prepared and concretized form of concepts, which the cognizing subject immediately faces at first. Their identity with the subject is untruth. Through it the subjective pre-formation of the phenomenon slides in front of what is non-identical, before the individuum ineffabile [Latin: ineffable individual]. The summation of identical determinations would correspond to the fondest wish of traditional philosophy, to the a priori structure and to its archaistic late form, ontology. However this structure is, before every sort of specific

content, in the simplest sense negative as something abstractly maintained, Spirit become compulsion. The power of that negativity rules to this day in reality. What would be different, has not yet begun. This affects all specific determinations. Each one which appears non-contradictory proves to be as contradictory as the ontological models of being and existence. Nothing positive is to be obtained from philosophy which would be identical with its construction. In the process of demythologization positivity must be negated all the way into the instrumental reason, which demythologization supplies. The idea of reconciliation rejects its positive positing in the concept. Nevertheless the critique of idealism does not discard what the construction of the concept towards the insight once garnered, and what the guidance of the concepts once won in terms of energy from the method. Only that which is inscribed in the idealistic magic circle goes beyond its figure, by calling it by name in the completion of its own deductive process, demonstrating what is separated from it, what is untrue in it, in the developed summation of the totality. Pure identity is what is set up [Gesetzt: posited] by the subject, and to this extent is brought from outside. To immanently criticize it means therefore, paradoxically enough, to criticize it from outside as well. The subject must render compensation to the non-identical, for what it perpetrated on it. Precisely this sets it free from the appearance [Schein] of its absolute being-for-itself. This latter for its part is the product of the identifying thought, which, the more it devalues a thing to the mere example of its kind or species, the more it imagines that it has it as such, without subjective addition.

ON THE DIALECTICS OF IDENTITY 149–151

By immersing itself in what initially opposes it, the concept, and becoming aware of its immanently antinomical character, thought abandons itself to the idea of something which would be beyond the contradiction. The opposition in thinking to what is heterogenous to it is reproduced in thought itself as its immanent contradiction. Reciprocal critique of the general and the particular, the identifying acts which judge whether the concept does justice to what it is dealing with, and whether the particular also fulfills its own concept, are the medium of the thinking of the non-identity of the particular and concept. And not of thinking alone. If humanity is to rid itself of the compulsion, which really is imposed on it in the form of identification, it must at the same time achieve identity with its

concept. All relevant categories play a part in this. The exchange-principle, the reduction of human labor to an abstract general concept of average labor-time, is Ur-related to the identification-principle. It has its social model in exchange, and it would not be without the latter, through which non-identical particular essences and achievements become commensurable, identical. The spread of the principle constrains the entire world to the identical, to totality. If the principle meanwhile was abstractly negated; if it was proclaimed as an ideal that, for the greater honor of the irreducibly qualitative, things should no longer go according to like for like, this would create an excuse for regressing into age-old injustice. For the exchange of equivalents was based since time immemorial exactly on this, that something unequal was exchanged in its name, that the surplus-value of labor was appropriated. If one simply annulled the measurement-category of comparability, then what would step into the place of the rationality, which was indeed ideological yet also inherent as a promise in the exchange-principle, is immediate expropriation, violence, nowadays: the naked privilege of monopolies and cliques. What the critique of the exchange-principle as the identifying one of thought wishes, is that the ideal of free and fair exchange, until today a mere pretext, would be realized. This alone would transcend the exchange. Once critical theory has demystified this latter as something which proceeds by equivalents and yet not by equivalents, then the critique of the inequality in the equality aims towards equality, amidst all skepticism against the rancor in the bourgeois egalitarian ideal, which tolerates nothing qualitatively divergent. If no human being was deprived of their share of their living labor, then rational identity would be achieved, and society would be beyond the identifying thought. This comes close enough to Hegel. The demarcation line from him is scarcely drawn by particular distinctions; rather by the intent: whether consciousness, theoretically and in practical consequence, would like to maintain identity as the ultimate, as the absolute and reinforce it, or else become aware of it as the universal apparatus of compulsion, which it ultimately requires in order to escape from the universal compulsion, just as freedom can only really come to be through the civilizing compulsion, not as a *retour à la nature* [French: back to nature]. The totality is to be opposed by convicting it of the non-identity with itself, which it denies according to its own concept. Negative dialectics is thereby tied, at its starting-

point, to the highest categories of identity-philosophy. To this extent it also remains false, identity-logical, itself that which it is being thought against. It must correct itself in its critical course, which affects those concepts which it handles according to form, as if they were still that which is first for it. It is one thing if thinking, sealed off by the necessity of every inescapable form, adapts in principle in order to immanently repudiate the claim of traditional philosophy to the conclusive structure – it is quite another to spur on that form of conclusiveness by itself, with the intention of making itself into what is first. In idealism the highly formal principle of identity had, by means of its own formalization, the affirmation for its content. This is innocently brought to light by the terminology; the simple predicative sentences are called affirmative. The copula says: it is so, not otherwise; the factual handling of the synthesis, for which it stands, announces that it shall not be otherwise: else it would not be achieved. The will to identity labors in every synthesis; as an a priori task of thinking, immanent to it, it appears positive and desirable: through this, the substrate of the synthesis would be reconciled with the I and for that reason good. This promptly permits the moral desiderata that the subject, by virtue of the insight into how much the thing is its very own, ought to bow to what is heterogenous to it. Identity is the Ur-form of ideology. It is consumed as the adequacy to the thing suppressed thereby; adequacy was always also subjugation under dominating ends, to this extent its own contradiction. After the unspeakable effort which it must have cost the human species in order to establish the primacy of identity even against itself, it rejoices and basks in its victory by turning this latter into a determination of the vanquished thing: what this last experienced, it must present as its in-itself. Ideology owes its power of resistance against the Enlightenment to complicity with identifying thought: indeed with thinking at large. It demonstrates therein its ideological side, that it never makes good on the assertion, that the non-I would in the end be the I; the more the I grasps it, the more completely the I finds itself downgraded to an object. Identity becomes the authority of a doctrine of adjustment, wherein the object, according to which the subject would be directed, pays back to the latter what the subject inflicted on it. It is supposed to accept reason against its reason. That is why the critique of ideology is not something peripheral and intra-scientific,

something limited to the objective Spirit and the products of the subjective one, but philosophically central: the critique of the constitutive consciousness itself.

SELF-REFLECTION OF THOUGHT 152-154

The power of consciousness reaches all the way into its own deception. It is rationally cognizable, where a detached rationality which has run away with itself becomes false, turns truly into mythology. The ratio recoils into irrationality as soon as mistakes, in its necessary course, the fact that the disappearance of its substrate, be it ever so diluted, is the handiwork of its abstraction. If thinking follows its laws of motion unconsciously, it turns against its own meaning, that which is thought by thinking, which commands the flight of subjective intentions to halt. The dictate of its autarky damns thinking to nullity; this becomes in the end, subjectively, stupidity and primitivity. The regression of consciousness is the product of its lack of self-reflection. It has the capacity to see through the identity-principle, but cannot be thought without the identification; every determination is an identification. But precisely this approaches what the object is, as non-identical: by stamping it, it wishes to be stamped by it. Non-identity is secretly the telos of the identification, it is what is to be rescued in the latter; the mistake of traditional thought is that identity is held for its goal. The power which explodes the appearance [Schein] of identity is that of thinking itself: the application of its "that is" shakes its nevertheless inalienable form. The cognition of the non-identical is dialectical too, in the sense that it identifies more, and identifies differently, than identity-thinking. It wishes to say what something would be, while identity-thinking says what it falls under, what it is an example or representative of, what it consequently is not itself. Identity-thinking distances itself farther and farther away from the identity of its object, the more relentlessly it tears at the latter's body. Identity does not disappear through its critique; it transforms itself qualitatively. Elements of the affinity of the object to its thought live on in it. It is hubris, that identity would be, that the thing in itself would correspond to its concept. But its ideal is not to be simply thrown away: in the reproach that the thing would not be identical with the concept lives too the longing that it would like to be so. In this form the consciousness of non-identity contains identity. Indeed the supposition of this, all the way down to formal logic, is the ideological moment in pure thinking. In it however the moment of truth of ideology is also

hidden, the injunction that no contradiction, no antagonism ought to be. In the simple identifying judgement, the pragmatic element which controls nature is already conjoined to a utopian one. "A" is supposed to be, what it is not yet. Such hope is contradictorily tied to that which breaks through the predicative identity. For these the philosophical tradition had the word ideas. They are neither *chóris* [Greek: separately] nor empty sounds but negative signs. The untruth of all achieved identity is the inverted form of truth. The ideas live in the hollows between what the things claim to be, and what they are. Utopia would be beyond identity and beyond the contradiction, a togetherness of what is divergent. For the sake of the former, identification reflects on how language uses the word outside of logic, which does not speak to the identification of an object, but rather to that with human beings and things. The Greek argument as to whether the like or the unlike could recognize the like, is solely to be settled dialectically. If the thesis holds that only the like would be capable of bringing the indelible moment of mimesis in all cognition and all human praxis to consciousness, then such consciousness becomes untruth when the affinity, at the same time infinitely far away in its indelibility, posits itself as positive. In epistemology the invariable result was the false conclusion, that the object would be the subject. Traditional philosophy imagined it could recognize the unlike, by making it like itself, while thereby in actuality it only cognizes itself. The idea of a different one would be to become aware of the like, in that it determines what is unlike it. – The moment of non-identity in the identifying judgement is reasonably comprehensible, to the extent that every individual object subsumed under a class has determinations, which are not contained in the definition of its class. Meanwhile in the more emphatic concept, which is not simply the characteristic of the individual objects from which it is derived, the opposite simultaneously holds good. The judgement that someone is a free man is related, thought emphatically, to the concept of freedom. However this is for its part more than what is predicated of that man, just as that man, through other determinations, is more than the concept of his freedom. Its concept says not only that it could be applied to all other individuals, as freely defined men. It nourishes the idea of a condition in which the individuals would have qualities, which here and now could be ascribed to noone. What is specific about praising someone as free is the *sous-entendu* [French: undertone],

that something impossible is being ascribed to him, because it manifests itself in him; this simultaneously contingent and secret thing animates every identifying judgement which is worth making. The concept of freedom lags behind itself, as soon as it is empirically applied. It is then itself not what it says. Because however it must always be a concept of what is grasped under it, it is to be confronted with this latter. Such a confrontation impels it to the contradiction with itself. Every attempt, by merely posited, "operational" definitions of the concept of freedom, to exclude what philosophical terminology once called its idea, arbitrarily degrades the concept for the sake of its utility in relation to what it means in itself. The individual is both more and less than its general determination. Because however the particular, the determinate would come to itself only through the sublation of that contradiction, hence through the achieved identity between the particular and its concept, the interest of the individual is not only to preserve what the general concept robbed it of, but as much in that "more" of the concept as in its neediness. It experiences this to this day as its own negativity. The contradiction between the general and particular has as its content, that individuality is not yet and for that reason is bad, where it establishes itself. At the same time, that contradiction between the concept of freedom and its realization also remains the insufficiency of the concept; the potential of freedom wishes the critique of that which its compulsory formalization made it into.

OBJECTIVITY OF THE CONTRADICTION 154-156

Such a contradiction is no subjective thought-error; objective contradictoriness is what is embittering in dialectics, especially for the reflection-philosophy which is as hegemonic today as in Hegel's time. It would be simply incompatible with the prevailing logic and thus to be abolished by the formal unanimity of the judgement. So long as critique holds itself abstractly to its rules, the objective contradiction would be only a pretentious way of saying, that the subjective conceptual apparatus unavoidably maintains the truth of its judgement on the particular existents over which it judges, while this existent accords with the judgement only insofar as it is already preformed by the apophantic requirement in the definitions of concepts. This would be easy to incorporate into advanced reflection-philosophical logic. But the objective contradictoriness designates not only whatever of the existent remains outside of the judgement, but something in what is judged itself. For the

judgement always means that existent which is judged beyond that particular, which is included in the judgement; otherwise it would be, according to its own intention, superfluous. And exactly this intention is what it does not satisfy. The negative motive of identity-philosophy has retained its power; nothing particular is true, none is, as its particularity claims, it itself. The dialectical contradiction is neither the mere projection of a miscarried conceptual construction of the thing nor metaphysics run amok. Experience refuses to settle whatever would appear in what is contradictory in the unity of consciousness. A contradiction for example like that between the determination, which the individual knows as its own, and that which society imposes on it, if it wishes to keep itself alive, that of the “role”, is not to be reduced to any sort of unity without manipulation, without the fine-tuning of impoverished master concepts, which cause the essential differences to disappear;⁸⁴ any more so than the fact that the exchange-principle, which increases the productive-forces in existing society, simultaneously threatens these to an increasing degree with annihilation. The subjective consciousness, to which the contradiction is unbearable, ends up before a desperate choice. Either it must harmonistically stylize itself as contrary to the course of the world and, against its better insight, obey it heteronomously; or it must, in hard-bitten faith in its own determination, conduct itself as if there were no course of the world, and perish in it. It cannot eliminate the objective contradiction and its emanations by itself, through conceptual arrangement. It can however comprehend it; all else is idle assertion. This weighs more heavily than for Hegel, who first envisioned it. Once the vehicle of total identification, it becomes the organ of its impossibility. Dialectical cognition does not, as its opponents charge, construe contradictions from above and step through their resolution, although Hegel’s logic proceeds in this manner at times. Instead, its task is to pursue the inadequacy of the thought and thing; to experience it in the thing. Dialectics need not fear the reproach, that it is obsessed with the fixed idea of the objective antagonism, while the thing would already be pacified; nothing individual finds peace in the unpacified whole. The

aporetic concepts of philosophy are marks of what is objectively unresolved, not

84 A textbook case of such a master-concept, of the technics [Technik] of logical subsumption for ideological ends, is the contemporary one of industrial society. It ignores the social relations of production by recourse to the technical productive forces, as if solely the state of the latter would be immediately decisive for the social form. This theoretical slippage can indeed be excused by the undeniable convergences of East and West under the sign of bureaucratic domination.

merely in thinking. To accuse contradictions of incorrigible speculative obstinacy merely shifts the blame; shame bids philosophy not to suppress the insight of Georg Simmel, that it is astonishing how little one notices the sufferings of humanity in their history. The dialectical contradiction “is” not purely and simply, but has its intention – its subjective moment – in that it cannot be talked out of this; in it dialectics goes towards what is divergent. The dialectical movement remains philosophical as the self-critique of philosophy.

OUTSET FROM THE CONCEPT 156–158

Because the existent is not immediate but only through the concept, one should commence with the concept, not the mere given fact. The concept of the concept became itself problematic. No less than its irrationalistic counterpart, intuition, it has as such archaic traces, which intersect with those of the rational; relics of static thought and of a static cognitive ideal in the midst of dynamized consciousness. The immanent claim of the concept is its order-creating invariance as opposed to the change in what it analyzes. The form of the concept rejects this latter, is therein “wrong”. In dialectics thought raises the objection against the archaisms of its conceptuality. The concept in itself, before all content, hypostasizes its own form against the content. Thereby however also the identity-principle: that what is solely postulated in thought-practice would be a matter-at-hand in itself, something solid, something proper. Identifying thought concretizes by means of the logical identity of the concept. Dialectics amounts, according to its subjective side, to a thinking wherein the form of thought no longer turns its objects into immutable things which stay the same; that they would be so, is refuted by experience. How labile the identity of what is solid to traditional philosophy is, can be learned from its guarantor, the individual-human consciousness. In Kant, it is supposed to ground every identity as a generally designated unity. In fact an older one, looking back to when it once began to consciously exist to some extent, clearly recalls its distant past. It produces a unity, however irreally childhood may slip away from it. In that irreality however the I which one remembers, which one once was and potentially is once again, becomes at the same time an other, an alien, to be detachedly observed. Such ambivalence of identity and non-identity is preserved all the way into the logical problematic of identity. The expert jargon had the ready-made formula of the identity in the non-identity ready for this.

It would need to be contrasted first with the non-identity in identity. Such a mere formal inversion meanwhile allows room for the subreption, that dialectics would be in spite of everything *prima philosophia*, as “*prima dialectica*” [Latin: originary dialectics].⁸⁵ The turn to the non-identical is borne out in its execution; if it remained a declaration, it would revoke itself. In the traditional philosophies, even where they, in Schelling’s words, construed, the construction was in actuality post-construction, which tolerated nothing not already predigested by the former. In that it interpreted even what was heterogenous to it as itself, ultimately as the Spirit, it turned once again into what is the same, into the identical, in which they repeated themselves as in a gigantic analytic judgement, leaving no room for the qualitatively new. It was ingrained into the thought-habit that without such an identity-structure philosophy would not be possible and would crumble into the pure juxtaposition of established positions. The mere attempt to turn philosophical thought towards the non-identical instead of identity would be absurd; it would a priori reduce the non-identical to its concept and thereby identify it. All these sorts of considerations are too radical and for that reason, like most radical questions, not radical enough. The form of the untiring recourse, in which something of the lash of the work-ethic rages, shrinks ever further away from what is to be seen through, and leaves it undisturbed. The category of the root, of the origin itself is dominating, the confirmation of what came first, because it was there first; of the chthonic against the migrant, of the settled against the mobile. What is alluring as the origin, because it does not want to be assuaged by what is derived, by ideology, is for its part an ideological principle. The conservative-sounding sentence of Karl Kraus, “Origin is the goal”, also expresses something scarcely meant in its own time and place: that the static bad state of affairs of the

85 “If the dialectic only reworks the gains of the particular sciences and thinks them into a whole: then it is a higher empiricism, and actually nothing but the sort of reflection, which toils to depict the harmony of the whole out of the experiences. Then however dialectics may not break from the genetic observation; it may not boast of immanent progress, which indeed excludes all accidental acquisition of observation and discovery; then it works only in the same ways and with the same means as all the other sciences, differing solely in the goal, to unite the parts into the thought of the whole. A thought-provoking dilemma can thus be observed here. Either the dialectical development is independent and only determined by itself; then it must in fact know everything out of itself. Or it presupposes the finite sciences and empirical forms of knowledge; then however immanent progress and the seamless context is shot through by what is externally absorbed; and it acts uncritically towards experience. The dialectic may choose. We see no third possibility.” (F.A. Trendelenburg, *Logical Investigations*, Vol. I., Leipzig 1870, Pg. 91)

concept of the origin must be removed. The goal would not be to find the way back to the origin, to the phantasm of a good nature, but rather the origin would devolve to the goal, would constitute itself out of the latter. No origin except in the life of the ephemeral.

SYNTHESIS 158–161

In its idealistic form dialectics was also a philosophy of origins. Hegel compared it to a circle. The return of the result of the movement to its beginning fatally annuls it: the identity of the subject and object was supposed to smoothly produce itself thereby. Its epistemological instrument is called the synthesis. It is not to be critiqued as an individual thought-act, which combines separate moments into their relation, but as a guiding and highest idea. In its general usage meanwhile the concept of the synthesis, the bulwark against decomposition, has patently taken on that tenor which took on its perhaps most repulsive form in the discovery of an alleged psycho-synthesis against Freudian psychoanalysis; idiosyncrasy balks at the usage of the word synthesis. Hegel used it far more seldom than his triple schemata, already convicted of its rattling, might lead one to suspect. This ought to correspond to the factual structure of his thinking. What predominates are the determinate negations of concepts, turned to and fro, envisioned from the most extreme proximity. What characterizes itself as the synthesis in such meditations, keeping faith with the negation insofar as what is supposed to be rescued therein, is what each preceding movement of the concept succumbed to. The Hegelian synthesis is throughout the insight into the insufficiency of that movement, into the costs of its production, as it were. As early as the introduction to the *Phenomenology* he gets to the very border of the consciousness of the negative essence of the dialectical logic he is expounding. Its command – to gaze purely at each and every concept until it moves itself, becomes non-identical with itself, by virtue of its own meaning, hence of its identity – is one of analysis, not synthesis. What is static in the concepts is supposed, so as to satisfy these latter, to release what is dynamic out of itself, comparable to the commotion of the drop of water under a microscope. That is why the method was called phenomenological, a passive relationship to what appears. It was, in Hegel, as what Benjamin called a dialectics at a standstill, already far more progressive than anything which appeared a hundred years later as phenomenology. Dialectics means, objectively, the breaking

of the identity-compulsion through the stored-up energies which are bound up in its concretizations. This ended up partly prevailing in Hegel, who indeed could not confess to what was untrue in the identity-compulsion. In that the concept experiences itself as non-identical and moves, it leads, no longer merely itself, to what Hegelian terminology terms its Other,⁸⁶ without sucking it dry. It determines itself by that which is outside it, because it does not exhaust itself according to what is its own. As itself it is not at all merely it itself. Where Hegel in the *Science of Logic* deals with the synthesis of the first triad, that of becoming,⁸⁷ it is only after he equates being and nothingness as what is entirely empty and devoid of determination, that he pays attention to the difference which registers the absolute divergence of the literal linguistic meaning of both concepts. He refined his earlier doctrine that identity could be meaningfully predicated, that is to say more than tautologically, only by the non-identical: only when identified with each other, by means of its synthesis, would the moments become non-identical. From this the assertion of their identity accrued that restlessness, which Hegel called becoming: it trembles in itself. As the consciousness of non-identity through identity dialectics is not only a progressive but a simultaneously retrograde process; to this extent the image of a circle describes it accurately. The development of the concept is also a reaching back, the synthesis the determination of the difference which perished in the concept, “disappeared”; almost as in Hölderlin’s anamnesis of what is natural, which fell away. Only in the consummated synthesis, the unification of the contradictory moments, is their difference revealed. Without the step that being would be the same as nothingness, both would be indifferent to each other, to use a favorite term of Hegel; only when they are supposed to be the same, do they become contradictory. Dialectics is not ashamed of the reminiscence of the Echternach spring parade. Unquestionably Hegel had, against Kant, delimited the priority of the synthesis: in keeping with the model of the later Platonic dialogue, he cognized the Many and the One [Einheit: the One, the unitary], which Kant regarded as contiguous categories, as moments, neither of which would be without the other. Nevertheless Hegel is, like Kant and the entire tradition, including Plato, a partisan of the One. Not even its abstract negation deserves thinking. The illusion of holding the Many immediately in hand would recoil as

86 See Hegel, WW 4, *ibid* pg 543.

87 See *ibid.* pg 98.

mimetic regression back into mythology, into the horror of the diffuse, just as the counter-pole of unitary thinking [Einheitsdenken], the imitation of blind nature through its suppression, ends up in mythical domination. The self-reflection of the Enlightenment is not its revocation: it is corrupted into the latter for the sake of the contemporary status quo. Even the self-critical turn of unitary thinking rests upon concepts, congealed syntheses. The tendency of the synthesizing acts is to be redirected, by becoming aware of what it inflicts upon the Many. Solely the One transcends the One. In it the affinity is granted its right to exist, which was driven back by the advance of the One and nevertheless, secularized to the point of unrecognizability, hibernates in it. The syntheses of the subject imitate, as Plato well knew, what that synthesis, mediately [mittelbar], with the concept, wishes on its own.

CRITIQUE OF POSITIVE NEGATION 161–163

The non-identical is not to be won immediately as something positive for its part and also not through the negation of the negative. This latter is not itself, as in Hegel, the affirmation. The positive, which to him is supposed to result from the negation, has more than just its name in common with that positivity which he fought in his youth. The equation of the negation of the negation with positivity is the quintessence of identification, the formal principle reduced to its purest form. With it the anti-dialectical principle wins the upper hand in the innermost core of dialectics, that traditional logic, which more arithmetico [Latin: in mathematical terms] books minus times minus as a plus. It was borrowed from that mathematics, against which Hegel otherwise so idiosyncratically reacted. If the whole is the bane, the negative, then the negation of the particularities which have their epitome in that whole remains negative. Its positive would be solely the determinate negation, critique, not a circumventing result, which the affirmation could happily hold in its hand. In the reproduction of an opaque immediacy which, as something come to be, is also appearance [Schein], the very positivity of the mature Hegel bears marks of what according to predialectical usage is bad. While his analyses destroy the appearance [Schein] of the being-in-itself of subjectivity,⁸⁸ for that reason however the institution which is supposed

to sublate subjectivity and bring it to itself is by no means the higher one, as he almost mechanically treats it. Rather what is reproduced in it still further is what was negated with good reason in subjectivity, however abstract this latter may be as itself something suppressed. The negation which the subject practiced was legitimate; also that which was practiced on it, and is nevertheless ideology. By forgetting the right of the preceding one at every new dialectical level, against the intermittent insight of his own logic, Hegel prepares the imitation of what he scolded as the abstract negation: abstract – namely confirmed by subjective caprice – positivity. This springs theoretically from the method, not, as it ought to according to Hegel, from the thing, and has spread throughout the world as an ideology as much as it turns into a real mockery and thereby convicts itself of its unwholesome nature [Unwesen]. What is positive in itself is fetishized from the vernacular, in which human beings praise what they positively would be, finally to the bloodthirsty phrase of the positive forces. By contrast what is to be taken seriously about the unwavering negation is that it does not lend itself to the sanctioning of the existent. The negation of the negation does not make this revocable, but proves that it was not negative enough; otherwise dialectics remains indeed what in Hegel it was integrated into, however at the price of its depotentialization, indifferent in the end towards what is posited at the beginning. What is negated is negative, until it has passed away. This is the decisive break from Hegel. To gloss over the dialectical contradiction, the expression of the indissolubly non-identical, once more by identity means so much as to ignore what it says, returning it to pure consistency-thinking. That the negation of the negation would be a positivity, can only be argued by those to whom positivity, as a universal conceptuality, is already presupposed at the outset. It rakes in the spoils of the primacy of logic over the metalogical, of the idealistic deception of philosophy in its abstract form, justification in itself. The negation of the negation would be once more identity, renewed delusion; the projection of consistency-logic, finally that of the principle of subjectivity, on the absolute. Between the most profound insight and its decay, Hegel's sentence shimmers iridescently: "The truth is also what an insight lacks or where it is wrong, then he or she is practically obliged by virtue of such determinacy to already have what is missing. Only this moment of the determinate negation, as something for its part subjective, is not to be credited as something objective let alone to metaphysics. In any case that moment is the strongest argument in favor of the adequacy of emphatic cognition; in favor of its capacity for nevertheless doing so, and therein the possibility of a metaphysics, beyond the Hegelian one, finds support.

the positive as the knowledge which accords with the object, but it is only this equality [Gleichheit] with itself, insofar as knowledge conducts itself negatively towards the other, has penetrated the object and has sublated the negation, which it is.”⁸⁹ The qualification of truth as the negative conduct of knowledge, which penetrates the object – hence extinguishes the appearance [Schein] of its immediate being-so – sounds like a program of negative dialectics as one of a knowledge which “accords with the object”; however the establishment of this knowledge as a positivity abjures that program. Through the formulation of the “equality with itself”, of pure identity, the knowledge of the object is revealed to be mere rigmarole, because this knowledge is no longer that of the object at all, but the tautology of an absolutely posited *noêsis noêseôs* [Greek: thinking of thinking]. The idea of reconciliation irreconcilably opposes its affirmation in the concept. If it was objected to this that the critique of the positive negation of the negation would cut the vital nerve of Hegel’s logic and permit no dialectical movement at all, then this latter would be delimited to a naïve faith in the authority of Hegel’s self-understanding. While the construction of his system would undoubtedly fall apart without that principle, dialectics has its experience-content not in the principle but in the resistance of the Other against identity; hence its power. In it the subject too lies hidden, insofar as its real domination creates contradictions, but these have seeped into the object. To attribute dialectics purely to the subject, to clear away the contradiction through itself, as it were, also clears away dialectics, by expanding it into a totality. In Hegel it originated in the system, but does not have its measure therein.

WHAT IS INDIVIDUAL TOO IS NO ULTIMATE 163–164

Thinking, which went astray in identity, capitulates easily to what is indissoluble and turns the indissolubility of the object into a taboo for the subject, which is supposed to irrationalistically or scientifically resign itself not to touch what is not the same as it, surrendering to the current cognitive ideal, thereby even paying homage to it. Such an attitude of thought is by no means foreign to that ideal. In every case it binds the appetite for incorporation with the aversion to what is not incorporated, which precisely requires cognition. The resignation of theory before the individuality labors indeed no less for what exists, to which it lends

89 Hegel, *ibid.* pg 543.

the nimbus and the authority of intellectual impenetrability and hardness, than does a voracious exuberance. As little as what individually exists coincides with its master-concept, that of existence, so little is it uninterpretable, nor for its part any ultimate, against which cognition knocks its head in vain. In keeping with the most enduring result of Hegelian logic it is not simply for itself but an other in itself and tied to others. What is, is more, than it is. This “more” is not imposed on it, but remains, as what is squeezed out of it, immanent to it. To this extent the non-identical would be the thing’s own identity against its identifications. The innermost core of the object proves to be simultaneously external to this, its sealed-off character as appearance [Schein], the reflex of the identifying, solidifying procedure. Where the thinking insistence in relation to the individual leads is towards its essence, instead of towards the general, which it would represent. Communication with others crystallizes itself in the individual, which is mediated in its existence [Dasein] by them. In fact the general, as Husserl recognized, dwells in the center of the individual thing, does not constitute itself in the comparison of something individual with others. For absolute individuality – and Husserl paid no attention to this – is the product of the same process of abstraction, which is set in motion for the sake of the generality. While the individual is not to be deduced out of thought, the core of the individual would be comparable to those works of art which renounce all schematas, which are individuated to the utmost degree, whose analysis rediscovers moments of the generality in the extremity of their individuation, its participation, hidden even from itself, in what is typical.

CONSTELLATION 164–166

The unifying moment survives, without the negation of the negation, yet also without delivering itself to the abstraction as the highest principle, not by advancing step by step towards the general master-concept from the concepts, but by these latter entering into a constellation. These illuminate the specifics of the object which the classifying procedure is indifferent towards or uncomfortable with. The model for this is the conduct of language. It offers no mere sign-system for cognitive functions. Where it appears essentially as language, becoming portrayal [Darstellung], it does not define its concepts. It obtains their objectivity through the relationship in which it posits the concepts, centered around a thing. It thereby serves the intention of the concept, to wholly express what is meant.

Solely constellations represent, from without, what the concept has cut away from within, the “more”, which the former wishes to be, so very much as it cannot be the latter. By gathering around the thing to be cognized, the concepts potentially determine its innermost core, thinking to attain what thinking necessarily stamped out of itself. The Hegelian usage of the terminus concrete, according to which the thing itself is its context, not its pure selfness, registers this, without however, in spite of all critique of discursive logic, ignoring this. But Hegel’s dialectic was one without language, while the simplest literal meaning of dialectics postulates language; to this extent Hegel remained the adept of current science. He did not need language in the emphatic sense, because to him everything, even what is devoid of language and opaque, is supposed to be Spirit and the Spirit, the context. This supposition is beyond salvation. That which is resolvable, which is not in any previously-thought context, does indeed transcend its self-enclosed nature out of itself, as what is non-identical. It communicates with that from which the concept separated it. It is opaque only for the totality-claim of identity; it resists the latter’s pressure. As such however it seeks expression. Through language it dispels the bane of its selfness. What in the non-identical is not to be defined in its concept, surpasses its individual existence, which shrinks into the polarity to the concept, at which it stares. The interior of the non-identical is its relationship to that which it is not itself and which its instituted, frozen identity with itself withholds from it. It attains itself only in its disclosure [Entaeusserung: removal, relinquishment, realization], not in its hardening; this can still be learned from Hegel, without making concessions to the repressive moments of his doctrine of realization [Entäußerung]. The object opens itself to a monadological insistence, which is the consciousness of the constellation, in which it stands: the possibility of immersion in what is internal necessitates what is external. Such immanent universality of the individual however is objective as sedimented history. This is in it and outside it, something all-encompassing, in which it has its place. To become aware of the constellation in which the thing stands, means so much as to decode the one which the latter bears within itself, as what has come to be. The chorismos of the outside and the inside is for its part historically conditioned. The only knowledge which can unleash the history in the object, is that which is aware of the historical positional value of the object in its relationship to others;

the updating and concentration of something already known, which it transforms. The cognition of the object in its constellation is that of the process, which it has stored up within itself. As a constellation the theoretical thought circles around the concept, which it would like to open, hoping that it springs ajar like the lock of a heavily guarded safe: only not by means of a single key or a single number, but by a number-combination.

CONSTELLATION IN SCIENCE 166–168

How objects are to be disclosed through constellations is to be gathered less from philosophy, which did not interest itself in this, than from scientific investigations of merit: in many cases the achieved scientific work was ahead of its philosophical self-understanding, that of scientivism. One need by no means start out from its own content, according to metaphysical investigations like Benjamin's *Origin of the German Tragedy-Play*, which grasp the concept of truth itself as a constellation.⁹⁰ One could return to a scholar of so positivistic a bent as Max Weber. He indeed understood the "ideal types", quite in keeping with subjectivistic epistemology, as an aid in approaching the object, excluding every substantiality in itself and to be relinquished any which way. But just as in all nominalism, however null and void it may consider its concepts, something of the constitution of the thing strikes through this and reaches beyond the thought-practical advantage – not the least motive for the critique of unreflective nominalism – so are the material works of Weber derived far more from the object, than the southwestern German methodology would lead one to expect. In fact the concept is adequate grounds for the thing⁹¹, insofar as the investigation of an at any rate social object becomes false, where it limits itself to a dependency inside its domain, which grounded the object, and which ignores its determinations through the totality. Without the superordinated concept, those dependencies conceal the most effective one of all, that of society, and this cannot be adequately

90 See Walter Benjamin, *Origin of the German Tragedy-play* [Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels], Frankfurt 1963, pg 15.

91 "This relation, the whole as the essential unity, lies only in the concept, in the purpose. For this unity the mechanical causes are not sufficient, because they are not grounded in the purpose, as the unity of the determinations. Under sufficient grounds, Leibniz understood one which would also suffice for this unity, hence would comprehend in itself not the mere causes, but the final causes. This determination of the ground does not however belong here; the teleological ground is a property of the concept and of the mediation through the same, which is reason." (Hegel, WW 4, ibid. Pg 555)

made up for by the individual res, which the concept has under itself. It appears however solely through the individual, and thereby the concept changes once more into the determinate cognition. In contrast to current scientific practice, the difficulty of the definition of historical concepts became clear to Weber when, in the treatise on the Protestant ethic and the Spirit of capitalism, he raised the question of their definition, as only philosophers before him had: Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche. He expressly rejected the delimiting definition-procedure according to the schema “genus proximum, differentia specific”⁹² and demanded instead that sociological concepts ought to “be gradually composed [komponieren: to compose musically] out of individual particular pieces extracted from historical reality. The place of the final conceptual reporting of the results lies therefore not at the beginning of the investigation, but at the end.”⁹³ Whether such a definition is required for once and for all, or whether what Weber called “composing”, without formally definitory results, has the capacity to be what Weber’s epistemological intent would like it to be, remains unsettled. So little as definitions are the be-all and end-all of cognition, which vulgar scientivism regards them as, so little are they to be banished. The thinking, which could not master the definition during its course, which is incapable of moments where linguistic precision could stand in for the thing, would very likely be as sterile as one which glutted itself on verbal definitions. More essential, however, is what Weber termed as composing, which would be unacceptable to orthodox scientivism. He is indeed keeping merely the subjective side, the procedure of the cognition, in view. But the compositions in question may well be similarly arranged as their analogue, the musical ones. Subjectively produced, these are successful only where the subjective production perishes in them. The context, which creates it – precisely the “constellation” – becomes legible as the sign of objectivity: of intellectual content. That which is similar to a text [Schriftähnliche] in such constellations is the recoil of what is subjectively thought and brought together in objectivity by means of language. Even a procedure as obliged to the traditional ideal of science and its theories as that of Max Weber by no means lacks this moment, though it is not thematic in him. While his most mature works, above all *Economy and Society*, seem to suffer

92 Max Weber, *Collected Essays on The Sociology of Religion, Volume 1* [Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Religionssoziologie I], Tübingen 1947, pg 30.

93 Ibid.

at times from a surplus of verbal definitions borrowed from jurisprudence, these latter are, looked at more closely, more than such; not only conceptual anchorings but rather attempts, by the gathering of concepts around the sought-after central one, to express what it aims at, instead of circumscribing it to operative ends. The in every respect decisive concept of capitalism is thus emphatically demarcated from isolated and subjective categories like acquisitiveness or the profit-motive, similarly by the way to Marx. The oft-cited profit-motive has to be oriented in capitalism to the profit-principle, to market chances, it must avail itself of the calculating capital account; its organizational form has to be that of free labor, household and firm have to be separated, it requires bookkeeping and a rational legal system in accordance with the dominating principle of rationality in capitalism at large.⁹⁴ The completeness of this catalogue remains in doubt; it is especially to be asked, as to whether the Weberian emphasis on rationality, disregarding the class-relationship which reproduces itself through the exchange of equivalents, already equates the method of capitalism overmuch to its "Spirit", although the exchange of equivalents and its problematic would certainly not be thinkable without rationality. Precisely the increasing tendency of integration of the capitalist system however, whose moments intertwine into a constantly more complete functional context, makes the old question concerning the cause as opposed to the constellation ever more precarious; not the critique of epistemology, but the real course of history necessitates the search for constellations. If these appear in Weber in place of a systematics, whose absence one would gladly reproach him for, then his thinking proves its worth as a third possibility beyond the alternatives of positivism and idealism.

ESSENCE AND APPEARANCE 169–172

Where a category – through negative dialectics, that of identity and of totality – changes itself, the constellation of all changes and thereby in turn each one. The concepts of essence and appearance are paradigmatic of this. They originate out of the philosophical tradition, are maintained, but their directional tendency is redirected. Essence is no longer to be hypostasized as pure intellectual being-in-itself. Rather, essence passes over into what lies hidden beneath the façade of the immediate, of the presumed facts, which makes them into what they are; the

94 See *ibid.* pg 4.

law of doom, which history has obeyed hitherto; all the more irresistible, the deeper it crawls beneath the facts, in order to be comfortably denied by them. Such essence [Wesen] is downright mischief-making [Unwesen], the arrangement of the world which degrades human beings into the means of their *sese conservare* [Latin: self-preservation], curtailing and threatening their life, by reproducing it and deceiving them that things are so, in order to satisfy their needs. This essence too must appear like the Hegelian one: masked in its own contradiction. Only in the contradiction of the existent to that which it claims to be, can essence be cognized. Indeed it, too, is conceptual in respect to the presumed facts, not immediate. But such conceptuality is not mere *physei* [Greek: by nature], the product of the subject of cognition, in which it finally finds itself once more confirmed. Instead it expresses the fact that the conceptualized world, however much also through the fault of the subject, is not its own but hostile to it. This is almost imperceptibly attested to by the apperception [Wesenschau] of the Husserlian doctrine. It amounts to the complete alienation of essence from the consciousness which grasps it. It recalls, albeit in the fetishized form of an utterly absolute ideal sphere, that even the concepts to which their essentialities are unthinkingly equated are not only the products of syntheses and abstractions: they represent equally, too, a moment in the many, which calls up the concepts, which according to idealistic doctrine are merely posited. Husserl's hypertrophied idealism, the ontologization of pure Spirit, for that reason long unknown to itself, helped in its most effective texts to give distorted expression to an anti-idealistic motive, the dissatisfaction with the thesis of the hegemony of the thinking subject. Phenomenology forbade the latter from proscribing laws, where it already had to obey them: to that extent it experiences them as something objective. Because meanwhile for Husserl, as for the idealists, all mediations are put on the noetic side, that of the subject, he cannot otherwise conceive of the moment of objectivity in the concept than as immediacy *sui generis* [Latin: general in itself] and must copy it, with an epistemological act of violence, from the sense-perception. He frantically denied that the essence in spite of everything is also for its part a moment: originated. Hegel, whom he damned with the arrogance of ignorance, already had the superior insight that the essence-categories of the second book of the *Logic* are as much historically become, products of the self-reflection of the

categories of being, as objectively valid. A thinking which zealously rejected dialectics can no longer attain this, even though Husserl's basic theme, the logical propositions, ought to have thrust this upon him. For such propositions are, according to his theory, equally objective in character, "laws of essence", as, something he at first passed over in silence, tied to thinking and dependent in their innermost core on that which they for their part are not. The absolute of logical absolutism justifies itself in the validity of formal propositions and of mathematics; nevertheless it is not absolute, because the claim of absoluteness, as the positively achieved identity of subject and object, is itself conditioned, the condensation of the subjective totality-claim. The dialectic of essence, as one which is simultaneously in its own way quasi existent and yet not-existent, is however by no means, as in Hegel, to be resolved in the unity of the produced and producing Spirit. His doctrine of the objectivity of essence postulates, being would be the Spirit not yet come to itself. The essence recalls the non-identity in the concept of what is not initially posited by the subject, but which the latter follows. Even the separation of logic and mathematics from the ontic realm, on which the appearance [Schein] of its being-in-itself, the ontological interpretation of formal categories rests, has its ontic aspect as something which rebounds from the ontic, as Hegel would have put it. That ontic moment reproduces itself in them. Because it is impossible for them to see through themselves as something separate and conditioned – for the separation is their own essence – they achieve a kind of existence [Dasein]. Even more however the laws of essence of society and its movement. They are realer than the factual, in which they appear and which deceptively veils them. But they cast aside the traditional attributes of their essentiality. They could be called the negativity, reduced to its concept, which made the world thus, as it is. – Nietzsche, the irreconcilable opponent of the theological heritage in metaphysics, ridiculed the distinction between essence and appearance and delivered the background world [Hinterwelt] over to the backwoodsmen [Hinterwäldlern], therein in accordance with the entirety of positivism. Perhaps nowhere else is it so palpable, how indefatigable Enlightenment comes to benefit the obscurantists. Essence is, what is itself concealed according to the law of the bad state of affairs; to dispute that an essence would exist, means taking the side of appearance [Schein], of total ideology, to which the existent has

meanwhile become. Those who would count everything which appears as the same, because they know of no essence which would permit a distinction, make common cause with the untruth out of the fanatical love of truth, with that scientific tedium which Nietzsche so despised, which can't be bothered with the dignity of the objects to be dealt with, and either parrots public opinion about this dignity or else selects its criterion by whether, as they say, a thing has not yet been worked out. The scientific mindset cedes the decision over what is essential and inessential to the disciplines, which are occupied with the object at any given time; what is essential to one can be inessential to the other. In accordance with this Hegel located the distinction in a third thing, initially outside of the immanent movement of what lies in the thing.⁹⁵ Husserl, who would not dream of a dialectic between the essence and appearance [Schein], is ironically in the right against him: in fact there is indeed a fallible, yet immediate intellectual experience of the essential and inessential, which the scientific need for order can talk the subjects out of only with violence. Where such an experience does not occur, cognition remains immobile and fruitless. Its measure is, what the subjects experience objectively as their suffering. Parallel to the theoretical leveling of essence and appearance, those who cognize subjectively lose, along with the capacity to suffer and to be happy, the primary capability to separate what is essential and what is inessential, without anyone really knowing what is the cause and what is effect. The obstinate urge to check on the accuracy of what is irrelevant, rather than to reflect on what is relevant at the risk of error, counts as one of the most widespread symptoms of regressive consciousness. The latest style of backwoodsmen do not bother themselves with any background world, satisfied with what the front-door world [Vorderwelt] talks them into buying, in words and in silence. Positivism turns into ideology, by eliminating the objective category of essence and then, logically, the interest in the essential. By no means is it exhausted however in the hidden general law. Its positive potential survives in what the law covers, what is inessential to the verdict of the course of the world, what is thrown to the margins.

95 "Insofar as something essential and something inessential are distinguished from each other in an existence, so is this distinction an external positing, a separation of a part of the same existence from another part, which does not touch the existence; a separation, which falls into something third. It is therein undetermined, what belongs to the essential or inessential. It is some sort of external consideration and observation, which makes it so, and that is why the same content is now regarded as essential, now as inessential." (Hegel, *ibid.* pg 487)

The gaze at this, the one at the Freudian “hubbub of the world of appearance” which goes far beyond the psychological one, follows the intention of the particular as the non-identical. What is essential is opposed to the dominating universality, to the bad state of affairs, to the extent that it critically surpasses it.

MEDIATION THROUGH OBJECTIVITY 172–174

The mediation of essence and appearance, of concept and thing, does not remain what it was either, the moment of subjectivity in the object. What mediates the facts is not so much the subjective mechanism which pre-forms and renders them, as the objectivity, heteronomous to the subject, behind that which it can experience. It is denied to the primary subjective circle of experience, is preordained to this. Wherever at the present historical stage one judges too subjectively, to use the current parlance, the subject almost automatically parrots the consensus omnium [Latin: general consensus]. For it would give the object what is its own, instead of being satisfied with the false copy, only where it resisted the average value of such objectivity and made itself free as a subject. It is on this emancipation, not on the insatiable repression of the subject, that objectivity depends today. The overwhelming power of what is objectivated in subjects, which then prevents them from becoming subjects, equally prevents the cognition of what is objective; that is what became of what was once called the “subjective factor”. Now subjectivity is what is mediated rather than objectivity, and such mediation is in more urgent need of analysis than the traditional one. In the subjective mechanisms of mediation, those of objectivity are extended, in which every subject, even the transcendental one, is harnessed. That the data are apperceived, according to their claim, as so and not otherwise, is what the pre-subjective social order sees to, which for its part essentially constitutes the subjectivity, which epistemology regards as constitutive. What in the Kantian deduction of categories ultimately remains contingent, by its own confession, “given”: that reason has these and no other basic concepts at its disposal, is attributed to what the categories, according to Kant, have yet to establish. The universality of mediation is not however a license to level everything between heaven and earth down to it, as if the mediation of the immediate and the mediation of the concept were the same. The mediation is essential to the concept, it is itself according to its constitution immediately the mediation; the mediation of immediacy is meaningful however as the reflection-determination,

only in relation to what it opposes, the immediate. If there is indeed nothing which would not be mediated, then such mediation always necessarily arises, as Hegel emphasized, in something mediated, without which it for its part would not be. That on the other hand what is mediated would not be without mediation, has a purely privative and epistemological character: the expression of the impossibility of determining the something without mediation, hardly more than the tautology that the thinking of something would be thinking just the same. Conversely no mediation would remain without the something. Its nature as something mediated does not lie in immediacy, in the same manner as something immediate in the mediation, which would be mediated. Hegel neglected the distinction. The mediation of the immediate affects its *modus*: the knowledge of it and the borders of such knowledge. Immediacy is no modality, no mere determination of the "how" for a consciousness, but objective: its concept points to what is not to be cleared away through its concept. Mediation by no means says that everything would go into it, but postulates what it is mediated by, something not completely worked through; immediacy itself however stands for a moment which does not require the cognition, the mediation, in the same way this latter does of the immediate. So long as philosophy employs the concepts immediate and mediate [*mittelbar*], which for the time being it can scarcely do without, its language announces the matter-at-hand, which the idealistic version of dialectics denied. That this last passes over the apparently minimal difference, is what lends it its plausibility. The triumph, that the immediacy would in every case be mediated, bulldozes over the mediated and attains the totality of the concept in its blessed journey, no longer held back by anything non-conceptual, the absolute domination of the subject. Because however the difference spirited away is recognizable by dialectics, the total identification in this does not have the last word. It has the capacity to break out of the magic circle, without contrasting it dogmatically from outside to a presumably realistic thesis. The circle of identification, which ultimately always identifies only itself, was drawn by the thinking, which tolerates nothing outside; its imprisonment is its own handiwork. Such totalitarian and for that reason particular rationality was historically dictated by what was threatening in nature. That is its limitation. Identifying thought, the making of everything different into the same, perpetuates the bondage of nature in fear. Unreflective

reason is deluded to the point of madness in view of each and every one which eludes its domination. For the time being, reason is pathic; only by curing itself of this, would reason be. Even the theory of alienation, the ferment of dialectics, confuses the need to approach the heteronomous and to this extent irrational world, in Novalis' words "to be everywhere at home", with the craving for incorporation and persecution; with the archaic barbarism, that the longing subject is incapable of loving the alien, of loving what is different. If the alien were no longer ostracized, there would hardly be any more alienation.

PARTICULARITY AND THE PARTICULAR 174-175

The equivocation in the concept of mediation, which gives rise to the fact that the opposing poles of cognition are equated to each other at the cost of their qualitative difference, on which simply everything depends, dates back to the abstraction. The word "abstract" is however still too abstract, itself equivocal. The unity of what is subsumed under general concepts is fundamentally different from the conceptually determined particular. In this latter the concept is always simultaneously its negative; it cuts short what it is itself and yet cannot immediately be named, and replaces it with identity. This negative, which is false, but at the same time necessary, is the staging-grounds of dialectics. The core, which in its idealistic version is also for its part abstract, is not simply eliminated. By virtue of its differentiation from nothingness, even the most indeterminate something would be, contrary to Hegel, not something purely and simply indeterminate. This refutes the idealistic doctrine of the subjectivity of all determinations. So little as the particular would be determinable without the general, by which it is identified according to current logic, so little is it identical with it. Idealism does not wish to see that a something, be it ever so devoid of qualities, may not however for that reason already be called nothing. Because Hegel shrank back from the dialectic of the particular which he conceived – it annihilated the primacy of the identical and consequently idealism – he is incessantly driven to shadow-boxing. In the place of the particular he slides the general concept of particularization pure and simple, of "existence", for example, in which it is no longer anything particular. This restores the manner of procedure of thinking, which Kant justifiably scolded as the amphiboly of the concepts of reflection in the earlier rationalisms. The Hegelian dialectic becomes sophistic, where it fails.

What makes the particular into the dialectical impulse, its indissolubility in the master-concept, it deals with as a universal matter-at-hand, as if the particular were itself its own master-concept and thereby indissoluble. Precisely thereby the dialectic of non-identical and identity becomes illusory [scheinhaft]: the victory of identity over the identical. The inadequacy of the cognition, which cannot assure itself of any particular without the concept, which is by no means the particular, redounds to the advantage of the Spirit as in a card-trick, which raises itself over the particular and purifies it of what resisted the concept. The general concept of particularity has no power over the particular, which it abstractively means.

ON THE SUBJECT-OBJECT DIALECTIC 176–177

It is easy for the polarity of subject and object to appear for its part as an undialectical structure, in which all dialectics is supposed to take place. But both concepts are originated categories of reflection, formulations for something which is not to be unified; not anything positive, nor any primary matter-at-hand, but negative throughout, the expression solely of non-identity. In spite of this the difference between subject and object is for its part not to be simply negated. They are neither the ultimate duality, nor does the ultimate unity hide behind them. They constitute each other just as much as they diverge from each other by means of such a constitution. If the dualism of subject and object were laid down as a principle, it would be once again total, monistic, just like the identity-principle which it rejects; the absolute duality would be unity. Hegel used this for the purpose of absorbing the subject-object polarity, which he felt rendered him preminent to Fichte and Schelling by developing it according to both sides, into thinking. As a structure of being the dialectic of subject and object becomes according to him the subject.⁹⁶ As abstractions both are thought-products; the

96 "The comprehension of an object consists in fact that nothing other than this, that the I makes the selfsame object to its own, penetrates it, and brings it into its own form, that is into the universality, which is immediate determinacy, or the determinacy, which is immediate universality. The object in the intuition or also in the conception is still something external, alien. Through comprehension the being-in-itself and being-for-itself which it has in intuiting and conceiving, is transformed into a posited being; the I penetrates it thinking. How it is however in thinking, so it is in and for itself; how it is in the intuition and conception, it is appearance; thinking sublates its immediacy, with which it at first comes to us, and makes a posited being out of it; however this, its posited being, is its in-itself and for-itself, or its objectivity. This objectivity has the object therewith in the concept, and this latter is the unity of self-consciousness, in which it has been received; its objectivity or the concept is thus itself nothing other, than the nature of self-consciousness; it has no other moments or determinations, than the I itself." (Hegel, WW 5, *ibid*, pg 16)

supposition of their opposition declares thinking inalienably to what is first. But the dualism does not take the hint of the pure thought. As long as this remains thought, it is consummated according to the dichotomy, which has become the form of thinking and without which thinking would perhaps not be. Every concept, even that of being, reproduces the difference of thinking and what is thought. It was burned into the theoretical consciousness of the antagonistic constitution of reality; insofar as it expresses this, the untruth of the dualism is the truth. Once detached from this however the antagonism would become the philosophical excuse of its eternity. Nothing else is possible except the determinate negation of the individual moments, through which subject and object are opposed absolutely and precisely thereby identified with each other. The subject is in truth never wholly the subject, the object never wholly the object; nevertheless both are not to be pieced together out of a third, which would transcend them. That which is third is no less deceptive. The Kantian agenda [Auskunft], of drawing it away from the positive, finite cognition as the infinite, and spurring this on to untiring effort via the unattainable, is inadequate. The duality of subject and object is to be critically maintained against the totality-claim which inheres to thought. Indeed the separation, which makes the object into what is alien, what is to be dominated and appropriates it, is subjective, the result of ordering preparation. Only the critique of the subjective origin of the separation does not once again bring together what is separated, after it has really split. Consciousness boasts of the unification of what it first arbitrarily divided into elements; hence the ideological overtone of all talk of the synthesis. It is the veil of the analysis, hidden from itself and increasingly tabooed. The antipathy of the vulgar noble consciousness towards this is due to the fact that the dismemberment, which the bourgeois Spirit reproaches its critics for practicing, is its own unconscious handiwork. The rational labor-processes are its model. They require compartmentalization as the condition of commodity production, which resembles the universal-conceptual procedure of the syntheses. If Kant had included the relationship of his method to theory, that of the epistemologically investigating subject to the one under investigation, in the critique of reason, then it would not have escaped him that the forms by which the multiplicity is supposed to be synthesized are for their part

the products of operations, which the structure of the work, revealingly enough, entitled transcendental analytics.

REDIRECTION OF THE SUBJECTIVE REDUCTION 178–180

The course of the epistemological reflection was, according to its predominant tendency, that which traced back objectivity more and more to the subject. Precisely this tendency should be reversed. What in the tradition of philosophy distinguished the concept of subjectivity from the existent, is modeled after the existent. That philosophy, laboring to this day from the lack of self-reflection, forgot the mediation in what is mediated, in the subject, is so little meritorious of sublimity than any other sort of forgetting. As punishment, as it were, the subject is overtaken by what is forgotten. As soon as it is made into an object of epistemological reflection, it shares with this that character of objectivity, whose absence it happily lays claim to as the preeminence before the realm of the factual. Its essentiality, an existence [Dasein] of second potency, presupposes (as Hegel did not fail to state) the first one, facticity, as the condition of its possibility, although negated. The immediacy of the primary reactions was broken through in the formation of the I and with them the spontaneity into which according to transcendental custom the pure I is supposed to contract; its centristic identity goes at the expense of what idealism then attributes to it. The constitutive subject of philosophy is more thingly [dinghafter] than the specific psychological content which it expelled from itself as thingly-naturalistic. The more autocratically the I raises itself up above the existent, the more it imperceptibly turns into an object and ironically countermands its constitutive role. Not merely the pure I is ontically mediated through the empirical one, which shines through unmistakably as the model of the first treatment of the deduction of the pure concept of reason, but so too is the transcendental principle itself, in which philosophy believes to possess its first in contrast to the existent. Alfred Sohn-Rethel was the first to point out that in the latter, in the general and necessary activity of the Spirit, inalienably social labor lies hidden. The aporetic concept of the transcendental subject – one which is not-existent, which nonetheless acts; one which is universal, which is nonetheless supposed to be experienced as particular – would be a soap bubble, could never be created out of the autarkic context of immanence of necessarily

individual consciousness. To this latter however it represents not only what is more abstract, but by means of its formative power also what is more real. Beyond the magic circle of identity philosophy, the transcendental subject can be deciphered as the society which is unconscious of itself. Such unconsciousness can be deduced. Since intellectual labor was separated from the manual kind in the sign of the domination of the Spirit, of the justification of privilege, the divided Spirit was obliged, with the exaggeration due to a bad conscience, to vindicate precisely that domination-claim, which it derived from the thesis that it would be the first and originary, and that is why it takes pains to forget from whence its claim comes, if it is not to crumble. Deep down the Spirit suspects that its stable rule is not at all that of the Spirit, but possesses its *ultima ratio* [Latin: ultimate ratio] in the physical violence at its disposal. It may not utter its secret, at the price of its downfall. The abstraction which, even by the lights of extreme idealists like Fichte, made the subject to a constituents in the first place, reflects the separation from manual labor, discernable through the confrontation with the latter. When Marx told the Lassalleans in the critique of the Gotha program that labor was not, as the vulgar socialists were wont to hold, the sole source of social wealth,⁹⁷ he thereby philosophically expressed, in a period in which he had already left behind the official philosophical thematic, no less than the fact that labor is not to be hypostasized in any form, in the industriousness of hands so little as in intellectual production. Such hypostasis merely perpetuates the illusion of the primacy of the producing principle. It comes to its truth solely in the relationship to that non-identical, for which Marx, in his contempt for epistemology, first chose the crude, all too narrow name of nature, later natural material and other, less incriminating termini.⁹⁸ What ever since the *Critique of Pure Reason* comprised the essence of the transcendental subject, functionality, the pure activity, which occurs in the achievements of the individual subjects and simultaneously surpasses these, projects free-floating labor on the pure subject as origin. If Kant thereby restricted the functionality of the subject, in that it would be null and void without something material befitting it, then he unflinchingly

⁹⁷ See Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Program* [Kritik des Gothaer Programms], Selection and Introduction by Franz Borkenau, Frankfurt am Main 1956, pg 199.

⁹⁸ See Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in the Doctrine of Marx* [Der Begriff der Natur in der Lehre von Marx], in: *Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie* [Frankfurt Contributions to Sociology], Vol 11, Frankfurt 1962, pg 21.

indicated that social labor is one on something; the greater consistency of the subsequent idealists eliminated this without hesitation. The universality of the transcendental subject however is that of the functional context of society, that of a whole, which coalesces out of the individual spontaneities and individual qualities, limiting them in turn through the leveling exchange-principle and virtually removing them, as powerlessly dependent on the whole. The universal domination of exchange-value over human beings, which a priori does not permit subjects to be subjects, degrades subjectivity itself to a mere object, relegating that principle of universality, which asserts that it would establish the predominance of the subject, to untruth. The “more” of the transcendental one is the “less” of the empirical subject, itself utterly reduced.

ON THE INTERPRETATION OF THE TRANSCENDENTAL 180–182

As the extreme borderline case of ideology the transcendental subject comes to within a hair of the truth. The transcendental universality is no mere narcissistic self-exaltation of the I, not the hubris of its autonomy, but has its reality in the domination which ends up prevailing and perpetuating itself through the exchange-principle. The process of abstraction, which is transfigured by philosophy and solely ascribed to the cognizing subject, plays itself out in the factual exchange-society. – The determination of the transcendental as what is necessary, which conjoins itself to functionality and universality, expresses the principle of the self-preservation of the species. This last delivers the legal grounds for the abstraction, without which it cannot work; it is the medium of self-preserving reason. It would not take too much artifice to parody Heidegger, by interpreting the thought of the necessity in what is philosophically universal as the need to avert privation, by remedying the lack of groceries through organized labor; thereby the Heideggerian mythology of language would indeed be unhinged: an apotheosis of the objective Spirit, which from the very beginning ostracized the reflection on the material process, which reaches deep into such, as inferior. – The unity of the consciousness is that of the individual-human and as its principle also visibly bears its trace; thereby that of the existent. For transcendental philosophy, individual self-consciousness indeed becomes due to its ubiquity something universal, which may no longer insist on the advantages of the concretion of self-certainty; in the meantime insofar as the

unity of consciousness is modeled on objectivity, that is to say has its measure in the possibility of the constitution of objects, it is the conceptual reflex of the total, seamless amalgamation of the acts of production in society, by which the objectivity [Objektivität] of commodities, their “objectivity” [Gegenständlichkeit], is formed in the first place. – Moreover that which is solidified, persisting, impenetrable in the I is the mimesis of the impenetrability of the external world, as perceived by primitive consciousness, for the experiencing consciousness. In the intellectual supremacy of the subject, its real powerlessness has its echo. The ego-principle imitates its negation. It is not, as idealism has been drilling in for centuries, that *objectum subiectum* [Latin: object is subject]; unquestionably however, *subiectum objectum* [Latin: subject is object]. The primacy of subjectivity spiritually perpetuates the Darwinian struggle for existence. The subjugation of nature for human ends is a mere natural relationship; that is why the superiority of the reason which controls nature and of its principle is appearance [Schein]. The subject participates epistemologically-metaphysically in it, proclaiming itself as the Baconian master and finally the idealistic creator of all things. In the exertion of its domination it becomes part of what it intends to control, succumbing like the Hegelian master. What comes to light in it is, how very much it is in thrall to the object, by consuming this latter. What it does, is the bane of that which the subject imagines to be under its bane. Its desperate self-exaltation is the reaction to the experience of its powerlessness, which prevents self-reflection; absolute consciousness, unconscious. Kantian moral philosophy gives splendid testimony to this in the unconcealed contradiction that the same subject, which he calls free and sublime, is as something existent a part of that natural context which its freedom wishes to escape. The Platonic doctrine of ideas, a powerful step towards demythologization, already repeats the mythos: it eternalizes those relationships of domination which passed from nature over to human beings, and which is practiced by the latter, as essences. If domination over nature was a condition and stage of demythologization, then this latter would have to reach beyond that domination, if it is itself not to fall prey to mythos. The philosophical emphasis on the constitutive power of the subjective moment however always blocks the truth. Thus do animal species like the triceratops dinosaur or the rhinoceros carry around the armor which protects them, as their own ingrown prison, which they

– at least so it appears anthropologically – seek in vain to shed. The imprisonment in the apparatus of its “survival” [in English] may explain the especial ferocity of the rhinoceros just as much as the unacknowledged and therefore all the more fearsome one of homo sapiens. The subjective moment is enmeshed as it were in the objective one, is itself, as something delimiting which is set down on the subject, objective.

“TRANSCENDENTAL APPEARANCE”

[SCHEIN] 182–184

All this has, according to the traditional norms of philosophy, of the idealistic one and the ontological one, something of the *hosteron proteron* [Greek: what is after is what is before] attached to it. What the weighty tone of stringency is to propose, is that these sorts of considerations presuppose, without confessing it, as mediating what they wished to deduce as mediated, i.e. the subject, thought; all their determinations would already be, as determinations, solely thought-determinations. But the critical thought does not wish to place the object on the orphaned royal throne of the subject, on which the object would be nothing but an idol, but to remove the hierarchy. Indeed the appearance [Schein] that the transcendental subject would be the Archimedean point of leverage, is scarcely to be broken by the analysis of subjectivity purely in itself. For this appearance [Schein] contains, without it needing to be extracted out of the mediations of thought, that which is true of the precedence of society before the individual consciousness and all its experience. The insight into the mediatedness of thinking by means of objectivity does not negate thinking and the objective laws by which it is thinking. That there is no getting around this, indicates for its part exactly that support on the non-identical which thinking, through its own form, denies just as much as it seeks and expresses. The grounds of the transcendental appearance [Scheins] are however still transparent above and beyond Kant: why thinking in the *intentio obliqua* [Latin: oblique intention] always culminates inexorably in its own primacy, the hypostasis of the subject. The abstraction namely, whose reification in the history of nominalism since the Aristotelean critique of Plato has been ascribed to the subject as its error, is itself the principle whereby the subject becomes the subject in the first place, its own essence. That is why the recourse to that which it is not itself seems external, violent. What convicts the subject of

its own caprice, its prius [Latin: first] of its own posteriority, always sounds like transcendental dogma to it. If idealism is criticized strictly from inside out, then it has the defense at hand that the critique thereby sanctions it. By employing its premises, the former would have the latter virtually already in itself; hence would be superior to it. Idealism dismisses objections from outside however as reflection-philosophical, predialectical. The analysis need not however abdicate in view of this alternative. Immanence is the totality of those identity-positions, whose principle is rendered void in immanent critique. Idealism is to be made, as Marx put it, to dance to its “own tune”. The non-identical, which determines it from inside out, following the criterion of identity, is simultaneously the opposite of its principle, which it vainly claims to control. Indeed no immanent critique can serve its purpose completely without knowledge from outside, without a moment of immediacy, if you will, something accessory [Dreingabe] to the subjective thought, which looks beyond the apparatus of dialectics. Precisely idealism cannot denounce that moment, that of spontaneity, because it itself would not be without it. Idealism, whose innermost core was termed spontaneity, breaks through spontaneity. – The subject as ideology is enchanted in the name of subjectivity like Hauff’s Dwarf Nose by the spice Sneeze-with-pleasure. This herb was kept secret from him; thus he never learned to prepare the pâté Suzeraine [French: sovereign pâté], which bears the name of overlordship in decline. No introspection alone would bring him to the insight into the rule of his deformed shape as that of his labor. It requires the push from outside, the wisdom of Goose Mimi. To philosophy, and most of all to the Hegelian one, such a push is heresy. Immanent critique has its border therein, that the law of the context of immanence is ultimately one with the delusion to be broken through. But this moment, truly indeed that of the qualitative leap, is realized solely in the completion of the immanent dialectic, which has the tendency to transcend itself, not entirely dissimilar to the transition of the Platonic dialectic to ideas which exist in themselves; if dialectics made itself totally conclusive, then it would already be that totality, which leads back to the identity-principle. Schelling perceived this interest against Hegel, and thereby offered himself up to ridicule for the abdication of thought, which fled to mysticism. The materialistic moment in Schelling, which ascribed something like a driving power to the material in itself, may have a share in that aspect of his philosophy.

But the leap, too, is not to be hypostasized as in Kierkegaard. Otherwise it would transgress against reason. Dialectics must delimit itself out of the consciousness of itself. The disappointment, however, that philosophy does not awaken from its dream by its own movement entirely without the leap; that it requires what its bane keeps at a distance from it, something other and something new – this disappointment is nothing other than that of the child, which feels sorry during the reading of Hauff's fairytale, because the dwarf released from its misshapen form never had the opportunity to serve the Duke the pâté Suzeraine.

PREPONDERANCE [VORRANG] OF THE OBJECT 184–187

The thorough-going critique of identity gropes for the preponderance [Präponderanz] of the object. Identity-thinking is, even where it claims otherwise, subjectivistic. To revise this, to account for identity as untruth, establishes no equilibrium between subject and object, no hegemony of the functional concept in the cognition: even where it is only infringed upon, the subject is already disempowered. It knows why it feels absolutely threatened by the slightest surplus of the non-identical, according to the measure of its own absoluteness. Even as something minimal it violates the whole, because the whole is its pretension. Subjectivity changes its quality in a context, which it is not capable of developing out of itself. By means of the inequality in the concept of mediation, the subject falls to the object totally differently than the latter to the former. The object can only be thought through the subject, but always preserves itself in contrast to this as an other; the subject is, however, according to its own constitution, already an object in advance. The object is not to be thought out of existence from the subject, even as an idea; but the subject, from the object. In the meaning of subjectivity is also the reckoning of being an object; but not so in the meaning of objectivity, to be a subject. The existing I is implicit even in the sense of the logical "I think, which all my conceptions should be able to follow along", because it is the sequence of time for the condition of its possibility and is the sequence of time only as something temporal. The "my" refers to a subject as an object among objects, and without this "my" there would be in turn no "I think". The expression existence [Dasein], synonymous with the subject, plays at such matters-at-hand. From objectivity it is assumed, that the subject would be; this lends to the latter a touch of objectivity;

it is no accident that *subiectum* [Latin: what is subject], that which underlies, recalls what the artificial language of philosophy named objective. The object by contrast is only related to subjectivity in the reflection on the possibility of its determination. Not that objectivity would be something immediate, that the critique of naïve realism could be forgotten. The preponderance [Vorrang] of the object means the progressive qualitative differentiation of what is mediated in itself, not beyond dialectics but a moment in it, in which it is however articulated. Kant still refused to be talked out of the moment of the preponderance of objectivity. He directed the subjective compartmentalization of the capacity of cognition in the critique of reason⁹⁹ out of objective intent, as well as tenaciously defending the transcendental thing-in-itself.¹⁰⁰ It was evident to him that it did not simply contradict the concept of an object, of being in itself; that its subjective mediation is to be reckoned less to the idea of the object than to the insufficiency of the subject. While it did not succeed in going beyond itself in him either, he did not sacrifice the idea of otherness. Without it, the cognition would degenerate into tautology; what is cognized would be this itself. This clearly irritated the Kantian meditation more than the inconcinnity, that the thing in itself would be the unknown cause of the appearances, even though causality as a category is annexed to the subject in the critique of reason. Insofar as the construction of the transcendental subjectivity was the magnificently paradoxical and fallible effort to master the object in its antipode, then what positive, idealistic dialectics only proclaimed is to be achieved solely through its critique. It requires an ontological moment, to the extent that ontology critically strips the binding constitutive role from the subject, without however substituting for the subject through the object in a sort of second immediacy. The preponderance of the object is attainable solely by subjective reflection, and that upon the subject. One may illuminate this matter-at-hand, difficult to reconcile with the rules of current logic and

99 See Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* [Kritik der reinen Vernunft], 2nd Edition, WW III, Academy Edition, Berlin 1911, pg 93.

100 The preponderance of the object would need to be literally pursued back to where the thought imagines to have achieved its own absolute objectivity, by the release of every single one which is not itself the thought: in formal logic. The something, to which all logical propositions refer, is still, even where it may utterly ignore this, the copy of what the thought means and without which it itself could not be; that which is not thought out [Gedankliche] is the logical-immanent condition of thought. The copula, the “is”, actually always contains, after the model of the existential judgement, objectivity. Therein all hopes of the need for security, of possessing in formal logic something simply and purely unconditional, as the certain foundation of philosophy, are rendered void.

seemingly absurd in its abstract expression, by noting that an Ur-history of the subject could indeed be written, as outlined in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, but no Ur-history of the object. This would always already deal with objects. If it was argued against this that there would be no cognition concerning the object without the cognizing subject, then no ontological priority of the consciousness follows from this. Every assertion that subjectivity would somehow “be”, already includes an objectivity, which the subject by means of its absolute being would first need to ground. Only because the subject is for its part mediated, hence is not the radical Other of the object, which first legitimates this, does it have the capacity to grasp objectivity at all. Rather than constitutive, the subjective mediation is the block before objectivity; the former does not absorb what is essential to the latter, the existent. The autonomized consciousness, the epitome of what is active in the achievements of cognition, has genetically branched off from the libidinous energy of the species-being of humanity. Its essence is not indifferent towards this; by no means does it define, as in Husserl, the “sphere of absolute origins”. Consciousness is the function of the living subject, its concept is formed in its image. This is not to be exorcised out of its own meaning. The objection that the empirical moment of subjectivity would thereby be intermixed with the transcendental or essential one is feeble. Without any relation to an empirical consciousness, to that of the living I, there would be no transcendental, purely intellectual one. Analogous reflections on the genesis of the object would be nugatory. The mediation of the object says, that it may not be statically, dogmatically hypostasized, but is only to be cognized in its imbrication with subjectivity; the mediation of the subject, that without the moment of objectivity it would literally be nothing. The index of the preponderance of the object is the powerlessness of the Spirit in all its judgements hitherto in the arrangement of reality. The negative, that the Spirit’s reconciliation failed along with the identification, that its preponderance [Vorrang] miscarried, becomes the motor of its own disenchantment. It is true and appearance [Schein]: true, because nothing is exempt from the domination, which it reduced to its pure form; untrue, because in its intertwining with domination it is not at all the Spirit, for which it takes itself and claims to be. Thereby the Enlightenment transcends its traditional self-understanding: it is demythologization not merely as *reductio ad hominem* [Latin: reduction to the person], but also conversely as

reductio hominis [Latin: human reduction], as the insight into the deception of the subject, which stylizes itself as the absolute. The subject is the late form of mythos, and yet the equal of its most ancient form.

OBJECT NOT A GIVEN 187–190

The preponderance of the object, as something which is nevertheless itself mediated, does not break off the subject-object dialectic. Immediacy is so little beyond dialectics as mediation. According to the tradition of epistemology the immediate falls under the subject, but as its given fact [Gegebenheit] or affection. Indeed the subject is supposed, insofar as it is autonomous and spontaneous, to have formative power over this; it has none however insofar as what is immediately given would be simply there. It is just as much the bedrock state of affairs [Grundbestand], on which the doctrine of subjectivity rested – that of the “mine”, that of the content of the subject as its possession – as it resists something objective in the form of what is given, the Menetekel, as it were, of objectivity in the subject. That is why Hume, in the name of what is immediate, criticized identity, the principle of the I, which would like to maintain itself as independently-realized against the immediate. Immediacy is not however to be solidified, so as to please an epistemology calibrated to conclusiveness. In it what is immediately given and the forms, which are equally simply given, are tailored complementarily to each other. Though immediacy does command a halt to the idolatry of derivation, it is however for its part also something abstracted from the object, the raw material of the subjective production-process in which epistemology had its model. The given is in its impoverished and blind form not objectivity, but rather merely the borderline value which the subject, after it confiscated the concrete object, has not completely mastered in its own magic circle. To this extent empiricism took note, in spite of all sensualistic reduction of the things, of something of the preponderance of the object: since Locke it insisted that there would be no content of consciousness which did not stem from the senses, would not be “given”. The critique of naïve realism in the whole of empiricism, culminating in the abolition of the thing by Hume, was always, by virtue of the character of facticity of immediacy to which it was tied, and the skepticism against the subject as creator, despite everything still rudimentarily “realistic”. Once thinking has freed itself from the supposition of the preponderance of the subject, then empiristic epistemology no longer has

the legal right to transfer, as a residual determination, a kind of minimum of the object into the immediacy of the data, by means of the subjective reduction. Such a construction is nothing but a compromise between the dogma of the preponderance of the subject and its unattainability; the naked, sensible datum, divested of its determinations, is the product of that process of abstraction, to which the Kantian subjective epistemology contrasted it; the purer the datum from its forms, the more threadbare, "abstract" it also becomes. The residuum of the object as the given, which remains after the subtraction of subjective additions, is a deception of *prima philosophia*. That the determinations through which the object becomes concrete would be merely imposed on it, is valid only for the unshakable faith in the primacy of subjectivity. Its forms are however not, as in Kant's doctrine, something ultimate to cognition; this latter is capable of breaking through it in the course of its experience. If philosophy, disastrously split off from the natural sciences, may refer to physics at all without short-circuiting itself, then it would be in such a context. The latter's development since Einstein has, with theoretical stringency, blasted apart the prison of the intuition as well as the subjective *a priori* of space, time and causality. The subjective – in keeping with the Newtonian principle of observation – experience speaks, with the possibility of such an outbreak, on behalf of the preponderance of the object and against its own supremacy. It turns, as involuntarily dialectical Spirit, the subjective observation against the doctrine of what is subjectively constituted. The object is more than pure facticity; that this is not to be removed, forbids it at the same time to remain content with its abstract concept and its dregs, the recorded sense-data. The idea of a concrete object falls to the critique of subjective-external categorization and that of its correlate, the fiction of something factual, devoid of determination. Nothing in the world is comprised – added up, as it were – out of facticity and concept. The power of proof of the Kantian example of the hundred imaginary thalers, whose reality is not ascribed to them as a further characteristic, strikes the form-content dualism of the *Critique of Pure Reason* itself and has a power far beyond this; actually it denies the distinction between the Many and the One, which the tradition of philosophy has been making since Plato. Neither concept nor facticity are additions to their complement. Hegel's presumptuously idealistic presupposition, that the subject could thus purely, unreservedly deliver itself over to the object, to the thing itself,

because that thing would reveal itself in the process, as what it would already be in itself, the subject, notes something true against idealism beyond the thinking mode of conduct of the subject: it must really “look at” the object, because it does not create the object, and the maxim of cognition is to facilitate this. The postulated passivity of the subject is measured by the objective determinacy of the object. But it requires a more lasting subjective reflection than the identifications which, already according to Kantian doctrine, the consciousness automatically, as it were, unconsciously carries out. That the activity of the Spirit, even that which Kant reckoned as the constitution-problem, is something different than that automatism which he equated it with, specifically comprises the intellectual experience which the idealists discovered, though immediately castrated. What the thing itself may mean is not positive, immediately available; whoever wishes to cognize it, must think more, not less than the point of relation of the synthesis of the Many, which is the same, at bottom, as no thinking at all. Therein the thing is itself by no means a thought-product; rather the non-identical, by and through identity. Such non-identity is no “idea”; but something supplemental to such. The experiencing subject labors to disappear in it. Truth would be its downfall. The latter is merely feigned by the subtraction of everything specific of subjectivity in the scientific method, *ad maiorem gloriam* [Latin: to the greater glory] of the subject, which has grown independent as a method.

OBJECTIVITY AND REIFICATION 190–193

To philosophy of import, the thought of the preponderance of the object is suspect, the aversion against this institutionalized since Fichte. The thousand-fold repeated and varied assurance to the contrary wishes to drown out the festering suspicion that the heteronomous would be mightier than the autonomy, which already in Kant’s doctrine is not supposed to be compelled by that overwhelming power. Such philosophical subjectivism ideologically accompanies the emancipation of the bourgeois I as its foundation. It draws its tenacious power from the misdirected opposition against the existent: against its thingliness. By relativizing or liquefying this, philosophy believes itself to be beyond the primacy of commodities and beyond its subjective form of reflection, the reified consciousness. In Fichte that impulse is unmistakable as the drive towards hegemony. It was anti-ideological insofar as it saw through the being-in-itself of the world, which was confirmed by

conventional, unreflective consciousness as something artificially made, something badly self-preserved. In spite of the preponderance of the object the thingliness of the world is also appearance [Schein]. It misleads the subjects into ascribing the social relationship of their production to things in themselves. This is developed in Marx's chapter on fetishism, truly a piece of the legacy of classic German philosophy. Even its systematic motive survives therein: the fetish-character of commodities is not chalked up to subjective-mistaken consciousness, but objectively deduced out of the social a priori, the process of exchange. Already in Marx the difference is expressed between the preponderance of the object as something to be critically established and its remnants in the existent, its distortion by the commodity-form. Exchange has, as something which occurs [Vorgänge], real objectivity and is nevertheless objectively untrue, violates its own principle, that of equality; that is why it necessarily creates false consciousness, the idol of the market. The natural-rootedness of exchange-society is only sardonically a law of nature; the primacy of the economic, no invariant. It is easy for thought to imagine as consolation that it possesses the philosopher's stone in the dissolution of reification, of the commodity character. But reification itself is the reflection-form of false objectivity; to center theory on it, a form of consciousness, makes critical theory idealistically acceptable to the dominating consciousness and the collective unconscious. It is to this that the earlier texts of Marx, in contrast to *Capital*, owe their contemporary popularity, especially among theologians. There is no lack of irony that the brutal and primitive functionaries who labeled Lukacs a heretic more than forty years ago due to the chapter on reification in the important book *History and Class Consciousness* suspected what was idealistic in his conception. Dialectics is so little to be reduced to reification as to any other isolated category, were it ever so polemical. What human beings suffer from, the lament of reification would in the meantime rather gloss over than denounce. The woe lies in the relationships which damn human beings to powerlessness and apathy and yet would have to be changed by them; not primarily in human beings and the manner in which the relationships appear to them. In contrast to the possibility of total catastrophe, reification is an epiphenomenon; all the more so is the alienation coupled to it, the subjective state of consciousness, which corresponds to it. It is reproduced by fear; consciousness, reified in the already constituted society, is not its constituents

[Latin: what constitutes]. Those who regard the thingly as what is radically evil; who would like to dynamize everything, which is, into pure contemporaneity, tend to be hostile towards the other, the alien, whose name does not resound in alienation for nothing; to that non-identity, which would need to be emancipated not solely in consciousness but in a reconciled humanity. Absolute dynamics however would be that absolute handling of the facts, which violently satisfies itself and misuses the non-identical as its mere occasion. Unbroken universally human slogans serve thereby once again to make what is not the same as the subject, into what is the same. The things harden themselves as fragments of what was subjugated; the latter's rescue means the love for things. What consciousness experiences as thingly and alien is not to be expelled from the dialectic of the existent: negatively, compulsion and heteronomy, yet also the distorted figure of what ought to be loved, and what the bane, the endogamy of consciousness, does not permit to be loved. Far beyond the Romanticism which felt itself as *weltschmerz*, as the suffering from alienation, hover Eichendorff's words, "beautiful stranger [Fremde: alien, stranger]". The reconciled condition would not annex the alien [Fremde] by means of a philosophical imperialism, but would find its happiness in the fact that the latter remains what is distant and divergent in the given nearness, as far beyond the heterogenous as what is its own. The untiring charge of reification blocks that dialectic, and this indicts the construction in the philosophy of history, which supports that complaint. The truly meaningful times, whose return the young Lukacs longed for, were just as much the product of reification, of inhuman institutions, as he only attested to those of the bourgeois ones. Contemporary depictions of medieval cities often look as if executions took place precisely as a form of popular entertainment. Should any sort of harmony of subject and object have prevailed *anno* [Latin: in that year], then it was realized by pressure exactly like the recent ones, and fragile. The transfiguration of past conditions serves the later and superfluous renunciation, which is experienced as inexorable; only when lost do they gain their allure. Their cult, that of the pre-subjective phases, came to itself in the era of declining individuation and the regressive collective in horror. Reification and reified consciousness realized, along with the unbinding of the natural sciences, also the potential of a world without scarcity; previously the

condition of humanity was already dehumanized by what was thingly,¹⁰¹ at least these went together with thingly forms of consciousness, while the indifference for things, which are appraised as pure means and reduced to the subject, helped to grind down humanity. Both are in each other in the thingly, the un-identical of the object and the subjugation of humanity under the dominating relations of production, their own functional context, unbeknownst to them. In his sparse utterances on the constitution of an emancipated society, the mature Marx changed his relationship to the division of labor, to the grounds of reification.¹⁰² He differentiated the condition of freedom from primeval immediacy. In the moment of planning, in which he placed his hopes of production for living beings – in a sense, for the restitution of immediacy – instead of for profit, the thingly alien is preserved; as is the mediation in the outline of the realization, which philosophy at first only thought. That meanwhile dialectics would not be possible without the moment of what is solidified as thingly and would be glossed as a harmless doctrine of transformation, is neither to be chalked up to philosophical habit nor solely to the social compulsion, which the consciousness gives itself to cognize in such solidity. It is up to philosophy, to think what is divergent from thought, which alone makes it into thought, while its daemon tries to talk it into thinking, that it should not be.

TRANSITION TO MATERIALISM 192–194

Through the transition to the preponderance of the object dialectics becomes materialistic. The object, the positive expression of the non-identical, is a terminological mask. In the object, prepared to this by the cognition, what is corporeal is intellectualized in advance by its translation into epistemology, reduced to the sort which Husserl's phenomenology, in general, methodologically suborned it. If the categories of subject and object, indissoluble to the critique of cognition, appear to be posited falsely in such: as not purely opposed to each other, then this also means, it would name what is objective in the object, what is not to be intellectualized therein, as the object only from the standpoint of the subjectively directed analysis, in which the primacy of the subject seems unquestionable. Observed from the outside, what in the reflection on the Spirit is specifically

101 See Benjamin, *German People. A series of letters* [Deutsche Menschen. Eine Folge von Briefen], Frankfurt 1962, afterword by Theodor W. Adorno, pg 128.

102 See Marx, *Capital* [Das Kapital] Vol 1, Berlin 1955, pg 514.

represented as not intellectual, as object, is material. The category of non-identity still obeys the measure of identity. Emancipated from such a measure, the non-identical moments show themselves as matter, or as inseparably fused with what is material. Sensation, the crux of all epistemology, is reinterpreted by this latter into a fact of consciousness, in contradiction to its own full-fledged constitution, which is nevertheless supposed to be the juridical source of cognition. No sensation without the somatic moment. To this extent its concept is, in contrast to what it presumably subsumed, twisted for the sake of the demand of an autarkic context of all stages of cognition. While sensation belongs to consciousness, in keeping with the cognitive principle of stylization, its phenomenology, which is unbiased according to the rules of cognition, must describe it by the same token as that which is not completely worked out in consciousness. Each one of these is in itself also corporeal feeling. The sensation does not even “accompany” it. This would presuppose its chorismos by the bodily; it is obtained solely from the noological intention in it, in the strict sense through abstraction. The linguistic shading of words like sensual, sensuous, indeed even sensation betrays just how little the matters-at-hand designated thereby are what epistemology treats them as, pure moments of cognition. The subject-immanent reconstruction of the world of things would not have the basis of its hierarchy, that of sensation, without the physis, which autarkic epistemology would like to construct over it. The somatic moment is irreducible as the not purely cognitive one in cognition. With this the subjective claim also becomes untenable, exactly where radical empiricism had conserved it. That the cognitive achievements of the cognitive subject are, according to its own meaning, somatic, affects not only the foundational relationship of subject and object but also the dignity of the corporeal. It emerges at the ontic pole of subjective cognition as its core. This dethrones the guiding notion of epistemology, which constitutes the body as the law of the context of sensations and acts, i.e. as intellectualized; sensations are already in themselves what the systematics would like to establish as their formation through consciousness. Traditional philosophy has bewitched what is heterogenous to it through the tailoring of its categories. Neither subject nor object are merely “posited”, in the Hegelian manner of speaking. This alone would fully explain why the antagonism which philosophy clothed in the words subject and object cannot be interpreted as an Ur-matter-

at-hand. Otherwise the Spirit would become the utterly other of the body, in contradiction to what is immanently somatic to it; the antagonism is not however to be annulled by the Spirit alone, because that would virtually intellectualize it once more. What is announced in it is both what the preponderance would have before the subject and slips away from this latter, as well as the irreconcilability of the epoch of the world with the subject, the inverted form, as it were, of the preponderance of objectivity.

MATERIALISM AND IMMEDIACY 195–197

The idealistic critique of materialism gladly deploys, insofar as it proceeds immanently and does not simply preach, the doctrine of the immediately given. The facts of consciousness are supposed to ground, like all judgements over the world of things, the concept of matter as well. If one wished, according to the lights of vulgar materialism, to equate what is intellectual with events in the brain, then the originary sensuous perceptions would have to be, so runs the idealistic counter-argument, such of the events of the brain, not those of for example colors. The indisputable stringency of such a refutation is owed to the stolid caprice of what it polemicizes against. The reduction to the events of consciousness allows itself to be tied to the apron-strings of the scientific cognitive ideal, of the necessity to seamlessly and methodically steel the validity of scientific propositions. Verification, which for its part is subject to the philosophical problematic, becomes its guideline, science is as it were ontologized, as if the criteria of the validity of judgements, the path of their testing, were simply the same as the matters-at-hand which they deal with retroactively, as something already constituted, in keeping with the norms of their subjective comprehensibility. The testing of scientific judgements must be achieved in multiple cases, by making it clear step for step, how one arrived at the judgement in question. It is thereby subjectively accentuated: which mistakes the cognizing subject made, when its judgement – say, one which runs counter to other propositions in the same discipline – was made. It is evident, however, that such retrospective questions do not coincide with the matter-at-hand being judged and its objective foundation. If someone has miscalculated, and if this is demonstrated to them, then this does not mean that the example of calculation or the mathematical rules governing this would be reducible to “their” calculation, as much as this too, as a moment of its objectivity, may require subjective acts. This

distinction has considerable consequences for the concept of a transcendental, constitutive logic. Kant already repeated the mistake for which he lambasted his rationalistic predecessors, an amphiboly of the concepts of reflection. He substituted the reflection on the path which the cognizing subject took in judgements, in place of the objective foundation of the judgement. This is not the least reason that the *Critique of Pure Reason* shows itself to be a theory of science. To install that amphiboly as a philosophical principle, ultimately to press metaphysics out of it like wine, was probably the most disastrous Freudian slip in the history of modern philosophy. It is for its part to be understood in the philosophy of history. After the destruction of the Thomistic ordo [Latin: social order], which regarded objectivity as the will of God, this latter appeared to break down. Simultaneously however scientific objectivity, in contrast to mere opinion, increased immeasurably and with it the self-confidence of its organ, the ratio. The contradiction was to be resolved by causing the ratio to permit its reinterpretation from the instrument, from the court of appeals of reflection, into what is constituted, in the sort of ontological manner by which the rationalism of the Wolff school expressly proceeded. To this extent the Kantian criticism remained bound to pre-critical thought and the entire subjective doctrine of constitution; this became evident in the post-Kantian idealists. The hypostasis of the means, today already the self-evident custom of human beings, lay theoretically in the so-called Copernican turn. It is not for nothing that this metaphor in Kant is, according to the substantive tendency, the opposite of the astronomical one. The traditional discursive logic, which directs the current argumentation against materialism, would have to criticize the procedure as *petitio principii* [Latin: begging the question]. The precedence of consciousness, which for its part is supposed to legitimate science, as it is presupposed at the beginning of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is deduced from the standards of the manner of procedure, which confirm or refute judgements according to scientific ground-rules. Such a circular conclusion is the index of a false approach. What it hushes up, is that there is no pure fact of the consciousness in itself, as an unquestionable and absolute first: that was the basic experience of the generation of the Jugendstil and neo-romantics, who were horror-stricken by the prevailing conception of a conclusive factuality of what is psychic. Retrospectively, under the dictate of validity-controls and out of the classificatory need, the facts

of consciousness become differentiated from their subtle border-transitions, which refute what is supposedly solid in them, especially to those of corporeal innervations. This confirms that no subject of the immediately given, no I, which might be given, is possible independent from the transsubjective world. Those to whom something is given belong a priori to the same sphere as what was given to them. This condemns the thesis of the subjective a priori. Materialism is not the dogma which its canny opponents accuse it of, but rather the dissolution of something which for its part is seen through as dogmatic; hence its justification in critical philosophy. When Kant construed freedom as freedom from sensation in the *Foundation for a Metaphysics of Morals*, he did involuntary honor to what he wished to argue away. The idealistic hierarchy of the given facts [Gegebenheiten] is so little to be rescued as the absolute separation of body and Spirit, which was secretly already tantamount to the preponderance of the Spirit. Both ended up historically, in the course of the development of rationality and the ego-principle, in opposition to each other; yet neither is without the other. Though the logic of non-contradictoriness may find fault with this, it is however commanded to halt by that matter-at-hand. The phenomenology of the facts of consciousness necessitates going beyond, where they have been defined as such.

DIALECTICS NO SOCIOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE 197–198

Marx had emphasized historical materialism as opposed to the vulgar-metaphysical kind. He thereby drew it into the philosophical problematic, leaving vulgar materialism to romp about dogmatically on this side of philosophy. Since then materialism is no longer a counter-position to be voluntarily taken up, but the epitome of the critique of idealism and of the reality for which idealism opts, by distorting it. Horkheimer's formulation "critical theory" does not wish to make materialism acceptable, but rather to bring to the latter the theoretical self-consciousness, whereby it distinguishes itself no less from the world-explanations of dilettantes than from the "traditional theory" of science. Theory must, as a dialectical one – like the Marxist one, by far and away – be immanent, even when it ultimately negates the entire sphere in which it moves. This contrasts it to a sociology of knowledge, which merely brought something from outside and, as philosophy quickly discovered, is powerless against this. This fails before philosophy,

whose social function and whose conditionality of interest it substituted for the truth-content, while it did not enter into that truth-content's own critique, behaving indifferently towards it. It fails equally before the concept of ideology, out of which it cooks its watery beggar's soup. For the concept of ideology is meaningful only in the relationship to the truth or untruth of what it aims at; socially necessary appearance [Schein] can be spoken of solely in reference to what is not appearance [Schein], and what indeed has its index in the appearance [Schein]. It is up to the critique of ideology to judge the share of the subject and object and its dynamic. It rejects false objectivity, the fetishism of concepts, through the reduction to the social subject; similarly with false subjectivity, the claim, at times concealed almost to invisibility, that what is would be the Spirit, by the proof of its swindle, its parasitic bad state of affairs as well as its immanent hostility to the Spirit. By contrast the all of the undifferentiated total concept of ideology terminates in nothingness. As soon as it ceases to distinguish itself from the right consciousness, then it no longer serves for the critique the wrong one. In the idea of objective truth materialistic dialectics becomes necessarily philosophical, despite and by virtue of all the critique of philosophy, which it practices. The sociology of knowledge on the other hand denies the objective structure of society as well as the idea of objective truth and its cognition. To it society is nothing but the average value of individual modes of reaction, similar to the type of positivistic economics co-founded by Pareto. It turns the doctrine of ideology back into a doctrine of idols, in the mold of the early bourgeois one; actually a cheap legal trick, in order to be rid of materialistic dialectics along with the entirety of philosophy. In classification the Spirit becomes localized *tel quel* [French: as such]. Such a reduction of so-called forms of consciousness is entirely compatible with philosophical apologetics. The excuse of the sociology of knowledge remains undisturbed, that the truth or untruth of what is philosophically taught would have nothing to do with social conditions; relativism and the division of labor ally themselves. The two worlds theory of the later Scheler wasted no time in exploiting this. Social categories are to be accessed philosophically solely through the decoding of the truth-content of the philosophical ones.

ON THE CONCEPT OF THE SPIRIT 198–200

The Hegelian chapter on the master and slave developed, as is commonly known, the genesis of self-consciousness out of the labor-relation, and indeed in the adaptation of the I to the purpose determined by it as well as to heterogeneous matter. The origin of the I in the not-I is scarcely concealed therein. It is sought in the real life-process, in the nomothetisms [Gesetzmässigkeiten] of the survival of the species, of its provisioning with groceries. Hegel hypostasizes the Spirit in vain after this. In order to somehow bring it off, he must inflate it into the whole, although the Spirit has, according to the concept, its *differentia specifica* in that it is a subject, therefore not the whole: no increase of tension of the dialectical concept can avoid such subreption. The Spirit, which is supposed to be the totality, is a nonsense, similar to the arriviste parties in the singular in the 20th century, which tolerate no other one beside themselves and whose names grin in the totalitarian states as allegories of the immediate power of the particular. If in the Spirit as totality every difference of that other were eliminated in which, following Hegel, it is supposed to have its life, then it becomes the nothingness a second time over, which in the beginning of dialectical logic is supposed to reveal itself as pure being: the Spirit deflates into the merely existent. The Hegel of the *Phenomenology* would scarcely have hesitated to designate the concept of the Spirit as one mediated in itself, as much the Spirit as non-Spirit; he would not have drawn the conclusion, of throwing off the chains of absolute identity. If however the Spirit needs, in what it is, that which it is not, then the recourse to labor is no longer what the apologists of the branch of philosophy reiterate as their ultimate wisdom: a *metabasis eis allo genos* [Greek: change into another genus]. The insight of idealism is not lost, that the activity of the Spirit is performed as labor through individuals as much as through their means, and that individuals are reduced to their functions in its performance. The idealistic concept of Spirit exploits the transition to social labor: it all too easily permits the general activity, which absorbs the individual doers, to be transfigured into an in-itself, while ignoring these latter. The polemic answer to this is the sympathy of materialism with nominalism. Philosophically however it was too narrow; that what is individual and the individuals would be solely what is truly real, is incompatible with the Marxist theory of the law of value, schooled in Hegel, which realizes itself in capitalism over the heads of

human beings. The dialectical mediation of the universal and the specific does not permit the theory which opts for the particular to overhastily treat the universal as a soap bubble. Theory could then neither grasp the noxious primacy of the general in the existent nor the idea of a condition which, by giving individuals what is theirs, would remove the universal of its bad particularity. Just as little however is a transcendental subject to be imagined without society, without the individuals which it integrates for good or ill; that is what the concept of the transcendental subject founders on. Even Kant's universality wishes to be one for all, namely for all beings endowed with reason, and those endowed with reason are a priori socialized. Scheler's attempt to unceremoniously banish materialism to the nominalistic side was a tactical maneuver. Materialism is first, not without the assistance of an undeniable lack of philosophical reflection, blackened as subaltern, and then its subalternity is gloriously overcome. The crude world-view, which was so detested by the materialistic dialectic that it preferred to ally itself with science, was what it itself became in its degradation to a political means of domination. It conflicts with what Brecht suicidally demanded of it, the simplification for tactical ends. It is dialectical even according to its own essence, as philosophy and anti-philosophy. The phrase that consciousness depends on being was no inverted metaphysics, but aimed against the deception of the Spirit, that it would be in itself beyond the total process, in which it finds itself as a moment. Even its conditions meanwhile are no in-itself. The expression "being" in Marx and Heidegger means something completely divergent, although not without a trace of similarity: in the ontological doctrine of the priority of being before thought, its "transcendence", a materialistic echo reverberates out of the furthest distance. The doctrine of being becomes ideological, by imperceptibly intellectualizing the materialistic moment in thought through its transposition into pure functionality beyond everything existent, magically dispelling what dwells within the materialistic concept of being in the critique of false consciousness. The word, which the truth wished to name against ideology, becomes that which is most untrue: the denial of ideality into the proclamation of an ideal sphere.

PURE ACTIVITY AND GENESIS 201-202

Its determination as activity immanently compels the transition of the philosophy of the Spirit to its other. Since Kant, idealism could not escape this, not even

Hegel's. Through activity however the Spirit has a share in the genesis, which annoys idealism as something which contaminates it. The Spirit as activity is, as the philosophers keep repeating, a becoming; hence not, something they put still greater stress on, *chôris* [Greek: separately] from history. According to its simple concept its activity is intratemporal, historical; a becoming as well as what has become, in which becoming accumulates. Just like time, whose most general conception requires something temporal, no activity is without a substrate, without the activator and without that on which it is exerted. In the idea of absolute activity lies hidden only, what is supposed to be done there; the pure *noêsis noêseôs* [Greek: thinking of thinking] is the shamefaced belief, neutralized into metaphysics, in the divine creator. The idealistic doctrine of the absolute would like to absorb theological transcendence as process, to bring it to an immanence which tolerates no absolute, nothing independent from ontic conditions. It is perhaps the most profound inconsistency of idealism, that it must on the one hand carry out secularization to the extreme, in order not to sacrifice its claim to the totality, on the other hand however can express its phantom of the absolute, the totality, solely in theological categories. Torn from religion, they become devoid of essence and are not fulfilled in that "experience of consciousness", which they are now delivered over to. The activity of the Spirit, once humanized, can be attributed to no one and nothing else but living beings. This infiltrates even the concept, which overshoots all naturalism the furthest, that of the subjectivity as the synthetic unity of apperception, with the moment of nature. Solely insofar as it is also the not-I, does the I relate to the not-I, "does" something, and would itself be the doing of the thinking. Thinking breaks the supremacy of thought over its other in second reflection, because it is always already the other in itself. That is why the highest abstraktum [the abstract, the abstract concept] of all activity, the transcendental function, affords no preponderance [Vorrang] over the factual genesis. No ontological abyss yawns between the moment of reality in it and the activity of real subjects; hence none between the Spirit and labor. Indeed this latter is not exhausted, as the assembling of something preconceived which was not yet factual, in what is in existence there [Daseiendem]; the Spirit is so little to be leveled down to existence as this latter to the former. Yet the not existing moment in the Spirit is so interwoven with existence, that to neatly pick it out would be

so much as to concretize and falsify it. The controversy over the priority of Spirit and body proceeds pre-dialectically. It drags on further the question concerning a first. It almost aims Hylozoistically at an *arché* [Greek: beginning, origin], ontological according to the form, though the answer may sound materialistic in terms of content. Both, body and Spirit, are abstractions of their experience, their radical difference something posited. They reflect the historically achieved “self-consciousness” of the Spirit and its renunciation of what it negated, for the sake of its own identity. Everything intellectual is modified corporeal impulse, and such modification, the qualitative recoil into that which not merely is. Stress [Drang], according to Schelling’s insight¹⁰³, is the precursor of Spirit.

SUFFERING PHYSICAL 202–204

The presumed basic facts of consciousness are anything but. In the dimension of pleasure and displeasure, the bodily reaches deep into them. All pain and all negativity, the motor of dialectical thought, are the many times over mediated, sometimes become unrecognizable form of the physical, just as all happiness aims at sensual fulfillment and garners its objectivity in it. If any aspect of happiness is frustrated, then it is none whatsoever. In the subjective sensuous data, that dimension, which for its part contradicts the Spirit in this, becomes as it were watered down to its epistemological copy, not at all so different from the curious theory of Hume, according to which conceptions, “ideas” [in English] – the facts of consciousness with intentional function – are supposed to be mere copies of impressions. This doctrine is easily criticized as secretly naïve-naturalistic. But in it the somatic moment trembles epistemologically for one last time, before it is completely driven out. In cognition it survives as its disquiet, which brings it into motion and reproduces itself unpacified in its course; unhappy consciousness is no deluded vanity of the Spirit but inherent to it, the sole authentic dignity, which it received in the separation from the body. This reminds it, negatively,

103 “So is being, too, completely indifferent towards the existent. But the more innervated and blissful this state of relaxation is, all the more must a silent longing, in eternity, without its doing and without knowing it, be created to know itself, to find and enjoy itself, an urge [Drang] to the becoming-conscious, of which it itself is nevertheless not yet conscious of.” (Schelling, *The Age of the World*, Munich 1946, pg 136) “And so we see nature, from the deepest level, desiring what is innermost and most secret to it and always rising and striding further in its obsession, until finally it has drawn to itself the highest essentiality, that which is purely intellectual in itself, making it its own.” (ibid. pg 140)

of its corporeal aspect; solely that it is capable of this, lends it any sort of hope. The smallest trace of senseless suffering in the experienced world condemns the whole of identity-philosophy, which would like to talk experience out of this, as a lie: "So long as there is even a single beggar, there will be mythos";¹⁰⁴ that is why identity-philosophy is mythology as thought. The corporeal moment registers the cognition, that suffering ought not to be, that things should be different. "Woe speaks: go." That is why what is specifically materialistic converges with what is critical, with socially transforming praxis. The abolition of suffering, or its mitigation to a degree which is not to be theoretically assumed in advance, to which no limit can be set, is not up to the individual who endures suffering, but solely to the species that it belongs to, even where it has subjectively renounced the latter and is objectively forced into the absolute loneliness of the helpless object. All activities of the species make reference to its physical continued existence, even if they fail to recognize this, becoming organizationally autonomous and seeing to their business only as an afterthought. Even the institutions which society creates in order to exterminate itself are, as unleashed, absurd self-preservation, simultaneously their own unconscious actions against suffering. Narrowly restricted indeed by what is their own, their total particularity also turns against this. Confronted with them, the purpose which alone makes society into a society demands that it be so arranged, as what the relations of production here and there relentlessly prevent, and as what would be immediately possible to the productive forces right here and now. Such an arrangement would have its telos in the negation of physical suffering of even the least of its members, and of the innervated reflection-forms of that suffering. It is in the interest of all, at this point to be realized solely through a solidarity transparent to itself and to every living being.

MATERIALISM IMAGELESS 204–207

To those who wish that it not be realized, materialism has in the meantime done the favor of its self-degradation. The immaturity which caused this is not, as Kant thought, the fault of humanity itself. In the meantime at least it is reproduced according to plan by the powers that be. The objective Spirit, which they direct, because they require its chaining, adjusts itself to that consciousness, which was

104 Benjamin, *Arcades manuscript* [Passagenarbeit], Manuscript [Manuskript], Folder K, Vol. 6.

enchained for millenia. The materialism which achieved political power has devoted itself to such praxis no less than the world, which it once wanted to change; it continues to chain the consciousness, instead of comprehending it and for its part changing it. Terroristic state-machineries entrench themselves under the threadbare pretext of a soon to be fifty-year-old dictatorship of the long since administered proletariat as permanent institutions, the mockery of the theory which they pay lip service to. They chain their underlings to their immediate interests and keep them narrow-minded. The depravation of theory meanwhile would not have been possible without the dregs of the apocryphal in it. By leaping summarily outside of culture, the functionaries who monopolize it would like to crudely feign that they would be beyond culture, and thus give sustenance to universal regression. What philosophy wished to liquidate, in the expectation of the immediately impending revolution, was, impatient with its claim, already at that moment lagging behind it. What is apocryphal in materialism reveals that of high philosophy, that which is untrue in the sovereignty of the Spirit, which the prevailing materialism disdains as cynically as bourgeois society had done in secret before. The idealistic sublime is the cognate of the apocryphal; the texts of Kafka and Beckett harshly illuminate this relationship. What is inferior in materialism is the unreflective inferiority of prevailing conditions. What through the fault of intellectualization did not keep up, as its failing principle, is in relation to that which is higher, which was shamed by the sight of what was perpetually inferior, also that which is worse. What is banal and barbaric in materialism eternalizes that extraterritoriality of the fourth estate into culture, which meanwhile is no longer limited to the members of such, but has spread over the entire culture. Materialism turns into the relapse into barbarism, which it was supposed to prevent; to work against this is not the least of the tasks of a critical theory. Otherwise that which is untrue of old will, with a reduced coefficient of friction and all the worse for that, continue. What is subaltern grows, after the revolution went the way of the return of the Messiah. Materialistic theory became not merely aesthetically defective in contrast to the hollowed-out sublime of bourgeois consciousness, but untrue. This is theoretically determinable. The dialectic is in the things, but it would not be without the consciousness which reflects it; no more than it could be dissolved into the latter. In the One pure and simple,

undifferentiated, total matter, there would be no dialectic. The official materialistic one skipped over epistemology by decree. The latter's revenge is epistemological: in the reflection-doctrine [Abbildlehre]. The thought is no reflection of the thing – it is made into this solely by materialistic mythology in Epicurean style, which discovered that matter sends out little images – but aims at the thing itself. The enlightening intention of thought, demythologization, nullifies the image-character of consciousness. What clings to the image remains mythically ensnared, idolatry. The summation of images forms a wall before reality. Reflection-theory denies the spontaneity of the subject, a *movens* [Latin: what moves] of the objective dialectic of productive forces and relations of production. If the subject is bound to the stubborn mirror-image of the object, which necessarily lacks the object, which discloses itself only to the subjective surplus in thought, then the result is the restless intellectual silence of integral administration. Solely indefatigably reified consciousness imagines, or tries to persuade others into imagining, that it would possess photographs of objectivity. Its illusion crosses over into dogmatic immediacy. When Lenin, instead of entering into epistemology, compulsively and repeatedly asserted against this the being-in-itself of cognitive objects, he wanted to demonstrate the complicity of subjective positivism with the “powers that be” [in English]. His political need turned thereby against the theoretical cognitive goal. Transcendent argumentation finishes things off by means of the power-claim, and for ill: by being left unpenetrated, what is criticized remains undisturbed as it is, and is capable, as what has not been properly examined, of being resurrected in transformed power-constellations any which way. Brecht's offhand remark, that after the book on empirio-criticism no critique of immanence-philosophy would be necessary anymore, was short-sighted. Philosophical desiderata are enacted in materialistic theory, if it is not to succumb to the same provincialism which disfigures the art of the Eastern bloc states. The object of theory is nothing immediate, whose replica it could drag back home; cognition does not possess, as the state police, a portfolio of its objects. Rather it thinks these in their mediation: otherwise it would remain content with the description of the façade. The overextended and already in its place problematic criterion of sensible intuition is, as Brecht nevertheless confessed, not applicable to what is radically mediated, society; what migrates into the object as its law of motion, necessarily hidden

from the ideological form of the phenomenon, slips away from the former. Marx, who out of disgust for petty academic squabbles rampaged through the epistemological categories like the proverbial bull in the china-shop, scarcely put too much weight on expressions like reflection [Widerspiegelung]. Their presumed supremacy comes at the cost of the subjective-critical moment. In its emphasis, a piece of hostility to ideology lives next to the ideology; what is prevented is the underhanded move, that what is produced and the relations of production would immediately be nature. No theory may for the sake of propagandistic simplicity play dumb in relation to the objectively achieved state of cognition. It must reflect it and drive it further. The unity of theory and praxis was not meant as a concession to the weakness of thinking, which is the monstrous product of repressive society. In the form of the computer, which thinking makes itself similar to and for whose glory it would like most of all to cancel itself out, consciousness declares bankruptcy before a reality, which at the present stage is not intuitively given but functionally, abstractly in itself. Reflection-based [Abbildendes] thinking would be devoid of reflection, an undialectical contradiction; without reflection, no theory. The consciousness, which would slide a third, images, between itself and what it thinks, unwittingly reproduces idealism; a corpus of conceptions would substitute for the object of cognition, and the subjective caprice of such conceptions is that which commands. The materialistic longing, to comprehend the thing, wishes the opposite; the full object could only be thought devoid of images. Such imagelessness converges with the theological ban on the graven image. Materialism secularized it, by not permitting utopia to be positively pictured; that is the content of its negativity. It comes to agree with theology there, where it is most materialistic. Its longing would be the resurrection of the flesh; this is utterly foreign to idealism, to the realm of the absolute Spirit. The vanishing-point of historical materialism would be its own sublation, the emancipation of the Spirit from the primacy of material needs in the condition of their fulfillment. Only with the satiation of the bodily urge would the Spirit be reconciled to itself, becoming that which it only promises, so long as the bane of material conditions refuses to let it satisfy material needs.

PART III. MODELS

I. FREEDOM: METACRITIQUE OF PRACTICAL REASON

"FALSE PROBLEM" [SCHEINPROBLEM] 211–213

The talk of false problems once wished to prevent, for the purposes of enlightenment, the unquestioned authority of dogmas to set the course of considerations, whose decisions would be impossible precisely to the thinking to which they were submitted. There is an echo of this in the pejorative use of the word scholastic. For some time however false problems are no longer presumed to be those which ridicule rational judgements and rational interests, but those which use concepts not clearly defined. A semantic taboo strangles substantive questions, as if they were only questions of meaning; the preliminary consideration degenerates into the ban on consideration altogether. The ground-rules of methods modeled without further ado on the current ones of exact science regulate what may be thought, no matter how urgent the matter; approved modes of procedure, the means, win primacy over what is to be cognized, the ends. Experiences which conflict with the explicit signs assigned to them are given a dressing-down. The difficulties which they cause are laid solely to lax pre-scientific nomenclature. – Whether the will would be free, is so relevant as the recalcitrance of the termini towards the desiderata of simply and clearly stating what they mean. Since justice and punishment, finally the possibility of what the tradition of philosophy has throughout called morality or ethics, depends on the answer, the intellectual need is not to be talked out of the naïve question as a false problem. The self-righteous tidiness of thinking offers it a poor substitute satisfaction. Nevertheless the semantic critique is not to be carelessly ignored. The urgency of a question cannot compel any answer, insofar as no true one is to be obtained; still less however can the fallible need, even the desperate one, indicate the direction of the answer. The objects under discussion are to be reflected upon, not by judging them as an existent or a not-existent, but by absorbing into their own determination the impossibility of making them tangibly thingly [dingfest], as much as the necessity to think them. This is attempted in the antinomy chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason* and in great swathes of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, with the express intent or without it; admittedly Kant did not totally avoid therein the dogmatic usage, which he,

like Hume, upbraids in other traditional concepts. He settled the conflict between facticity – “nature” – and what is necessary to thought – the intelligible world – in dichotomical fashion. If however the will or freedom cannot be pointed out as something existent, then this does not at all exclude, after the analogy to simple predialectical epistemology, individual impulses or individual experiences from being synthesized under concepts to which no naturalistic substrate corresponds, which however similarly reduce those impulses or experiences to a common denominator, comparable to how the Kantian “object” does to its appearances. According to its model, the will would be the lawful [gesetzmäßige] unity of all impulses, which prove themselves to be simultaneously spontaneous and rationally determined, as distinct from the natural causality in whose framework it in any case remains: no sequence of acts of will outside of the causal nexus. Freedom would be the word for the possibility of those impulses. But the snap epistemological answer is not adequate. The question as to whether the will would be free or not, compels an either/or, just as dubious as conclusive, which the concept of the will as the lawful [gesetzmäßiges] unity of its impulses glosses over indifferently. And above all the monadological structure of will and freedom is tacitly assumed, as in the model of conceptual construction oriented to subjective immanence-philosophy. The simplest of things contradicts it: mediated through what analytic psychology calls the “reality check”, countless moments of externalized, indeed social reality go along together with the decisions designated by will and freedom; if the concept of what rationally accords in the will is supposed to say anything at all, then it refers to this, however stubbornly Kant may dispute this. What lends the immanence-philosophical determination of those concepts their elegance and their autarky is, in truth, in view of the factual decisions, whereby the question as to whether they are free or unfree can be asked, an abstraction; what it leaves over of what is psychological, is scanty in contrast to the real complexion of inner and outer. Nothing is to be read out of this impoverished, chemical extract, which might predicate freedom or its opposite. Put more strictly and at the same time more Kantian still, the empirical subject which makes those decisions – and only an empirical one can make them, the transcendental pure “I think” would not be capable of any impulse – is itself a moment of the spatio-temporal “external” world and has no ontological priority before it; that is why the attempt to localize

the question of free will in it failed. It drew the line between what is intelligible and what is empirical in the midst of empiricism. That much is true in the thesis of the false problem. As soon as the question of free will shrinks into that of the decision of every individual, dissolving this out of its context and that which is individuated [Individuum] out of society, it hews to the deception of absolute pure being-in-itself: delimited subjective experience usurps the dignity of what is most certain of all. The substrate of the alternative has something fictive about it. The presumed subject, which is existing-in-itself, is in itself mediated by that which it separates itself from, by the context of all subjects. Through the mediation it becomes itself what, according to its consciousness of freedom, it does not wish to be, heteronomous. Even where unfreedom is positively assumed, its conditions, as those of an immanently closed psychic causality, are sought in the split-off individuated, which is essentially nothing split-off of the sort. If not even the individual can find the matter-at-hand of freedom in itself, just as little may the theorem of the determination of the naïve feeling of caprice be simply extinguished post festum; the doctrine of psychological determinism was carried out only in a late phase.

INTEREST IN FREEDOM SPLIT 213–215

Since the seventeenth century great philosophy has deemed freedom to be its most characteristic interest; under the unexpressed mandate of the bourgeois class, to transparently ground it. That interest however is antagonistic in itself. It goes against the old oppression and promotes the new one, which lies hidden in the rational principle itself. A common formulation is sought for freedom and oppression: the former is ceded to rationality, which delimits it, and removed from empiricism, in which one does not wish to see it realized at all. The dichotomy is also related to advancing scientization. The class is allied to it, insofar as it encourages production, and must fear it, as soon as it infringes upon the belief that their freedom, already resigned to sheer inwardness, would be existent. This is what really stands behind the doctrine of the antinomies. Already in Kant and later in the idealists the idea of freedom appeared in opposition to specific scientific research, particularly psychology. Their objects were banished by Kant into the realm of unfreedom; positive science is supposed to have its place underneath speculation – in Kant: underneath the doctrine of the noumena. With the waning

of the speculative power and the correlative development of the particular sciences, the opposition sharpened to an extreme. The particular sciences paid for this with hidebound pettiness, philosophy with non-committal emptiness. The more the particular sciences confiscated of its content – as psychology did to the genesis of the character, over which even Kant made wild guesses – the more embarrassingly do philosophemes on the freedom of the will degenerate into declamations. If the particular sciences seek ever more nomothetism [Gesetzmässigkeit]; if they are thereby, before any fundamental views, driven to the party of determinism, then philosophy increasingly becomes the storehouse of pre-scientific, apologetic intuitions of freedom. The antinomies of freedom in Kant, just like the dialectics of freedom in Hegel, form an essential philosophical moment; after them academic philosophy, at least, swore by the idol of a higher realm beyond empiricism. The intelligible freedom of individuals is praised, so that one can hold the empirical ones even more ruthlessly accountable, to better curb them by the prospect of a metaphysically justified punishment. The alliance of the doctrine of freedom and repressive praxis distances philosophy ever further from genuine insight into the freedom and unfreedom of living beings. It approximates, anachronistically, that faded sublimity which Hegel diagnosed as the misery of philosophy. Because however the particular science – that of criminal justice is exemplary – cannot handle the question concerning freedom and must reveal its own incompetence, it seeks assistance precisely from the philosophy which through its bad and abstract opposition to scientivism cannot provide such assistance. Where science hopes for the decision on what it finds irresolvable from philosophy, it receives from the latter only the solace of the humdrum world-view. In it individual scientists thus orient themselves according to taste and, it must be feared, according to their own psychological drive-structure. The relationship to the complex of freedom and determinism is delivered helter-skelter over to irrationality, oscillating between inconclusive, more or less empirical specific findings and dogmatic generalities. Ultimately the attitude to that complex becomes dependent on political affiliation or the power recognized at the moment. Reflections on freedom and determinism sound archaic, as if dating from the early epoch of the revolutionary bourgeoisie. But that freedom grows obsolete, without being realized, is not to be accepted as a fatality; resistance must explain this. Not the least of the reasons why the

idea of freedom lost its power over human beings is that it was conceived of so abstractly-subjectively in advance, that the objective social tendency could bury it without difficulty.

FREEDOM, DETERMINISM, IDENTITY 215–217

The indifference towards freedom, its concept and the thing itself, is caused by the integration of society, which the subjects experience as if it were irresistible. Their interest in being cared for has crippled the one in a freedom which they fear as defenselessness. The very mention of freedom, just like the appeal to it, already rings hollow. That is what an intransigent nominalism adjusts itself to. The fact that it relegates the objective antinomies, in keeping with the logical canon, into the realm of false problems, has for its part a social function: to conceal contradictions through denial. By holding on to data or their contemporary heirs, protocol statements, consciousness is disburdened of what would contradict that which is external. According to the rules of that ideology, only the modes of conduct of human beings in various situations would need to be described and classified; any talk of the will or freedom would be conceptual fetishism. All determinations of the I ought thereby, as behaviorism in fact planned, to be simply translated back into modes of reaction and individual reactions, which could then be nailed down. What is left out of consideration is that what is nailed down produces new qualities in contrast to the reflexes, out of which the former may have originated. The positivists unconsciously obey the dogma of the preeminence of the first, which their metaphysical archenemies entertained: "What is specifically most revered is what is most ancient, the sworn witness is however the most honored of all."¹⁰⁵ In Aristoteles it is mythos; what survives of it in straight out anti-mythologists is the conception that everything which is would be reducible to what it once was. In the like for like of their quantifying methods there is as little room for the self-producing other as the bane of destiny. What however has been objectified in human beings out of their reflexes and against these, character or will, the potential organ of freedom, also undermines this last. For it embodies the dominating principle, to which humanity progressively submits. Identity of the self and self-alienation accompany each other from the very beginning; that is why the concept of self-alienation is badly romantic. The condition of freedom,

105 Aristoteles, *Metaphysics* [Metaphysik], Book A, pg 983.

identity is immediately at the same time the principle of determinism. The will is, insofar as human beings objectify themselves into character. Thereby they become, towards themselves – whatever that may be – something externalized, according to the model of the external world of things, subjugated to causality. – Moreover the positivistic concept of the “reaction”, purely descriptive by its own intent, presupposes incomparably more than what it confesses: passive dependence on each given situation. What is spirited away a priori is the reciprocal influence of subject and object, spontaneity is already excluded by the method, in unison with the ideology of adjustment, which breaks human beings, ready to serve the course of the world, once more of the habit of that moment. If there remained only passive reactions, then there would remain, in the terminology of older philosophy, only receptivity: no thinking would be possible. If there is will only through consciousness, then consciousness is indeed, correlatively, also only where there is will. Self-preservation for its part demands, in its history, more than the conditioned reflex and thereby prepares for what it finally steps beyond. Therein it presumably resembles the biological individual [Individuum], which stipulates the form of its reflexes; the reflexes could scarcely be without any moment of unity. It reinforces itself as the self of self-preservation; freedom opens itself to the latter as its historically-become difference from the reflexes.

FREEDOM AND ORGANIZED SOCIETY 217–221

Without any thought of freedom, organized society could scarcely be theoretically grounded. It would then once again cut short freedom. Both can be demonstrated in the Hobbesian construction of the state-contract. A factual, thorough-going determinism would sanction, in opposition to the determinist Hobbes, the bellum omnium contra omnes [Latin: war of all against all]; every criterion of treatment would fall asunder, if everyone were equally predetermined and blind. The perspective of something at an extremity is outlined; as to whether, in the demand for freedom for the sake of the possibility of living together, a paralogism lies hidden: freedom must be real, so that there would not be horror. But rather there is horror, because there is not yet any freedom. The reflection on the question concerning will and freedom does not abolish the question, but turns it into one from the philosophy of history: why did the theses, “The will is free”, and, “The will is unfree”, become an antinomy? Kant did not overlook the fact that this

reflection originated historically, and expressly founded the revolutionary claim of his own moral philosophy on its delay: "One saw human beings bound to laws by their duty, it did not however occur to anyone, that they would be subject only to their own and nevertheless universal legislation, and that they would only be bound to act according to their own yet generally legislated will, according to the purpose of nature."¹⁰⁶ By no means however did it occur to him, as to whether freedom itself, to him an eternal idea, could be a historical essence; not merely as a concept but rather according to its experience-content. Entire epochs, entire societies lacked the concept of freedom as much as the thing. To ascribe this to them as an objective in-itself even where it was thoroughly concealed from human beings, would conflict with the Kantian principle of the transcendental, which is supposed to be founded in the subjective consciousness, and would be untenable to the degree that the presumed consciousness totally lacked any sort of living being at all. Hence no doubt Kant's tenacious effort to demonstrate the moral consciousness as something ubiquitous, existent even in what is radically evil. Otherwise he would have had to reject, in the appropriate phases and societies in which there is no freedom, along with the character of rationally-endowed beings also that of humanity; the follower of Rousseau could scarcely have found comfort in that. Before that which is individuated in the modern sense formed, something self-evident for Kant, which is not meant simply as the biological individual being but as what is first constituted as a unity by the self-reflection,¹⁰⁷ the Hegelian "self-consciousness", it is anachronistic to speak of freedom, of the real kind as much as the demand for such. Freedom, to be established in its full dimensions solely under social conditions of an unfettered plenitude of goods, could on the other hand also be totally extinguished, perhaps without a trace. The trouble is not that free human beings act radically evil, as is being done far beyond any measure imaginable to Kant, but that there is not yet a world in which they, and this flashes in Brecht, would no longer need to be evil. Evil would be therefore their own unfreedom: what happens which is evil, would come from the latter. Society determines individuals, even according to their immanent genesis, as what they are; their freedom or unfreedom is not what is primary, as this appears under

106 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* [Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten]. WW IV, Academy Edition, pg 432.

107 See Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* [Dialektik der Aufklärung], Amsterdam 1947, pg 106.

the veil of the principium individuationis [Latin: individuating principle]. For even the insight into its dependence is obscured to subjective consciousness by the ego, as Schopenhauer explained by the mythos of the veil of Maya. The individuation-principle, the law of particularization to which the universality of reason in individuals is tied, insulates this tendentially from the contexts which surround it and promotes thereby the flattering confidence in the autarky of the subject. Its epitome is contrasted under the name of the freedom to the totality which restricts individuality. The principium individuationis is however by no means that which is metaphysically ultimate and unalterable, and therefore also not freedom; this is rather a moment in a double sense: not isolatable but imbricated, and for the time being always only a moment of spontaneity, a historical intersection blocked under contemporary conditions. As little as the independence of the individuated, inappropriately emphasized by liberal ideology, prevails, so little is its utterly real separation from society to be denied, which that ideology wrongly interprets. At times the individuated has opposed society as something self-realized although particular, which could pursue its own interests through reason. In that phase, and beyond it, the question of freedom was genuine, as to whether society permits the individuated to be as free, as the former promises the latter; thereby also, as to whether the former is itself so. The individuated temporarily towers above the blind context of society, helping however in its windowless isolation just that context to reproduce itself. – The thesis of the unfreedom of historical experience registers no less the irreconcilability of inner and outer: human beings are unfree in their bondage to what is external, and that which is external to them is in turn also themselves. Only in what is separated from this and necessarily against it, according to the cognition of Hegel's *Phenomenology*, does the subject acquire the concepts of freedom and unfreedom, which it can then relate back to its own monadological structure. The pre-philosophical consciousness is on this side of the alternative; to the naïvely acting subject, which posits itself against the immediate environment, its own conditionality is impenetrable. To master it, consciousness must make it transparent. The sovereignty of thought, which by virtue of its freedom turns back to itself as to its subject, realizes also the concept of unfreedom. Both are no simple opposition but in each other. The consciousness does not become aware of this out of the theoretical urge towards knowledge.

The sovereignty which exploits nature and its social form, domination over human beings, suggests its opposite, the idea of freedom. Those who were at the top of hierarchies, but not visibly dependent, were its historical archetype. Freedom becomes, in the abstract general concept of something beyond nature, intellectualized into freedom from the realm of causality. Thereby however into self-deception. Put psychologically, the interest of the subject in the thesis, that it would be free, is narcissistic, as boundless as anything which is narcissistic. Even in Kant's argumentation, despite his localization of the sphere of freedom categorically above psychology, narcissism shows through. Every human being, even the "most malign ruffian", would wish, according to the *Foundation for a Metaphysic of Morals*, that "when one set forth examples of honesty in intent, of steadfastness in following good maxims, of compassion and of general good will", even he would like to be so minded. From this he could expect no "gratification of the desires", "no condition in which any other of his real or otherwise imaginable inclinations would be satisfied", "but only a greater inner worth of his person... He believes himself to be this better person however, when he puts himself in the standpoint of a member of the world of understanding, to which the idea of freedom, that is to say independence from the determining causes of the sensible world, involuntarily compels him..."¹⁰⁸ Kant spares no effort to justify that expectation of a greater inner worth of the person, which would motivate the thesis of freedom, with that objectivity of the law of morality to which, for its part, consciousness would first need to rise on the grounds of that expectation. Nevertheless he cannot make us forget that the "practical usage of common human reason"¹⁰⁹ in view of freedom is coupled with the need for self-exaltation, with the "worth" of the person. Meanwhile that immediate consciousness experiences the "common moral cognition of reason", from which the Kantian *Foundation* methodically starts out, no less than the interest to deny the self-same freedom which it proclaims. The more freedom the subject, and the community of subjects, ascribes to itself, the greater its responsibility, and before the latter it fails in a bourgeois life, whose praxis has never vouchsafed the undiminished autonomy to subjects which it was accorded in theory. That is why it must feel guilty. Subjects

108 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* [Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten], *ibid.* pg 454.

109 *Ibid.* pg 454.

become aware of the limits of their freedom as their own membership in nature, ultimately as their powerlessness in view of the society become autonomous before them. The universality of the concept of freedom, however, in which the oppressed also participate, recoils against domination as a model of freedom. In reaction to this, those who are privileged with freedom delight in discerning that others would not yet be mature enough for freedom. They rationalize this, revealingly enough, as natural causality. Subjects are not only fused with their own corporeality, but even in that which is psychological, painstakingly separated from the immediate world of the bodily by reflection, a thorough-going nomothetism [Gesetzmässigkeit] prevails. The consciousness of this rose in proportion to the determination of the soul as something unitary. So little meanwhile does an immediately evident self-consciousness of freedom exist, as one of unfreedom; it always requires either the mirror-reflection of what is perceived in society upon the subject – the oldest is the so-called Platonic psychology – or one which is concretized by psychological science, in whose hands the life of the soul it discovered becomes a thing among things and ends up under the causality predicated by the world of things.

THE PRE-EGOIZED IMPULSE 221–222

The dawning consciousness of freedom nourishes itself on the memory of the archaic impulse, not yet directed by a solidified ego. The more the ego curbs this, the more questionable pre-temporal freedom becomes to it as something chaotic. Without the anamnesis of the unbridled, pre-egoized impulse, which is later banished into the zone of unfree bondage to nature, the idea of freedom could not be created, even though it terminates for its part in the strengthening of the ego. In the philosophical concept, which raises freedom as a mode of conduct as the highest beyond empirical existence, namely that of spontaneity, the echo reverberates of that by which the ego of idealistic philosophy intends to secure its freedom, by controlling it all the way to its annihilation. Through the apology for its inverted form, society encourages individuals to hypostasize their own individuality and thereby their freedom. Insofar as such tenacious appearance [Schein] reaches, the consciousness is taught the moment of its unfreedom solely in pathogenic conditions, as in compulsory neuroses. They command it, in the midst of the circumference of its own immanence, to act according to laws which it experiences as “ego-alien”; the rejection of freedom in its own domestic realm.

The pain of neurosis also has the metapsychological aspect, in that it destroys the simplistic notion: free inside, unfree outside, without the subject coming to realize the truth which its pathic condition communicates, and which it can reconcile neither with its drive nor with its rational interest. This truth-content of neuroses is that they demonstrate the unfreedom of the ego in itself in what is ego-alien, the feeling of "But that's not me at all"; there, where its domination over inner nature fails. Whatever falls under the unity of what traditional epistemology termed personal self-consciousness – itself compulsory essence, insofar as all moments of this unity are stamped with nomothetism [Gesetzmässigkeit] – appears to be free to the self-retrieving ego, because it derives the idea of the freedom from the model of its own domination, first the one over human beings and things, then, innervated, the one over its own entire concrete content, over which it disposes by thinking it. This is not only the self-deception of the immediacy, which is inflated into the absolute. Solely where someone acts as an ego, not merely reactively, can their action in any sense be called free. Nevertheless that which is not bound to the ego as the principle of every determination would be equally free, as that which appears to be unfree to the ego, as in Kant's moral philosophy, and which in fact has been equally unfree to this day. Freedom as a given fact becomes problematic through the progress of self-experience and, because the interest of the subject in it nevertheless does not wane, is sublimated into an idea. This is metapsychologically verified by the psychoanalytic theory of repression [Verdrängung: displacement]. According to this the repressing authority, the mechanism of compulsion, is, dialectically enough, one with the ego, the organon of freedom. Introspection discovers neither freedom nor unfreedom in itself as something positive. It conceives of both in the relation to something extra-mental: freedom as the polemical counter-image to the suffering under social compulsion, unfreedom as its mirror-image. That is how little the subject is the "sphere of absolute origins" which it is philosophized as; even the determinations, by virtue of which it lays claim to its sovereignty, always also need that which, according to their self-understanding, are supposed to need only them. What is decisive in the ego, its independence and autonomy, can only be judged in relationship to its otherness, to the not-ego. Whether or not autonomy exists, depends on its adversary and contradiction, the object, which grants or denies the subject autonomy; dissolved from this, autonomy is fictive.

EXPERIMENTA CRUCIS [LATIN: DECISIVE EXPERIMENT] 222–226

How little the consciousness can discern of freedom by means of the recourse to its self-experience, is attested to by the *experimenta crucis* of introspection. It is not for nothing that the most popular one is saddled onto a donkey. Kant still follows its schema in the attempt to demonstrate freedom by the decision, something relevant to Beckett's plays, to stand up from a chair. In order to decide conclusively, empirically so to speak, as to whether the will would be free, situations must be rigorously cleansed of their empirical content; thought-experimental conditions established, in which as few determinants as possible can be observed. Every less clownish paradigm contains rational grounds for the self-deciding subject, which would have to be chalked up as determinants; the *experimenta* is damned by the principle, according to which it is supposed to decide, to silliness, and this devalues the decision. Pure situations in the style of Buridan are not likely to occur, except where they are thought out or established for the sake of demonstrating freedom. Even if something remotely similar to this could be discovered, it would be irrelevant to any person's life and hence *adiaphorou* [Greek: indifferent] for freedom. Indeed many of Kant's *experimenta crucis* have greater pretensions. He draws them up as empirical evidence of the right "to introduce freedom into science", since "the experience too confirms this order of concepts in us";¹¹⁰ whereas empirical evidence for something which is according to his own theory simply supra-empirical ought to make him suspicious, because the critical matter-at-hand is thereby localized in that sphere, from which it has been principally removed. The example is then also not stringent: "Supposing, that someone is given over to carnal desire, such that it would be completely irresistible for him, if the beloved object and the opportunity thereto presented themselves; ask whether if a gallows before the house, where he took this opportunity, were constructed in order to hang him immediately after the carnal pleasure, whether he then would not repress his desire. It would not take long to guess what he would answer. If he was asked however, whether his prince under the threats of the same immediate punishment of death required him to bear false witness against an honest man, which the former is bent on ruining under a mere pretext, whether there, however great his love of life may be, he could

110 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* [Kritik der praktischen Vernunft], WW V, Academy Edition, pg 30.

consider it possible to overcome this latter. He will perhaps not trust himself to say whether he would do it or not; that it would be possible, however, he would admit without hesitation. He judges therefore, that he can do something, because he is conscious of it, that he ought to do it, and cognizes in himself the freedom, which without the moral law would otherwise have remained unknown to him.”¹¹¹ That he could do it, might presumably be conceded by the person charged by Kant with “carnal desire” as much as the victim of extortion by the tyrant, who Kant respectfully names his prince; it would probably be the truth if both said, in the consciousness of the weight of self-preservation in these sorts of decisions, that they did not know how they would behave in the real situation. In the emergency situation, a psychological moment like the “ego-drive” and the fear of death would appear irrefutably differently than in the improbable thought-experiment, which neutralizes that moment to the cogitative affectless conception. Noone can predict, not even those with the most integrity, how they would act under torture; this in the meantime by no means fictive situation denotes a limit upon what is self-evident to Kant. His example does not permit, as he hoped, the legitimization of the concept of freedom according to its practical use, but at most a shrugging of the shoulders. Not even that of the card-cheat serves anymore: “He who has lost at cards, can be angry at himself and his lack of cleverness, but if he is consciousness of having cheated in the game (although thereby winning), then he must despise himself, as soon as he compares himself with the moral law. This must therefore be something other than the principle of one’s own happiness. For to be obliged to say to myself: I am a good-for-nothing, though I have lined my pockets, must have a different standard of judgement, than giving oneself applause and saying: I am a clever human being, for I have enriched myself.”¹¹² Whether card-cheats despise themselves or not, even assuming they would reflect on the moral law, is a crassly empirical question. They may feel themselves, in an infantile fashion, to be exempt from every bourgeois obligation; even laughing up their sleeves at the successful stunt, their narcissism shielding them against the presumed self-loathing; and they may simply be following an ethical code approved among their own kind. The pathos, with which they are supposed to abuse themselves as unworthy, is based on the recognition of the Kantian moral law, which this latter

111 Ibid.

112 Ibid. pg 37.

wishes to ground with the example. In the group of all those covered for example by the concept of “moral insanity” [in English], it is suspended, yet they by no means lack reason; only metaphorically could they be classified as insane. What in propositions over the mundus intelligibilis [Latin: intelligible world] seeks consolation in the empirical one, must itself accord with empirical criteria, and this speaks against the consolation, in keeping with that aversion of speculative thought against the so-called example as something inferior, for which there is no lack of testimony in Kant: “This is also the sole and great use of examples, that they sharpen the power of judgement. For in regards to the correctness and precision of the insight of understanding, they commonly cause the latter some obstruction, because they only seldom adequately fulfill the condition of the rule (as casus in terminis [Latin: case in the end]) and moreover often weaken the corresponding effort of understanding, to look into the adequacy of the rules in general and independently of the particular circumstances of experience, and ultimately cultivate the habit of using these more as formulations than as foundations. Thus examples are the leading-strings of the power of judgement, which those, who lack the natural talent for the same, can never dispense with.”¹¹³ Given that Kant did not, contrary to his own insight, disdain to use examples in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, one suspects that he needed them because the relation between the formal moral law and existence, and thereby the possibility of the imperative, could not have been achieved except by empirical subreption; his philosophy thereby revenges itself on him, in that the examples dissolve like smoke. The absurdity of moral experiments might have as their core, the fact that they couple what is incompatible; they claim to calculate out, what for its part explodes the realm of the calculable.¹¹⁴

113 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* [Kritik der reinen Vernunft], 2nd Edition, WWIII, Academy Edition, pg 97. – Hegel, too, repeatedly and cuttingly criticized the philosophical usage of examples, especially in the history of philosophy.

114 The Kantian thought-experiments are not dissimilar to existential ethics. Kant, who well knew that good will had its medium in the continuity of a life and not in the isolated deed, sharpens good will to a decision between two alternatives in the experiment, so that it should prove what it ought to. This continuity hardly exists anymore; this is why Sartre clings steadfastly to the decision, in a kind of regression to the 18th century. Yet while autonomy is supposed to be demonstrated in the alternative situations, it is heteronomous before all content. Kant had to provide a despot for one of his examples of the situation of decision; analogously, the Sartrean ones stem many times over from fascism, true as the denunciation of the latter, not as a condition humaine [French: human condition]. Only those who would not have to accept any alternatives at all would be free, and in the existent it is a trace of freedom, to reject them. Freedom means the critique and transformation of situations, not their confirmation by a decision reached within their compulsory apparatus.

THE SUPPLEMENTARY [HINZUTRETENDE] 226–230

Despite all this, they demonstrate a moment which, corresponding to its vague experience, may be termed the supplementary [Hinzutretende]. The decisions of the subject do not roll off as in a causal chain, but occur as a jolt. This supplementary, the factual, which realizes itself [sich entaeussert] in consciousness, is interpreted again by the philosophical tradition only as consciousness. It is supposed to intervene, as if the intervention were somehow conceivable by the pure Spirit. What is construed for the sake of the QED [quod erat demonstrandum: what is to be shown]: that solely the reflection of the subject would be able, if not to break through natural causality, then at least to add in other chains of motivations, to change its direction. The self-experience of the moment of freedom is bound up with consciousness; the subject knows itself to be free, only insofar as its action appears to be identical with it, and that is the case solely in conscious ones. In these alone subjectivity raises, laboriously and ephemerally, its head. But the insistence on this narrowed itself rationalistically. To this extent Kant was, in keeping with his conception of practical reason as that which is truly “pure”, namely sovereign in relation to every material, closely attached to the school which the critique of theoretical reason demolished. Consciousness, the rational insight, is not simply the same as the free act, is not to be flatly equated to the will. Exactly that occurs in Kant. The will is to him the epitome of freedom, the “capacity”, to act freely, the characteristic unity of all the acts, which can be conceived of as free. Of the categories which “in the field of the supra-sensory” stand in “necessary connection” with the “determining grounds of the pure will”, he teaches “that they always refer only to beings which are intelligent, and in these also only as the relationship of reason to the will, and therefore always only to what is practiced.”¹¹⁵ Reason would obtain reality through the will, untrammelled by any sort of material. The formulations scattered in Kant’s moral-philosophical texts ought to converge therein. In the *Foundation for a Metaphysic of Morals* the will is “thought of as a capacity, to determine oneself to act according to the conception of certain

When Brecht, following a discussion with students, permitted the collectivistic teaching-play of the Yes-man to be followed by the deviating Nay-sayer, he helped this insight to break through in spite of his official credo.

115 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* [Kritik der praktischen Vernunft], *ibid.* pg 56.

laws.”¹¹⁶¹¹⁷ According to a later passage of the same text, the will would be “a kind of causality of living beings, insofar as they are rational, and freedom would be the selfsame characteristic of this causality, since it can have an affect independent from alien fundamental causes which determine it.”¹¹⁸ The oxymoron “causality through freedom”, appearing in the thesis of the Third Antinomy and explicated in the *Foundation*, becomes plausible solely due to the abstraction, which allows the will to be exhausted in reason. In fact freedom becomes for Kant a characteristic of the causality of living subjects, because it would be beyond the alien fundamental causes which determine them and would shrink into that necessity which coincides with reason. Even the treatment of the will as the “capacity of purposes”¹¹⁹ in the *Critique of Practical Reason* expounds this, in spite of its orientation to the objective concept of the purpose, as theoretical reason, since the purposes “are at every time the determining grounds for the capacity of desire according to principles”;¹²⁰ however, solely the laws of reason are to be conceived under principles, which are tacitly ascribed the capability of directing the capacity to desire, which for its part belongs to the world of the senses. As pure *Logos* [Greek: logic] the will becomes a no-man’s land between the subject and the object, antinomical in a manner which was not envisioned by the critique of reason. – At the beginning of the self-reflection of the modern, self-emancipating subject, however, in Hamlet, the divergence between the insight and the act is paradigmatically displayed. The more the subject becomes an existent for itself and distances itself from an unbroken accord with pre-established order, the less are the deed and consciousness as one. The supplementary is possessed of an aspect which is irrational according to rationalistic ground-rules. It denies the Cartesian dualism of *res extensa* [Latin: extended substance] and *res cogitans* [Latin: thinking substance], in which the supplementary, as something mental, is lumped together with the *res cogitans* [Latin: thinking substance], without consideration of its difference from the thought. The supplementary is an impulse, the rudiment of a phase, in which

116 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* [Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten], *ibid.* pg 427.

117 The “conception of certain laws” amounts to the concept of pure reason, which indeed Kant defines as “the capacity of cognizing out of principles.”

118 *Ibid.* pg 446.

119 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* [Kritik der praktischen Vernunft], *ibid.* pg 59.

120 *Ibid.*

the dualism of the extra- and intramental was not thoroughly nailed down, neither to be bridged as volition nor an ontological ultimate. The concept of the will is also touched by this, which has the so-called facts of consciousness as its content, which are simultaneously purely descriptive, and not only such; this lies hidden in the transition of the will into praxis. The impulse, intramental and somatic in one, drives beyond the sphere of consciousness, which it nevertheless belongs to. With it, freedom reaches deep into experience; this animates its concept as one of a condition, which would be so little blind nature as suppressed nature. Its phantasm, which reason does not allow to be withered by any proof of causal interdependence, is that of a reconciliation of Spirit and nature. It is not so alien to reason as it seems under the aspect of its Kantian equation with the will; it does not fall from the heavens. It appears as something simply and purely other to the philosophical reflection, because the will, reduced to the pure practical reason, is an abstraction. The supplementary is the name for what was stamped out of that abstraction; without it the will would not be real at all. It flashes like a bolt of lightning between the poles of something long past, which has become almost unrecognizable, and that which it one day could be. True praxis, the epitome of acts which would satisfy the idea of freedom, requires indeed full theoretical consciousness. The decisionism which cancels out reason in the transition to the action delivers this over to the automatism of domination: the unreflective freedom, which it adjusts to, becomes the servant of total unfreedom. Hitler's realm, which united decisionism and social Darwinism, the affirmative extension of natural causality, taught this lesson. But praxis also requires something other, something not exhausted in consciousness, something corporeal, mediated into reason and qualitatively divergent from it. Both moments are by no means experienced separately; yet the philosophical analysis has clipped the phenomenon in such a manner that it can not otherwise be expressed in the language of philosophy, than as if something other were being added to rationality. By allowing only reason to be a *movens* [Latin: what moves] of praxis, Kant remained in the bane of that faded theoretics, against which he invented the primacy of practical reason as complementary. His entire moral philosophy labors under this. What is different in the action from the pure consciousness, which to Kant compels the former: that which abruptly springs out, is the spontaneity, which Kant likewise transplanted

into the pure consciousness, because otherwise the constitutive function of the “I think” would have been endangered. The memory of what has been expelled lives on in him only in the double interpretation of the intramentally interpreted spontaneity. It is on the one hand an achievement of the consciousness: thinking; on the other hand, unconscious and involuntary, the heartbeat of the *res cogitans* [Latin: thinking substance] beyond this latter. Pure consciousness – “logic” – is itself something which has become and something valid, in which its genesis perished. It has this latter in the moment glossed over by the Kantian doctrine, of the negation of the will, which according to Kant would be pure consciousness. Logic is a praxis sealed off from itself. Contemplative conduct, the subjective correlate of logic, is the conduct which wants nothing. Conversely every act of will breaks through the autarkic mechanism of logic; this jolts theory and praxis into opposition. Kant turns the matter-at-hand upside down. However more sublimated the supplementary may constantly become with increasing consciousness, indeed however the concept of the will may form thereby as something substantial and uniform – if the motor reaction-form were totally liquidated, if the hand no longer twitched, then there would be no will. What the great rationalistic philosophers conceived under this latter, already repudiates it, without giving an account of it, and the Schopenhauer of the fourth book was not wrong in feeling himself to be a Kantian. That without the will there is no consciousness, was blurred by the idealists into point-blank identity: as if the will were nothing other than consciousness. In the most profound concept of transcendental epistemology, that of the productive power of imagination, the trace of the will migrates into the pure intellective function. Once this has occurred, then spontaneity is curiously glossed over in the will. It is not merely reason which has genetically developed itself out of drive-energy as its differentiation: without that willing, which manifests itself in the caprice of every such act of thinking and alone furnishes the ground for its distinction from the passive, “receptive” moment of the subject, there would be no thinking in the proper sense. Idealism however swore an oath to the opposite and may not permit this to speak, at the price of its annihilation; this explains the inversion of as well as its proximity to the true matter-at-hand.

FICTION OF POSITIVE FREEDOM 230–231

Freedom is solely to be grasped in determinate negation, in accordance with the concrete form of unfreedom. Positively it becomes an “as if”. Literally so in the *Foundation for a Metaphysic of Morals*: “I say now: every such being, which can not act otherwise than under the idea of freedom, is precisely thereby really free in the practical consideration, i.e. that all laws, which are inseparably bound to freedom, are applicable as much to the selfsame being, as if its will also in itself and in theoretical philosophy were validly declared free.”¹²¹ What is aporetic in this fiction, which perhaps precisely because of its weakness lends so much subjective stress to the “I say now”, is illuminated by a footnote, in which Kant apologizes, “freedom is sufficiently presumed by our intent only in that the actions of rational beings are founded merely in the idea”, “so that I may not be obliged, to prove freedom also in its theoretical intent”.¹²² He has however the being in view, which cannot act otherwise than under that idea, therefore real human beings; and these, following the *Critique of Pure Reason*, are meant by that “theoretical intent” which records causality in its table of categories. To ascribe freedom to empirical human beings, as if their will could also be demonstrated as free in theoretical philosophy, in that of nature, requires an immense effort on Kant’s part; for if the moral law were simply incommensurable with them, then moral philosophy would be meaningless. It would be only too happy to shake off the fact that the Third Antinomy punished both possible answers in equal measure as border-violations, ending in a deadlock. While in the practical philosophy Kant rigorously proclaims the chorismos of the existent and that which ought to be, he is nevertheless driven to mediations. His idea of freedom becomes paradoxical: incorporated into the causality of the world of appearance, which is incompatible with its Kantian concept. With the magnificent innocence, which raises even Kant’s errors far above all craftiness, he expresses this in the sentence on the beings, who could not act otherwise than under the idea of freedom, whose subjective consciousness would be chained to this idea. Their freedom has as its basis their unfreedom, on not being able to do otherwise, and at the same time on an empirical consciousness, which could deceive itself about its freedom just as

121 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* [Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten], *ibid.* pg 448.

122 *Ibid.*

much as about countless other details of its own psychological life out of amour propre [French: narcissism]; the being of freedom would be delivered over to the contingency of spatio-temporal existence. If freedom is posited as positive, as something given or unavoidable in the midst of what is given, then it immediately turns into unfreedom. But the paradox of Kant's doctrine of freedom corresponds strictly to its location in reality. The social emphasis on freedom as something existent coalesces with undiminished oppression, psychologically with compulsive traits. They are what the Kantian moral philosophy, antagonistic in itself, has in common with a criminological praxis in which the dogmatic doctrine of the free will is coupled with the necessity of harsh punishment, regardless of empirical conditions. All of the concepts in Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* which, in honor of freedom, are supposed to fill in the cleft between the imperative and human beings, are repressive: law, constraint, respect, duty. Causality out of freedom corrupts the latter into obedience. Kant, like the idealists after him, cannot bear freedom without compulsion; its undistorted conception already provokes in him that fear of anarchy, which later recommended the liquidation of its own freedom to the bourgeois consciousness. This can be recognized in formulations taken at random from the *Critique of Practical Reason*, almost more by the tone than by the content: "The consciousness of a free submission of the will to the law, as nevertheless bound up with an unavoidable compulsion, which is exerted on all inclinations, but only through its own reason, is thus the respect for the law."¹²³ The fearsome majesty of what Kant prioritized is what the analysts trace back to psychological conditions. In that deterministic science causally explains, what debased freedom to the non-deducible compulsion in idealism, it really contributes to freedom: a piece of its dialectic.

UNFREEDOM OF THOUGHT 231-234

Fully-developed German idealism chimes with one of the songs collected in the same period by *The Boy's Magic Horn*: thoughts are free. Since according to its doctrine everything which is, is supposed to be thought, that of the absolute, everything, which is, is supposed to be free. But this wishes only to assuage the consciousness that thoughts are by no means free. Even before all social controls,

123 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason* [Kritik der praktischen Vernunft], *ibid.* pg 80.

before all adjustment to relations of domination, their pure form, that of logical stringency, would be proof of unfreedom, of compulsion, in relation to what is thought as much as in relation to those who think, who exact it from themselves through concentration. What does not fit into the consummation of the judgement is choked off; thinking practices in advance that violence which philosophy reflected in the concept of necessity. Through identification, philosophy and society mediate each other into the former's innermost core. The nowadays universal regimentation of scientific thought externalizes this Ur-old relationship in modes of conduct and organizational forms. Without the moment of compulsion however thinking could not be at all. The contradiction of freedom and thinking is so little to be removed by thinking as it is to be removed for thinking, but demands instead its self-reflection. Speculative philosophers from Leibniz to Schopenhauer were right to concentrate their efforts on causality. It is the crux of rationalism in that wider sense, which includes Schopenhauer's metaphysics, insofar as it knew itself to be on Kantian grounds. The nomothetism of the pure thought-forms, the *causa cognoscendi* [Latin: cause of cognition], is projected on the objects as *causa efficiens* [Latin: efficient cause]. Causality presupposes the formal-logical principle, actually the non-contradictoriness, that of naked identity, as the rule of the material cognition of objects, even though historical development proceeded in the other direction. Thus the equivocation in the word *ratio*: reason and ground. Causality must atone for this: it cannot, in keeping with Hume's insight, appeal to any sensory immediate. To this extent, it is severed from idealism as a dogmatic remainder, while without causality the former could not exert the domination over the existent, which it strives for. Freed of the compulsion of identity, thinking would perhaps escape the causality, which that compulsion is modeled after. This last hypostatizes the form as committal for a content, which does not assume this form by itself; metacritical reflection would have to absorb empiricism wholesale. In contrast to this, the entire philosophy of Kant stands under the sign of unity [Einheit]. This lends it, in spite of the heavy accentuation of the "material", which does not stem from the pure form, the character of a system: he expected no less from such a one than his successors. The prevailing unity however is the concept of reason itself, finally the logical one of pure non-contradictoriness. The Kantian doctrine of praxis adds nothing to it. The distinction suggested terminologically

between the pure theoretical and the pure practical ones, just as much as between the formal-logical and the transcendental-logical and finally that of the doctrine of ideas in the narrow sense, are not differences inside of reason in itself; but are solely such in view of their usage, which either has nothing at all to do with objects, or simply refers to the possibility of objects, or, like practical reason, creates its objects, the free acts, out of itself. Hegel's doctrine, that logical and metaphysic would be the same, is inherent to Kant, without it yet becoming thematic. To the latter the objectivity of reason as such, the epitome of formal-logical validity, becomes the place of refuge for the ontology which was fatally assailed by critique in all material realms. This not only establishes the unity of the three *Critiques*: it is precisely as this moment of unity that reason achieves that double character, which later helped to motivate dialectics. To him reason is on the one hand, as distinct from thinking, the pure form of subjectivity; on the other hand, the summation of objective validity, the archetype of all objectivity. Its double character permits the turn taken by Kantian philosophy, as well as the German idealists: to teach the objectivity of the truth and of every content, which is nominalistically hollowed-out by subjectivity, by virtue of the same subjectivity, which destroyed it. In reason, both would be already as one; wherein indeed whatever is meant by objectivity, which opposes the subject, perishes through the abstraction in this latter, however much this dismayed Kant. The structural double-jointedness of the concept of reason is shared however by that of the will. While in the name of spontaneity, of that which is at no price to be concretized in the subject, it is supposed to be nothing other than a subject, it becomes, solidified and identical like reason, concretized into a hypothetical, yet factual capacity in the midst of the factual-empirical world, and thus commensurable with this latter. It is only due to its a priori ontic nature, which is something available like a characteristic, that the judgement can be made, without absurdity, that it would create its objects, the actions. It belongs to the world, in which it has its effect. That this can be confirmed to it, is the fee for the installation of the pure reason as an indifferent concept. The will, from which all impulses which refuse their concretization are banished as heteronomous, has to pay for this.

"FORMALISM" 234-236

The system-immanent objection raised against Kant, that the subdivision of reason according to its objects would make it dependent, against the doctrine of autonomy, on what it is not supposed to be, on the extra-rational, ought not to weigh too heavily. What breaks through in that discrepancy, despite his intent, is what Kant shoos away, the innervated referentiality of reason to what is non-identical to it. Only Kant does not go that far: the doctrine of the unity of reason in all of its presumed districts of application presupposes a firm separation between reason and its "what about". Because however it necessarily refers to such a "what about", in order to be any sort of reason, it is also determined, against his theory, in itself by this. The constitution of objects enters for example into judgements about what is to be practically done qualitatively differently than in the Kantian theoretical founding propositions. Reason distinguishes itself according to its objects, it may not be superficially stamped, with varying degrees of validity, as always the same in various object-realms. This also informs the doctrine of the will. It is not *chôris* [Greek: separately] from its material, society. If it were, then the categorical imperative would violate itself; as nothing other than its material, other human beings would be used by the autonomous subject only as means, not as ends. That is the absurdity of the monadological construction of morality. Moral conduct, evidently more concrete than the merely theoretical kind, becomes more formal than this latter as a consequence of the doctrine, that practical reason would be independent from everything which is "alien" to it, from every object. To be sure the formalism of Kantian ethics is not merely damnable, as reactionary German scholastic philosophy since Scheler has branded it. While it provides no readily positive casuistic of what is to be done, it humanely prevents the misuse of qualitative-substantive differences for the benefit of privilege and ideology. It stipulates the general juridical norm; to this extent something of substance lives on in, it spite of and because of its abstraction, the idea of equality. The German critique, to which Kantian formalism was too rationalistic, has made its bloody colors known in Fascist praxis, which made who was to be killed dependent on blind appearance [Schein], on membership or non-membership in a designated race. The illusory character [Scheincharakter] of such concreity: that in the complete abstraction human beings are subsumed under arbitrary concepts and are treated

accordingly, does not wipe away the stigma which has soiled the word concrete ever since. Therein however the critique of abstract morality is not abrogated. It suffices so little, in view of the continuing irreconcilability of the particular and universal, as the allegedly material value ethics of short-term eternal norms. Raised to a principle, the appeal to one so much as the other does an injustice to the opposite. The depracticalization of Kant's practical reason, that is to say its rationalism, and its deobjectification are coupled; only as deobjectified does it become that which is absolutely sovereign, which is supposed to be able to have its effect in empiricism regardless of this latter, and regardless of the leap between the acting and the doing. The doctrine of pure practical reason prepares the re-translation of spontaneity into contemplation, which really occurred in the later history of the bourgeoisie and which culminated in political apathy, something utterly political. Its consummated subjectification produces the appearance [Schein] of the objectivity of practical reason, as existent-in-itself; it is no longer clear how it is supposed to reach, beyond the ontological abyss, into any sort of existent. This is also the root of what is irrational in the Kantian moral law, for which he chose the expression, the given fact [Gegebenheit], which denies all rational transparency: it commands the course of reflection to halt. Because freedom to him amounts to the invariant self-sameness of reason even in the practical realm, it forfeits what the linguistic usage distinguishes between reason and the will. By virtue of its total rationality the will becomes irrational. The *Critique of Practical Reason* moves in the context of delusion. It has the Spirit serve as surrogate of the action, which is not supposed to be anything other than the sheer Spirit there. This sabotages freedom: its Kantian bearer, reason, coincides with the pure law. Freedom would require what is heteronomous to Kant. Freedom would be so little, without something accidental according to the criterion of pure reason, as without the rational judgement. The absolute separation between freedom and accident [Zufall: chance, contingency] is as arbitrary as the absolute one between freedom and rationality. According to an undialectical standard of lawfulness [Gesetzmässigkeit], it always appears to freedom as something contingent; it demands reflection, which rises above the particular categories of law and accident.

THE WILL AS THING 236–237

The modern concept of reason was one of indifference. In it, the subjective thinking reduced to the pure form – and thereby potentially objectivated, detached from the ego – is balanced out with the validity of logical forms, removed from their constitution, which nevertheless could not in turn be conceived without subjective thinking. In Kant the expressions of the will, the actions, participate in such objectivity; they are thus called objects.¹²⁴ Their objectivity, copied from the model of reason, pays no attention to the *differentia specifica* of action and object. The will, the master-concept or moment of unity of the acts, is analogously concretized. What it thereby experiences theoretically, does not meanwhile in all flagrant contradiction completely lack truth-content. In view of the individual impulse the will is in fact independent, quasi thingly, to the extent that the principle of unity of the ego achieves a degree of independence in relation to its phenomena as what is “its”. One can talk of an independent and to this extent even objective will so much as of a strong ego or, in archaic terminology, of character; even outside of Kant’s construction, it is that middle ground between nature and the *mundus intelligibilis*, which Benjamin contrasted to fate.¹²⁵ The concretization of individual impulses in the will which synthesizes and determines them, is their sublimation, the successful, displaced redirection, involved as duration, of the primary drive-goal. It is faithfully circumscribed in Kant by the rationality of the will. Through it the will becomes something other than its “material”, the diffuse excitations. To emphasize the will of a human being, means the moment of unity of their actions, and that is their subordination under reason. In the Italian title of *Don Giovanni* the libertine is named “il dissoluto”, the dissolute one; language opts for morality as the unity of the person according to the abstract rational law. Kant’s doctrine of ethics ascribes to the totality of the subject the predominance over the moments, in which they alone have their life and which

124 “By a concept of practical reason, I understand the conception of an object as a possible effect through freedom. To be an object of practical cognition as such, means therefore only the relation of the will to the action, by which it or its opposite would be really made, and the judgement, as to whether something would be an object of pure practical reason or not, is merely the distinction between the possibility or impossibility of willing the action in question, whereby, if we had the capacity for this (which must be judged by experience), a certain object would come to be.” (Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, WW V, Academy-Edition, pg 57).

125 See Walter Benjamin, *Writings Volume 1* [Schriften I], Frankfurt am Main 1955, pg 36.

yet outside of such totality would not be the will. The discovery was progressive: it prevented casuistic judgements from being made any longer over the particular impulses; it also inwardly prepared the end of the righteousness over texts. This contributed to freedom. The subject becomes moral for itself, cannot be weighed according to internal and external particulars, which are alien to it. By establishing the rational unity of the will as the sole moral authority, it is sheltered from the violence done to it by a hierarchical society, which – as even in Dante – judges its acts, without their law being accepted by its own consciousness. The individual actions become venial; no isolated one is absolutely good or evil, their criterion is “good will”, their principle of unity. The internalization of society as a whole steps into the place of the reflexes of a feudal order, whose apparatus, the tighter it becomes, fragments the generality of human beings all the more. The relegation of morality to the sober unity of reason was Kant’s bourgeois sublime, despite the false consciousness in the concretization of the will.

OBJECTIVITY OF THE ANTINOMY 238–239

The assertion of freedom as much as unfreedom terminates according to Kant in contradictions. That is why the controversy is supposed to be fruitless. Under the hypostasis of scientific-methodical criteria it is expounded as self-evident, that theorems, which cannot be safeguarded from the possibility of their contradictory opposite, are to be discarded by rational thinking. Since Hegel this is no longer tenable. Rather than blaming the procedure in advance, the contradiction may be one in the thing itself. The urgency of the interest in freedom suggests such objective contradictoriness. In that Kant demonstrated the necessity of the antinomies, he also disdained the excuse of the false problem, overhastily bowing however to the logic of contradictoriness.¹²⁶ The transcendental dialectic does not entirely

126 “For that which necessarily drives us to go beyond the borders of experience and all appearances, is what is unconditional, which reason necessarily and with every right demands in the things in themselves to everything which is conditioned and thereby fully achieves the sequence of conditions. If it turns out now, if one assumes, our cognition of experience directing itself according to the objects as things in themselves, that the unconditional could not at all be thought without contradiction; on the other hand, if one assumes our conception of things, as they are given to us, direct themselves not according to these as things in themselves, but that these objects direct themselves rather as appearances according to our manner of conception, the contradiction falls away; and that consequently the unconditional ought to be met not in things, insofar as we know them (as they are given to us), but rather in them, insofar as we do not know them, as things in themselves: thus demonstrating, that what we at the beginning only tentatively assumed, would be grounded.” (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, WWW III, Academy Edition, pg. 13)

lack the consciousness of this. To be sure the Kantian dialectic is expounded according to the Aristotelian model as one of trick statements [Fangschlüssen]. But each time it develops thesis like antithesis non-contradictorily in itself. To that extent it by no means comfortably disposes of the antithesis, but wishes to demonstrate its inevitability. It would “be dissolved” only through a reflection on a higher level, as the hypostasis of logical reason in relation to that which, whose being-in-itself it knows nothing of, and over which it is therefore not entitled to positively judge. That the contradiction would be inescapable to reason, indicates it as something beyond that and its “logic”. In terms of content, this allows for the possibility that the bearer of reason, the subject, would be both free and unfree. Kant settles the contradiction with the means of undialectical logic, by the distinction between the pure and empirical subject, which ignores the mediatedness of both concepts. The subject is supposed to be unfree to the extent that it, too, is its own object, submitting to the lawful synthesis through categories. In order to be able to act in the empirical world, the subject cannot in fact be conceived as other than the “phenomenon”. Kant by no means always denies this. The speculative critique grants, teaches the work on practical reason in unison with that on the pure one, that “the objects of experience as such and among these our own subject are valid only as appearance”.¹²⁷ The synthesis, the mediation, cannot be subtracted from anything which can be positively judged. The moment of unity of thought, it grasps everything thought under itself and determines it as necessary. This would catch up even to the talk of the strong ego as firm identity, as the condition of freedom. It would have no power over the chorismos. The concretization of character would in Kantian terms be localizable only in the realm of the constitutum [Latin: what is constituted], not in that of the constituens [Latin: what constitutes]. Otherwise Kant would commit the same paralogism, for which he convicts the rationalists. The subject would however be free, in that it posits, “constitutes” in the Kantian sense, its own identity, the ground of its lawfulness. That the constituens is supposed to be the transcendental subject, the constitutum the empirical one, does not remove the contradiction, for there is no transcendental one which is not individuated in the unity of consciousness, hence as a moment of the empirical one. It requires what

127 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, *ibid.* pg 6.

is irreducibly non-identical, which simultaneously delimits lawfulness. Without it, identity would be so little as an immanent law of subjectivity. Only for the non-identical is it one; otherwise, a tautology. The identifying principle of the subject is itself the internalized one of society. That is why in the realm of socially existent subjects unfreedom is preponderant over freedom to this day. Inside of the reality, which is modeled after the identity-principle, no freedom is positively available. Where, under the universal bane, human beings seem to be relieved of the identity-principle and thereby of comprehensible determinants, they are for the time being not more than but less than determined: as schizophrenia, subjective freedom is something destructive, which only incorporates human beings under the bane of nature that much more.

DIALECTICAL DETERMINATION OF THE WILL 240–241

The will without the bodily impulse, which lives on weakly in the imagination, would be none at all; at the same time however it arranges itself as a centralizing unity of the impulses, as the authority which restrains and potentially negates them. This necessitates its dialectical determination. It is the power of consciousness, by which it leaves its own magic circle and thereby transforms what merely is; its recoil is resistance. No doubt the memory of this always accompanied the transcendental rational doctrine of morals; as in the Kantian avowal of the given fact [Gegebenheit] of the moral law independent of philosophical consciousness. His thesis is heteronomous and authoritarian, but has its moment of truth in that it limits the pure rational character of the moral law. If one took the one reason strictly, it could be no other than the unabbreviated, philosophical one. The motif culminates in the Fichtean formulation of the self-evidence of what is moral. As the bad conscience of the rationality of the will, however, its irrationality becomes crumpled up and false. If it is once supposed as self-evident, exempt from rational reflection, then what is self-evident affords shelter to the unexamined residue and to repression. Self-evidence is the hallmark of what is civilized: good is what is one, immutable, identical. What does not fit into this, the whole legacy of the pre-logical natural moment, turns immediately into evil, as abstract as the principle of its opposite. Bourgeois evil is the post-existence of that which is older, subjugated, not entirely subjugated. It is however not unconditionally evil,

any more than its violent counterpart. Solely the consciousness, which reflects the moments as far and as consistently as they are accessible to it, can render judgements each time over this. Actually there is no other authority for correct praxis and for the good itself than the most advanced state of theory. An idea of the good, which is supposed to direct the will, without it being completely absorbed into the concrete rational determinations, unwittingly obeys the reified consciousness and what is socially approved. The will which is torn from reason and declared its own purpose, whose triumph the National Socialists [Nazis] themselves documented at each one of their party meetings, stands like all ideals which protest against reason ready for any atrocity. The self-evidence of good will grows obdurate in the mirage, the historical sediment of power, which the will should resist. In contrast to its pharisaism, the irrational moment of the will principally condemns everything moral to fallibility. Moral certainty does not exist; to posit it would already be immoral, the false exoneration of what is individuated from anything which might be called morality. The more pitilessly society gathers itself up objectively-antagonistically into every situation, the less is any sort of moral individual decision accorded the right to be the correct one. Whatever the individual or the group undertakes against the totality, which they form a part of, is infected by that evil, and no less are those who do nothing at all. That is what original sin has been secularized into. The individual subject, which imagines itself to be morally certain, fails and becomes culpable, because harnessed to the social order, is hardly able to do anything about the conditions, which appeal to moral ingenium [Latin: natural ability, talent]: crying out for its transformation. For such a decay, not of morality, but of what is moral, the canny neo-German after the war hatched the name of the "overdemand" [Überforderung], for its part once more an apologetic instrument. All thinkable determinations of what is moral, down to the most formal of all, the unity of the self-consciousness as reason, are squeezed out of that matter, with which moral philosophy did not wish to soil its hands. Today morality has once again been granted the hated heteronomy it loathes, and tendentially sublates itself. Without recourse to the material no Ought [Sollen] could issue from reason; however once it is forced to recognize its material in abstracto [Latin: in the abstract] as the condition of its possibility, then it may not cut off the self-reflection on the specific material;

otherwise it would thereby become heteronomous. In hindsight the positivity of what is moral, the infallibility which the idealists attested to it, reveals itself as the function of a still somewhat closed society, or at least of its appearance [Schein] to the consciousness delimited by it. This is what Benjamin may have meant by the conditions and boundaries of humanity. The primacy taught by the doctrines of Kant and Fichte of practical reason over theory, actually of reason over reason, is valid only for traditionalistic phases, whose horizon does not even tolerate the doubt, which the idealists imagined they were dissolving.

CONTEMPLATION 242–243

Marx received the thesis of the primacy of practical reason from Kant and German idealism and sharpened it into the demand to transform the world instead of merely interpreting it. He thereby underwrote the program of absolute control of nature, something *Ur-bourgeois*. The real model of the identity-principle breaks through, which dialectical materialism disputes as such, the effort, by which the subject makes what is dissimilar to it similar. However while turning that which is immanently real to the concept inside out, Marx is preparing a recoil. The telos of the long overdue praxis, according to him, was the abolition of its primacy in the form which dominated bourgeois society through and through. Contemplation would be possible without inhumanity, just as soon as the productive forces were unfettered to the point that human beings were no longer devoured by a praxis, which scarcity extorts from them and which then automatizes itself in them. What is bad in contemplation to this day, which contents itself to this side of praxis, as Aristoteles was the first to develop it for the *summum bonum* [Latin: highest good], was that it became a piece of narrow-minded praxis precisely due to its indifference towards the transformation of the world: that it became a method and instrumentalized. The possible reduction of labor to a minimum ought to radically influence the concept of praxis. Whatever insights would befall a humanity emancipated through praxis, would be divergent from a praxis, which ideologically exalts itself and in one fashion or another keeps subjects running on a treadmill. A reflection of this falls on contemplation today. Against the current objection, extrapolated from the theses on Feuerbach, that the happiness of the Spirit would be impermissible amidst the increasing unhappiness of the exploding population of the poor countries, after the catastrophes of the past and those which threaten

in the future, is not merely that it makes for the most part impotence into a virtue. Certainly there is no longer any justification for enjoying that of the Spirit, because a happiness forced to see through its own nullity, the borrowed time, which is given to it, would be none at all. Subjectively, too, it is undermined, even where it still bestirs itself. There is much to speak for the fact that cognition, whose possible relation to a transforming praxis is at least momentarily crippled, would not in itself be any sort of blessing. Praxis is put off and cannot wait; theory, too, ails from this. Those however who can do nothing, which does not at some point threaten to turn out for the worse even though it wishes for what is better, are constrained to thinking; that is their justification and that of the happiness of the Spirit. Its horizon need by no means be that of a transparent relation to a possible later praxis. The delayed thinking of praxis always has something inappropriate about it, even when it puts it off out of naked compulsion. However things go all too easily awry, for those who spoon-feed their thinking by the *cui bono* [Latin: who benefits]. What will one be incumbent upon and bestowed by a better praxis, thinking can so little foresee here and now, in keeping with the warning of utopianism, than praxis, according to its own concept, could ever exhaust itself in cognition. Without the practical visa-stamp, thinking should push against the façade, moving as far as it can possibly move itself. A reality which seals itself off against traditional theory, even against the best hitherto, demands this for the sake of the bane which shrouds it; it gazes at the subject with eyes so alien, that the latter, mindful of its failure, may not spare itself the effort of the reply. The desperate state of affairs, that the praxis on which everything depends is thwarted, paradoxically affords thinking the breathing-space which it would practically be criminal not to use. Ironically, thinking benefits from the fact that one may not absolutize its own concept: it remains, as conduct, a piece of praxis, however much this would be hidden from itself. But whoever contrasts literal, sensory happiness as something better than the impermissible one of the Spirit, fails to recognize that at the conclusion of historical sublimation, the split-off sensory happiness takes on the aspect of something regressive, similar to the way adults find the relationship of children to food off-putting. To not be similar to the latter in this respect, is a piece of freedom.

STRUCTURE OF THE THIRD ANTINOMY 243–244

According to the results of the transcendental analytic, the Third Antinomy would be cut off in advance: “Who called upon you, to think up a purely and simply first condition of the world and with this an absolute beginning of the gradual sequence of appearances, and thereby providing a resting-point for your imagination, by setting borders on boundless nature?”¹²⁸ Meanwhile Kant was not content with the summary observation, that the antinomy would be an avoidable mistake of the use of reason, and carried it out, like the others. The Kantian transcendental idealism contains the anti-idealistic ban on positing absolute identity. Epistemology is not supposed to behave as if the unforeseeable, “infinite” content of the experience could be garnered out of positive determinations of reason. Whoever violates this, would end up in a contradiction unbearable to “common sense” [in English]. This is plausible, but Kant bores further. The reason which proceeds, as he upbraids it for doing, must, according to its own meaning, and for the sake of its inexorable cognitive ideal, keep right on going where it shouldn’t, as if under a natural and irresistible temptation. It is whispered to reason, that the totality of the existent would nonetheless converge in it. On the other hand, what is authentic in the system-alien necessity, as it were, in the infinite continuation of the reason which searches for conditions, is the idea of the absolute, without which the truth could not be thought, in contrast to the cognition as a mere *adaequatio rei atque cogitationis* [Latin: making the thing equal with what is thought]. That the continuation, and thereby the antinomy, would be inalienable from the same reason, which nevertheless, as the critical one, must suppress these sorts of excesses in the transcendental analytic, documents with unintentional self-critique the contradiction of the critical approach to its own reason as of the organ of emphatic truth. Kant insists on the necessity of the contradiction and at the same time stops up the hole by spiriting away that necessity, which presumably originated from the nature of reason, to its greater honor, explaining it as solely a false, but correctable, usage of concepts. – The explanation of freedom, as the “causality through freedom” mentioned in the thesis of the Third Antinomy, is referred to as “necessary”.¹²⁹ Its own practical doctrine of freedom, as unequivocally as its intention manifests, can accordingly not simply

128 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *ibid.* pg 311.
 129 *Ibid.*

be acausal or anticausal. He modifies or expands the concept of causality, as long as he does not explicitly distinguish it from that employed in the antithesis. His theorem is fissured by what is contradictory even before all paradoxicality of the infinite. As a theory of the validity of scientific cognition, the *Critique of Pure Reason* cannot deal with its themes otherwise than under the concept of the law, not even those which are supposed to be beyond lawfulness.

ON THE KANTIAN CONCEPT OF CAUSALITY 245–246

The most famous, utterly formal Kantian definition of causality holds, that everything which happens, would presuppose a previous condition, “upon which it inexorably follows in keeping with a rule.”¹³⁰ Historically it was directed against the school of Leibniz; against the interpretation of the sequence of conditions out of inner necessity, as something being-in-itself. On the other hand it distinguishes itself from Hume: without the rule-based nature [Regelhaftigkeit] of thought, which the latter delivers over to convention, to something accidental, unanimous experience would not be possible; Hume would then and there have to speak causally, in order to make what he is rendering indifferent as convention plausible. In Kant by contrast causality becomes the function of subjective reason, and what is imagined thereunder becomes more and more watered down. It dissolves like a piece of mythology. It approximates the principle of rationality as such, of thinking according to rules. Judgements on causal contexts run out into tautology: reason observes in them, what it effects anyway as the capacity of laws. That it prescribes laws of nature or rather the law, says no more than the subsumption under the unity of reason. It transposes this unity, its own identity-principle, onto the objects and shuffles it off on them as their cognition. Once causality is thoroughly disenchanted, as if by the taboo on the inner determination of objects, then it also corrodes itself in itself. Kant’s rescue has the sole advantage over Hume’s denial, that what the latter swept away is regarded by the former as inborn to reason, as the necessity of its constitution, as it were, though not as an anthropological contingency. Causality is not supposed to originate in the objects and their relationship, but instead solely in the subjective thought-compulsion. That one condition could have something essential, something specific to do with the next, is dogmatic for Kant. However

130 Ibid. pg 308.

nomothetisms of successions, in keeping with the Kantian conception, could be set up, which recall nothing of the causal relationship. The relationship of the objects to each other, which have gone through what is inwards, virtually becomes something superficial to the theorem of causality. What is ignored is the simplest of utterances, that something would be the cause of something else. The causality which rigorously seals itself off from the inside of objects, is no more than its own shell. The *reductio ad hominem* [Latin: reduction to the person] in the concept of law reaches a borderline value, where the law no longer says anything about the object; the expansion of causality into the pure concept of reason negates it. Kantian causality is one without a *causa* [Latin: cause]. By curing it from the naturalistic prejudice, it melts away in his hands. That the consciousness cannot indeed escape causality, as its inborn form, certainly answers to Hume's weak point. But when Kant says that the subject must think causally, he also follows in the analysis of what is constituted, according to the literal meaning of "must", the causal proposition, to which he first ought to submit the *constituta* [Latin: things constituted]. If the constitution of causality through the pure reason, which for its part is nonetheless supposed to be freedom, is already subject to causality, then freedom is already compromised from the outset, that it has scarcely any other place than the complaisance of the consciousness towards the law. In the construction of the entire antithetics, freedom and causality intersect. Because the former in Kant is so much as to act out of reason, it is also lawful; even the free actions "follow rules". What has resulted from this is the unbearable mortgage of post-Kantian philosophy, that there would be no freedom without the law; that it would consist solely in the identification with this. Through German idealism, this was inherited by Engels with unforeseeable political consequences:¹³¹ the theoretical origin of the false reconciliation.

131 "Hegel was the first, who correctly portrayed the relationship of freedom and necessity. For him freedom is the insight into necessity. 'Necessity is blind only insofar as the selfsame is not understood.' Freedom does not lie in the dreamed-of independence from natural laws, but in the cognition of these laws, and in the possibility given thereby, of causing them to act in a planned fashion for determinate ends. This applies as much in relation to the laws of external nature, as to those which regulate the bodily and intellectual existence of human beings – two classes of laws, which we could separate from each other at most in the imagination, but not in reality. The freedom of the will means therefore nothing other than the capacity, to be able to decide with relevant knowledge [*Sachkenntnis*]. The freer therefore the judgement of a human being in relation to a certain standpoint, the greater the necessity by which the content of this judgement is determined; while the uncertainty which rests on ignorance, which seems to arbitrarily choose between many various and contradictory possibilities of decision, exactly thereby proves its unfreedom,

PLEA FOR ORDER 247-249

That claim to totality which is staked on behalf of causality, so long as it coincides with the principle of subjectivity, would become untenable along with the epistemological compulsory character. What in idealism can appear as freedom only paradoxically, would thus become substantively that moment, which transcends the bracketing of the course of the world with fate. If causality was sought as a determination – however subjectively mediated – of the things themselves, then what would open itself up in such a specification, in contrast to the indiscriminate One of pure subjectivity, is the perspective of freedom. It would be applicable to what is differentiated from compulsion. Compulsion would then no longer be praised as the factual action of the subject, its totality would no longer be affirmed. It would forfeit the a priori power, which was extrapolated from real compulsion. The more objective the causality, the greater the possibility of freedom; this is not the least reason why whoever wishes for freedom, must insist on necessity. By contrast Kant demands freedom and prevents it. The foundation of the thesis of the Third Antinomy, that of the absolute spontaneity of the cause, the secularization of the freely deified act of creation, is Cartesian in style; it is supposed to be valid, so as to satisfy the method. The completion of the cognition establishes itself as the epistemological criterion; without freedom, “even in the course of nature the sequence of appearances [would] never [be] complete on the side of the causes.”¹³² The totality of cognition, which is tacitly equated therein with the truth, would be the identity of subject and object. Kant restricts it as a critic of cognition and teaches it as a theoretician of the truth. A cognition which disposes over the sort of complete sequence which according to Kant can only be conceived under the hypostasis of an originary act of absolute freedom; which therefore permits nothing which is sensibly given to be outside, would be one which is not confronted with anything divergent from it. The critique of such identity would strike the positive-ontological apotheosis of the subjective causal concept as well as the Kantian proof of the necessity of freedom, whose pure form has something contradictory about it anyway. That freedom must be, is the highest

its mastery by the objects, which it is supposed to master. Freedom consists therefore in the cognition of the domination founded in natural necessities over ourselves and over external nature; it is thereby necessarily a product of historical development.” (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Works*, Berlin 1962, Vol. 20, Pg. 106)

132 Ibid. pg 310.

iniuria [Latin: injustice] of the legislating autonomous subject. The content of its own freedom – identity, which has annexed everything non-identical – is as one with the must, with the law, with absolute domination. This kindles the Kantian pathos. He construes even freedom as a special case of causality. What matters to him are “constant laws”. His deprecating bourgeois aversion to anarchy is not less than his self-conscious bourgeois antipathy against disenfranchisement. Even here society reaches deep into his most formal deliberations. What is formal in itself, which on the one hand emancipates the individuals from the restrictive determinations of what has become so and not otherwise, on the other hand confronts the existent with nothing, is based on nothing but domination raised to a pure principle, is something bourgeois. In the origins of the Kantian *Metaphysic of Morals* lies hidden the later sociological dichotomy of Comte between the laws of progress and to those of the social order, including the partisanship for this latter; by means of its lawfulness it is supposed to restrain progress. The sentence from the Kantian proof of the antithesis has such an overtone: “the freedom (independence) from the laws of nature is indeed an emancipation from compulsion, but also from the guidelines of all rules”.¹³³ It is supposed to be “torn down” through “unconditional causality”, that is to say: the free act of production; where Kant scientifically criticizes the latter in the antithesis, he scorns it, as elsewhere the stubborn fact, as “blind”.¹³⁴ That Kant hurriedly thinks of freedom as the law, betrays the fact that he takes it no more scrupulously than his class ever did. Even before they feared the industrial proletariat, they combined, for example in Smithian economics, praise of the emancipated individual with the apology for a social order, in which on the one hand the “invisible hand” [in English] takes care of the beggars as well as the king, while on the other hand even the free competitor was obliged to follow a code of – feudal – “fair play” [in English]. Kant’s popularizer did not falsify his philosophical teacher, when he named the social order the “blessed daughter of heaven” [reference to Schiller’s poem, *The Bell*] in the same poem, which hammers home that when peoples arise, well-being does not thrive. Both wished to know nothing of the fact that the chaos which that generation discerned in the comparatively modest terrors of the French Revolution – they displayed less outrage over the cruelty of the chouans

133 Ibid. pg 309.

134 Ibid. pg 311.

[French: 18th century counter-revolutionaries] – was the monster of a repression whose traces survive in those who rise up against it. Like all the other German geniuses who, as soon as Robespierre provided a pretext, fell over themselves in relief castigating the revolution which they at first had hailed, Kant praises “nomothetism” [Gesetzmässigkeit] at the expense of “lawlessness” in the proof of the antithesis and even speaks of a “mirage of freedom”.¹³⁵ Laws are lent the glorifying epithet “constant”, which is supposed to raise them above the specter of anarchy, without a glimmer of the suspicion, that exactly these would be the old ill of what is unfree. But what demonstrates the primacy of the concept of law in Kant, is that he calls upon it in the proof for the thesis as much as for the antithesis, as their alleged higher unity.

DEMONSTRATING THE ANTITHESIS 249–252

The entire section on the antithetics of pure reason argues, as is well known, *e contrario* [Latin: to the contrary]; in the thesis, that the counter-thesis would be guilty of that transcendental usage of causality, which violates the doctrine of categories in advance; that the causal category in the antithesis would overstep the borders of the possibility of experience. What is overlooked therein in terms of content, is that a consistent scientivism guards itself from such a metaphysical usage of the causal category. In order to escape from the agnostic consequences of scientivism, which the doctrine of the theoretical reason unmistakably sympathizes with, Kant constructs an antithesis which does not at all correspond to the scientivistic position: freedom is achieved by the destruction of a straw-man made to order. What is proven is only that causality ought not to be seen as something positively given into infinity – a tautology, according to the tenor of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which the positivists would be the last to object to. By no means however, not even in the context of the argumentation of the thesis, does it follow that the causal chain would break with the supposition of a freedom, which is presumed no less positively than the former. The paralogism is of indescribable import, because it allows it to positively reinterpret the non liquet [Latin: not proven]. Positive freedom is an aporetic concept, conceived, in order to conserve the being-in-itself of something intellectual in contrast to nominalism and scientification. At a central moment in the *Critique of Practical*

Reason Kant confessed what this was all about, namely the salvation of a residue: “Since this law however unavoidably concerns all causality of things, insofar as their existence is determinable in time, so would freedom, if this were the manner in which one had to conceive of the existence of these things, have to be rejected as a nugatory and impossible concept. Consequently if one still wishes to rescue it, no other way is left than to attribute the existence of a thing, insofar as it is determinable in time, consequently also causality according to the laws of natural necessity, merely to the appearance; to attribute to freedom, however, the same essence as the things in themselves.”¹³⁶ The construction of freedom confesses to being inspired by what *Elective Affinities* later called the salvational desire, while the former, relegated to the characteristic of the intratemporal subject, is revealed as “nugatory and impossible”. The aporetic essence of the construction, not the abstract possibility of the antithesis in the infinite, speaks against the positive doctrine of freedom. The critique of reason apodictically rejects all talk of a subject beyond space and time as an object of cognition. At first even the moral philosophy argues this: “Even of itself and indeed according to the knowledge, which the human being has through inner sensation, it may not presume to cognize, how it would be in itself.”¹³⁷ The forward to the *Critique of Practical Reason* repeats this, by citing that of the pure reason.¹³⁸ That the “objects of experience”, as Kant stipulates, would “nevertheless be grounded as things in themselves”,¹³⁹ sounds crassly dogmatic after that. Aporetic meanwhile is by no means only the question of the possibility, of cognizing what the subject would be in and for itself. Every merely thinkable, in the Kantian sense “noumenal”, determination of the subject ends up this way, too. In order to share in freedom, this noumenal subject must, according to Kant’s doctrine, be extratemporal, “as a pure intelligence, which is not determinable in its existence according to time”.¹⁴⁰ The salvational desire makes this noumenal into an existence – because nothing at all of this could be predicated otherwise – even though it is not supposed to be determinable according to time. Existence however, as anything which is given, which has not faded into the pure idea, is according to its own concept intratemporal. In the

136 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, *ibid.* pg 95.

137 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, *ibid.* pg 451.

138 See footnote 97 above, pg 239 in text [i.e. Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason*].

139 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, *ibid.* pg 6.

140 *Ibid.* pg 114.

Critique of Pure Reason – in the deduction of the pure concept of understanding as well as in the chapter on schematism¹⁴¹ – the unity of the subject becomes a pure temporal form. It integrates the facts of consciousness, as those of the same person. No synthesis without the intratemporal interrelation of the synthesized moments to each other; it would be the condition of even the most formal logical operations and of their validity. Accordingly however timelessness could not be ascribed to an absolute subject either, so long as something under the name of the subject is supposed to be thought. At most, rather, it would be absolute time. It is unfathomable, how freedom, the principal attribute of the temporal act and realized solely temporally, is supposed to be predicated by something radically non-temporal; equally unfathomable, how something non-temporal of this sort could have an affect in the spatio-temporal world, without itself becoming temporal and straying into the Kantian realm of causality. The concept of the thing-in-itself steps in as a *deus ex machina* [Latin: automatic god]. Hidden and indeterminate, it marks a blind spot of thought; solely its indeterminacy permits it to be utilized as needed for the explanation. The only peep out of the thing in itself which Kant permits is that it “affects” the subject. Thereby however it would be sharply opposed to this, and only by an irredeemable speculation, nowhere performed by Kant, could it be thrown together with the moral subject as something which likewise exists in itself. Kant’s critique of cognition prevents the summoning of freedom into existence; he helps himself by conjuring up a sphere of existence, which indeed would be exempt from that critique, but also from every judgement, over what it would be. His attempt to concretize the doctrine of freedom, to ascribe freedom to living subjects, is caught in paradoxical assertions: “One can thus concede, that if it were possible for us to have a deep insight into the manner of thinking of a human being, as to how it shows itself through inner as well as outer actions, that every last mainspring thereof would

141 “This now makes clear, that the schematism of understanding through the transcendental synthesis of the power of imagination, would amount to nothing other than the unity of everything which is diverse of the intuition in the inner sense and thus indirectly to the unity of the apperception as a function, to which the inner sense (of a receptivity) corresponds. Therefore the schemata of pure concepts of understanding are the true and sole conditions for providing these with a relation to objects, hence a meaning, and the categories have thus in the end no other possible empirical use, than in thereby serving, through grounds of an a priori necessary unity (due to the necessary unification of everything conscious in an ordinary apperception), to submit the appearances to the universal rules of the synthesis and thereby to fit them to thorough-going interlinking in an experience.” (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *ibid.* Pg 138)

be known to us, along with all the external causes which affect them, one could calculate the behavior of a human being in the future with certainty, just like the lunar or solar eclipse and nevertheless maintain, that the human being would be free.”¹⁴² That Kant even in the *Critique of Practical Reason* cannot do without termini like mainspring, is relevant in terms of content. The attempt to make freedom comprehensible, insofar as a doctrine of freedom cannot afford to do without this, inescapably leads through the medium of its metaphors to conceptions from the empirical world. “Mainspring” is a causal-mechanical concept. Even if the previous proposition were valid, however, then the one afterwards would be nonsense. It would serve solely to relate what is being metaphysically related to, which is empirically in total causality, through the mythical context of destiny, by burdening it in the name of freedom with the guilt, which would be nothing of the sort in the totally given determination. Through its culpability this would be reinforced into the innermost core of its subjectivity. Nothing is left to such a construction of freedom other than, under the sacrifice of the reason on which it is supposed to rest, to cower in authoritarian fashion those who attempt to think it in vain. Reason for its part however is nothing other to him than the legislating capacity. That is why he must conceive of freedom from the very beginning as a “special kind of causality”.¹⁴³ By positing it, he takes it back.

ONTIC AND IDEAL MOMENTS 252–257

In fact the aporetic construction of freedom is based not on the noumenal but on the phenomenal. There, that given fact of moral law can be observed, by which Kant believes, despite everything, freedom to be warranted as something existent. Meanwhile the given fact, as the very word hints, is the opposite of freedom, naked compulsion, exerted in space and time. For Kant freedom means so much as the pure practical reason, which produces its objects itself; this would have to do “not with objects, to recognize them, but with their own capacity, to really make these (according to the cognition of the same).”¹⁴⁴ The absolute autonomy of the will implied therein would be so much as absolute domination over inner nature. Kant continues: “To be consistent, is the greatest obligation

142 Ibid. pg 99.

143 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ibid. pg 309.

144 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, ibid. pg 89.

of a philosopher and yet is the most seldom met.”¹⁴⁵ This not only passes off the formal logic of pure consistency as the highest moral authority, but at the same time the subordination of every impulse under the logical unity, its primacy over what is diffuse in nature, indeed overall diversity of the non-identical; that always appears inconsistent in the closed circle of logic. In spite of the resolution of the Third Antinomy, Kantian moral philosophy remains antinomic: it is capable, according to the entire conception, of conceiving of the concept of freedom solely as repression. The entirety of the concretizations of morality in Kant bear repressive features. Their abstractness is substantive, because they exclude from the subject, what does not correspond to its pure concept. Thus the Kantian rigorism. The hedonistic principle is argued against, not because it is evil in itself, but because it would be heteronomous to the pure ego: “The pleasure from the conception of the existence of a thing, insofar as it is supposed to be a grounds of determination of desire of this thing, is based on the sensitivity of the subject, because it depends on the existence of an object; it thus belongs the senses (feelings) and not to the understanding, which expresses a relation of a concept of an object according to concepts, but not of a subject according to feelings.”¹⁴⁶ But the honor with which Kant sanctifies freedom, by wishing to purify it from everything which impinges on it, simultaneously condemns the person to unfreedom in principle. It cannot experience such a freedom, tightened to an extreme pitch, otherwise than as the restriction of its own impulses. If Kant inclines nevertheless towards happiness in many passages, as in the magnificent second note of the second theorem from the foundations of practical reason, then his humanity breaks through the norm of consistency. It may have dawned on him, that without such clemency one could not live according to moral law. The pure principle of reason of personality ought to converge with that of the self-preservation of the person, with the totality of its “interests”, which includes happiness. Kant’s position to this is as ambivalent as the bourgeois Spirit as a whole, which would like to guarantee “the pursuit of happiness” [in English] to the individual [Individuum] and would forbid it through the work-ethic. Such sociological reflection is not introduced from the outside, in a classificatory manner, into the Kantian a priorism. The fact that termini of social content appear over and over again in the *Foundation* and in the

145 Ibid. pg 24.

146 Ibid. pg 22.

Critique of Practical Reason, may be incompatible with the a prioristic intention. But without such a metabasis Kant would have to fall silent before the question concerning the compatibility of moral law with empirical human beings. He would have to capitulate to heteronomy, as soon as he confessed that autonomy was unrealizable. If in the service of systematic validity one wished to expropriate those socially content-based termini of their simple meaning and sublimate them to ideas, then one would ignore not only their wording. The true origin of moral categories is registered in them with greater power, than Kant's intention is able to handle. Thus the famed variant of the categorical imperative from the *Foundation*: "Act so, that you always use the humanity in your person, as much as in every other person, at the same time as an end, never merely as means",¹⁴⁷ then "humanity", the human potential in human beings, may have been meant only as a regulative idea; humanity, the principle of human existence, by no means the sum of all human beings, is not yet realized. Nevertheless the addition of the factual content in the word is not to be shaken off: every individual is to be respected as the representative of the socialized species humanity, no mere function of the exchange-process. The decisive distinction urged by Kant between means and ends is social, that between subjects as commodities of labor-power, out of which value is economically produced, and the human beings who even as such commodities remain subjects, for whose sake the entire operation, which forgets them and only incidentally satisfies them, is set into motion. Without this perspective the variant of the imperative would lose itself in a void. The "never merely" however is, as Horkheimer put it, one of those usages of a sublime sobriety, in which Kant, in order to not spoil the chance of the realization of utopia, accepts empiricism even in its most degraded form, that of exploitation, as the condition of what is better, insofar as he then develops it in the philosophy of history, under the concept of antagonism. This reads: "The means, by which nature serves to bring the development of all its predispositions into existence, is the antagonism of the same in society, insofar as this latter in the end becomes nonetheless the cause of a lawful social order of the same. What I understand here under antagonism is the unsociable sociability of human beings, i.e. the tendency of the same to enter into society, which however is tied to a thorough-going resistance, which constantly threatens

147 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ibid. pg 429.

to separate this society. This predisposition evidently lies in human nature. Human beings have an inclination to be socialized: because they feel themselves to be more of a human being in such a condition, i.e. the development of their natural predispositions. They have however also a great tendency to particularize (isolate) themselves: because they find in themselves simultaneously the unsociable characteristic, the wish to arrange everything merely according to their mind, and hence expect resistance everywhere, just as they know themselves, that they for their part are inclined to resistance against others. Now this resistance is that which awakens all powers of humanity, bringing it thereby to overcome its tendency towards laziness and, driven by the desire for honor, for lordship or for property, to establish a position amongst their fellows, which they most likely cannot stand, but cannot do without, either.”¹⁴⁸ The “principle of humanity as an end in itself”¹⁴⁹ is, despite all meditative ethics to the contrary, nothing merely innervated, but a promissory note on the realization of a concept of human beings, which has its place only as the social, albeit innervated, principle in every individual. Kant must have noticed the double meaning of the word humanity, as the idea of being human and of the epitome of all humanity. With dialectical profundity he introduced it into theory, even if only playfully. Consequently his usage of speech continues to oscillate between ontic and idea-related modes of parlance. “Rational beings”¹⁵⁰ are just as certainly living human subjects, as the “general realm of ends in themselves”,¹⁵¹ which are supposed to be identical with rational beings, transcends these in Kant. He would like neither to cede the idea of humanity to the existent society nor to dissolve such into a phantasm. The tension rises to the breaking point in his ambivalence towards happiness. On the one hand he defends such in the concept of being worthy of happiness, on the other hand he disparages it as heteronomous, especially where he finds “universal happiness”¹⁵² to be of no use to the law of the will. How little Kant, in spite of the categorical character of the imperative, would dream of ontologizing this posthaste, is confirmed by the passage, “that... the concept of good and evil must be determined not before the

148 Kant, *Outline of universal history from the perspective of a world-citizen* [Idee zu einer allgemeinen Geschichte in weltbürgerlicher Absicht], WW VIII, Academy Edition, pg 20.

149 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, ibid. pg 430.

150 Ibid. pg 447.

151 Ibid. pg 462.

152 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, ibid. pg 36.

moral law (on which it superficially seems it ought to be grounded), but only (as also happens here) after the selfsame and through the selfsame.”¹⁵³ Good and evil are no mere existents-in-themselves of some intellectual-moral hierarchy but are something posited by reason; that is how deeply nominalism still reaches into Kantian rigorism. However by fastening the moral categories to self-preserving reason, they are no longer thoroughly incompatible with that happiness, against which Kant so harshly expounded them. The modifications of his stance towards happiness in the course of the *Critique of Practical Reason* are no backpedaling concessions to the tradition of the ethics of goods; rather, preceding Hegel, the model of a movement of the concept. The moral universality passes, whether willed or no, over into society. This is formally documented by the first note to the fourth theorem of *Practical Reason*: “Therefore the mere form of a law, which restricts the matter, must at the same time be a grounds to add this matter to the will, but not to presuppose it. The material may be for example my own happiness. This, if I attribute it to everyone (as I may in fact do in finite beings), can thus only become an objective practical law, if I include that of others in the same. Thus the law to promote the happiness of others originates not from the presupposition, that this would be an object for everyone’s caprice, but merely from the fact that the form of universality, which reason requires as a condition of giving a maxim of self-love the objective validity of a law, becomes the grounds of the determination of the will, and therefore the grounds of the determination of the pure will was not the object (the happiness of others), but solely the mere lawful form of it, by which I restricted my maxim grounded on my inclination, in order to obtain the universality of a law and to make it fit for the pure practical reason, solely out of whose restriction, and not from the addition of an external mainspring, could the concept of what is committal – to extend the maxims of self-love also to the happiness of others – originate.”¹⁵⁴ The doctrine of the absolute independence of the moral law of the empirical being and indeed of the pleasure-principle is suspended, by the incorporation of the thought of living creatures in the radical, general formulation of the imperative.

153 Ibid. pg 62.

154 Ibid. pg 34.

DOCTRINE OF FREEDOM REPRESSIVE 257–258

Adjacent to this, Kant's ethics, fragile in itself, retains its repressive aspect. It triumphs in unmitigated form in the need for punishment.¹⁵⁵ The following lines stem not from the late works but from the *Critique of Practical Reason*: "Likewise if someone, who otherwise is an honest man (or is only placed in thought in the position of an honest man), confronts the moral law, in which he recognizes the unworthiness of a liar, his practical reason (in the judgement over that, which he is supposed to do) immediately departs from the advantage, unifying itself with what preserves the respect for his own person (truthfulness), and the advantage will now, after it has been separated from everything extraneous to reason (which is solely and totally on the side of duty) and cleansed, is weighed by everyone, in order to bring in all likelihood still other cases into connection with reason, only not where it could run counter to the moral law, which reason never departs from, but thereby unites its innermost core with it."¹⁵⁶ In the contempt for compassion, the pure practical reason accords with the "Grow hard" of Nietzsche, its antipode: "Even the feeling of compassion and soft-hearted participation, if it precedes the consideration of what duty would be and becomes a grounds of determination, burdens the well-meaning person, bringing their considered maxims into confusion and causes them to wish to be rid of them and to submit solely to the legislating reason."¹⁵⁷ At times, the intermixed heteronomy of the inner composition of autonomy boils over into rage against the same reason, which is supposed to be the origin of freedom. Then Kant takes the side of the antithesis of the Third Antinomy: "Where however determination according to natural laws ceases, there cease also all explanations, and nothing remains but the defense, that is the driving away of the objections of those, who pretend to have seen deeper into the essence of things and hence blithely declare freedom to be impossible."¹⁵⁸ Obscurantism entwines itself with the cult of reason as that which rules absolutely.

155 In keeping with the tenor of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the opposite intention can still be found there: "The more that legislation and government were arranged in accordance with this idea, the more seldom in any case would punishment become, and thus it is then entirely rational (as Plato maintained) that in a perfected arrangement of the former nothing of the latter would be necessary." (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *ibid.* pg 248)

156 *Ibid.* pg 92.

157 *Ibid.* pg 118, see Horkheimer and Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, *Ibid.*

pg 123.

158 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, *ibid.* pg 459.

The compulsion, which according to Kant proceeds from the categorical imperative, contradicts the freedom, which is supposed to be constituted in it as its highest determination. This is not the least of the reasons why the imperative, stripped of all empiricism, is presented as a “factum”¹⁵⁹ which needs no test by reason, in spite of the chorismos between facticity and the idea. The antinomies of the Kantian doctrine of freedom is sharpened to the point that the moral law counts as rational for it and as not rational; rational, because it reduces itself to pure logical reason without content; not rational, because it would be accepted as a given fact, it would no longer be analyzed; every attempt to do so is anathema. This antinomy is not to be shuffled off onto the philosopher: the pure logic of consistency, compliant to self-preservation without self-reflection, is deluded in itself, irrational. The hideous Kantian expression of “reasonalizing” [Vernünfteln: reasoning], which still echoes in Hegel’s “raisonnement” [Raisonnieren: reasoning], which denounces reason without any valid grounds of distinction, and whose hypostasis is beyond all rational ends, is consistent despite its glaring contradiction. The ratio turns into irrational authority.

SELF-EXPERIENCE OF FREEDOM AND UNFREEDOM 258–262

The contradiction dates back to the objective one between the experience of consciousness of itself and its relationship to the totality. The individuated feels free, insofar as it is opposed to society and may undertake something against it or other individuals, although incomparably less than it believes. Its freedom is primarily that of pursuing its own ends, which are not immediately exhausted in social ones; to this extent it coincides with the principle of individuation. Freedom of this type has escaped the natural-rootedness of society; within an increasingly rational one it has achieved a degree of reality. At the same time it remains appearance [Schein] in the midst of bourgeois society, no less than individuality generally. The critique of the freedom of the will, like that of determinism, means critique of this appearance [Schein]. The law of value realizes itself over the heads of formally free individuals. They are unfree, according to Marx’s insight, as its involuntary executors, and indeed all the more thoroughly, the more the social

159 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, *ibid.* pg 31, see additionally Horkheimer and Adorno, *ibid.* pg 114.

antagonisms grow, in which the conception of freedom first formed. The process by which what is individuated becomes autonomous, the function of the exchange-society, terminates in its abolition through integration. What produced freedom, recoils into unfreedom. The individuated was free as the economically active bourgeois subject, to the extent that autonomy was promoted by the economic system, so that it would function. Its autonomy is thereby already potentially repudiated at its origin. The freedom of which it boasted was, as Hegel first discerned, also something negative, the mockery of the true one; the expression of the contingency of the social fate of each and every individual. The real necessity in freedom, which had to maintain itself and, as ultra-liberal ideology praised it, prevailed by elbowing its way through, was the cover-image [Deckbild] of the total social necessity, which compels the individual towards *ruggedness* [in English and italicized in original], so that it survives. Even concepts which are so abstract, that they appear to approximate invariance, prove themselves to be historical. Just so that of life. While it reproduces itself further under conditions of unfreedom, its concept presupposes, according to its own meaning, the possibility of what is not yet included, of the open experience, which has been so much more lessened, that the word life already sounds like empty consolation. The freedom of the bourgeois individuated is no less of a caricature, however, than the necessity of its action. It is not, as the concept of the law commands, transparent, but strikes every individual subject as an accident, the continuation of mythical fate. Life has retained this negativity, an aspect which furnished the title for a duet piano piece of Schubert, *Storms of Life*. In the anarchy of commodity production the natural-rootedness of society reveals itself, as it vibrates in the word life, as a biological category for something essentially social. If the process of production and reproduction of society were transparent to subjects and determined by them, then they would also no longer be passively buffeted to and fro by the ominous storms of life. What is called life would thereby disappear, including the fatal aura, with which the Jugendstil surrounded the word in the industrial age, as the justification of a bad irrationality. At times the transience of that surrogate cast out its friendly shadow beforehand: today the adultery literature of the nineteenth century is already rubbish, excepting its greatest products, which cite the historical Ur-images of that epoch. Just as no theater director would dare to play Hebbel's

Gyges before an audience which does not wish to dispense with their bikinis – the fear of what is materially anachronistic, the lack of aesthetic distance, has at the same time something barbaric about it – something similar will transpire, once humanity worked it out, for nearly everything which counts today as life and merely deceives one over how little life there really is. Until then the prevailing lawfulness is contrary to the individual and its interests. Under the conditions of the bourgeois economy this is not to be shaken; the question concerning the freedom or unfreedom of the will, as something available, cannot be answered in it. It is for its part the molded cast of bourgeois society: the in truth historical category of the individual deceptively exempts that question from the social dynamic and treats every individual as an *Ur-phenomenon*. Obediently freedom has innervated the ideology of individualistic society badly within itself; this bars every definitive answer to ideology. If the thesis of the freedom of the will burdens the dependent individuals with the social injustice, over which they can do nothing, and humiliates them unceasingly with *desiderata*, before which they must fail, then on the other hand the thesis of unfreedom metaphysically prolongs the primacy of the given, declares itself to be immutable and encourages individuals, insofar as they are not already prepared to do so, to cower, since indeed nothing else is left for them to do. Determinism acts as if dehumanization, the commodity character of labor-power developed into a totality, were human essence pure and simple, incognizant of the fact that the commodity character finds its borders in labor-power, which is not mere exchange-value but also has use-value. If the freedom of the will is merely denied, then human beings are reduced without reservations to the normal form of the commodity character of their labor in developed capitalism. No less topsy-turvy is a prioristic determinism as the doctrine of the freedom of the will, which in the middle of commodity society abstracts from this. The individuated itself forms a moment of it; the former is ascribed the pure spontaneity which society expropriates. The subject needs only to pose the inescapable alternative of the freedom or unfreedom of the will, and it is already lost. Each drastic thesis is false. That of determinism and that of freedom coincide in their innermost core. Both proclaim identity. Through the reduction to pure spontaneity, the empirical subjects are subjected to the same law, which expands itself into the category of causality of determinism. Free human beings

would perhaps also be emancipated from the will; surely only in a free society would individuals be free. Along with external repression, the inner one would disappear, probably after a long interim period and under the permanent threat of regression. If the philosophical tradition, in the Spirit of repression, confounded freedom and responsibility, then this latter would pass over into the fearless, active participation of every individual: in a whole, which would no longer institutionally harden the participation, in which however they would have real consequences. The antinomy between the determination of the individuated and the social responsibility which contradicts it is no false usage of concepts but real, the moral form of the irreconcilability of universal and particular. That even Hitler and his monsters, according to all psychological insight, are slaves of their earliest childhood, products of mutilation, and that nevertheless the few, which were able to be caught, ought not to be allowed to go free, if the atrocity is not to repeat itself into the indefinite future, which the unconscious of the masses thereby justifies, in that no ray of light fell from the heavens – this is not to be glossed over by jury-rigged constructions such as a utilitarian necessity, which quarrels with reason. What is individuated befalls humanity only when the entire sphere of individuation, including its moral aspect, is seen through as an epiphenomenon. At times the total society, out of the despair of its condition, represents the freedom, against individuals, which goes into protest in their unfreedom. On the other hand, in the epoch of universal social oppression the picture of freedom against society lives only in the torn-apart, maimed traits of the individuated. Where this hides away each time in history, is not decreed for once and for all. Freedom becomes concrete in the changing forms of repression: in resistance against these. There was so much freedom of the will, as human beings wished to free themselves. However freedom itself is so tangled up with unfreedom, that it is not merely inhibited by the latter, but has it as the condition of its own concept. This is no more to be separated out as an absolute than any other individual one. Without the unity and the compulsion of reason, nothing which is similar to freedom could ever have been thought, let alone come to be; this is documented in philosophy. No model of freedom is available, except as consciousness, as in the social total constitution, intervening through this in the complex of what is individuated. That is why this is not thoroughly chimerical, because consciousness for its part

is branched-off drive-energy, itself also impulse, is a moment, too, of what it intervenes in. If there were not that affinity, which Kant frantically denies, nor would there be the idea of freedom, for whose sake he wishes to hush up the affinity.

ON THE CRISIS OF CAUSALITY 262–266

What is happening to the idea of freedom meanwhile appears also to be happening to its counterpart, the concept of causality; that in keeping with the universal trend towards the false sublation of the antagonisms, the universal liquidates the particular from above, through identification. This is not to be short-circuited by returning to the crisis of causality in natural sciences. It applies there expressly only in the micro-realm; on the other hand the formulations of causality in Kant, at least those of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, are so “large” [in English], that they presumably have room even for merely statistical nomothetisms [Gesetzmässigkeiten]. The natural sciences, which content themselves with operational definitions immanent to their mode of procedure, even with respect to causality, and philosophy, which cannot dispense with an accounting of causality, if it wishes to do more than merely abstractly repeat natural-scientific methodology, are miserably broken from each other, and the need alone will not glue them back together. The crisis of causality is visible however even in what philosophical experience can still reach, in contemporary society. Kant accepted as the unquestionable method of reason, that every condition is traced back to “its” cause. The sciences, which philosophy for the most part moves further and further away from, the more enthusiastically it recommends itself as the former’s spokesperson, may operate less with causal chains than causal networks. This is however more than an incidental concession to the empirical ambiguity of causal relations. Even Kant had to acknowledge that the consciousness of all causal sequences which intersect in every phenomenon, instead of being unequivocally determined by causality in temporal succession, is essential to the category itself, in his words, is a priori: no individual event is excepted from that multiplicity. The infinity of what is interwoven and which intersects in itself makes it impossible in principle, by no means merely practically, to form unequivocal causal chains, as the Thesis and Antithesis of the Third Antinomy stipulate in equal measure. Even tangible historical inquiries, which in Kant still remained in a finite course,

involve, horizontally as it were, that positive infinity which applies in the critique in the antinomy chapter. Kant ignores this, as if he were transposing relationships clearly visible in small towns to all possible objects. No path leads from his model to full-fledged causal determinations. Because he treats the causal relationship solely as a principle, he thinks past what is interwoven in principle. This omission is conditioned by the relocation of causality into the transcendental subject. As the pure form of lawfulness it shrinks to one-dimensionality. The inclusion of the ill-famed “reciprocal effect” in the table of categories is the retrospective attempt to answer for that lack, attesting also to the dawning crisis of causality. Its schemata replicated, as did not escape the Durkheim school, the simple generational relationship, so very much as its explanation requires causality. It takes on an aspect of something feudal, if not, as in Anaximander and Heraclitus, of an archaic juridical relationship of vengeance. Causality, the inheritor of the activating spirits in things, has been as delimited by the process of demythologization as much as reinforced by such in the name of the law. If causality is the actual unity in the polyvalence, which led Schopenhauer to favor it among the categories, then the bourgeois era was throughout as much causality as system. The more unequivocal the relationships were, the easier it was to speak of it in history. Hitler’s Germany caused the Second World War more precisely than the Wilhelmine one did the First. But the tendency recoils on itself. Ultimately there is a level of system – the social keyword is: integration – in which the universal dependence of all moments on all other ones makes the talk of causality obsolete; the search for what inside a monolithic society is supposed to be the cause is in vain. The cause is only this latter itself. Causality has withdrawn as it were into the totality; in the midst of its system it becomes indistinguishable. The more its concept, under scientific mandate, dilutes itself to abstraction, the less the simultaneous threads of the universally socialized society, which are condensed to an extreme, permit one condition to be traced back with evidence to others. Each one hangs together horizontally as vertically with all others, tinctures all, is tintured by all. The latest doctrine in which enlightenment employed causality as a decisive political weapon, the Marxist one of superstructure and infrastructure, lags almost innocently behind a condition, in which the apparatuses of production, distribution and domination, as well as economic and social relations and ideologies are inextricably interwoven, and in

which living human beings have turned into bits of ideology. Where these latter are no longer added to the existent as something justifying or complementary, but pass over into the appearance [Schein], that what is, would be inescapable and thereby legitimated, the critique which operates with the unequivocal causal relation of superstructure and infrastructure aims wide of the mark. In the total society everything is equally close to the midpoint; it is as transparent, its apologetics as threadbare, as those who see through it, who die out. Critique could portray, in every administration building and every airport, to what extent the infrastructure has become its own superstructure. For this it needs on the one hand the physiognomics of the total condition and of the extended individual data, on the other hand the analysis of economic structural transformations; no longer the derivation of an ideology, which is not at all available as something independent or even with its own truth-claim, out of its causal conditions. That the validity of causality decomposes correlative to the downfall of the possibility of freedom, is the symptom of the transformation of a society, rational in its means, into that openly irrational one, which latently, according to its ends, it was long ago. The philosophy of Leibniz and Kant, by means of the separation of the final cause from the phenomenally valid causality in the narrow sense, and the attempt at unifying both, felt something of that divergence, without getting to its root in the ends-means antinomy of bourgeois society. But the disappearance of causality today signals no realm of freedom. In the total reciprocal effect, the old dependence reproduces itself on an expanded level. Through its million-fold web it prevents the long overdue, palpably graspable rational penetration, which causal thinking wished to promote in the service of progress. Causality itself makes sense only in a horizon of freedom. It seemed to be protected from empiricism, because without its assumption the cognition organized into science did not seem possible; idealism possessed no stronger argument. Kant's effort however, to raise causality as a subjective thought-necessity to a constitutive condition of objectivity, was no more binding than its empiricist denial. Even he had to distance himself from the assumption of an innervated context of phenomena, without which causality becomes an if-then relation, which glides away precisely from that emphatic lawfulness – “a priority” – which the doctrine of subjective-categorical essence of causality wishes to conserve; scientific development then

fulfilled the potential of Kant's doctrine. Another makeshift substitute is the foundation of causality through its immediate self-experience in the motivation. Meanwhile psychology has substantively demonstrated that self-experience not only can deceive, but must.

CAUSALITY AS BANE 266–267

If causality as a subjective thought-principle is tainted with absurdity, if there is no cognition however completely without the former, then one would need to seek out a moment in it, which is itself not thinking. What is to be learned from causality, is what identity perpetrated upon the non-identical. The consciousness of causality is, as that of lawfulness [Gesetzmässigkeit], the consciousness of this; as the critique of cognition, also that of the subjective appearance [Schein] in the identification. Reflective causality points to the idea of freedom as the possibility of non-identity. Objectively causality would be, in a provocatively anti-Kantian sense, a relationship between things in themselves, insofar and only insofar as these are subordinated to the principle of identity. It is, objectively and subjectively, the bane of controlled nature. It has its fundamentum in re [Latin: fundamental basis] in identity, which as an intellectual principle is only the reflection of the real control of nature. In the reflection on causality, which finds this everywhere in nature there, where the latter is dominated by the former, reason also becomes aware of its own natural-rootedness, of the bane-casting principle. In such self-consciousness, progressive enlightenment separates itself from the regression into mythology, which it unreflectively subscribed to. It escapes the omnipotence of the schemata of its reduction, "that is what human beings are", in that human beings recognize themselves, for what they are otherwise insatiably reduced to. Causality is nothing other however than the natural-rootedness of humanity, which the latter perpetuates as domination over nature. If the subject once comes to know the moment of its equality with nature, then it would no longer turn nature into what resembles itself. That is the secret and inverted truth-content of idealism. For the more thoroughly the subject, according to idealistic custom, makes nature the same as itself, the further it distances itself from all equality with it. Affinity is the razor's edge of dialectical enlightenment. It recoils into delusion, the nonconceptual execution from outside, as soon as it completely cuts through the affinity. No truth without the latter: this is what idealism

caricatured in identity-philosophy. Consciousness knows as much about its other as it is similar to the latter, not by canceling itself out along with the similarity. Objectivity as the residue after the subtraction of the subject is a mere aping. It is the schemata, unconscious to itself, to which the subject reduces its other. The less it tolerates the affinity to things, the more ruthlessly it identifies. But even affinity is no positive ontological individual determination. If it turns into an intuition, into an immediate, empathically cognized truth, then it is ground up as an archaicism by the dialectic of the enlightenment, as warmed-over mythos; in accordance with the mythology which reproduces itself out of pure reason, with domination. Affinity is no remainder, which cognition would hold in its hands after the mandatory leveling [Gleichschaltung] of identification-schemata of the categorical apparatus, but rather their determinate negation. Causality is reflected upon in such critique. In it thinking consummates the mimicry of the bane of things, which it cast around these, on the threshold of a sympathy, which would cause the bane to vanish. The subjectivity of causality has an elective affinity to objects, as the premonition of what the subject caused them to experience.

REASON, EGO, SUPEREGO 267–271

The Kantian turn of moral law into the factum draws its suggestive power from the fact that he can cite such a given fact in the sphere of the empirical person. This is advantageous for the mediation, always problematic, between what is intelligible and what is empirical. The phenomenology of empirical consciousness, and indeed the psychology, runs into precisely that conscience which is the voice of moral law in the Kantian doctrine. The descriptions of its efficacy, for example that of “constraint”, are no mental phantoms. The traits of compulsion, which Kant carved into the doctrine of freedom, are to be read out of the real compulsion of the conscience. The empirical irresistibility of the psychologically existent conscience, of the superego, vouchsafes for the facticity of the moral law against its transcendental principle, which nonetheless ought to disqualify it as the foundation of autonomous morality for Kant as much as the heteronomous drive. That Kant tolerates no critique of the conscience, brings him into conflict with his own insight, that in the phenomenal world all motivations are those of the empirical, psychological ego. That is why he removed the genetic moment from moral philosophy and replaced it with the construction

of the intelligible character, which indeed the subject would initially give to itself.¹⁶⁰ The temporal-genetic and in spite of everything once again “empirical” claim of that “initially”, is however not to be redeemed. Whatever one knows of the genesis of the character, is incompatible with the assertion of such an act of moral Ur-generation. The ego, which is supposed to consummate it in Kant, is not anything immediate but itself something mediated, something originated, in psychoanalytic termini: branched off from diffuse libido-energy. Not only is all specific content of the moral law constitutively related to factual existence but also its presumably pure, imperative form. It presupposes the innervation of repression as much as the prior development of the fixed, identical self-maintaining authority of the ego, which is absolutized by Kant as the necessary condition of morality. Every interpretation of Kant, which would complain about his formalism and which would undertake to demonstrate, with its help, the empirical relativity of the morality this eliminated in the content, does not reach far enough. Even in its most extreme abstraction, the law is something which has come to be; the anguish of its abstraction, sedimented content, domination reduced to its normal form, that of identity. Psychology has concretely caught up with what in Kant’s time it did not yet know and which it therefore did not specifically need to concern itself with: the empirical genesis of what Kant glorified, unanalyzed, as timelessly intelligible. In its heroic period the Freudian school, in agreement on this point with the other, enlightening Kant, demanded the ruthless critique of the superego as something alien to the ego, something truly heteronomous. It saw through it as the blind and unconscious innervation of social compulsion. Sandor Ferenczi’s *Building Blocks of Psychoanalysis* states, with a caution which is best explained as fear of social consequences, “that a real character-analysis must remove, at least provisionally, every kind of superego, and thus even that of the analyst. Ultimately the patient must indeed become free of all emotional bonds, insofar as they go beyond reason and the former’s own libidinous tendencies.

160 “In the judgement of free acts in view of its causality, we can therefore come only to the intelligible cause, but not beyond the same; we can recognize, that it is free, i.e. is determined independent of the senses, and in such a manner could be the sensorily unconditional condition of appearances. Why however the intelligible character would yield exactly these appearances and this empirical character under existing circumstances, this goes far beyond all capacity of our reason to answer, indeed beyond all capacity of the same even to ask, as if one were asking: why does the transcendental object of our external sensory intuition yield precisely only the intuition in space and not some other kind.” (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, ibid. pg 376)

Only this sort of demolition of the superego can lead at all to a radical healing; successes, which consist merely of substituting one superego for another, must be characterized as merely transference-successes; they certainly do not do justice to the end-goal of therapy, which is to be rid of the transference, too.”¹⁶¹ Reason, in Kant the ground of the conscience, is supposed to refute it by dissolving it. For the unreflective domination of reason, that of the ego over the id, is identical with the repressive principle, which psychoanalysis, whose critique was silenced by the reality-principle of the ego, displaced into the latter’s unconscious reign. The separation of ego and superego, which its topology insists upon, is dubious; genetically both lead equally to the innervation of the father-image. That is why the analytic theories of the superego waned so quickly, however boldly they were raised: otherwise they would have to infringe on the cherished ego. Ferenczi immediately qualifies his critique: “his struggle” is directed “only against the part of the superego which has become unconscious and thus impervious to influence”.¹⁶² But this does not suffice: the irresistibility of the compulsion of the conscience consists, as Kant observed, in such becoming unconscious, just like the archaic taboos; if a condition of universally rational topicality were conceivable, no superego would establish itself. Attempts, like that of Ferenczi and particularly psychoanalytic revisionism, which subscribe along with other healthy viewpoints also to that of the healthy superego, to divide it into an unconscious and a preconscious and therefore more harmless part, are in vain; the concretization and process of becoming independent, through which the conscience becomes an authority, is constitutively a forgetting and to this extent ego-alien. Ferenczi emphasizes in agreement that “the normal human being continues to retain in their preconscious furthermore a sum of positive and negative models”.¹⁶³ If however a concept in the strict Kantian understanding is heteronomous, in psychoanalytical terms is one of a libidinous cathexis, it is that of the model, the correlate of that “normal human being”, who Ferenczi equally respects, who deliver themselves over actively and passively to every social repression and who psychoanalysis uncritically draws, out of the disastrous faith in the division of labor, from the existing society.

How closely psychoanalysis comes to that repression, as soon as the critique it

161 Sandor Ferenczi, *Basic Elements of Psychoanalysis* [Bausteine zur Psychoanalyse], Bern 1959, Vol 3, pg 394.

162 Ibid. pg 398.

163 Ibid.

inaugurated of the superego was braked out of social conformism, which to this day disfigures all doctrines of freedom, is shown most clearly by passages from Ferenczi like this: "So long as this superego takes care in a moderate manner, that one feels oneself as a moral citizen and acts as such, it is a useful institution, which ought not to be disturbed. But pathological exaggerations of the formation of the superego..."¹⁶⁴ The fear of exaggerations is the mark of the same ethical bourgeois nature, which may at no price renounce the superego along with its irrationalities. How the normal and the pathic superego would be subjectively distinguished, according to psychological criteria, is something which psychoanalysis, coming to its senses all too quickly, is just as silent about as the upstanding citizenry [Spiessbuerger] are about the border between what they cherish as their natural national feeling and nationalism. The sole criterion of the distinction is the social effect, whose *quaestiones iuris* [Latin: legal question] psychoanalysis declares to be outside its realm of competence. Reflections on the superego are, as Ferenczi says, though in contradiction to his words, truly "metapsychological". The critique of the superego ought to become the critique of the society which produced it; if it falls silent before this, then it accommodates the prevailing social norm. To recommend the superego for the sake of its social utility or inalienability, while it itself, as a mechanism of compulsion, does not confer that objective validity, which it claims in the context of affective psychological motivations, repeats and reinforces the irrationalities inside of psychology, which the latter made itself strong enough to "remove".

POTENTIAL OF FREEDOM 271-272

What however has been occurring in the most recent epoch, is the externalization of the superego into unconditional adjustment, not its sublation in a more rational whole. The ephemeral traces of freedom, the emissaries of possibility in empirical life, are becoming tendentially fewer; freedom into a borderline value. Not even as a complementary ideology is it entrusted to present itself; the functionaries, who meanwhile also administer ideology with a firm hand, evidently have little confidence in the attractive power of freedom as propaganda-technicians. It is being forgotten. Unfreedom is consummated in its invisible totality, which tolerates nothing "outside", out of which it could look and break through. The world as

164 Ibid. pg 435.

it is, is becoming the sole ideology, and human beings, its inventory. Even therein however dialectical justice reigns: it transpires over the individuated, the prototype and agent of a particularistic and unfree society. The freedom, for which it must hope, could not be merely its own, it would have to be that of the whole. The critique of the individuated leads beyond the category of freedom insofar as this is created in the image of what is unfreely individuated. The contradiction, that no freedom of will and thus no morality can be proclaimed for the sphere of the individuated, while without them not even the life of the species can be preserved, is not to be settled through the imposition of so-called values. Its heteronomous posited being, the Nietzschean new commandments, would be the opposite of freedom. It need not however remain, what it originated from and what it was. Rather what matures in the innervation of social compulsion in the conscience, along with the resistance against the social authority, which critically measures this by its own principles, is a potential which would get rid of compulsion. The critique of the conscience envisions the salvation of such potential, only not in the psychological realm but in the objectivity of a reconciled life among the free. If Kantian morality ultimately converges, apparently against its rigorous claim to autonomy, with the ethics of goods, then what it maintains therein is the juridical truth of the break, which can be bridged by no conceptual synthesis, between the social ideal and the subjective one of self-preserving reason. The reproach, that subjective reason puts on airs as an absolute in the objectivity of moral law, would be subaltern. Kant expresses, fallibly and distortedly, what ought indeed to be demanded from society. Such objectivity is not to be translated into the subjective sphere, that of psychology and that of rationality, but will continue to exist for good and ill separated from it, until the particular and general interest really and truly concord. The conscience is the mark of shame of unfree society. The arcanum of his philosophy was necessarily hidden from Kant: that the subject, in order to be able to constitute objectivity or objectivate itself in the act, as he entrusted it, must always for its part be something objective. The transcendental subject, the pure reason which objectively interprets itself, is haunted by the preponderance of the object, without which, as a moment, even the Kantian objectivating achievements of the subject would not be. His concept of subjectivity has at the core apersonal features. Even the personality of the subject, what is immediate to

this, what is nearest, most certain, is something mediated. No ego-consciousness without society, just as no society is beyond its individuals. The postulates of practical reason, which transcend the subject, God, freedom, immortality, imply the critique of the categorical imperative, that of pure subjective reason. Without those postulates it could not even be thought, however much Kant avers to the contrary; there is nothing good without hope.

AGAINST PERSONALISM 272–275

The nominalistic tendency entices thought, which may not renounce the protection of morality in view of the immediate violence breaking out everywhere, to anchor morality in the person like an indestructible good. Freedom, which would arise solely in the institution of a free society, is sought there, where the institution of the existing one denies it, in each individual, who needs it, but does not guarantee it, as they are. Reflection on society does not occur in ethical personalism any more than that on the person itself. Once this latter is torn completely from the universal, then it is not capable of constituting anything universal either; it is then drawn in secret from existing forms of domination. In the pre-fascist era personalism and the twaddle about bonds were hardly averse to sharing the platform of irrationality. The person, as something absolute, negates the universality which is supposed to be read out of it, and yields its threadbare legal title to caprice. Its charisma is borrowed from the irresistibility of the universal, while it, losing faith in its legitimacy, withdraws into itself in the privation of thought. Its principle, the unshakeable unity which makes out its selfness defiantly repeats domination in the subject. The person is the historically tied knot, which is to be loosened out of freedom, not perpetuated; the old bane of the universal, ensconced in the particular. Anything moral which is deduced from it remains as accidental as immediate existence [Existenz]. Otherwise than in Kant's old-fashioned talk of personality, the person became a tautology for those, who indeed were left nothing more than the nonconceptual here-and-now of their existence. The transcendence which many neo-ontologists hope from the person, exalts solely their consciousness. This latter would however not be without that universal, which the recourse to the person would like to exclude as an ethical ground. That is why the concept of the person as well as its variants, for example the I-you relation, have taken on the oily tone of a theology lacking credibility. As

little as the concept of a right human being can be presumed in advance, so little would it resemble the person, the sanctified duplicate of its own self-preservation. In the philosophy of history that concept presupposes the subject objectivated into the character on the one hand, as assuredly as its disassembly [Zerfall] on the other hand. The consummated ego-weakness, the transition of the subjects into passive and atomistic, reflex-based behavior, is at the same time the judgement which the person deserved, in which the economic principle of appropriation has become anthropological. What could be thought in human beings as the intelligible character, is not the persona [Personhafte] in them, but how they distinguish themselves from their existence. In the person this distinction necessarily appears as what is non-identical. Every human impulse contradicts the unity of what harbors it; every impulse for the better is not only, in Kantian terms, reason, but before this also stupidity. Human beings are human only where they do not act as persons and are not at all posited as such; what is diffuse in nature, in which they are not persons, resembles the delineation of an intelligible being, that self which would be delivered from the ego; contemporary art innervates something of this. The subject is the lie, because it denies its own objective determinations for the sake of the unconditionality of its own domination; the subject would be only what detached itself from such lies, what had thrown off, out of its own power, which it owes to identity, its shell. The ideological bad state of affairs of the person is immanently criticizable. What is substantial, which according to that ideology would lend the person their dignity, does not exist. Human beings are above all, and without exception, not yet themselves. Their possibility is justifiably to be thought under the concept of the self, and it stands polemically against the reality of the self. This is not the least reason that the talk of self-alienation is untenable. It has, in spite of its better Hegelian and Marxist¹⁶⁵ days, or for their sake, succumbed to apologetics, because it gives us to understand with a fatherly mien that human beings would have fallen from an existent-in-itself, which it always was, while they have never been such and thus have nothing to hope from recourse to its *archai* [Greek: ancient, old] except submission to authority, precisely what is alien to them. That this concept no longer figures in the Marxist

165 "This alienation, in order to remain comprehensible to the philosophers, can naturally be sublated only under two practical prerequisites." (Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology*, Berlin 1960, pg 31)

Capital, is conditioned not only by the economic thematics of the work but makes philosophical sense. – Negative dialectics does not halt before the conclusiveness of existence, the solidified selfness of the ego, any more than before its no less hardened antithesis, the role, which is used by contemporary subjective sociology as a universal nostrum, as the latest determination of socialization, analogous to the existence [Existenz] of selfness in many ontologists. The concept of roles sanctions the topsy-turvy bad depersonalization of today: the unfreedom which, in the place of the autonomy which was achieved with such toil and was subject to repeal, steps forwards merely for the sake of complete adjustment, is beneath freedom, not beyond it. The privation of the division of labor is hypostasized as a virtue. With it the ego ordains, what society has damned it to, once more to itself. The emancipated ego, no longer locked up in its identity, would no longer be damned to roles, either. What would be socially left behind of the division of labor, given radically reduced labor-time, would lose the horror which forms individual beings through and through. The thingly hardness of the self and its readiness to be deployed and its availability for socially desired roles are accomplices. In what is moral, too, identity is not to be negated abstractly, but is to be valorized in resistance, if it is ever to cross over into its other. The contemporary state of affairs is destructive: the loss of identity for the sake of abstract identity, of naked self-preservation.

DEPERSONALIZATION AND EXISTENTIAL ONTOLOGY 275–277

The double-jointedness of the ego has found its expression in existential ontology. The recourse to existence just as the draft of authenticity against the “man” transfigure the idea of the strong, enclosed in itself, “decisive” ego into metaphysics; *Being and Time* acted as a manifesto of personalism. In Heidegger’s interpretation of subjectivity as a mode of being, precedent to thinking, personalism already crossed over into its opposite. That apersonal expressions like being-there [Dasein: existence] and existence [Existenz] were chosen for the subject, indicates this linguistically. What returns imperceptibly in such usage is the idealistic German, state-besotted [staatsfromme] predominance of identity beyond its own bearer, that of the subject. In depersonalization, in the bourgeois devaluation of the individual, which is glorified in the same breath, already lies the difference

between subjectivity as the universal principle of the individual ego – in Schelling's words, egoity – and the individualized ego itself. The essence of subjectivity as being-there, thematic in *Being and Time*, resembles what remains of the person, when they are no longer a person. The motives for this are not to be censured. What is commensurable in the universal-conceptual scope of the person, its individual consciousness, is always also appearance [Schein], imbricated in that transsubjective objectivity, which according to idealistic as well as ontological doctrine is supposed to be founded in the pure subject. Whatever the ego is capable of experiencing introspectively as ego, is also not-ego, unexperienceable by absolute egoity; hence the difficulty noted by Schopenhauer, of its becoming conscious of itself. The ultimate is no ultimate. The objective turn of Hegel's absolute idealism, the equivalent of absolute subjectivity, does justice to this. The more thoroughly however the individual loses what was once called its self-consciousness, the more depersonalization increases. That in Heidegger death became the essence of existence [Dasein], codifies the nullity of being, which is merely for itself.¹⁶⁶ The sinister decision in favor of depersonalization however bows regressively to a doom, felt as inescapable, instead of pointing beyond the person through the idea, that it might achieve what is its own. Heidegger's apersonality is linguistically instituted; won too easily, by the mere leaving out of what makes the subject alone the subject. He thinks past the knot of the subject. The perspective of depersonalization would not be opened by the abstract evaporation of existence into its pure possibility but solely by the analysis of the existing innerworldly subject existing there. Heidegger's analysis of existence holds off from it; that is why his apersonal existentialia can be so easily attached to persons. The micro-analysis of the latter is unbearable to authoritarian thinking: in selfness it would strike the principle of all domination. By contrast existence generally, as something apersonal, is unhesitatingly treated as if it were something beyond human beings and nevertheless human. In fact the total constitution of living human beings as their functional context, which objectively precedes them all, moves towards the apersonal in the sense of anonymity. Heidegger's

166 "Shortly after the publication of Heidegger's masterwork, its objective-ontological implication could already be demonstrated in Kierkegaard's concept of existence [Existenzbegriff] and the recoil of the objectless interior into negative objectivity." (See Theodor W. Adorno, *Kierkegaard: Construction of the Aesthetic*, Frankfurt am Main, 1962, pg 87)

language bemoans this as much as it affirmatively reflects that matter-at-hand as suprapersonal. Only the insight into what is thingly in the person itself would overtake the horror of depersonalization, in the limitations of the egoity, which were commanded by the equality of the self with self-preservation. In Heidegger ontological apersonality always remains the ontologization of the person, without reaching this latter. The cognition of what consciousness became, under the sacrifice of its living aspect, has a reciprocal power: egoity has always been so thingly. In the core of the subject dwell objective conditions, which it must deny for the sake of the unconditionality of its domination and which are its own. The subject ought to get rid of these. The prerequisite of its identity is the end of the identity-compulsion. In existential ontology this appears only distortedly. Nothing however is intellectually relevant any longer, which does not press into the zone of depersonalization and its dialectic; schizophrenia is the truth in the philosophy of history about the subject. In Heidegger that zone, which he touches, turns unnoticed into a parable of the administered world, and complementarily into the despairing rigidified determination of subjectivity. Solely its critique would find its object, which he, under the name of destruction, reserves to the history of philosophy. The anti-metaphysical Freud's doctrine of the id is closer to the metaphysical critique of the subject than Heidegger's metaphysics, which wishes to be none. If the role, the heteronomy ordained by autonomy, is the most recent objective form of the unhappy consciousness, then conversely there is no happiness, except where the self is not itself. If, under the unbearable pressure which weighs on it, it falls schizophrenically back into the condition of dissociation and ambiguity, which the subject historically escaped from, then the dissolution of the subject is at the same time the ephemeral and condemned picture of a possible subject. Once its freedom commanded mythos to halt, then it would emancipate itself, as from the ultimate mythos, from itself. Utopia would be the non-identity of the subject without sacrifice.

THE UNIVERSAL AND INDIVIDUAL IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY 277-281

The Kantian zeal against psychology expresses, besides fear of once more losing the scraps of the mundus intelligibilis [Latin: intelligible world], achieved so laboriously, also the authentic insight, that the moral categories of the individuated

are more than only individual. What becomes evident in them, in keeping with the model of the Kantian concept of law, as what is universal, is secretly something social. Not the least of the functions of the admittedly enigmatic concept of humanity in the *Critique of Practical Reason* is that pure reason would count as universal for all rational beings: a point of indifference of Kant's philosophy. If the concept of the universality in the diversity of subjects was won and then becomes autonomous in the logical objectivity of reason, into which all individual subjects and superficially even subjectivity disappear as such, then Kant, on the narrow ridge between logical absolutism and empirical validity, would like to go back to that existent, which the system's logic of consistency previously banished. Anti-psychological moral philosophy converges therein with later psychological findings. By unveiling the superego as an innervated social norm, psychology breaks through its monadological limitations. These are for their part socially produced. The conscience draws its objectivity in relation to human beings out of that of society, in which and through which they live and which reaches all the way into the core of their individuation. The antagonistic moments are indistinguishably interwoven in such objectivity: the heteronomous compulsion and the idea of a solidarity, which surpasses divergent individual interests. What in the conscience reproduces the tenaciously persisting, repressive bad state of affairs of society, is the opposite of freedom and to be disenchanted through the proof of its own determination. By contrast the universal norm, which is unconsciously appropriated by the conscience, attests to that which points beyond the particularity in society as the principle of its totals. This is its moment of truth. The question of the right and wrong of the conscience admits to no conclusive reply, because right and wrong dwells within it and no abstract judgement could separate them: only in its repressive form does the solidaristic one form, which sublates the former. It is essential to moral philosophy that the individuated and society are neither separated by a simple difference, nor reconciled. What is bad in the universality has declared itself in the socially unfulfilled claim of the individuated. This is the supraindividual truth-content of the critique of morality. But the individuated which, at fault due to privation, turns into the ultimate and absolute, degenerates thereby for its part into the appearance [Schein] of the individualistic society, and mistakes itself; Hegel once more discerned this, and indeed most acutely

where he gave impetus to the reactionary misuse of such. The society, which does injustice to the individuated in its universal claim, also does justice to it, insofar as the social principle of unreflected self-maintenance, itself the bad universal, is hypostasized in what is individuated. Society metes it out, measure for measure. The sentence of the late Kant, that the freedom of every human being must be restricted only insofar as it impinges on the freedom of another,¹⁶⁷ is the cipher of a reconciled condition, which would be not only beyond the bad universal, the mechanism of compulsion, but also beyond the obdurate individuated, in which that mechanism of compulsion repeats itself microcosmically. The question of freedom demands no yes or no but theory, which raises itself above the existing society as well as above the existing individuality. Instead of sanctioning the innervated and hardened authority of the superego, it carries out the dialectic of the individual being and species. The rigorism of the superego is solely the reflex of the fact that the antagonistic condition prevents this. The subject would only be emancipated as reconciled with the not-ego, and thereby also beyond freedom, insofar as this latter is in league with its counterpart, repression. How much aggression hitherto lies in freedom, becomes visible whenever human beings act as if they are free in the midst of the universal unfreedom. So little however would the individuated frantically protect the old particularity in a state of freedom – individuality is as much the product of pressure as the power-center, which resists it – so little would that condition be compatible with the contemporary concept of the collective. That in the countries which today monopolize the name of socialism, an immediate collectivism is commanded as the subordination of the individual to society, gives the lie to their socialism and reinforces the antagonism. The weakness of the ego through a socialized society, which unremittently drives human beings together and, literally and figuratively, makes them incapable of being alone, manifests itself in the complaints about isolation no less than in the truly unbearable coldness which spreads everywhere along with the expanding exchange-relationship, and which is merely prolonged by the authoritarian and ruthless regimentation of the alleged peoples' democracies against the needs of their subjects. That a union of free human beings would have to continually gang

167 Translators note: "Every such act is right, which can exist together – or, whose maxim permits the freedom of the caprice of everyone – with everyone's freedom in accordance with a universal law." (Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, Introduction to the Doctrine of Law, Section C, WW VI, Academy Edition, Pg. 230)

themselves up, belongs in the conceptual realm of maneuvers, of marching, flag-waving, orations of leaders. They thrive only so long as society irrationally wishes to cobble together its compulsory members; objectively they are not needed. Collectivism and individualism complete one another in what is false. Speculative historical philosophy since Fichte protested against both, in the doctrine of the condition of consummated sinfulness, later in that of lost meaning. Modernity is equated with a deformed world, while Rousseau, the initiator of retrospective hostility towards one's own time, set it alight on the last of the great styles: what spurred his revulsion was too much form, the denaturalization of society. The time has come to dismiss the imago of the meaningless world, which degenerated from a cipher of longing to the slogan of those who fetishize order. Nowhere on earth is contemporary society, as its scientific apologists vouchsafe, "open"; nowhere deformed, either. The belief that it would be so, originated in the devastation of the cities and landscapes by planlessly self-expanding industry, in a lack of rationality, not its oversupply. Whoever traces back deformation to metaphysical processes instead of relationships of material production, virtually delivers ideologies. With their change, the picture of violence could be softened, which the world presents to the human beings who do violence to it. That supraindividual bonds disappeared – they by no means disappeared – would indeed not itself be bad; the truly emancipated works of art of the twentieth century are no worse than those, which thrived in the styles which modernity discarded with reason. The experience inverts itself as if in a mirror, that according to the state of consciousness and of the material productive forces, it is expected that human beings would be free, that they also expect it themselves, and that they are not so, while nevertheless no model of thinking, behavior and, in that most denigrating of terms, "value", is left in the state of their radical unfreedom, as those who are unfree desire it. The lament over the lack of bonds has a constitution of society for its substance, which simulates freedom, without realizing such. Freedom exists only, dimly enough, in the superstructure; its perennial failure deflects the longing towards unfreedom. Probably the question of the meaning of existence in its entirety is the expression of that discrepancy.

ON THE CONDITION OF FREEDOM 281–283

The horizon of a condition of freedom, which would need no repression and no morality, because the drive would no longer have to express itself destructively, is veiled in gloom. Moral questions are stringent not in their dreadful parody, sexual repression, but in sentences like: torture ought to be abolished; concentration camps ought not to exist, while all this continues in Africa and Asia and is only repressed because civilized humanity is as inhuman as ever against those which it shamelessly brands as uncivilized. If a moral philosopher seized these lines and exulted, at having finally caught up with the critics of morality – in that these, too, cite the values comfortably proclaimed by moral philosophers – then the definitive conclusion would be false. The sentences are true as impulse, when they register, that somewhere torture is occurring. They may not be rationalized; as an abstract principle they would end up immediately in the bad infinity of their derivation and validity. The critique of morality is applicable to the transposition of the logic of consistency onto the behavior of human beings; that is where the stringent logic of consistency becomes the organ of unfreedom. The impulse, the naked physical fear and the feeling of solidarity with, in Brecht's words, tormentable bodies, which is immanent to moral behavior, would be denied by attempts at ruthless rationalization; what is most urgent would once more become contemplative, the mockery of its own urgency. The distinction of theory and praxis involves theoretically, that praxis can no more be purely reduced to theory than *chôris* [Greek: separately] from it. Both are not to be glued together into a synthesis. That which is undivided lives solely in the extremes, in the spontaneous impulse which, impatient with the argument, does not wish to permit the horror to continue, and in the theoretical consciousness unterrorized by any functionary, which discerns why it nonetheless goes unforeseeably on. This contradiction alone is, in sight of the real powerlessness of all individuals, the staging-grounds of morality today. The consciousness will react spontaneously, to the extent it cognizes what is bad, without satisfying itself with the cognition. The incompatibility of every general moral judgement with the psychological determination, which nevertheless does not dispense with the judgement, that something would be evil, does not originate in thinking's lack of logical consistency, but in the objective antagonism. Fritz Bauer has noted that the same types who call for clemency for the torturers of

Auschwitz with a hundred lazy arguments, are friends of the reintroduction of the death penalty. The newest state of moral dialectics is concentrated therein: clemency would be naked injustice, the justified atonement would be infected by the principle of brute force, while humanity consists solely of resisting this last. Benjamin's remark, that the execution of the death penalty might be moral, but never its legitimization, prophesized this dialectic. If the ones in charge of the torture including their chief assistants had been immediately shot, it would have been more moral, than putting a few on trial. The fact that they succeeded in fleeing, hiding for twenty years, qualitatively transforms the justice which was missed at that time. As soon as a juridical machine has to be mobilized with court procedure, black robes and understanding defense lawyers, justice, which in any case is capable of no sanction which would fit the atrocities committed, is already false, compromised by the same principle according to which the murderers once acted. The Fascists are clever enough to exploit such objective insanity with their devilishly insane reason. The historical grounds of the aporia is that the revolution against the Fascists failed in Germany, or rather that in 1944 there was no revolutionary mass movement. The contradiction of teaching empirical determinism and nevertheless condemning the normal monsters – according to the former, perhaps one should let them loose – is not to be settled by any supraordinated logic. Theoretically reflected justice may not shy away from this. If it does not help this to become aware of itself, then it encourages, as politics, the continuation of the methods of torture, which in any case the collective unconscious hopes for and for whose rationalization this latter lies in wait; this much in any case is true of the theory of deterrence. In the confessed breach between a reason of law, which for the last time does the guilty the honor of a freedom which they do not deserve, and the insight into their real unfreedom, the critique of consistency-logical identity-thinking becomes moral.

INTELLIGIBLE CHARACTER IN KANT 283–287

Kant mediates between existence and the moral law through the construction of the intelligible character. It leans on the thesis, “the moral law proves its reality”¹⁶⁸ – as if what is given, what is there, would thereby be legitimated. When Kant talks of this, “that the determining ground of that causality can also be assumed outside

168 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, *ibid.* pg 48.

of the world of the senses in freedom as the characteristic of an intelligible being”,¹⁶⁹ then the intelligible being turns, through the concept of the characteristic, into something which is positively conceived in the life of the individuated, something “real”. This however is, within the axiomatic of non-contradictoriness, contrary to the doctrine of what is intelligible as something beyond the world of the senses. Kant immediately and unabashedly recalls: “By contrast the moral good is something suprasensible in relation to the object, for which therefore no sensory intuition of something corresponding to it” – most certainly therefore no “characteristic” – “can be found, and the power of judgement under laws of the pure practical reason seems thus to be subjected to especial difficulties, which rest on the fact that a law of freedom is supposed to be applied to acts as events, which occur in the world of the senses and to this extent belong to nature.”¹⁷⁰ In the spirit of the critique of reason, the passage is directed not only against the ontology of good and evil, stringently criticized in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, as of goods which exist in themselves, but also against the subjective capacity ascribed to them, which, removed from the phenomena, would vouchsafe to that ontology a character of simply and purely supernatural essence. If in order to save freedom Kant introduces the utterly exposed doctrine of the intelligible character, which shrank from all experience and which nevertheless was conceived as the mediation to the empirical, then one of the strongest motives for this, objectively speaking, was the fact that the will is not disclosed as an existent from the phenomena, nor can it be defined by its conceptual synthesis, but would have to be presupposed as its condition, with the defects of a naïve realism of inwardness, which he, in other hypostases of what is psychological, destroyed in the paralogism chapter. The proof, that character would neither be exhausted in nature nor absolutely transcendent to it, as its concept by the way dialectically implies, is supposed to take care of the precarious mediation. Motivations however have their psychological moment, without which no such mediation would be, while those of the human will, according to Kant, can “never be anything other than the moral law”.¹⁷¹ This is what the antinomy prescribes for every possible answer. It is bluntly worked out by Kant: “For how a law could be for itself and the immediate ground of

169 Ibid. pg 67.

170 Ibid. pg 68.

171 Ibid. pg 72.

determination of the will (which is nonetheless what is essential in all morality), this is an insoluble problem for human reason and as one with: how a free will would be possible. Thus we will not have to show a priori the grounds of why the moral law would in itself constitute a mainspring, but what, insofar as it is such a one, it effects in the mind (put even better, must effect).¹⁷² Kant's speculation falls silent where it should start, and resigns itself to a mere description of immanent effect-contexts, which, had he not been overwhelmed by his intention, he would scarcely have hesitated to call a mirage: something empirical worms itself into supraempirical authority through the power of the affection which it exerts. An "intelligible existence [Existenz]",¹⁷³ of an existence without time, which according to Kant aids in constituting what is in the existent, is dealt with without fear of the *contradictio in adjecto* [Latin: added contradiction], without articulating it dialectically, indeed without saying what exactly might be thought under that existence. The furthest he dares to go is the discussion "of the spontaneity of the subject as a thing in itself".¹⁷⁴ According to the critique of reason, this could no more be spoken of positively than the transcendental causes of the phenomena of external senses, while without the intelligible character, the moral act in what is empirical, the effect on this – and thereby morality – would be impossible. He must toil desperately, for what the basic outline of the system prevents. What comes to his assistance is the fact that reason is capable of intervening against the causal automatism of physical as well as psychic nature, of producing a new nexus. If he permits himself to think what, in the explicated moral philosophy, is no longer the intelligible realm, secularized into pure practical reason, as absolutely divergent, then this is, in view of that observable influx of reason, by no means the miracle it would seem to be according to the abstract relationship of the Kantian founding theses to each other. That reason would be something other than nature and yet would be a moment of this latter, is its prehistory, which has become its immanent determination. It is nature-like as psychic power, branched-off for the ends of self-preservation; once split off and contrasted to nature, however, it turns into its Other. Ephemeraally escaping this latter, reason is identical with nature and non-identical, dialectical according to its own concept. The more

172 Ibid.

173 Ibid. 99.

174 Ibid.

ruthlessly however reason makes itself into the absolute opposite of nature in that dialectic and forgets itself in this, the more it regresses, as self-preservation run wild, to nature; solely as its reflection would reason be supranature. No interpretive guile [Kunst] is capable of removing the immanent contradictions of the determinations of the intelligible character. Kant is silent over how for its own part it would have an influence on what is empirical; whether it is supposed to be nothing but the pure act of its positing or to continue on next to that, however jury-rigged this sounds, but which is not without plausibility for self-experience. He contents himself with the description of how that influence appears in what is empirical. If the intelligible character is conceived entirely as *chôris* [Greek: separately], which the word suggests, then it is as impossible to speak of it as of the thing in itself, which Kant, cryptically enough, equated to the intelligible character in an utterly formal analogy, not even explaining whether “a” thing in itself, one in each person, would be the unknown cause of the phenomena of the inner senses or, as Kant occasionally put it, “the” thing in itself, identical with all, Fichte’s absolute I. By having an effect, such a radically divided subject would become a moment of the phenomenal world and would succumb to its determinations, therefore to causality. Kant, the traditional logician, ought never to have accepted that the same concept is subject to causality as much as it is not subject.¹⁷⁵ If the intelligible character were no longer *chôris* [Greek: separately],

then it would no longer be intelligible but, in the sense of the Kantian dualism,

175 It is easy to reckon against the concept of the intelligible, that it would be forbidden to positively mention unknown causes of appearances, even in the uttermost abstraction. A concept over which simply nothing is to be said, cannot be operated with, it would be equal to nothingness, nothingness also its own content. Therein German idealism had one of its most effective arguments against Kant, without the former stopping very long at the Kantian-Leibnizian idea of the border-concept. Meanwhile one would need to remonstrate against Fichte’s and Hegel’s plausible critique of Kant. It follows for its part traditional logic, which rejects discussing something which would not be reduced to the content of the thing, which comprises the substance of that concept, as idle. In their rebellion against Kant, the idealists have overzealously forgotten the principle which they followed against him: that the consistency of thought compels the construction of concepts, which have no representative in the positively determinable given fact. For the sake of the speculation, they denounced Kant as a speculator, guilty of the same positivism which they accused him of. In the alleged failure of the Kantian apologetics of the thing in itself, which the logic of consistency since Maimon could so triumphantly demonstrate, the memory lives on in Kant of the ghostly moment counter to the logic of consistency, non-identity. That is why he, who certainly did not mistake the consistency of his critics, protested against them and would rather be convicted of dogmatism than absolutize identity, from whose own meaning, as Hegel recognized quickly enough, the relation to something non-identical is inalienable. The construction of the thing in itself and the intelligible character is that of something non-identical as the condition of the possibility of identification, but also that which eludes the grasp of the categorical identification.

contaminated by the *mundus sensibilis* [Latin: sensible world] and would be no less self-contradictory. Where Kant feels obliged to explicate the doctrine of the intelligible character more closely, he must on the one hand ground it in an action in time, on that which is empirical, which it is simply not supposed to be; on the other hand, neglecting the psychology, with which he embroils himself: "There are cases, where human beings from childhood onwards, even under an education, which was of an advantageous nature to others of the sort, nevertheless show such malignity early on and proceed to increase it into their mature years, that one considers them born evil-doers and completely incorrigible in the mode of their thinking, nevertheless because their actions and omissions are so judged, that the guilt of their crimes is proven, indeed they (the children) themselves find this proof so thoroughly founded, as if they, regardless of the hopeless natural constitution of their apportioned inner character, remained just as responsible, as any other human being. This could not happen, if we did not presuppose that everything which originates from its arbitrariness (as every intentionally perpetrated act undoubtedly does), would have a free causality for its grounds, which expresses its character in its appearances (the acts) from early youth onwards, which because of the uniformity of conduct indicates a natural context, which however does not make the ill-starred constitution of the will necessary, but rather the consequence of the free-willed acceptance of evil and unchangeable principles, which only make them that much more reprehensible and worthy of punishment."¹⁷⁶ It does not occur to Kant, that the moral verdict might err over psychopaths. The allegedly free causality is relocated into early childhood, entirely fitting by the way to the genesis of the superego. It is ludicrous however that "babies" [in English], whose reason is only just forming, are attested that autonomy, which is attached to the fully developed reason. By backdating the moral responsibility of the individual act of the adult to its earliest, dawning prehistory, an unmoral pedagogic sentence of punishment is meted out to those who are not yet grown up in the name of adulthood. The processes, which decide in the first years of life over the formation of the ego and superego or, as in the Kantian paradigm, over their failure, can evidently neither be a prioritized for the sake of their ancientness, nor can their extremely empirical content be ascribed that purity, which Kant's doctrine of the

moral law demands. In his enthusiasm for the necessity of punishing childhood criminals, he leaves the intelligible realm solely in order to raise mischief in the empirical one.

THE INTELLIGIBLE AND THE UNITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS 287–292

What Kant thought in the concept of the intelligible character, is despite the ascetic reticence of his theory not beyond all conjecture: the unity of the person, the equivalent of the epistemological unity of the self-consciousness. Behind the scenes of the Kantian system, it is expected that the highest concept of practical philosophy would coincide with the highest one of the theoretical kind, the ego-principle, which theoretically produces unity as well as practically restraining and integrating the drives. The unity of the person is the location of the doctrine of the intelligible. According to the architecture of the form-content dualism endemic to Kant it counts as a form: the principle of particularization is, in an involuntary dialectic which was first explicated by Hegel, something universal. For the honor of universality, Kant distinguishes terminologically between the personality and the person. The former would be “the freedom and independence of the mechanism of all of nature, yet simultaneously considered as a capacity of a being whose peculiar, pure practical laws, given from its own reason, the person therefore, is in thrall to the world of the senses, is subject to its own personality, insofar as it belongs at the same time to the intelligible world.”¹⁷⁷ In personality [Persönlichkeit], the subject as pure reason, indicated by the suffix “-ity” [“-keit”, the German equivalent of the English suffix “-ness”] as the index of a conceptual generality, the person, the subject, is supposed to be subordinated as an empirical, natural individual being. What Kant meant by the intelligible character might come very close to the personality in an older usage of speech, which “belongs to the intelligible world”. The unity of self-consciousness genetically presupposes not only the psychological-factual contents of consciousness, but its own pure possibility; indicating a zone of indifference of pure reason and spatio-temporal experience. Hume’s critique of the I glosses over the fact that the facts of consciousness would not be available, without being determined inside of an individual consciousness, rather than in some other thing chosen at random. Kant corrects him, but neglects

177 Ibid. 87.

however for his part the reciprocity: his critique of Hume is personality rigidified into a principle beyond individual persons, into their framework. He grasps the unity of consciousness independent of every experience. Such independence exists to some degree in relation to the variable individual facts of consciousness, not however radically against all existing being of factual contents of consciousness. Kant's Platonism – in the *Phaedo* the soul was something similar to an idea – epistemologically repeats the eminently bourgeois affirmation of personal unity in itself at the expense of its content, which under the name of personality ultimately left behind nothing but the strongman. The formal achievement of integration, by no means a priori formal but substantive, the sedimented exploitation of inner nature, usurps the rank of the good. The more a personality would be, it is suggested, the better it would be, heedless of the dubiousness of the being-of-one-self. The great novels of the eighteenth century intuited this. Fielding's Tom Jones, the orphan child, someone who was a "compulsive character" in the psychological sense, stood for the human being unmutated by convention and becomes at the same time comical. The latest echo of this is the rhinoceros of Ionesco: the only one, who resists bestial standardization and to this extent preserves a strong ego, is an alcoholic and a professional failure, not strong at all according to the verdict of life. In spite of the example of the radically evil little child, one ought to ask, as to whether an evil intelligible character is even conceivable for Kant; as to whether he seeks evil in the fact that the formal unity fails. Where there is no unity at all, one could probably no more speak of good than among animals, nor of evil either; he may have conceived of the intelligible character as closest to the strong I, which can rationally control all its impulses, as was taught in the entire tradition of modern rationalism, especially by Spinoza and Leibniz, who were in agreement at least on this point.¹⁷⁸ Great philosophy hardens itself against the idea of a humanity which is not modeled after the reality-principle, not hardened in itself. This gives Kant the thought-strategical advantage, of being able to carry out the thesis of freedom parallel to consistent causality. For the unity of the person is not merely the formal a priori, which appears in the Kantian system, but against his will, and for the benefit of his *demonstrandum* [Latin:

178 Concerning the relationship of the Kantian doctrine of the will to that of Leibniz and Spinoza, see Johan Eduard Erdmann, *History of Modern Philosophy*, Neudruck Stuttgart 1932, especially Volume 4, pg 128.

what is demonstrated], the moment of all individual contents of the subject. Each of its impulses is “its” impulse just as much as the subject is the totality of impulses, and thus their qualitative Other. In the utterly formal region of self-consciousness both melt together. From it one can predicate, without distinction, what is not exhausted in each other: the factual content and the mediation, the principle of its context. The matter-at-hand, tabooed according to the traditional-logical manner of argumentation, but all the more really dialectical for that, is vindicated in the indifference-concept of personality through the most extreme abstraction, by the fact that in the antagonistic world the individual subjects are also antagonistic in themselves, free and unfree. In the night of indifference, the palest ray of light falls on freedom as personality in itself, a Protestant inwardness, removed even from itself. The subject is justified, in Schiller’s pithy saying, by what it is, not by what it does, just as the Lutherans once were by faith, not by works. The involuntary irrationality of the Kantian intelligible character, its indeterminacy, which is mandated by the system, tacitly secularizes the explicitly theological doctrine of the irrationality of election by grace. This latter was admittedly conserved in advancing enlightenment, always more oppressively. If God was once pushed by the Kantian ethics into the as it were provident [dienende: serving, providing] role of the postulate of practical reason – this too is anticipated in Leibniz and even Descartes – then it is difficult to conceive of something under the intelligible character, irrationally existent-as-such, as anything else except the same blind fate, against which the idea of freedom took exception. The concept of character always oscillated between nature and freedom.¹⁷⁹ The more ruthlessly the absolute being-so of the subject is equated with its subjectivity, the more impenetrable its concept. What formerly seemed to be the election by grace of divine counsel, can scarcely be thought anymore as one by objective reason, which nevertheless would have to appeal to the subjective one. The pure being-in-itself of human beings, excluding every empirical content, which is sought in nothing but its own rationality, does not permit rational judgement about why it succeeded here, and failed there. The authority however to which the intelligible character is attached, pure reason, is itself something becoming and to this extent also something conditional, not anything absolutely conditioning. That it posits itself outside of time as what is

179 See Benjamin, *ibid.* pg 36

absolute – an anticipation of the same Fichte, with whom Kant was feuding – is far more irrational than any creation doctrine. This rendered an essential contribution to the alliance between the idea of freedom and real unfreedom. Irreducibly existent, the intelligible character duplicates itself in the concept of that second nature, as which society stamps the characters of all of its members anyway. If one translated Kant's ethics into judgements over real human beings, its only criterion is: how someone would now once be, therefore their unfreedom. Schiller's pithy saying certainly wished primarily to announce the revulsion evoked by the subjugation of all human relationships under the exchange-principle, the evaluation of one act against another. Kantian moral philosophy registers the same motif in the opposition of dignity and price. In the right society however the exchange would not only be abolished but fulfilled: no one would be shortchanged of the yield of their labor. As little as the isolated act can be weighed, so little is there something good which is not expressed in acts. Absolute reflection, exclusive of any specific intervention, would degenerate into absolute indifference, into what is inhuman. Both Kant and Schiller objectively anticipated the loathsome concept of a free-floating nobility, which self-appointed elites could later attest to at will as their selfsame characteristic. In the Kantian moral philosophy lurks a tendency towards its sabotage. In it the totality becomes indistinguishable from the preestablished status of the elect. That the right or wrong of an act is no longer to be casuistically asked, also has its sinister moment: the competency of judgement crosses over into the compulsions of empirical society, which the Kantian *agathon* [Greek: the good] wished to transcend. The categories noble and mean are, like all doctrines of bourgeois freedom, ingrown with familial and natural relationships. In late bourgeois society their natural-rootedness breaks through once again, as biologism and finally race-theory. The reconciliation of morality and nature envisioned by the philosophizing Schiller, against Kant and secretly in unison with him, is not at all as human and innocent in the existent, as it gives itself to know. Nature, once outfitted with meaning, is substituted in place of that possibility, which the construction of the intelligible character was aimed at. In Goethe's *kalokagathia* [Greek: noble character, goodness] the ultimately homicidal recoil is unmistakable. Already a letter of Kant, concerning his portrait by a Jewish painter, made use of a despicable anti-Semitic thesis, later popularized by the Nazi

Paul Schultze-Naumburg.¹⁸⁰ Freedom is really and truly restricted by society, not only from outside but in itself. As soon as it is utilized, it multiplies unfreedom; the placeholder of what is better is always also the accomplice of what is worse. Even where human beings feel themselves to be most free from society, in the strength of their ego, they are at the same time its agents: the ego-principle is implanted in them by society, and the latter honors it, although restraining it. Kant's ethics is not yet aware of this awkwardness, or posits itself as beyond such.

TRUTH-CONTENT OF THE DOCTRINE OF THE INTELLIGIBLE 292-294

If one dared to wager as to what the Kantian X of the intelligible character owes its true content, which maintained itself against the total indeterminacy of the aporetic concept, it would probably be the historically most advanced, periodically flaring, swiftly fading consciousness which is inherent in the impulse to do the right thing. It is the concrete, intermittent anticipation of the possibility, neither alien to human beings nor identical with them. They are not only the substrates of psychology. For they are not exhausted by the concretized exploitation of nature, which has become autonomous, which they projected back on themselves from external nature. They are things in themselves, insofar as the things are only something artificially made by them; to this extent the world of phenomena is truly an appearance [Schein]. The pure will of the Kantian *Foundation* is for that reason not so different from the intelligible character. The verse of Karl Kraus, "What has the world made of us" ponders ruefully on it; it is falsified by anyone who imagines they possess it. It breaks through negatively in the pain of the subject, that all human beings, in what they became, in their reality, are mutilated. What would be different, the no longer inverted essence, rejects a language which bears the stigmata of the existent: theology spoke once of mystical names. However the separation of the intelligible from the empirical character is experienced in the consold block, which slides that which is supplementary before the pure will: external considerations of all conceivable kinds, the many times over subaltern, irrational

180 "Heartfelt thanks, my most esteemed and dearest friend, for the revelation of your kind sentiments towards me, which duly arrived along with your beautiful present the day after my birthday! The portrait which Mr. Löwe, a Jewish painter, produced without my permission, is indeed supposed, as my friends say, to have a degree of similarity with me, but a connoisseur of paintings said at the first glance: a Jew always paints another Jew; whereupon he puts the emphasis on the nose: but enough of this." (From: *Kant's Letters, Volume 2, 1789-1794*, Berlin 1900, pg 33)

interests of subjects of the false society; in general the principle of the particular self-interest, which prescribes to everything individuated without exception its actions in the society, as it is, and which is the death of all. The block prolongs itself from within, in the narrow-minded egoistic cravings, then in neuroses. These absorb, as everyone knows, an immeasurable quantum of available human power and prevent, on the line of least resistance, with the cunning of the unconscious, that which is right, which irrefutably contradicts biased self-preservation. Therein the neuroses have it so much the easier, can rationalize themselves so much the better, as the self-preserving principle in a state of freedom would come to that which is its own just as much as the interests of others, which damages it a priori. Neuroses are the pillars of society; they frustrate the better possibilities of human beings and thereby what is objectively better, which might be brought about by humanity. They tendentially dam up the instincts, which press beyond the false condition, into narcissism, which satisfies itself in the false condition. This is a hinge in the mechanism of evil: weaknesses, which are mistaken if possible for strengths. In the end the intelligible character would be the crippled rational will. What by contrast would count in it as the higher, the more sublime, what is not ruined by what is inferior, is essentially its own neediness, the inability to transform what is humiliating: failure, stylized as an end in itself. Nevertheless there is nothing better amongst human beings than that character; the possibility of being different from what one is, even though all are locked up in their self and thereby locked away even from their self. The glaring flaw of the Kantian doctrine, that which is elusive or abstract in the intelligible character, also has a touch of the truth of the ban on the graven image, which post-Kantian philosophy, Marx included, extended to all concepts of what is positive. As the possibility of the subject, the intelligible character is, like freedom, something becoming, not anything existent. It would be betrayed, the moment it was incorporated into the existent by description, even by the most cautious one. In the right condition everything would be, as in the Jewish theologoumenon [Greek: theology], only the tiniest bit different than what it is, but not the slightest thing can be imagined, as how it would then be. In spite of this the intelligible character can be spoken of only to the extent it does not hover abstractly and powerlessly over the existent, but really keeps arising in the guilty context of such, and is realized by this latter. The

contradiction of freedom and determinism is not, as the self-understanding of the critique of reason would like, one between the theoretical positions of dogmatism and skepticism, but one of the self-experience of the subject, now free, now unfree. Under the aspect of freedom they are non-identical with themselves, because the subject is hardly one yet, and indeed precisely by virtue of its instauration as a subject: the self is what is inhuman. Freedom and the intelligible character are related to identity and non-identity, without clare et distincte [Latin: clearly and distinctly] allowing themselves to be entered on one side of the ledger or another. The subjects are free, according to the Kantian model, to the extent that they are conscious of themselves, identical with themselves; and in such identity also again unfree, insofar as they are subject to its compulsion and perpetuate it. They are unfree as non-identical, as diffuse nature, and yet as such free, because in the impulses, which overpower them – the non-identity of the subject with itself is nothing else – they are also rid of the compulsory character of identity. Personality is the caricature of freedom. The ground of the aporia is that the truth beyond the identity-compulsion would not be purely and simply its Other, but is mediated through it. All individuals are in the socialized society incapable of what is moral, which is socially demanded, but which would be real only in an emancipated society. Social morality would be solely, to finally bring the bad infinity, the dreadful cycle of retribution, to an end. The individual meanwhile is left with nothing more of what is moral, than what Kant's moral theory, which conceded inclination to animals, but not respect,¹⁸¹ has only contempt for: to attempt to live so that one may believe to have been a good animal.

181 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, *ibid.* pg 76.

II. WORLD-SPIRIT AND NATURAL HISTORY. EXCURSUS ON HEGEL

TENDENCY AND FACTS 295–297

What the human understanding, ailing from its own soundness, reacts most sensitively against, the primacy of something objective beyond individual human beings, in their coexistence as much as in their consciousness, can be crassly experienced every single day. One represses that primacy as a groundless speculation, so that the individuals, as if their meanwhile standardized conceptions were in a double sense the unconditional truth, can preserve their self-flattering delusion from the suspicion, that it would not be so and that they live under a doom. In an epoch which shakes off the system of objective idealism as easily as the objective value-theory of economics, theorems are now becoming current, with which it is asserted the Spirit has no use for, which seeks its own security and that of cognition in what is extant as the well-organized sums of immediate individual facts of social institutions or the subjective constitution of their members. The Hegelian objective and ultimately absolute Spirit, the Marxist law of value which realizes itself without the consciousness of humanity, is more evident to the unleashed experience than the prepared facts of the positivistic scientific bustle, which today prolongs itself deep into the naïve pre-scientific consciousness; only this latter breaks humanity of the habit, for the greater glory of the objectivity of cognition, of the experience of real objectivity, to which they are also subjected in themselves. If thinkers were prepared for and capable of such an experience, it would shake the foundation of their faith in facticity; it would compel them to go so far beyond the facts, that these latter would lose their unreflective preponderance before the universals, which are to triumphant nominalism a nothingness, the subtractable addition of the compartmentalizing researcher. That sentence from the initial considerations of the Hegelian *Logic*, that there would be nothing in the world, which is not just as much mediated as immediate, is preserved nowhere more precisely than in the facts, by which historiography swears. No doubt it would be foolish to try to dispute away with epistemological finesse, that when a dissident is roused at six in the morning by the Gestapo under Hitler's Fascism, this is more immediate to the individual [Individuum], who experiences it, than the previously transpiring machinations of power and the installation of the party apparatus in all branches

of the administration; or indeed than the historical tendency, which for its part blasted apart the continuity of the Weimar Republic, and which does not otherwise reveal itself than in the conceptual context, committal solely in developed theory. Nevertheless the *factum brutum* [Latin: brute fact] of the official onslaught, by which Fascism strikes at the bodies of individuals, depends on all those moments which are at a distance from and momentarily indifferent to the victim. Only the most miserable nitpicking could blind itself, under the title of scientific acribia, to the fact that the French Revolution, however abruptly many of its acts occurred, meshed with the total trend of the emancipation of the bourgeoisie. It would have been neither possible nor successful, had the key positions of economic production not been already occupied by 1789, outstripping feudalism and its absolutist heads, which from time to time coalesced with the interests of the bourgeoisie. Nietzsche's shocking imperative, "What is falling ought to be pushed" retrospectively codifies an *Ur-bourgeois* maxim. Probably all bourgeois revolutions were already decided by the historical expansion of the class and had an admixture of ostentation, externalized in art as classicist *décor*. Nevertheless that tendency would hardly have realized itself in the historical moment of rupture without the acute absolutist mismanagement and the financial crisis, on which the physiocratic reformers of Louis XVI failed. The specific privation at least of the Parisian masses might have ignited the movement, while in other countries, where it was not so acute, the bourgeois process of emancipation succeeded without a revolution and at first did not touch the more or less absolutist form of domination. The infantile distinction between the fundamental cause and proximate occasion has in its favor, that it at least crudely indicates the dualism of immediacy and mediation: the occasions are what is immediate, the so-called fundamental causes are what mediates, what overwhelms, what incorporates the details. The primacy of the tendency over the facts can be read even in the most recent history. Specific military acts such as the bombing raids on Germany functioned as "slum clearing" [in English], retrospectively integrated with that transformation of the cities, which could long be observed not only in North America, but all across the earth. Or: the strengthening of the family in the emergency situation of refugees temporarily held the anti-familial developmental tendency in check, but scarcely the trend; the number of divorces and of split families increased afterwards even

in Germany. Even the assaults of the conquistadors on ancient Mexico and Peru, which must have been experienced therein like invasions from another planet, murderously advanced the expansion of rational bourgeois society – irrationally for the Aztecs and Incas – all the way to the conception of “one world” [in English] teleologically inherent in the principle of that society. Such a preponderance of the trend in the facts, which the former always still needs, ultimately condemns the old-fashioned distinction between cause and occasion to silliness; the whole distinction, not only the occasion, is superficial, because the cause is concrete in the occasion. If royal mismanagement was a lever of the Parisian uprisings, then this mismanagement was still a function of the total, of the backwardness of the absolutistic “consumption economy” behind the capitalistic income economy. Moments contrary to the historical whole, which thereby, as in the French Revolution, only promote such, garner their positional value only in this latter. Even the backwardness of the productive forces of one class is not absolute but merely relative to the progressiveness of another. Construction in the philosophy of history requires knowledge of all of these things. This is not the least reason why the philosophy of history approaches, as already in Hegel and Marx, historiography just as much as this latter, as the insight into the essence which, although veiled by facticity, yet conditions such, is still possible only as philosophy.

ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE WORLD-SPIRIT 297–300

Even under this aspect, dialectics is no variety of a world-view, no philosophical position, to be selected from a sample chart among others. Just as the critique of allegedly first philosophical concepts drives towards dialectics, so too is it demanded from below. Only the experience which is violently tailored by a narrow-minded concept of itself, excludes the emphatic concept as an independent, although mediating moment, from itself. If it could be objected against Hegel, that absolute idealism would recoil as the deification of that which is, into exactly that positivism which it attacked as reflection-philosophy, then conversely the dialectics due today would not only be the indictment of the prevailing consciousness but also capable of matching it, a positivism which is brought to itself, and thereby indeed negated. The philosophical demand to immerse oneself in the detail, which does not allow itself to be directed by any philosophy from above, nor by any of its

infiltrated intentions, was already the one side of Hegel. Only its carrying-out in him was caught tautologically: his manner of immersion in the detail demands that that Spirit show up, as if by appointment, which was posited as the total and absolute from the very beginning. The intent of the metaphysician Benjamin was to oppose this tautology, to rescue the induction, something developed in the prologue to the *Origin of the German Tragedy-Play*. His statement, the smallest cell of intuited reality would outweigh the rest of the remaining world, attests early on to the self-consciousness of the contemporary state of experience; all the more authentically, because it formed itself extraterritorially to the so-called great questions of philosophy, which it befits a transformed concept of dialectics to distrust. The preponderance [Vorrang] of the total over the appearance is to be grasped in the appearance, over which dominates, what counts for tradition as the world-spirit; not to be taken from this tradition, which is in the widest sense Platonic, as sacred. The world-spirit is, yet is not, is not the Spirit, but precisely the negative, which Hegel shuffles off from it onto those who must counter it and whose downfall renders the verdict, that its difference from objectivity would be what is untrue and bad, double-sided. The world-spirit becomes something autonomous in contrast to the individual actions, out of which the real total movement of society as well as so-called intellectual developments are synthesized, and in contrast to the living subjects of these actions. It is realized over their heads and through these and to this extent antagonistic in advance. The reflection-concept of the world-spirit does not interest itself in living creatures, which the whole, whose primacy it expresses, needs just as much as these latter can exist only by virtue of that whole. Such a hypostasis, robustly nominalistic, was what the Marxist terminus of “mystified” meant. According to that theory, the demolished mystification would not however be merely ideology. It would be just as much the distorted consciousness of the real primacy of the whole. It appropriates in thought the impenetrable and irresistible one of the universal, the perpetuated mythos. Even the philosophic hypostasis has its experience-content in the heteronomous relationships, in which human beings became invisible as such. What is irrational in the concept of the world-spirit, it borrowed from the irrationality of the course of the world. In spite of this it remains fetishistic. History has to this day no total subject, however construable. Its substrate is the

functional context of real individual subjects: "History does nothing, it 'possesses no gigantic wealth', it 'fights no battles'! It is rather the human being, the real, living human being, which does everything, possesses and fights; it is not some sort of 'history', which needs human being as a means, in order to work through its ends – as if this were a person apart – but rather this latter is nothing but the activity of human beings pursuing their ends."¹⁸² Those qualities are conferred upon history, however, because the law of motion of society abstracted from its individual subjects over millennia. It has degraded them just as really to mere executors, to mere partakers of social wealth and social struggle, as the fact that, no less really, nothing would be without them and their spontaneities. Marx emphasized this anti-nominalistic aspect over and over again, without indeed granting philosophical consistency to it: "Only to the extent that the capitalist is personified capital, do they have a historical value and that historical right to existence... Only as the personification of capital is the capitalist respectable. As such they share with the treasure-hunter the absolute drive to enrichment. What however appears in the latter as individual mania, is in the capitalist the effect of the social mechanism, in which they are merely a cog. Besides, the development of capitalist production makes the continuous increase of the capital invested in an industrial enterprise a necessity, and competition imposes the immanent laws of capitalist mode of production on each individual capitalist as external compulsory laws. It compels them to continually extend their capital, in order to preserve it, and they can extend it only by means of progressive accumulation."¹⁸³

"TO BE WITH THE WORLD-SPIRIT" 300–301

In the concept of the world-spirit the principle of divine omnipotence was secularized into that which posited unity, the world-plan into the pitilessness of what occurs. The world-spirit is worshipped like a deity; it is divested of its personality and all its attributes of providence and grace. Therein a piece of the dialectic of enlightenment fulfills itself: the disenchanting and conserved Spirit takes the form of mythos or regresses into the shudder before something simultaneously overpowering and devoid of qualities. The essence of such is the feeling of being touched by the world-spirit or of hearing its roar [Rausch]. It

182 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Holy Family* [Die heilige Familie], Berlin 1953, pg 211.

183 Karl Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, Berlin 1955, pg 621.

becomes the state of thralldom [Verfallensein] in fate. Just like its immanence, the world-spirit is saturated with suffering and fallibility. By the inflation of total immanence into what is essential, its negativity is reduced to an accidental trifle. However to experience the world-spirit as a whole means to experience its negativity. Schopenhauer's critique of official optimism registered this. It remained meanwhile as obsessive as the Hegelian theodicy of what exists in this world. That humanity lives only in the total imbrication, perhaps only surviving by virtue of it, would not refute Schopenhauer's doubts over whether to affirm the will to life. In all likelihood however there rested, on that which was with the world-spirit, at times also the reflection of a happiness far beyond the individual unhappiness: as in the relationship of the intellectual individual talent to the historical situation. If the individual Spirit is not, as would please the vulgar division into the individuated and the general, "influenced" by the general, but mediated in itself through objectivity, then this latter cannot always be entirely hostile to the subject; the constellation changes in the historical dynamic. In phases when the world-spirit and indeed the totality itself is shrouded in gloom, it is impossible for even the most gifted to become what they are; in favorable ones, such as the period during and immediately after the French Revolution, the average were borne up far beyond themselves. Even the individual downfall of the individuated, which is with the world-spirit, precisely because it is ahead of its time, evokes at times the awareness of what is not in vain. The expression of the possibility, that all could yet be well, is irresistible in the music of the young Beethoven. The reconciliation with objectivity, be it ever so fragile, transcends the monotonous. The moments in which something particular frees itself, without confining others in turn through its own particularity, are anticipations of the unconfined itself; such consolation shines from the early period of the bourgeoisie well into its late phase. The Hegelian philosophy of history was scarcely independent of this, in the sense that in it, already distancing itself, the striking of the hour of an epoch reverberated, in which the realization of bourgeois freedom blew with such a breath, that it overshot itself and opened up the perspective of a reconciliation of the whole, in which its violence would melt away.

ON THE UNLEASHING OF THE
PRODUCTIVE FORCES 301–303

It is tempting to associate periods of being with the world-spirit, of a more substantial happiness than the individual one, with the unleashing of the productive forces, while the burden of the world-spirit threatens to crush humanity, as soon as the conflict between the social forms, under which they exist, and their forces becomes flagrant. But even this schemata is too simple: the talk of the rising bourgeoisie hollow. The development and unleashing of the productive forces are not opposites of the sort which could be ordained as alternating phases, but are truly dialectical. The unleashing of the productive forces, the deed of the Spirit which controls nature, has an affinity to the violent domination of nature. Though it may conceal itself from time to time, it is not to be thought away from the concept of the productive force and least of all from that which is unleashed; the very word resonates with a threat. In *Capital* there is a passage which goes: “As a fanatic of the valorization of value, it” – exchange-value – “ruthlessly compels humanity towards production for production’s sake.”¹⁸⁴ In its place and time this turns against the fetishization of the process of production in exchange-society, beyond this however it violates the nowadays universal taboo on doubting production as an end in itself. At times the technical forces of production are hardly restrained socially, but work in fixed relations of production without much influence on these latter. As soon as the unleashing of the forces separates itself from the constituting relationships between human beings, it becomes no less fetishized than the social castes [Ordnungen]; it, too, is only a moment of the dialectic, not its magic formula. In such phases the world-spirit, the totality of the particular, can pass over into that which it buries underneath it. If appearances do not completely deceive, then this is the signature of the contemporary epoch. In periods by contrast when living beings require the progress of the productive forces or at least are not visibly endangered by them, the feeling of concordance with the world-spirit likely prevails, although with the apprehensive undercurrent, that this is only a ceasefire; also with the temptation of the subjective Spirit, to overzealously run over to the objective one under the pressure of business, like Hegel. In all of this the subjective Spirit remains a historical category, too,

184 Ibid. pg 621.

something originated, self-transforming, virtually transient. The popular spirit [Volkgeist] of primitive societies, not yet individualized, which reproduces itself in the latter under the pressure of the civilized ones, is planned by post-individual collectivism and released; the objective Spirit is then as overwhelming as much as a naked swindle.

GROUP SPIRIT [GRUPPENGEST] AND DOMINATION 302–303

If philosophy were, what Hegel's *Phenomenology* proclaimed it to be, the science of the experience of consciousness, then it could not, as Hegel does to an increasing extent, sovereignly dismiss the individual experience of the general, which pushes its way through, as something irreconcilably bad, and acceding to the apologetics of power from a presumably higher standpoint. The embarrassing recollection of how in committees, what is inferior ends up prevailing, in spite of the subjectively good will of the members, renders the primacy of the general evident, for whose disgrace no appeal to the world-spirit compensates. Group opinion dominates; through adjustment to the majority of the group, or its most influential members, more often by virtue of the more encompassing and authoritative opinion beyond the group, especially one approved by the members of the committee. The objective Spirit of the class reaches deep into the participants far beyond their individual intelligence. Their voice is its echo, although they themselves, subjectively where possible the defenders of freedom, feel nothing of it; intrigues appear only at critical points, as open criminality. The committee is the microcosm of the group of its members, finally of the total; this preforms the decisions. These sorts of contemporary observations ironically resemble those of the formal sociology in the mold of Simmel. However they do not have their content in socialization pure and simple, in empty categories like that of the group. Rather they are what formal sociology, in keeping with its definition, only grudgingly reflects on, the imprint of social content; their invariance is solely a memento of how little the power of the generality has changed in history, how much it still is always only prehistory. The formal group spirit is the reflex-movement of material domination. Formal sociology has its right to exist in the formalization of social mechanisms, the equivalent of domination, progressing through the ratio. In agreement with this, is the fact that the decisions of those committees,

however substantive they would like to be according to their essence, are rendered manifest for the most part under formal-juridical points of view. Formalization is not anything more neutral in contrast to the class-relationship. It reproduces itself through abstraction, the logical hierarchy of the stages of universality, and indeed also there, where the relationships of domination are caused to mask themselves behind democratic procedures.

THE JURIDICAL SPHERE 303–305

Following the *Phenomenology* and the *Logic*, Hegel drove the cult of the course of the world the furthest in the *Philosophy of Law*. The medium, in which what is bad is preserved for the sake of its objectivity and lends itself the appearance [Schein] of what is good, is to a large extent that of legality, which indeed positively protects the reproduction of life, however in its existing forms, due to the destructive principle of violence, what is destructive in it returns undiminished. While society without law, as in the Third Reich, became the prey of purely caprice, the law conserves terror in society, ready to go back to it at any moment with the help of quotable statutes. Hegel delivered the ideology of positive law, because in an already visibly antagonistic society, this latter most urgently required it. Law is the Ur-phenomenon of irrational rationality. In it the formal principle of equivalence becomes the norm, everyone is measured by same standard. Such equality, in which differences perish, gives a secret impetus to inequality; persisting mythos in the midst of an only apparently demythologized humanity. The norms of the law cut short what is not covered, every experience of the specific which is not preformed, for the sake of the seamless systematic, and then raises instrumental rationality to a second reality sui generis [Latin: general in itself]. The entire juridical realm is one of definitions. Its systematic commands, that nothing shall pass into it, which could escape from its closed circle, quod non est in actis [Latin: which is not in the deed]. This enclosure, ideological in itself, exerts real violence through the sanctions of law as the socially controlling authority, particularly in the administered world. In the dictatorships it turns into the latter immediately, mediately [mittelbar] it always stood behind them. That the individual feels so easily wronged, when the antagonism of interest drives it into the juridical sphere, is not, as Hegel would like to argue, its own fault, such that it would be too deluded to recognize its own interest in the objective legal norm and its guarantee; rather

it is that of the constituents of the legal sphere itself. Meanwhile the description remains objectively true, which Hegel sketched as one of a presumably subjective bias: "That legality [Recht] and morality, and the real world of the law and of the moral are grasped through thought, that through thought the form of rationality, namely universality and determinacy, is given, this, the law, is what that feeling which reserves itself at will, that conscience which places legality in the subjective conviction, looks at with grounds as what is most hostile to itself. It perceives the form of legality, as one of duty and one of law, as a dead, cold letter and as a fetter; for it does not cognize itself in it, hence is not free in it, because the law is the rationality of the thing, and this latter does not permit the feelings to warm to its own particularity."¹⁸⁵ That the subjective conscience would view objective morality "with grounds" as what is most hostile to itself, Hegel sets down as if by a philosophical Freudian slip. He blurts out, what in the same breath he disputes. If in fact the individual conscience saw the "real world of the law and the moral" as hostile, because it does not recognize itself in it, then one cannot simply gloss over this in disavowal. For the Hegelian dialectic holds that it cannot conduct itself any other way, indeed cannot recognize itself therein. He thereby concedes that the reconciliation, whose demonstration is the content of his philosophy, did not take place. If the legal order were not objectively alien and external to the subject, then the antagonism which is inescapable for Hegel might be settled by the better insight; Hegel however experienced its intractability much too thoroughly, for him to have faith in this. Thus the paradox, that he both teaches the reconciliation of conscience and the legal norm and disavows it, as one.

LAW AND FAIRNESS 305–306

If every substantively explicated, positive doctrine of natural law leads to antinomies, then its idea nevertheless critically preserves the untruth of positive law. Today it is the reified consciousness, translated back into reality, which multiplies domination therein. Even according to its very form, before class-content and class-justice, it expresses domination, the yawning difference of individual interests from the whole, in which they are abstractly conglomerated. The system of self-made concepts, which slides a full-fledged jurisprudence over the life-process of society, decides in advance, by means of the subsumption

185 Hegel, WW 7, *ibid.* pg 28.

of everything individual under the category, in favor of the social order which the classificatory system is formed in the image of. To his imperishable honor, Aristoteles registered this in the doctrine of the *epieikeia* [Greek: fairness, equity], of fairness against the abstract legal norm. The more consistently however the legal system is constructed throughout, the more incapable it is of absorbing that which has its essence in refusing absorption. The rational system of law allows the claim of fairness, which meant the corrective of the injustice in justice, to be regularly stricken down as a species of patronage, as unfair privilege. The tendency to do so is universal, of one mind with the economic process, which reduces individual interests to the common denominator of a totality, which remains negative, because it distances itself by means of its constitutive abstraction from the individual interests, out of which it is nevertheless simultaneously composed. The universality, which reproduces the preservation of life, simultaneously endangers it, on constantly more threatening levels. The violence of the self-realizing universal is not, as Hegel thought, identical to the essence of individuals, but always also contrary. They are not merely character-masks, agents of value, in some presumed special sphere of the economy. Even where they think they have escaped the primacy of the economy, all the way down to their psychology, the *maison tolérée* [French: universal home] of what is unknowably individual, they react under the compulsion of the generality; the more identical they are with it, the more un-identical they are with it in turn as defenseless followers. What is expressed in the individuals themselves, is that the whole preserves itself along with them only by and through the antagonism. There are countless times when human beings, though conscious and capable of the critique of the universality, are compelled by inescapable motives of self-preservation, to acts and attitudes which help the universal to blindly maintain itself, even though they consciously oppose it. Solely because they must make what is alien to them into their own affair, in order to survive, does the appearance [Schein] of that reconciliation originate, which Hegelian philosophy, which incorruptibly cognized the primacy of the universal, transfigures corruptibly into an idea. What radiates, as if it were beyond the antagonisms, is as one with the universal entanglement. The universal ensures that what is subjected to it as particular would be no better than itself. This is the core of all hitherto established identity.

INDIVIDUALISTIC VEIL 306–307

To look the primacy of the universal in the eye, is psychologically damaging to the narcissism of all individuals and the democratically organized society to an unbearable extent. To see through selfness as nonexistent, as an illusion, would easily drive the objective despair of all into the subjective one and would rob them of the faith that individualistic society implants in them: that they, the individuals, would be what is substantial. For the functionally determined individual interest under existing forms to somehow be satisfied, it must itself become what is primary; the individual must be confused with what is immediate for it, with the *prôtê ousia* [Greek: primary substance]. Such subjective illusion is objectively caused: only by means of the principle of individual self-preservation, with all its narrowness, does the whole function. It compels each individual to gaze solely at themselves, interfering with their insight into the objectivity, and thus objectively works for ill. Nominalistic consciousness reflects a whole, which lives on by means of the particularity and its obstinacy; literally ideology, socially necessary appearance [Schein]. The general principle is that of isolation. It appears to be the indubitable certainty, bewitched by the fact that, at the price of its existence, it may not become aware of how much it would be something mediated. Thus the popular spread of philosophical nominalism. Each individual existence is supposed to have preeminence over its own concept; the Spirit, the consciousness of individuals, is only supposed to be in individuals and not just as much in the supraindividual, which is synthesized in them and solely through which they think. The monads stubbornly block their real species-dependency from themselves just as much as the collective aspect of all the forms and contents of their consciousness: of forms, which themselves are that generality which nominalism denies, of contents, even though no experience, not even the so-called material of experience, would fall to the individual, which is not already predigested and delivered by the generality.

DYNAMIC OF GENERAL AND PARTICULAR 307–309

In contrast to the epistemological reflection on the generality in individual consciousness, it is right not to allow itself to be consoled about ill, sin and death through the appeal to the generality. In Hegel this is recalled, in contrast to the doctrine of the universal mediation, by the apparently paradox one, that this latter

comports itself magnificently with what is universally restored as immediate. But the nominalism, disseminated as prescientific consciousness, and today once more commanding science from there, which makes a profession out of its naivete – the positivistic instrumentarium seldom lacks the pride in being naïve, and the category of “everyday language” is its echo – does not bother with the historical coefficient in the relationship of the general and the particular. The true preponderance [Vorrang] of the particular could only be obtained by means of the transformation of the general. To simply install it as something existent, is a complementary ideology. It conceals how much the specific has become the function of the general, which, according to its logical form, it was all along. What nominalism clings to as its most prized possession is utopia; thus its hatred of utopian thinking, that of the difference from what exists. The scientific bustle creates the illusion that the objective Spirit, produced by utterly real mechanisms of domination, which meanwhile also plans the contents of the consciousness of its reserve-army, would result merely from the sum of this last’s subjective reactions. These however have long since been only the afterbirths of that universality, which solicitously fêtes human beings, in order to be able to better hide behind them, to better curb them. The world-spirit itself turned on the subjectivistically obstinate conception of science, which aims at its autarkic, empirical-rational system, instead of comprehending the objective society which dictates from above. The formerly critically enlightening rebellion against the thing in itself has become the sabotage of cognition, although even in the most crippled scientific concept-formation traces of the for its part no less crippled thing survive. The refusal of the Kantian amphiboly chapter to cognize the interior of the thing, is the *ultima ratio* [Latin: ultimate meaning] of the Baconian program. It had the historical index of its truth in the rebellion against scholastic dogmatism. The motive capsizes itself, however, where that which is forbidden to the cognition is part of the latter’s epistemological and real condition; where the cognizing subject must reflect on itself as a moment of the generality to be cognized, without however becoming entirely the same as this. It is absurd to prevent it from cognizing from within, what it dwells in and what it has all too much of in its own interior; to this extent Hegelian idealism was more realistic than Kant. Where scientific concept-formation ends up in conflict with its ideal of facticity no less than with that of simple reason, whose

anti-speculative executor it pretends to be, its apparatus turned into unreason. The method high-handedly represses what would be incumbent on it to cognize. The positivistic cognitive ideal of unanimous and non-contradictory, logically objection-free models is untenable, due to the immanent contradiction of what is to be cognized, to the antagonisms of the object. They are those of the general and the particular of society, and they are denied all content by the method.

SPIRIT AS SOCIAL TOTALITY 309–311

The experience of that objectivity, which is preordained to the individuated and its consciousness, is that of the unity of the totally socialized society. It is the closest kin of the philosophical idea of absolute identity, in that it tolerates nothing outside of itself. However deceptively the raising of the One [Einheit] into philosophy at the expense of the Many may have been raised; its preeminence, which counted for the *summum bonum* [Latin: highest good] of the victorious philosophical tradition since the Eleatics, is indeed not this, but an *ens realissimum* [Latin: most real being]. It really does appropriate a touch of the transcendence, which the philosophers praised in the unity as an idea. While developed bourgeois society – and indeed the earliest unity-thinking was already urban, rudimentarily bourgeois – was composed [komponiert: to compose musically] from countless individual spontaneities of self-preserving individuals, dependent in their self-preservation on each other, by no means did that equilibrium between unity and the individuals prevail, which theorems of justification proclaim as existent. The non-identity of the One and the Many meanwhile has the form of the precedence of the One, as the identity of the system, which lets nothing go. Without the individual spontaneities the One would not have become, and was as its synthesis something secondary; nominalism recalled this. However by weaving itself ever tighter, through the necessities of self-preservation of the Many or merely through irrational relationships of domination, which misused this as a pretext, it ensnared all individuals, on the pain of their downfall, integrated them, to use Spencer's terminus, absorbed them with its lawfulness even against their reasonable individual interests. This then gradually brought the advancing differentiation to an end, which Spencer may still have believed would necessarily accompany integration. While the unchanged whole and the One form only by means of the particularities it covers, it forms ruthlessly over them. What is realized through the individual

and the Many is, and yet is not, the Many's own affair [Sache]: they can do less and less about it. Its epitome is simultaneously its Other: this dialectic was studiously ignored by the Hegelian one. To the extent individuals somehow become aware of the preponderance of the One over them, it is reflected back onto them as the being-in-itself of the generality, which they in fact run into: even into their innermost core, it is inflicted on them, even where they inflict it on themselves. The sentence *ethos anthrôpos daimôn* [Greek: custom which humanity is under the power of]: that the character of humanity, always modeled as such by the generality, would be their fate, has more truth than that of a characterological determinism; the generality, through which every individual is determined as the unit [Einheit] of its particularity, is borrowed from what is external to it and hence also as heteronomous to the individual, as anything which demons were once said to afflict them with. The ideology of the being-in-itself of the idea is so powerful, because it is the truth, but it is the negative one; it becomes ideology through its affirmative reversal. If human beings once learn the primacy of the generality, then it is almost unavoidable for them to transfigure it into the Spirit, as what is higher, which they must propitiate. Compulsion becomes sensible [zum Sinn: meaningful] to them. Not entirely without reason: for the abstract generality of the whole, which exerts the compulsion, is entwined with the universality of thinking, with the Spirit. This permits it to project this latter once more back onto its bearer, on that universality, as if it were realized in this and had its own reality for itself. In the Spirit the unanimity of the generality has become a subject, and the universality maintains itself in society only through the medium of the Spirit, the abstracting operation, which it really and truly performs. Both converge in exchange, something at the same time subjectively thought and objectively valid, wherein however the objectivity of the generality and the concrete determination of the individual subjects, precisely by becoming commensurable, irreconcilably oppose each other. In the name of the world-spirit the Spirit is merely affirmed and hypostasized, as what it always already was; in it, as Durkheim recognized, who for that reason was accused of metaphysics, society worships itself, its compulsion as omnipotence. Society may find itself confirmed by the world-spirit, because it in fact possesses all the attributes, which it subsequently worships in the Spirit. Its mythical veneration is no pure conceptual mythology: it extends thanks for

the fact that in more developed historical phases all individuals have lived only by means of that social unity, which is not exhausted in them and which approaches their doom the longer it goes on. If their existence today, without them realizing it, is literally granted as something revocable by the great monopolies and powers, then what comes to itself, is what the emphatic concept of society teleologically had in itself all along. The ideology renders the world-spirit independent, because it had already potentially grown independent. The cult of its categories however, for instance the utterly formal one of greatness, something which even Nietzsche accepted, merely reinforces in the consciousness its difference from everything individual, as if this difference were ontological; and with that the antagonism and the foreseeable disaster.

ANTAGONISTIC REASON OF HISTORY 311–313

It is not only today that the reason of the world-spirit is, in contrast to the potential one, to the entire interest of the united individual subjects from which it differs, unreason. Hegel, like all the others who learned from him, was reproved for the equation of logical categories here, with social ones and the ones from the philosophy of history there, as *metabasis eis allo genos* [Greek: change into another genus]: they would be that peak of speculative idealism, which had to break off in view of the unconstruability of what is empirical. Precisely that construction however did justice to the reality. The tit for tat of history just as much as the equivalence-principle of the social relationships between the individual subjects, which advances towards the totality, is tantamount to the logicity which Hegel is presumed to have interpreted into it. Only this logicity, the primacy of the general in the dialectic of the general and the particular, is an index falsi [Latin: index of falsity]. There is no more that identity than freedom, individuality, and whatever else Hegel posits with the general in identity. The total of the generality expresses its own failure. What cannot bear any particular, betrays itself thereby as particularly dominating. The general reason, which ends up prevailing, is already the restricted kind. It is not the mere unity inside of the multiplicity, but rather stamped as a position to reality, the unity over something. Thereby however, according to the pure form, antagonistic in itself. The division is unity. The irrationality of the particularly realized ratio inside of what is socially total is not extraneous to the ratio, not solely the fault of its usage. Rather immanent

to it. Measured by complete reason, the currently prevailing one reveals itself, according to its principle, as polarized and to this extent irrational. Enlightenment truly succumbs to the dialectic: this latter takes place in its own concept. Ratio is no more to be hypostasized than any other sort of category. The transfer of the self-preserving interest of individuals into the species is intellectually congealed in its simultaneously general and antagonistic form. It obeys a logic which great bourgeois philosophy comprehended at historic corners like Hobbes and Kant: without the ceding of the self-preserving interest to that species, which bourgeois thinking represented for the most part by the state, what is individuated would not be able to preserve itself in more developed social relationships. However by means of this transfer, necessary for individuals, the general rationality unavoidably appears practically in opposition to the particular human beings, who it must negate, in order to become general, and who it pretends to serve, and not only pretends. In the universality of the ratio, which ratifies the neediness of everything particular, its dependence on the whole, its contradiction to the particular develops by virtue of the process of abstraction, on which that rests. All-prevailing reason, which instaurates itself over another one, also necessarily delimits itself. The principle of absolute identity is contradictory in itself. It perpetuates non-identity as something suppressed and damaged. A trace of this entered into Hegel's effort, to absorb non-identity through identity-philosophy, indeed to determine identity through non-identity. He distorts however the matter-at-hand, by affirming what is identical, conceding what is non-identical as indeed necessarily negative, and misconceiving the negativity of the generality. He lacks sympathy for the utopia of the particular, buried underneath the general, for that non-identity, which would only be, when realized reason had left the particular one of the generality behind. The consciousness of the injustice which the concept of the general implies, which he upbraids, would deserve his respect due to the universality of the injustice itself. When at the very dawn of the modern era the mortally wounded condottieri [Italian: mercenary] Franz von Sickingen found the words, "Nothing without cause" for his fate, then he expressed two things with the power of the epoch: the necessity of the social course of the world, which condemned him to perish, and the negativity of the principle of a course of the world, which proceeds according to necessity. It is simply incompatible with happiness, even of

the whole. The experience-content of the dictum is more than the platitude of the general validity of the causal proposition. What glimmers in the consciousness of the individual person is what they experience, the universal interdependence. Its apparently isolated fate reflects the whole. What the mythological name of fate once stood for, is as what is demythologized no less mythical than the secular "logic of the things". It is burnt into individuals, the figure of their particularization. This objectively motivated Hegel's construction of the world-spirit. On the one hand it gives an accounting of the emancipation of the subject. It must first have withdrawn from the universality, in order to perceive it in and for itself. On the other hand the context of the social individual actions must be tied together into a seamless totality, predetermining for the individual, as never was the case in the feudal epoch.

UNIVERSAL HISTORY 313–315

The concept of universal history, which the Hegelian philosophy took inspiration from very much as the Kantian one did from that of the mathematical natural sciences, became all the more problematic, the more the unified world approaches a total process. For one thing, positivistically progressing historical science took apart the conception of the total and of unbroken continuity. The philosophical construction had the dubious advantage over it of a less detailed knowledge, which it easily enough booked in the ledger as a sovereign distance for itself; to be sure also less fear, of saying what is essential, which is outlined solely from a distance. On the other hand advanced philosophy had to be aware of the understanding between universal history and ideology¹⁸⁶ and the despoiled life as discontinuous. Hegel himself had conceived of universal history as uniform merely by virtue of its contradictions. With the materialistic reversal of dialectics, the heaviest accent fell on the insight into the discontinuity of what is not consolingly held together by any unity of the Spirit and concept. Discontinuity however and universal history are to be thought together. To cancel out this latter as a remainder of metaphysical superstition, would intellectually consolidate mere facticity as the only thing to be cognized and therefore accepted, in the same fashion that sovereignty once marshaled the facts into the total forwards march of the One Spirit, confirming them as its utterances. Universal history is to be construed

186 See Walter Benjamin, *Writings Volume 1*, Frankfurt am Main 1955, pg 494.

and denied. The assertion that an all-encompassing world-plan for the better manifests itself in history would be, after past catastrophes and in view of future ones, cynical. This however is not a reason to deny the unity which welds together the discontinuous, chaotically fragmented moments and phases of history, that of the control of nature, progressing into domination over human beings and ultimately over internalized nature. No universal history leads from savagery to humanity, but one indeed from the slingshot to the H-bomb. It culminates in the total threat of organized humanity against organized human beings, in the epitome of discontinuity. Hegel is thereby verified by the horror and stood on his head. If he transfigured the totality of historical suffering into the positivity of the self-realizing absolute, then the One and the whole, which to this day, with breathing-spells, keep rolling on, would teleologically be absolute suffering. History is the unity of continuity and discontinuity. Society preserves itself not in spite of its antagonism but through it; the profit-motive, and thereby the class relationship, are objectively the motor of the process of production on which everyone's life depends and whose primacy has its vanishing-point in the death of all. This implies also what is reconciling in the irreconcilable; because it alone allows human beings to live, without it there would not even be the possibility of a different life. What historically created that possibility, can destroy it just as easily. The world-spirit, a worthy object of definition, could be defined as permanent catastrophe. Under the identity principle which yokes everyone, what does not pass over into identity and which escapes from the grasp of planned rationality in the realm of the means, turns into that which provokes fear, retribution for that woe, which the non-identical experiences through identity. History could scarcely be philosophically interpreted otherwise, without enchanting it into an idea.

ANTAGONISM CONTINGENT? 315–317

Speculations as to whether the antagonism was inherited from the origins of human society, as the principle *homo homini lupus* [Latin: humanity is wolf to humanity], a piece of prolonged natural history, or indeed came into being *thesei* [Greek: thesis]; and as to whether, if it had already germinated, it followed from the necessities of the survival of the species and not contingently, as it were, out of archaic arbitrary acts of power-seizure, are not idle. With that of course the construction of the world-spirit would fall asunder. The historical generality, the

logic of things, which is compacted in the necessity of the overall tendency, would be grounded on what is accidental, what is external to it; the latter need not have been. Not just Hegel but also Marx and Engels, hardly anywhere so idealistic as in the relationship to the totality, would have rejected the doubt in its inescapability, which nonetheless rises up in the intention to transform the world, like a deadly attack on their own system instead of the prevailing one. Indeed Marx refrains, mistrustful of all anthropology, from relocating antagonism into the essence of humanity or into primeval times, which are drawn up instead according to the topos of the golden age, yet insists all the more tenaciously on its historical necessity. The economy would have primacy over domination, which may not be otherwise deduced than economically. The controversy is hardly to be settled with facts; they lose themselves in the mists of prehistory. But the interest in it was in all likelihood no more one of historical facts than the one in the social contract, which even Hobbes and Locke would scarcely have considered to be really fulfilled.¹⁸⁷ It was a question of the deification of history, even in the atheistic Hegelians Marx and Engels. The primacy of the economy is supposed to ground the happy end with historical stringency as immanent to it; the economic process would produce the political relationships of domination and would overturn them until the mandatory emancipation from the coercion of the economy. However the intransigence of the doctrine, especially in Engels, was for its part precisely political. He and Marx wished for the revolution as one of the economic relationships in society as a whole, in the fundament of its self-preservation, not as the changing of the ground-rules of domination, its political form. The point was directed at the anarchists. What motivated Marx and Engels to translate even humanity's prehistory, its fall from grace, as it were, into political economy, although its very concept, chained to the totality of the exchange-relationship, is itself something late, was the expectation of immediately impending revolution. Because they wished for this right away, it was of the utmost importance to them to strike down tendencies, which they feared would be similarly defeated just as Spartacus formerly, or the rebellious peasants. They were enemies of utopia for the sake of its realization. Their imago of revolution stamped that of the primal world; the overwhelming weight of the

187 The imaginary social contract was so welcome to the early bourgeois thinkers, because it grounded bourgeois rationality, the exchange-relationship, as a formal-juridical a priori; it was however just as imaginary, as the bourgeois ratio was itself in the impenetrable real society.

economic contradictions in capitalism seemed to demand its derivation from the accumulated objectivity of what, since inconceivably distant times, was historically stronger. They could not have suspected what appeared later, in the failure of the revolution, even where it succeeded: that domination is capable of outlasting the planned economy, which neither of them to be sure would have confused with state capitalism; a potential, which the antagonistic tendency explicated by Marx and Engels of the economic, sharpened against mere politics, prolongs beyond its specific phase. The tenacity of domination after the fall of what the critique of political economy had as its main object, confers upon ideology the cheap triumph, which deduces domination, be it out of presumably inalienable forms of social organization, for instance those of centralization, be it out of those of the consciousness abstracted from the real process – the ratio – and subsequently prophesizes an infinite future for domination, with open understanding or under crocodile-tears, for as long as any sort of organized society exists. By contrast the critique of the politics fetishized as an existent-in-itself, or that of the Spirit, inflated into its particularity, retains its power. The idea of the historical totality is touched upon however by the events of the twentieth century, as one of calculable economic necessity. Only if things could have been different; only if the totality, socially necessary appearance [Schein] as the hypostasis of the generality, which is squeezed out of individual human beings, is broken of the claim of its absoluteness, does critical social consciousness preserve the freedom of thought, that one day things might be different. Theory is capable of moving the immeasurable weight of historical necessity solely by cognizing this as appearance [Schein] turned into reality, the historical determination as metaphysically accidental. Such cognition is thwarted by the metaphysics of history. The looming catastrophe corresponds rather to the presumption of an irrational catastrophe in the beginnings. Today the disdained possibility of the Other has shrunk into that which, despite everything, wards off catastrophe.

OTHERWORLDLINESS OF THE HEGELIAN WORLD-SPIRIT 317–320

In Hegel however, especially in the philosophies of history and law, historical objectivity, as it once became, is exalted into transcendence: “This general substance is not the worldly; the worldly strives powerlessly against it. Nothing individuated

[Individuum] can go beyond this substance; it can indeed distinguish itself from other particular individuals, but not from the popular spirit [Volksgeist].”¹⁸⁸ The opposite of “worldly”, that of the identity, which is unidentically imposed over the particular existent, is accordingly otherworldly. Even such an ideology has its grain of truth: the critic of his own popular spirit is also chained to what is commensurable to him, so long as humanity is split into nations. The constellation between Karl Kraus and Vienna is the greatest model of this in the recent past, although for the most part garbed disparagingly. But things are not so dialectical for Hegel, as ever where he meets something disturbing. The individuated, he continues, “can be more intellectually keen [geistreicher] than many others, but cannot surpass the popular spirit. The intellectually keen are only those, who know the spirit of the people and know how to direct themselves accordingly.”¹⁸⁹ With rancor – it cannot fail to be overheard in the usage of the term “intellectually keen” – Hegel describes the relationship far beneath the level of his own conception. “To direct oneself accordingly” would be literally mere adjustment. As if by the compulsion to confess he decodes the identity he teaches as the continuing break and postulates the subordination of the weaker under the mightier. Euphemisms such as that of the philosophy of history, that in the course of world history “particular individuals have suffered”,¹⁹⁰ unwittingly come very close indeed to the consciousness of irreconcilment, and the fanfare “in duty the individuated emancipates itself towards substantial freedom”,¹⁹¹ incidentally a theme endemic to the entirety of idealistic German thought, is already indistinguishable from its parody in the doctor-scene in Buechner’s *Woyzeck*. Hegel puts into philosophy’s mouth, “that no power goes beyond the power of the good, of God, which prevents Him, from reigning, that God delivers justice, that world-history represents nothing other than the plan of providence. God governs the world; the content of His government, the fulfillment of His plan, is world-history, to grasp this latter is the philosophy of world-history, and its prerequisite is, that the ideal be realized, that only what is in accordance with the idea has reality.”¹⁹² The world-spirit seems to have been at work with especial cunning, when Hegel, as if to crown his edifying

188 Hegel, *Reason in History* [Die Vernunft in der Geschichte], *ibid.* pg 60.

189 *Ibid.*

190 *Ibid.* pg 48.

191 Hegel, *WW 7*, *ibid.* pg 230.

192 Hegel, *Reason in History*, *ibid.* pg 77.

sermon, to borrow a word from Arnold Schönberg, apes Heidegger in advance: “For reason is the perception of the divine work.”¹⁹³ The omnipotent thought must abdicate and make itself available to experience as mere perception. Hegel mobilizes Greek conceptions this side of the experience of individuality, in order to gild the heteronomy of the substantial generality. In such passages he leaps over the entire historical dialectic and unhesitatingly proclaims the antique form of morality, which was itself first that of the official Greek philosophy and then that of the German high schools, as the true one: “For the morality of the state is not the moralistic, reflected one, wherein one’s own conviction prevails; this is more accessible to the modern world, while the true and antique one has its roots therein, that everyone does their duty.”¹⁹⁴ The objective Spirit takes its revenge on Hegel. As the guest-speaker of the Spartan one he anticipates the jargon of authenticity by a hundred years with the expression “does their duty”. He debases himself by offering decorative remarks to the victims, without touching on the substantiality of the condition, whose victims they are. What haunts his superior declarations like a ghost, was already petty cash in the bourgeois treasure-box of Schiller. In the *Song of the Bell*, this latter has the family father, his worldly goods burned to cinders, not only reach for the walking-stick, which is merely the beggar’s stick, but compels him moreover to do so joyfully; on behalf of the nation, which would otherwise be unworthy, he imposes the joyous dedication of its utmost to its honor. The terror of good cheer innervates the *contrainte sociale* [French: social duress]. Such exaggeration is no poetic luxury; the idealistic social pedagogue must do something extra, because without the additional and irrational accomplishment of identification, the fact that the generality robs the particular of what it promises it would become all too flagrant. Hegel associates the power of the generality with the aesthetic-formal concept of greatness: “The great ones of a people are those, who direct the people according to the general Spirit. Individualities thus disappear for us and count only as those, who carry through that which the popular spirit wills.”¹⁹⁵ The disappearance of individualities, decreed off-the-cuff, something negative which philosophy gives itself to know as something positive, without really changing it, is the equivalent of the continuing break. The power of the

193 Ibid. pg 78.

194 Ibid. pg 115.

195 Ibid. pg 60.

world-spirit sabotages what Hegel in a later passage celebrates in the individuated: "that it is in line with its substance, it is thus through itself".¹⁹⁶ Nevertheless the dismissive formulation touches upon something serious. The world-spirit would be "the Spirit of the world, as it is explicated in human consciousness; human beings conduct themselves towards this latter as individuals towards the whole, which is their substance."¹⁹⁷ This is telling the score to the bourgeois intuition of the individuated, of vulgar nominalism. What constrains itself to what is immediately certain and substantial, thereby becomes precisely the agent of the generality; individuality, into a deceptive conception. Therein Hegel chimes with Schopenhauer; what he had over the latter was the insight that the dialectic of individuation and the general is not exhausted by the abstract negation of what is individual. The objection remains, however, not only against Schopenhauer but against Hegel himself, that the individuated, necessary appearance of the essence of the objective tendency, is justified in once more turning against this, to the extent it confronts such with its externality and fallibility. This is implied in Hegel's doctrine of the substantiality of the individuated "through itself". But instead of developing it, he remains frozen in an abstract opposition of the generality and particular, which ought to be unbearable according to his own method.¹⁹⁸

HEGEL'S PARTISANSHIP FOR THE UNIVERSAL 320-322

What stands against such a division of what is substantive and individuality no less than against the biased immediate consciousness, is the insight of Hegelian logic into the unity of the particular and the general, which at times counts for

196 Ibid. pg 95.

197 Ibid. pg 60.

198 Among the positivists Emile Durkheim held fast to the Hegelian decision in favor of the generality in the doctrine of the collective spirit and if possible even trumped this, insofar as his schemata did not grant any room to a dialectic of the general and particular, not even in abstracto [Latin: in the abstract]. In the sociology of primitive religions he had substantively cognized, that what the particular laid claim to, the characteristic, was inflicted on it by the generality. He designated the deception of the particular as mere mimesis to the generality just as much as the power, which makes the particular into one in the first place: "The veil (which is used in the course of certain ceremonies) is not a natural movement of private sensibility, injured by a cruel loss; it is a duty imposed by the group. One mourns, not simply because one is sad, but because one is expected to mourn. It is a ritual attitude which one is obliged to adopt by respect for the usage, but which is, to a large extent, independent of the effective state of the individual. This obligation is moreover sanctioned by mythical punishments as well as social ones." (Emile Durkheim, *The elementary forms of religious life: The totemic system in Australia*, Paris 1912, Travaux de l'Annee Sociologique, pg. 568.)

him as identity: "The particularity however is as universality in and for itself, not such an immanent relation by transition; it is the totality in itself, and simple determinacy, essentially principle. It has no other determinacy than that which is posited by means of the generality itself, and results in the following fashion out of the same. The particular is the generality itself, but it is its difference from or relation to an other, its outwards appearance [Scheinen]; it is however not extant as anything other, from which the particular would be differentiated, than the generality itself. – The generality determines itself, thus it is itself the particular; the determinacy is a distinction; it is only distinct from itself."¹⁹⁹ The particular would accordingly be immediately the generality, because it finds each and every determination of its speciality [Sonderheit] solely through the generality; without this, concludes Hegel, according to an always recurring mode, the particular would be nothing. The modern history of the Spirit, and not only it, was the apologetic labor of Sisyphus, to think away the negative of the generality out of existence. In Kant the Spirit still recalls it in opposition to necessity: he sought to delimit this latter to nature. In Hegel the critique of what is necessary is spirited away. "The consciousness of the Spirit must form in the world; the material of this realization, its soil [Boden] is nothing other than the general consciousness, the consciousness of a people. This consciousness contains and by means of it directs all ends and interests of the people; this consciousness makes up the laws of the people, morals, religion, etc. It is what is substantial of the Spirit of a people, even when the individuals do not know it, but ascertain it as a prerequisite. It is like a necessity; the individuated is raised in this atmosphere, knowing nothing else. Yet however it is not mere education and the consequence of education; but rather this consciousness is itself developed out of the individuated itself, not taught to it: the individuated is in this substance."²⁰⁰ The Hegelian formulation "it is like a necessity" is quite fitting to the primacy of the generality; the "like", by hinting at the merely metaphorical essence of such a necessity, fleetingly highlights what is merely apparent [Scheinhafte] in what is realest of all. Any doubts as to whether necessity is good are promptly stricken down by the assertion, repeated over hill and dale, that exactly necessity would be freedom. The individuated, as Hegel puts it, "is in this substance", that universality, which to him still coincided with

199 Hegel, *WW* 5, *ibid.* pg 43.

200 Hegel, *Reason in History*, *ibid.* pg 59.

the popular spirits. But its positivity is itself negative and becomes all the more so, the more positive it ends up becoming; the One so much the worse, the stronger its grip over the Many. Its praise is offered by the victor, who even as one of the Spirit cannot dispense with the victory procession, with the ostentation, that what is incessantly inflicted on the many would be the meaning of the world. "It is the particular, which struggles mightily against each other, and a part of which goes to pieces. But precisely in the struggle, in the downfall of the particular, the generality results. This is not disturbed."²⁰¹ To this day it has not been disturbed. Nevertheless, following Hegel, the generality too would not be without that particular, which it determines; as something detached. Hegel's logic, also for him an a priori doctrine of general structures, is capable of definitively identifying the general and the not determined particular, of equating the mediatedness of both poles of cognition, only by not dealing at all with the particular as what is particular, but merely with the particularity, itself already something conceptual.²⁰² The primacy of the generality thus established delivers the fundament to the Hegelian option for the social one and political one. This much is to be conceded to Hegel, that to think not merely the particularity but the particular itself would be impossible without the moment of the generality, which distinguishes the particular, stamps it, in a certain sense only thereby makes the particular. But the fact that one moment dialectically requires the other, contradictory one opposed to it, reduces, as Hegel well knew but occasionally prefers to forget, neither the former nor the latter to *mêou* [Greek: what is not the case]. Otherwise the absolute, ontological validity of the logic of pure non-contradictoriness is stipulated, which the dialectical demonstration of "moments" had broken through; ultimately the position of an absolute first – of the concept – to which the factum is supposed to be secondary, because according to idealistic tradition it "follows" from the concept. While nothing about the particular can be predicated without determinacy and thereby without the universality, the moment of something particular, something opaque, which that predication refers to and is based on, does not perish therein. It preserves itself in the midst of the constellation, otherwise the dialectic would be tantamount to the hypostasis of the mediation, without preserving the moments of the immediacy, as Hegel judiciously wished elsewhere.

201 Ibid. pg 105.

202 See text, especially *Being and Existence* (pp 104-136).

RELAPSE INTO PLATONISM 322–324

The immanent critique of dialectics explodes Hegelian idealism. Cognition aims at the particular, not the generality. It seeks its true object in the possible determination of the difference of that particular, even from that generality, which it critiques as something nonetheless inalienable. If however the mediation of the general through the particular and of the particular through the general is simply reduced to the abstract normal form of mediation pure and simple, then the particular has to pay for this, all the way to its authoritarian dismissal in the material parts of the Hegelian system: “What the human being ought to do, what its duties are, which it has to fulfill, in order to be virtuous, is easy to say in a moral community – it is to do nothing else, than what is indicated, expressed and known by its relationships. The uprightness is the generality, which can be demanded of it part by law, partly morally. It can easily appear however for the moral standpoint as something subordinate, beyond which one ought to demand yet more of oneself and others; for the urge to be something particular, is not satisfied with that which is existent in and for itself and general; only in an exception does it find the consciousness of the peculiarity.”²⁰³ If Hegel had driven the doctrine of the identity of the general and the particular further to a dialectic in the particular itself, then the particular, which indeed according to him is the mediating generality, would be given the same rights as the former. That he denigrates this right to a mere urge, like a father, who chastises the son, “You probably think you’re something special”, and psychologically blackens the human right as narcissism, is no deplorable lapse by the individual philosopher. The dialectic of the particular he envisions is not to be carried out idealistically. Because, contrary to the Kantian chorismos, philosophy does not arrange itself as a doctrine of forms in the generality, but is supposed to penetrate the content itself, philosophy sets up the reality in a magnificently catastrophic *petitio principii* [Latin: begging the question], in such a manner that the latter fits the repressive identity with the former. What is most true in Hegel, the consciousness of the particular, without whose weight the concept of reality degenerates into farce, gives rise to that which is most false, abolishes the particular, which Hegel’s philosophy gropes for. The more insistently its concept strives for the reality,

the more delusively does he contaminate this latter, the *hic et nunc* [Latin: here and now] to be cracked open like the golden nuts at a children's party, with the concept under which it is subsumed. "It is precisely this position of philosophy to reality, which concerns the misunderstandings, and I return herewith to what I previously noted, that philosophy, because it is the fathoming of what is rational, is exactly thereby the comprehension of what is present and real, not the raising up of something beyond, which is supposed to be God knows where – or of which one knows in fact quite enough to say where it is, namely in the error of a one-sided, empty reasonalizing [*Raisonnirens*]... If the reflection, the feeling or whatever form the subjective consciousness would have, sees the present as something in vain, is beyond it and knows better, then it ends up as what is in vain, and because it has its reality only in the present, it is itself only vanity. If conversely what counts for the idea, which is only an idea, a conception in an opinion, then philosophy preserves the insight against this, that nothing is real except the idea. It is a question of recognizing the substance, which is immanent, and the eternal, which is present, in the appearance [*Scheine*] of what is temporal and transitional."²⁰⁴²⁰⁵ So Platonically is the dialectician forced to speak. He does not wish to acknowledge that logically as well as in the philosophy of history the generality contracts into the particular, until this tears itself free from the abstract generality, which has become external to it, while correlative to this, the generality which he vindicates as the higher objectivity sinks down to what is badly subjective, to the average value of the particularities. He who had intended the transition of logic into time, is resigned to timeless logic.

DETEMPORALIZATION OF TIME 324–328

The simple dichotomy of the temporal and the eternal amidst and in spite of the conception of the dialectic in Hegel conforms to the primacy of the generality in the philosophy of history. Just as the universal concept, the fruit of abstraction, seems to be beyond time, and the loss suffered by what is subsumed through the

204 Ibid. pg 32.

205 Kant already criticized the cliché "only an idea". "The Platonic republic has become proverbial as a presumably striking example of a dreamt-of perfection, which can have its seat only the brain of the idle thinker... Yet one would do better, to approach this thought more closely, and (where the excellent man permits us without assistance) to shed light on it by means of a new effort, rather than setting it aside as useless under the quite wretched and harmful pretext of its unfeasibility." (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *WW III*, Academy Edition, pg. 247)

process of abstraction is booked in the ledger as a net gain and as a promissory note on eternity, so do the allegedly supratemporal moments of history become positiva [Latin: positive things]. But what is hidden in them is the same old ill. The agreement, that it would always remain so, discredits the thought which protests against this as ephemeral. Such a recoil into timelessness is not extraneous to the Hegelian dialectic and the philosophy of history. By extending itself over time, his version of dialectics becomes ontologized, turning from a subjective form into a structure of being pure and simple, itself something eternal. Hegel's speculations, which equate the absolute idea of the totality to the transience of everything finite, are founded on such. His attempt to deduce time, as it were, and to eternalize it as something which does not tolerate anything outside itself, is appropriate to this conception just as much as to absolute idealism, which can so little resign itself to the separation of time and logic than Kant could to that of the intuition and understanding. In this Hegel, the critic of Kant, was incidentally also his executor. If the latter a priorized time, as a pure form of intuition and the condition of everything temporal, this is for its part raised above time.²⁰⁶ Subjective and objective idealism thereby come to accord. For the fundament of both is the subject as concept, excluding its temporal content. Once more the actus purus [Latin: pure act], as in Aristoteles, becomes what does not move. The social partisanship of the idealists reaches all the way into the constituents of their systems. They glorify time as non-temporal, history as eternal out of the fear that it would begin. The dialectic of time and the temporal consequently turns for Hegel into one of an essence of time in itself.²⁰⁷ It offers positivism a favorite point of attack. In fact it would be badly scholastic, if dialectics were ascribed to the formal concept of time, purged of every temporal content. The critical reflection on this however dialectizes time as the unity of form and content, mediated in itself. The transcendental aesthetic of Kant would have nothing to counter the

206 "Time does not proceed in itself, but the existence of what is changeable proceeds in it. Time, which is itself unchangeable and lasting, therefore corresponds in the appearance to what is unchangeable in existence, i.e. the substance, and only in it can the sequence and the simultaneity of the appearances of time be determined." (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, *ibid.*, pg 137)

207 "More closely now, the real I belongs itself to time, with which it, if we abstract from the concrete content of the consciousness and self-consciousness, coincides, insofar as it is nothing but this empty movement of positing itself as another and sublating this transformation, i.e. preserving itself, the I and only the I as such therein. The I is in time, and the time is the being of the subject itself." (Hegel, *WW 14*, *ibid.*, pg 151)

objection, that the purely formal character of time as a “form of intuition”, its “emptiness”, would itself correspond to no intuition, however stylized. Kantian time rejects every possible conception and imagination: in order to conceive it, something temporal must always be co-conceived along with it, on which it can be read, a something, on which its course or its so-called flow becomes experienceable. The conception of pure time requires precisely the conceptual mediation – the abstraction from all thinkable conceptions of time – which Kant, for the sake of the systematic, of the disjunction of sensuality and understanding, wished and had to dispense from the forms of intuition. Absolute time as such, divested of its lattermost factual substrate, which is in it and proceeds in it, would no longer be what according to Kant time must inalienably be: dynamic. No dynamics without what it takes place in. Conversely however no facticity is to be conceived, which would not possess its positional value in the continuum of time. Dialectics carries this reciprocity into even the most formal realm: none of the moments essential therein, and opposed to each other, is without the other. It is motivated meanwhile not by the pure form in itself, in which it unveils itself. A relationship of form and content has itself become form. It is the inalienable form of content; the uttermost sublimation of the form-content dualism in the severed and absolutized subjectivity. The moment of truth in Hegel’s theory of time could still be extracted, insofar as one does not permit the logic of time to produce itself out of itself, as he does, but rather preserves it in the logic of congealed time-relations, as it was indicated variously in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, especially in the schematism chapter, though cryptically enough. The discursive *Logic* similarly preserves moments of time – unmistakably in the conclusions – as detemporalized, rendered illusory, by means of their objectification into pure nomothetism, performed by subjective thinking. Without such detemporalization of time these latter would in turn never have been objectified. As the cognition of a moment, the interpretation of the context between logic and time through the recourse to what, according to the current, positivistic doctrine of science, is pre-logical in logic, would be compatible with Hegel. For what he calls the synthesis, is not simply the utterly new quality, which leaps out from the determinate negation, but rather the return of what is negated; dialectical progress constantly also the recourse to what fell victim to the progressing concept: its advancing concretion, its self-correction.

The transition of logic into time would like, insofar as the consciousness is able, to render compensation to this latter, for what logic has done to it, without which however time would not be. Under this aspect the Bergsonian doubling of the concept of time is a piece of its own unconscious dialectic. He sought to theoretically reconstruct the living experience of time in the concept of the *temps durée* [French: lived duration], of the lived duration, and thereby its substantive moment, which had fallen victim to the abstraction of philosophy and to the causal-mechanical natural sciences. Nevertheless he did not reach the dialectical concept any more than this latter, more positivistically than his polemic knew; he absolutized the dynamic moment, out of *dégoût* [French: disgust] for the dawning reification of consciousness, made it for its part into a form of consciousness, as it were, into a particular and privileged mode of cognition, reifying it, if you will, into a branch. Isolated, the subjective experience of time along with its content becomes as accidental and mediated as its subject, and for that reason, in view of the chronometric one, always at the same time “wrong”. To explain this, the triviality suffices that the subjective experiences of time, measured by the clock, are subject to illusion, although no clock-time would be without the subjective experience of time, which is concretized by this. The crass dichotomy of both times in Bergson registers however the historical one between the living experience and the concretized and repetitive labor-processes: his fragile doctrine of time is an early precipitation of the objective social crisis of temporal consciousness. The irreconcilability of *temps durée* [French: lived duration] and *temps espace* [French: chronometric time] is the wound of that split consciousness, which is any sort of unity only through division. This can no more be mastered by the naturalistic interpretation of the *temps espace* than by the hypostasis of the *temps durée*, in which the subject, shrinking away from reification, hopes in vain to conserve itself by simply being alive. In fact the laughter, in which life is supposed to reestablish itself according to Bergson in contrast to its conventional hardening, has long since become the weapon of convention against the uncomprehended life, against the traces of something natural which is not completely domesticated.

INTERRUPTION OF THE DIALECTIC IN HEGEL 328–331

The Hegelian transposition of the particular into the particularity follows the praxis of a society, which tolerates the particular merely as a category, as the form of the supremacy of the general. Marx designated this state of affairs [Sachverhalt] in a manner which Hegel could not foresee: “The dissolution of all products and activities into exchange-values presupposes the dissolution of all solidified personal (historical) relationships of dependency in production, as much as the all-round dependency of the producers on each other. The production of every individual is dependent on the production of all others; as much as (also) the transformation of one’s products into food has become dependent on the consumption of all others... This reciprocal dependency is expressed in the constant necessity of exchange and in exchange-value as an all-round mediator. The economists express this as follows: each pursues their private interest; and serves thereby, without willing or knowing it, the private interests of all others, the general interest. The joke is not that insofar as each pursues their private interests, the entirety of the private interests, hence the general interest is achieved. Rather it could also be concluded from this abstract phrase, that each reciprocally stymies the enforcement of the interest of the others, and that instead of a general affirmation, rather a general negation results from this bellum omnium contra omnes [Latin: war of all against all]. The point however lies therein, that the private interest is itself already a socially determined interest and can be accomplished only under the conditions posited by the society and the means given by it; hence is tied to the reproduction of these conditions and means. It is the interest of the private; but its content, like its form and means of realization, are given by means of social conditions independent of all.”²⁰⁸ Such negative primacy of the concept sheds light on why Hegel, its apologist, and Marx, its critic, converge in the conception that what the former named the world-spirit, possesses a preponderance of being-in-itself and would not merely, as to Hegel alone would be fitting, have its objective substance in individuals: “The individuals are subsumed under social production, which exists as a doom outside of them; but social production is not subsumed

208 Karl Marx, *Outline of a Critique of Political Economy* [Grundrisse der Kritik der politischen Ökonomie], Berlin 1953, pg 73.

under individuals, who operate it as their capacity in common.”²⁰⁹ The real chorismos compels Hegel, against his will, to remodel the thesis of the reality of the idea. Without the theory conceding such, the philosophy of law contains unmistakable sentences about this: “In the idea of the state one must not look to specific states, nor particular institutions, one must rather consider the idea, this real God, for itself. Every state, even though one may find it bad according to the principles which one has, cognizing this or that defect in it, always has the essential moments of its existence in itself, when it namely belongs to the developed ones of its time. Because however it is easier to find faults, that to comprehend the affirmative, one falls easily into the mistake, of forgetting particular sides of the internal organism of the state.”²¹⁰ If one must “consider the idea for itself”, and not “particular states”, and indeed in principle, obeying an extensive structure, then the contradiction between the idea and reality rises up once more, which the tenor of the entire work is to dispute away. The ominous sentence, that it would be easier to find faults than to comprehend the affirmative, is in line with this; today this has turned into the cry for constructive (read: self-abasing) critique. Because the identity of the idea and reality is denied by this, it requires a devotional special effort of reason, as it were, in order to nevertheless reassure itself of that identity; the “affirmative”, the demonstration of positively achieved reconciliation, is postulated, praised as the superior achievement of the consciousness, because the Hegelian pure onlooker does not suffice for such an affirmation. The pressure exerted by the affirmation on what strives against it, what is real, untiringly reinforces that real one, which the universality perpetrates on the subject as its negation. Both yawn all the more visibly from each other, the more concretely the subject is confronted with the thesis of the objective substantiality of what is moral. In Hegel’s later conception of education this is still described as something merely hostile to the subject: “Education is thus in its absolute determination the emancipation and the labor of higher emancipation, namely the absolute point of passage to infinite subjective substantiality of morality, which is no longer immediate, natural but intellectual, equally raised to the form of universality. – This emancipation is the hard labor in the subject against the mere subjectivity of conduct, against the immediacy of the desires, as well as against the subjective

209 Ibid. pg 76.

210 Hegel, *WW* 7, *ibid.* pg 336.

vanity of sensation and the random caprice. That it is this hard labor, comprises part of the disfavor, which falls upon it. It is through this labor of education however, that the subjective will itself wins the objectivity, by which alone it for its part is solely worthy and capable of being the reality of the idea.”²¹¹ This glosses over the Greek school-wisdom *o mê dareis* [Greek: *o mê dareis anthropos ou paidentai*, “the person who does not get thrashed does not get educated”, a line from Menander], which Goethe, to whom it did not fit at all, did not disdain as the Hegelian-minded motto of his autobiography. However by trumpeting the truth over identity, which it would like to first introduce, the classicist maxim confesses its own untruth, that of the pedagogy of beatings in the most literal sense and in the metaphorical one that of the unimpeachable command, to stay in line. As immanently untrue it is of no use to the end, which is entrusted to it; psychology, trivialized by great philosophy, knows more about this than the latter. Brutality against human beings reproduces itself in them; those who are maltreated are not educated but blocked up, rebarbarized. The insight of psychoanalysis, that the civilized mechanisms of the repression transform the libido into anti-civilized aggression, is not to be extinguished. Those who are raised with violence canalize their own aggression, by identifying with violence, in order to carry it further and be released of it; thus are the subject and object really identified according to the ideal of education of Hegel’s philosophy of law. Culture, which is nothing of the sort, does not wish for its own part that those who end up in its mill be cultivated. Hegel appeals, in one of the most famous passages of the *Philosophy of Law*, to the line attributed to Pythagoras, that the best way to morally educate a son, would be to make him a citizen of a state of good laws.²¹² This demands a judgement, as to whether the state itself and its laws are in fact good. In Hegel however the social order is just that a priori, without having to take responsibility for those who live under it. His subsequent reminiscence of Aristoteles ironically bears out, that the “substantial unity is the absolute, motionless end in itself”;²¹³ motionless, it stands in the dialectic, which is supposed to produce it. The comment that in the state “freedom comes to its highest right”²¹⁴ is thereby devalued into empty assertion; Hegel degenerates into that washed-out sublimity,

211 Ibid. pg 268.

212 See *ibid.* pg 235.

213 Ibid. pg 329.

214 Ibid.

which he still detested in the *Phenomenology*. He repeats a topos of the thinking of antiquity, from the stage when the victorious, Platonic-Aristotelian mainstream of philosophy solidarized with the institutions against their ground in the social process; by and large humanity discovered society later than the state, which, mediated in itself, appeared as given and immediate to the dominated. Hegel's sentence, "Everything, which the human being is, it owes to the state",²¹⁵ the most striking exaggeration, smuggles the ancient confusion along with it. What impelled him to the thesis, is that it would be impossible to predicate that "motionlessness" which he ascribes to the general end, indeed of the institution which has once hardened, out of the essentially dynamic society. The dialectician strengthens the prerogative of the state, of being exempt from dialectics, because -- something over which he did not deceive himself -- this latter drives beyond bourgeois society.²¹⁶ He did not entrust to the dialectic the power to heal itself, and disavows his assurance of the dialectically self-producing identity.

ROLE OF THE POPULAR SPIRIT 331-333

That the metaphysics of the reconciliation of the general and particular failed in the construction of reality, as the philosophies of law and history, could not have remained hidden from Hegel's systematic need. He labored mightily for the sake of the mediation. His category of mediation, the popular spirit, reaches into empirical history. To the individual subjects it would be the concrete form of the generality, but the "determinate popular spirit" would be for its part "merely something individuated [ein Individuum] in the course of world-history",²¹⁷ an individuation of a higher degree, yet independent as such. Precisely the thesis of this independence of the popular spirits legalizes the violent domination over individual human beings in Hegel, similar to the collective norms in Durkheim and the soul of each culture in Spengler, later on. The more splendidly a generality is outfitted with the insignia of the collective subject, the more completely the subjects disappear therein without a trace. That category of mediation meanwhile, which by the way is not explicitly called the mediation, but only fulfills its function,

215 Hegel, *Reason in History*, *ibid.* pg 111.

216 See Oskar Negt, *Structural relationships between the social doctrines of Comte and Hegel* [Strukturbeziehungen zwischen den Gesellschaftslehren Komtes und Hegels], *Frankfurt Contributions to Sociology* [Frankfurter Beiträge zur Soziologie] Volume 14, Frankfurt am Main 1964, pg 49.

217 Hegel, *Reason in History*, *ibid.* pg 72.

remains behind Hegel's own concept of mediation. It does not prevail in the thing itself, certainly not immanently in its Other, but functions as a bridge-concept, a hypostasized average between the world-spirit and the individuals. Hegel interprets the transience of the popular spirits, analogous to that of the individuals, as the true life of the generality. In truth however the categories of the people and of the popular spirit are themselves transient, not just their specific manifestations. Even to the extent that today's newly appearing popular spirits are supposed to carry further the burning torches of the Hegelian world-spirit, they threaten to reproduce the life of the human species at a lower level. In view of the Kantian generality of his period, of visible humanity, Hegel's doctrine of the popular spirit was already reactionary, cultivated something already seen through as particular. Without hesitation he participates with the emphatic category of the popular spirit in the same nationalism, whose funestes [Latin: fatal, sinister] overtones he diagnosed in the young frat-house [burschenschaftlichen: traditional German fraternities] agitators. His concept of the nation, the bearer of the world-spirit in monotonous variation, reveals itself to be one of invariants, with which the dialectical work, paradoxically and yet in accordance with its one aspect, overflows. In the undialectical constants in Hegel, which punish the dialectic as a lie and yet without which no dialectics would be, there is so much truth, as history takes its course as monotony, as the bad infinity of guilt and atonement, which Hegel's star witness Heraclitus already cognized and ontologically exalted in archaic times. But the nation – the terminus as much as the thing – is of a recent date. After the fall of feudalism, a precariously centralized organizational form was supposed to restrain the diffuse natural associations for the protection of the bourgeois interest. It had to become a fetish, because it could not have otherwise integrated human beings, who economically needed that form of organization, just as much as it does them incessant violence. Where the unification of the nation, the precondition of a self-emancipated bourgeois society, failed, in Germany, its concept became overvalued and destructive. In order to seize the gentes [Latin: country], it mobilizes additional regressive recollections of the archaic tribe. As an evil ferment, they are suited to hold down the individuated, equally something late-developed and fragile, where its conflict with the universality is about to recoil into its rational critique: the irrationality of the ends of bourgeois society could

scarcely otherwise have been stabilized than with effectively irrational means. The specific German situation of the immediate post-Napoleonic era may have deceived Hegel about how anachronistic the doctrine of the popular spirit was compared with his own concept of the Spirit, out of whose progress the progressive sublimation, the emancipation from rudimentary natural-rootedness is not to be expelled. In him the doctrine of the popular spirit was already false consciousness; ideology, though provoked by the need of the administrative unity of Germany. Masked, coupled as the particularity with what is now existent, the popular spirits are proof against that reason, whose memory is nevertheless preserved in the universality of the Spirit. After the tract on eternal peace the Hegelian eulogy of war can no longer hide behind the naivete of insufficient historical experience. What he praised as substantial in the popular spirits, the mores, were even then already hopelessly depraved into those archaic customs, which were dug up in the epoch of the dictatorships, in order to officially propagate the disempowerment of the individuals by the historical trend. The mere fact that Hegel must speak of the popular spirits in the plural, already betrays the obsolescence of their alleged substantiality. It is negated, as soon as a plurality of popular spirits is spoken of, or an internationale of the nations is envisioned. After Fascism it resurfaced.

POPULAR SPIRIT OBSOLETE 333–335

Through its national particularization the Hegelian Spirit no longer includes the sort of material basis in itself, which it would like to claim all the same as the totality. In the concept of the popular spirit, an epiphenomenon, collective consciousness, a stage of social organization, is opposed to the real process of production and reproduction of the society as something essential. That the spirit of a people is to be realized, that it would be “made into an extant world”, says Hegel, “is felt by every people.”²¹⁸ Today hardly so, and where peoples are made to feel so, then for ill. The predicates of that “extent world”: “religion, cults, morals, customs, art, constitution, political laws, the entire extent of its institutions, its occurrences and acts”²¹⁹ have lost what counted for Hegel as their substantiality, along with their self-evident character. His injunction, that the individuals would have “to form themselves, to make themselves according

218 Ibid. pg 67.

219 Ibid.

to" the "substantial being" of their people,²²⁰ is despotic; it was already in his day incompatible with the meanwhile equally obsolete Shakespearian hypothesis, as it were, that the historical generality would realize itself through the sufferings and interests of the individuals, while it is merely drilled into them, as the healthy popular sentiment of those who are caught in its machinery. Hegel's thesis, that no one could "leap beyond the spirit of [their] people, any more than one could leap beyond the earth",²²¹ is in the epoch of telluric conflicts and the potential of a telluric arrangement of the world utterly provincial. In few other places does Hegel pay so dear a toll to history, as where he thinks history. Nevertheless he also thought to the point, where the popular spirits he hypostasized were for their part so relativized in the philosophy of history, that he might have considered it possible for the world-spirit to one day escape from the popular spirits, and clear a space for cosmopolitanism. "Every single new popular spirit is a new stage in the conquest of the world-spirit, towards the winning of its consciousness, its freedom. The death of a popular spirit is the transition into life, and indeed not as in nature, where the death of one calls a similar one into existence. Rather the world-spirit strides forwards from the humble determination to higher principles, concepts of itself, to more developed portrayals [Darstellungen] of its idea."²²² Accordingly the idea of a world-spirit to be "conquered", realized through the downfall of the self-realizing popular spirits and transcending them, would in any case be open. Only no progress of world-history by virtue of its transition from nation to nation is to be trusted anymore in a phase, in which the victor no longer ends up at that higher stage, which was probably only attested to it, because it was the victor. Thereby however the consolation of the downfall of peoples comes to resemble the cyclical theories down to Spengler. The philosophical decree concerning the germination [Werden] and extinction [Vergehen] of entire peoples or cultures drowns out the fact that what is irrational and incomprehensible in history became self-evident, because it was never any different; robbing the talk of progress of its content. In spite of the well-known definition of history, Hegel did not work out any sort of theory of progress. The Hegelian migration of the world-spirit from one popular spirit to another is the migration of peoples puffed up into

220 Ibid.

221 Ibid. pg 95.

222 Ibid. pg 73.

metaphysics; this latter indeed, something which sweeps over human beings, is the prototype of world history itself, whose Augustinian conception fell in the era of the migration of peoples. The unity of world history, which animates philosophy to trace it out as the path of the world-spirit, is the unity of what rolls over, of horror, the immediate antagonism. Concretely Hegel did not go beyond nations except in the name of their unforeseeably repeated annihilation. The *Ring* of the Schopenhauerian Wagner is more Hegelian than Wagner ever knew.

INDIVIDUALITY AND HISTORY 335–337

What Hegel hypertrophically assigned the popular spirits, as collective individualities, is extracted from individuality, from the human individual being. Complementarily, it is placed in Hegel at once both too high and too low. Too high as the ideology of the great men, in whose favor Hegel recites the master's joke of the servant and the hero. The more impenetrable and alienated the power of the generality, which ends up prevailing, the fiercer the need for consciousness to make it commensurable. That is where the geniuses come in, the military and political ones especially. They are part of the publicity of what is large than life-size, which is derived from precisely that success, which for its part is supposed to be explained out of individual qualities, which they for the most part lack. Projections of the powerless longing of all, they function as the imago of unleashed freedom, boundless productivity, as if these latter were always and everywhere to be realized. Such ideological excess contrasts in Hegel with a scarcity in the ideal; his philosophy has no interest, that individuality would actually be. Therein the doctrine of the world-spirit harmonizes with its own tendency. Hegel saw through the fiction of the historical being-for-itself of individuality just like that of each unmediated immediacy, and cast the individuated, by means of the ruse of reason, which dates back to the Kantian philosophy of history, as the agent of the generality, something which it had served as for centuries. Therein he thought of the relationship of the world-spirit and the individual along with their mediation as invariant, in keeping with a consistent thought-structure, which his conception of dialectics simultaneously skeletizes and revokes; he too was in thrall to his class, which must eternalize its dynamic categories to ward off the consciousness of the limits of its continued existence. What he followed was the image of the individuated in individualistic society. It is adequate, because the principle of the

exchange society realized itself only by means of the individuation of the specific contracting parties; because the principium individuationis [Latin: individuating principle] was thus literally its principle, its generality. It is inadequate, because in the total functional context, which requires the form of individuation, individuals are relegated to mere executive organs of the generality. The functions of the individuated, and thereby its own composition, change historically. In contrast to Hegel and his epoch, it has become irrelevant to a degree which could not have been anticipated: the appearance [Schein] of its being-for-itself has dissolved for everyone, just as much as the speculation of Hegel esoterically demolished it in advance. Exemplary for this is passion, the motor of individuality for Hegel as well as Balzac. To the powerless, for whom what is achievable and not achievable is always more narrowly prescribed, it becomes anachronistic. Already Hitler, who was tailored according to the classic bourgeois model of the great man, so to speak, parodied passion in hysterical fits of tears and carpet-chewing. Even in the private realm passion is becoming a rarity. The well-known transformations of the erotic modes of conduct of the young indicate the decomposition of the individuated, which no longer summons up the power for passion – ego-strength – nor requires it, because the social organization which integrates it, takes care to ensure that the open resistances are removed, which once set passion alight, and thereby relocates the controls into the individuated as one of adjustment at any price. Therein it has by no means lost all functions. Now as before the social process of production conserves the principium individuationis [Latin: individuating principle] in the regnant process of exchange, the private disposition, and thereby all the evil instincts of what is bottled up inside its own ego. The individuated outlives itself. Solely in its remainder, however, that which is historically condemned, is what does not sacrifice itself to false identity. Its function is that which is functionless; of the Spirit, which is not as one with the generality and for that reason powerlessly represents it. Only as that which is exempt from general praxis is the individuated capable of the thought, which transformative praxis requires. Hegel sensed the potential of the generality in the individualized: “The actors have in their activity finite ends, particular interests; but they are also knowers, thinkers.”²²³ The methexis of each individuated in the generality through thinking consciousness – and it becomes

the individuated only as that which thinks – already surpasses the contingency of the particular in contrast to the generality, on which the Hegelian contempt for what is individual just like the later collectivistic one is based. Through experience and consistency the individuated becomes capable of the truth of the generality, which this latter, as blind self-perpetuating power, conceals from itself and others. According to the prevailing consensus the generality is supposed, due to its mere form as universality, to be in the right. Itself a concept, it thereby becomes non-conceptual, hostile to reflection; the first condition of resistance is that the Spirit sees through this and names it, a modest beginning of praxis.

BANE 337–340

Now as before, human beings, individual subjects, stand under a bane. It is the subjective form of the world-spirit, whose primacy over the externalized life-process is reinforced internally. What they can do nothing about, and which negates them, is what they themselves become. They no longer need to acquire a taste for it as what is higher, which it in fact is in contrast to them, in the hierarchy of degrees of universality. On their own, a priori, as it were, they behave in accordance with what is inescapable. While the nominalistic principle simulates individualization to them, they act collectively. This much is true in the Hegelian insistence on the universality of the particular, that the particular in the inverted form of powerless individualization, sacrificed to the general, is dictated by the principle of the inverted universality. The Hegelian doctrine of the substantiality of the general in what is individual appropriates the subjective bane; what is presented here as metaphysically worthier, owes such an aura chiefly to its impenetrability, irrationality, the opposite of the Spirit, which according to metaphysics it is supposed to be. The fundament of unfreedom, which in the subjects is beyond even their psychology, which prolongs it, serves the antagonistic condition, which today threatens to annihilate the potential of subjects to change this last. Expressionism, spontaneous, collective forms of reaction, jerkily indicated something of that bane. In the meantime this latter became as ubiquitous as the deity, whose place it usurped. It is no longer felt, because scarcely anything and scarcely anyone would have escaped it far enough to realize the difference. Humanity continues to drag itself along as in Barlach's sculpture and Kafka's prose, an endless train of bowed figures chained to each other, who can no longer raise their heads under

the burden, of what is.²²⁴ The merely existent, the opposite of the world-spirit according to the high-flown doctrine of idealism, is its incarnation, coupled to the accident, the form of freedom under the bane.²²⁵ While it seems as if it is cast over all living beings, it is nonetheless probably not what Schopenhauer would take it for, simply and purely one with the principium individuationis [Latin: individuating principle] and its stubborn self-preservation. The conduct of animals differs from that of humans through something compulsory. It may have inherited it from the animal species called humanity, but becomes something qualitatively different in this latter. And indeed precisely by means of the capacity for reflection, by which the bane might be dispelled and which entered into the bane's service. By such an inversion of itself it reinforces this and makes this radically evil, devoid of the innocence of the merely being-so. In human experience, the bane is the equivalent of the fetish-character of the commodity. What is self-made becomes the In-itself, out of which the self can no longer escape; in the dominating faith in facts as such, in their positive acceptance, the subject worships its mirror-image. The reified consciousness has become total as the bane. That it is a false one, holds the promise of the possibility of its sublation: that it would not remain such, that false consciousness would inescapably move beyond itself, that it could not have the last word. The more the society is steered by the totality, which reproduces itself in the bane of subjects, the deeper too its tendency towards dissociation. This latter threatens the life of the species, as much as it denies the bane of the whole, the false identity of subject and object. The general, which compresses the particular as if by an instrument of torture, until it splinters, labors against itself, because it has its substance in the life of the particular; without it, it sinks down

into the abstract, separate and voidable form. Franz Neumann diagnosed this

224 See Benjamin, *Writings Volume 2*, Frankfurt am Main 1955, pg 197.

225 Hegel's doctrine of the identity of the accidental and the necessary (see text, pg. 350) retains its truth-content beyond his construction. Under the aspect of freedom, necessity remains heteronomous, however designated by the autonomous subject. The Kantian empirical world, which the subjective category of causality is supposed to underwrite, is precisely thereby outside of subjective autonomy: what is causally determined for the individual subject is at the same time absolutely accidental. Insofar as the fate of human beings proceeds in the realm of necessity, it is blind to them, "over their heads", contingent. Exactly the strict deterministic character of the economic laws of motion of society condemns its members, if their own determination were truly respected as a criterion, to the accidental. The law of value and the anarchy of commodity production are as one. Contingency is thus not only the form of the non-identical, ruined by causality; it also coincides itself with the identity-principle. For its part this latter hides, as the merely posited, as what is imposed on experience, which does not arise from what is non-identical, the accidental in its innermost core.

in the institutional sphere in *Behemoth*: the disassembly into disconnected and warring power-apparatuses is the secret of the total fascist state. Anthropology corresponds to this, the chemism of human beings. Unresistingly delivered over to the collective bad state of affairs, they lose identity. It is not entirely improbable that the bane is thereby tearing itself apart. What would like to provisionally gloss over the total structure of society under the name of pluralism, receives its truth from such self-announcing disintegration; simultaneously from horror and from a reality, in which the bane explodes. Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents* has a content which was scarcely available to him; it is not solely in the psyche of the socialized that the aggressive drives accumulate to the point of openly destructive pressure, but the total socialization objectively breeds its counter-force [Widerspiel], without to this day being able to say, whether it is the catastrophe or the emancipation. The philosophical systems drafted an unwitting schemata of this, which equally, with increasing unity, disqualified what is heterogenous to them, be it named sensation, the not-I or what have you, all the way to that chaos, whose name Kant used for the heterogenous. What some prefer to call angst and ennoble as an existential, is claustrophobia in the world: in the closed system. It perpetuates the bane as the coldness between human beings, without which the woe could not repeat itself. Whoever is not cold, who does not make themselves cold as per the vulgar figure of speech of the murderer who ices the victim, must feel themselves condemned. Along with angst and its grounds, the coldness, too, might pass away. Angst is the necessary form of the curse laid in the universal coldness over those, who suffer from it.

REGRESSION UNDER THE BANE 340–343

Whatever the domination of the identity-principle tolerates of the non-identical, is mediated for its part by the identity-compulsion, the stale remainder, after the identification has cut out its chunk. Under the bane, what is different and whose smallest admixture would indeed be incompatible with the former, is transformed into poison. As accidental, the un-identical remainder becomes on the other hand in turn so abstract, that it fits into the lawfulness of the identification. This is the sad truth of what Hegel expounded positively as the doctrine of the unity of accident and necessity. The substitution of traditional causality through statistical rules ought to confirm that convergence. What is fatally in common

however between necessity and accident, which Aristoteles already ascribed to the merely existent, is fate. It has its place in the circle, which the dominating thinking draws around itself, as much as in what falls out and, bereft of reason, acquires an irrationality which converges with the necessity posited by the subject. The process of domination spews out tatters of subjugated nature undigested. That the particular would not melt away philosophically into the universality, requires that it would also not seal itself off in the contrariness of the accident. What would help the reconciliation of the general and the particular would be the reflection of difference, not its extirpation. This latter is what Hegel's pathos signs itself over to, granting the sole reality to the world-spirit, echo of the laughter of hell in heaven. The mythical bane has secularized itself into what is real, seamlessly compartmentalized. The reality principle, which the clever follow, in order to survive, ensnares them like an evil magic; they are that much less capable and willing of shaking off the burden, which the magic hides from them: they consider it as life itself. Metapsychologically the talk of regression is on the mark. Everything which is nowadays called communication, without exception, is only the noise, which drowns out the silence of those under the bane. The individual human spontaneities, meanwhile to a large extent even the allegedly oppositional ones, are condemned to pseudo-activity, potentially to idiocy. The techniques of brainwashing and its related procedures practice from without an immanent-anthropological tendency, which indeed for its part is motivated from without. The natural-historical norm of adjustment, to which Hegel assented in the beer hall wisdom, that one has to sow one's wild oats, is, entirely like his own, the schemata of the world-spirit as bane. Perhaps the most recent biology projects its experience, taboo among human beings, onto animals, in order to exonerate the human beings who torture them; the ontology of animals imitates the age-old and constantly newly-acquired animality [Vertietheit] of human beings. The world-spirit is to this extent too its own contradiction, contrary to what Hegel wished. The animalized self-preserving reason drives out the Spirit of the species, which worships the latter. That is why the Hegelian metaphysics of the Spirit is already so close, at all of its stages, to hostility to the Spirit. Just as the mythical power of what is natural reproduces itself on an expanded scale in the unconscious society, so too are the categories of consciousness, which it produces, all the way to the most

enlightened, under the bane and turn into delusion. Society and the individuated harmonize therein as nowhere else. With society, ideology has advanced to the point that it no longer develops into socially necessary appearance [Schein] and thereby to independence, however fragile, but only into an adhesive: false identity of subject and object. The individuals, the old substrate of psychology, are themselves by virtue of the principle of individuation, by the monotonous restriction of every individual to particular interests, also equal to each other and accordingly appeal to the dominating abstract universality, as if it were their own affair [Sache]. This is their formal a priori. Conversely the generality, to which they bow, without even feeling it, is tailored to them in such a manner, appeals so little to that which would not be the same as this in them, that they bind themselves freely and easily and joyfully [reference to a line in Schiller]. Contemporary ideology is no less a holding-tank to receive the psychology of the individuals, in every case already mediated by the generality, just as it unceasingly produces the generality in the individuals anew. Bane and ideology are the same. What is fatal about the latter is that it dates back to biology. The Spinozist *sese conservare* [Latin: to preserve oneself], self-preservation, is truly the law of nature of everything living. The tautology of identity is its content: what should be, is what already is anyway, the will turns back onto the willing, as the mere means of itself it turns into an end. This turn is already that of false consciousness; if the lion had one, then its rage at the antelope, which it wants to devour, would be ideology. The concept of the end, which is exalted into reason for the sake of consistent self-preservation, would have to emancipate itself from the idol of the mirror. The end would be, what is different from the subject as the means. This however is obscured by self-preservation; it fixes the means as ends, which do not legitimate themselves before any sort of reason. The greater the increase of the productive forces, the more the perpetuation of life as an end in itself loses its self-evident character. Enslaved by nature, it becomes dubious in itself, while the potential of something other matures in it. Life prepares itself to become its means, as indeterminate and unknown as this other would be. Its heteronomous arrangement however always again inhibits it. Because self-preservation through the eons was always difficult and precarious, the ego-drives, its instrument, have an almost irresistible power, even after self-preservation became virtually easy through technics; greater even

than the object-drives, whose specialist, Freud, mistook it for. The exertion which is superfluous according to the state of the productive forces becomes objectively irrational, hence the bane into really dominating metaphysics. The current stage of the fetishization of means as ends in technology indicates the victory of that tendency all the way to open absurdity: formerly rational, yet obsolete modes of conduct are conjured up by the logic of history unchanged. It is logical no longer.

SUBJECT AND THE INDIVIDUATED [INDIVIDUUM] 343–344

Hegel formulated idealistically: “Subjectivity is itself the absolute form and the existing reality of substance, and the subject’s difference from it as its object, end and power is only the vanished difference of the form, which is at the same time just as immediate.”²²⁶ Subjectivity, which indeed even in Hegel is the general and the total identity, is deified. Thereby however the opposite is achieved as well, the insight into the subject as a self-manifesting objectivity. The construction of the subject-object has an abyssal double character. It not only ideologically falsifies the object in the free act of the absolute subject, but cognizes also in the subject that which represents itself as objective and thereby restricts the subject anti-ideologically. Subjectivity as the existent reality of the substance does indeed lay claim to preeminence, but would be as an “existing”, realized [entäussertes] subject just as much objectivity as appearance. This however would also affect the relationship of subjectivity to concrete individuals. If objectivity is immanent to them and at work in them; if it truly appears in them, then the sort of individuality which is related to the essence is far more substantial, than where it is merely subordinated to the essence. Hegel falls silent before such consistency. He who attempted to liquidate Kant’s abstract concept of form, drags along nevertheless the Kantian and Fichtean dichotomy of the – transcendental – subject and – empirical – individuated. The lack of concrete determinacy of the concept of subjectivity is exploited to the advantage of the higher objectivity of a subject purified of contingency; this facilitates the identification of the subject and object at the expense of the particular. Therein Hegel follows the usage of the entirety of idealism, at the same time however he undermines his assertion of the identity of freedom and necessity. By means of its hypostasis as Spirit, the substrate of freedom, the subject, is dissociated so far

226 Hegel, *WW* 7, ibid. pg 234.

from living existing human beings, that the freedom in necessity does not at all bear fruit for them. Hegel's language brings this to light: "In that the state, the fatherland, comprises a community of existence, in that the subjective will of human beings submits to the law, the opposition between freedom and necessity disappears."²²⁷ Not even the most artful interpretation could argue the fact away that the word submission means the opposite of freedom. Its alleged synthesis with necessity bows to the latter and refutes itself.

DIALECTICS AND PSYCHOLOGY 344-347

Hegel's philosophy outlines the perspective of the loss involved in the rise of individuality in the nineteenth century until well into the twentieth: that of committalness [Verbindlichkeit], that power towards the generality, in which individuality would first come to itself. The meanwhile evident decay of individuality is coupled to such a loss; the individuated, which develops and differentiates itself, by separating itself from the generality more and more emphatically, threatens thereby to regress to the contingency, which Hegel reckoned against it. Only the restorative Hegel had himself neglected logic and coercion in the progress of individuation, for the benefit of an ideal modeled on Greek maxims, as if foreshadowing the most dire German reaction of the twentieth century, just as much as the forces which first come to maturity in the disassembly of individuality.²²⁸ Even therein he does an injustice to his own dialectic. That the generality is not anything merely thrown over individuality but would be its innervated substance, is not to be reduced to the platitude of the encompassing nature of valid human morality, but would need to be traced to the center of the individual mode of conduct, especially in the character; in that psychology, which Hegel, as one with popular bias, accuses of a contingency which Freud meanwhile refuted. Certainly the Hegelian anti-psychologism achieves the cognition of the empirical precedence of the social generality, which Durkheim later expressed sturdily and untouched by any dialectical reflection.²²⁹ Psychology, seemingly opposed to the general,

227 Hegel, *Reason in History*, *ibid.* pg 115.

228 See Theodor W. Adorno, *In Search of Wagner* [Versuch über Wagner], Berlin and Frankfurt am Main 1952, pg 195.

229 See Emile Durkheim, *The rules of the sociological method* [Les règles de la méthode sociologique], 13th Edition Paris 1956, pg 100; also see Adorno, *Notes on objectivity in the social sciences* [Notiz über sozialwissenschaftliche Objektivität], in: *Cologne Periodical for Sociology and Social Psychology* [Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie], 17th Year 1965, Vol. 3, pg 416.

yields under pressure, all the way to the cells of innervation, to the general, and to this extent is a real constitutum [Latin: what is constituted].²³⁰ However the positivistic objectivism, like the dialectical one, is as short-sighted against psychology as superior to it. Because the dominating objectivity is objectively inadequate to individuals, it realizes itself solely through the individuals, psychologically. Freudian psychoanalysis does not so much weave the appearance [Schein] of individuality, as thoroughly destroy it as much as the philosophical and social concept. If the individuated shrinks according to the doctrine of the unconscious down into a scanty number of repetitive constants and conflicts, the former disinterests itself indeed with contempt for humanity in the concretely developed ego, but is reminded by it of the frailness of its determinations in contrast to those of the id and thereby of its thin and ephemeral essence. The theory of the ego as a summation of defense mechanisms and rationalizations is aimed against the same hubris of the self-mastering individuated, against the individuated as ideology, demolished by more radical theories of the primacy of the objective. Whosoever paints the right condition, in order to answer the objection, that they would not know what they want, cannot disregard that primacy, even over themselves. Even if their imagination were capable of representing everything as radically different, then it would still remain chained to them and their contemporary moment as static points of reference, and everything would go wrong. Even the most critical person would in a state of freedom be totally different, just like those they wish to change. Probably every citizen of the wrong world would find the right one intolerable, they would be too damaged for it. This ought to impart a measure of tolerance to the consciousness of intellectuals who do not sympathize with the world-spirit, amidst their resistance. Whoever will not allow themselves to be deflected from difference and critique is nonetheless not entitled to put themselves in the right. Such a moment of indulgence would of course be denounced as decadent throughout the whole world, under whatever sort of political system. The aporia extends even to the teleological concept of a happiness of humanity, which would be that of individuals; the fixation of one's own needs and one's own longing disfigures the idea of a happiness, which would only arise, when the category of the individual no longer sealed itself off

230 See Durkheim, *The rules of the sociological method*, ibid. pg 104.

from itself. Happiness is no invariant, solely unhappiness is what has its essence in monotony. Whatever happiness the existent totality intermittently permits or grants, bears the marks in advance of its own particularity.²³¹ All happiness to this day promises what never yet was, and the belief in its immediacy gets in the way of its coming to be. This lends the passages of the Hegelian philosophy of history which are hostile to happiness more truth, than was intended in their time and place: "...one names those as happy, who find themselves in harmony with themselves. One can also have happiness as a point of view in the consideration of history; but history is not the soil for happiness. The times of happiness are empty pages in them. Very likely there is in world-history also satisfaction; but this is not what is called happiness: for it is the satisfaction of such ends, which stand over particular interests. Ends, which have significance in world-history, must be held fast by means of abstract willing, with energy. The world-historical individuals, who have pursued such ends, have indeed satisfied themselves, but they have not wished to be happy."²³² Certainly not, but its renunciation, to which even Zarathustra confesses, expresses the insufficiency of individual happiness in contrast to utopia. Only the resurrection of the particularity as the general principle would be happiness, irreconcilable with individual human happiness here and now. What is repressive in the Hegelian position towards happiness is however not, after his own manner, to be treated from a presumably higher standpoint as a *quantité négligeable* [French: negligible quantity]. As insistently as he corrects his own historical optimism through the sentence, history would not be the soil for happiness, so much does he transgress against it, by attempting to establish that sentence as the idea beyond happiness. Nowhere is the latent aestheticism of someone, to whom reality cannot be real enough, so striking as here.²³³ If the times of happiness are supposed to be the empty pages of history – by the way a dubious assertion in view of somewhat happier periods of humanity, such as those of the European nineteenth century, which nevertheless did not lack for historical dynamics – then the metaphor signifies, as if in a book in which the great deeds would be recorded, an unreflective concept of world history, borrowed from

231 See Herbert Marcuse, *Towards a critique of hedonism* [Zur Kritik des Hedonismus], in: *Magazine for Social Research* [Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung], Annual VII 1938, Paris 1939, pg 55.

232 Hegel, *Reason in History*, *ibid.* pg 92.

233 See Adorno, *Three Studies on Hegel*, Frankfurt 1963, pg 154.

conventional education, as what is grandiose. One who as an observer is intoxicated on battles, the toppling of regimes and catastrophes, is silent as to whether the emancipation, which they advocate in bourgeois fashion, ought to emancipate itself from precisely that category. Marx had this in mind: he designated the sphere of greatness which is set up as an object of consideration, that of politics, as ideology and as transient. The position of thought towards happiness would be the negation of each and every false one. It postulates, in stark contrast to the prevailing intuition, the idea of the objectivity of happiness, as it was negatively conceived in Kierkegaard's doctrine of objective despair.

"NATURAL HISTORY" 347–351

The objectivity of historical life is that of natural history. Marx recognized that against Hegel, and indeed strictly in the context of the generality which realizes itself over the heads of subjects: "Even though society is becoming aware of the natural law of its motion – and it is the ultimate end-goal of this work, to reveal the economic law of motion of modern society – it can neither leap over naturally-proceeding [naturgemässe] developmental phases nor decree them away... I by no means show the form of capitalist and landlord in a rosy light. But it is a question here of persons only insofar as they are the personification of economic categories, carriers of determinate class-relationships and interests. My standpoint, which treats the development of the economic social formation as a natural-historical process, can less than any other make individuals responsible for relationships, whose creature they socially remain, however much they may subjectively rise above them."²³⁴ What is meant is certainly not the anthropological concept of nature of Feuerbach, against which Marx aimed dialectical materialism, in the sense of a reprise of Hegel against the Left Hegelians.²³⁵ The so-called law of nature, which nevertheless would only be one of capitalist society, is therefore termed mystification by Marx: "The law of capitalist accumulation, mystified into a law of nature, expresses therefore in fact only that its nature excludes every such decrease in the degree of exploitation of labor or every such increase of the price of labor, which could seriously endanger the continual reproduction of the relationships of capital and its reproduction on a constantly expanded level. It

234 Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, *ibid.*, Preface to the first Edition, pg 7.

235 See Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in the Doctrine of Marx*, in: *Frankfurt Contributions to Sociology, Volume 11*, Frankfurt 1962, pg 15.

cannot be otherwise in a mode of production, wherein the laborer is there for the necessity of valorization of extant values, instead conversely of the objective wealth for the developmental needs of the laborer.”²³⁶ That law is nature-like due to the character of its inescapability under the dominating relationships of production. Ideology does not eclipse social being like a detachable layer, but is inherent in the latter. It is grounded in the abstraction, which counts as essential for the process of exchange. There would no be no exchange without disregarding living human beings. This implies the necessarily social appearance [Schein] in the real process of life to this day. Its core is value as a thing in itself, as “nature”. The natural-rootedness of capitalist society is real and at the same time that appearance [Schein]. That the assumption of natural laws is not to be taken à la lettre [French: literally], least of all to be ontologized in the sense of a however stylized draft of so-called humanity, is confirmed by the strongest motive of Marxist theory of all, that of the potential abolition of those laws. Where the realm of freedom had begun, they would no longer apply. The Kantian distinction of a realm of freedom from one of necessity is transposed, by means of the mobilization of the Hegelian mediating philosophy of history, onto the sequence of phases. Only such an inversion of the Marxist motives as that of Diamat [Eastern bloc state-approved “dialectical materialism”], which prolongs the realm of necessity with the assertion that it would be that of freedom, could degenerate into falsifying the polemical Marxist concept of natural lawfulness from a construction of natural history into a scientific doctrine of invariants. In the meantime the Marxist talk of natural history loses nothing of its truth-content, namely that of its critical one. Hegel still made do with a personified transcendental subject, which indeed already fell short of the subject. Marx denounces not only the Hegelian transfiguration, but the matter-at-hand which it experienced. Human history, progressive natural domination, continues the unconscious one of nature, of devouring and being devoured. Marx was ironically a social Darwinist: what the Social Darwinists praised and wished to act according to, is for him the negativity, in which the possibility of its sublation awakens. A passage from the *Outline of Political Economy* leaves no doubt as to the critical essence of his insight into natural history: “Now as much as the whole of this movement appears as a social process, and as much

236 Marx, *Capital Volume 1*, *ibid.* pg 652.

as the individual moments of this movement proceed from the conscious will and particular ends of individuals, so much does the totality of the process appear as an objective context, which originates naturally [naturwüchsig]; indeed proceeds out of the reciprocal effect of conscious individuals, but neither lies in their consciousness, nor is subsumed under them as a whole."²³⁷ Such a social concept of nature has its own dialectic. The natural lawfulness of society is ideology, to the extent it is hypostasized as an immutable given fact of nature. Natural lawfulness is real however as a law of motion of unconscious society, as it is pursued in *Capital* from the analysis of the commodity form down to the theory of economic crisis in a phenomenology of the anti-Spirit. The changes in each constitutive economic form took place like those of animal species, which arise and go extinct over millions of years. The "theological quirks [Mucken] of the commodity" in the fetishism chapter scorn the false consciousness, which the social relationship of exchange value reflects in itself as the characteristic of things in themselves to the contracting parties. But they are also as true, as formerly the praxis of bloody idolatry was in fact practiced. For the constitutive forms of socialization, of which that mystification is one, maintain their unconditional supremacy over human beings, as if they were divine providence. The sentence about the theories which would become a real force if they seized the masses, is already applicable to all the structures, which precede the false consciousness of all, which assure the social hegemony of its irrational nimbus, of the character of the continuing taboos, of the archaic bane, to this day. Something of this flashed in Hegel: "Above all however it is simply essential, that the constitution, although produced in time, is not seen as something artificially made; for it is rather the simply existent in and for itself, which for that reason is to be considered as the divine and enduring, and as beyond the sphere of that which is made."²³⁸ Hegel thereby extends the concept of what would be the *physei* [Greek: by nature], onto that which formerly defined the counter-concept of the *thesei* [Greek: thesis]. The "constitution", the name of the historical world, which mediates all immediacy of nature, determines conversely the sphere of mediation, precisely the historical one, as nature. The Hegelian phrase is based on Montesquieu's polemic against the old-fashioned theories of the time, alien to history, of the social contract: the state-juridical institutions

237 Karl Marx, *Outline of a Critique of Political Economy*, ibid. pg 111.

238 Hegel, *WW* 7, ibid. 375.

were not created by any conscious act of will of the subjects. The Spirit as second nature however is the negation of the Spirit, and indeed all the more thoroughly, the more its self-consciousness deceives itself about its natural-rootedness. This fulfills itself in Hegel. His world-spirit is the ideology of natural history. He names it the world-spirit by virtue of its power. Domination becomes absolute, projected onto being itself, which would there be the Spirit. History however, the explication of something, which it is always supposed to have been, acquires the quality of what is devoid of history. In the midst of history Hegel takes the side of what is unchanging, of monotony, of the identity of the process, whose totality would be healthy. He is thus to be charged unmetaphorically with historical mythology. He garbs the asphyxiating mythos with the words Spirit and reconciliation: "What by nature is accidental, is what experiences the accidental, and just this fate is thus the necessity, just as the concept and the philosophy cause the point of view of the mere contingency to disappear and cognizes in it, as the appearance [Schein], its essence, necessity. It is necessary that what is finite, the possession and life be posited as accidental, because this is the concept of the finite. This necessity has on the one hand the form of a force of nature and everything finite is mortal and transient."²³⁹ Nothing else has been taught to humanity by the Western myths of nature. Hegel cites nature and the force of nature as models of history, according to an automatism, which the philosophy of the Spirit can do nothing about. They assert themselves however in philosophy, because the identity-positing Spirit, by denying the bane of blind nature, is identical with the latter. Gazing into the abyss, Hegel became aware of the world-historical main event and affair of the state as second nature, but glorified therein the first, in ghastly complicity with it. "The soil of law is above all that which is of the Spirit, and its closer location and point of departure is the will, which is free, so that freedom comprises its substance and determination, and the system of law is the realm of realized freedom, which the world of the Spirit produced out of itself, as a second nature."²⁴⁰ Second nature, first philosophically taken up once again in Lukács' theory of the novel,²⁴¹ remains however the negative of that which could somehow be thought of as the first. What is truly *thesei* [Greek: thesis], something which, if it is not produced by

239 Ibid. pg 434.

240 Ibid. pg 50.

241 See Georg Lukács, *Theory of the Novel* [Die Theorie des Romans], Berlin 1920, pg 54.

individuals, then surely by their functional context, usurps the insignia of what counts to bourgeois consciousness as nature and natural. To that consciousness, nothing which would be outside appears any more; in a certain sense there is in fact nothing more outside, nothing unaffected by the total mediation. That is why what is ensnared therein turns into its own otherness: the Ur-phenomenon of idealism. The more relentlessly socialization masters all moments of human and interhuman immediacy, the more impossible it is to recall the historically-become being of the web; the more irresistible the appearance [Schein] of nature. The distancing of the history of humanity from the latter reinforces it: nature turns into an irresistible allegory of imprisonment. The young Marx expressed the unceasingly interpenetration of both moments with a power of extremity, which must irritate the dogmatic materialists: "We know only one science, the science of history. History can be considered from two sides, divided into the history of nature and the history of humanity. Both sides are meanwhile not to be separated; so long as human beings exist, the history of nature and the history of human beings condition each other reciprocally."²⁴² The traditional antithesis of nature and history is true and false; true, insofar as it expresses what the moment of nature experienced; false, insofar as it apologetically repeats, by virtue of its conceptual post-construction, the concealment of the natural-rootedness of history by this latter itself.

HISTORY AND METAPHYSICS 351–353

The separation of nature and history unreflectively expresses at the same time that division of labor, which the inescapable one of scientific methods heedlessly projects onto the objects. The unhistorical concept of history, which the falsely resurrected metaphysics harbors in what it calls historicity, would demonstrate the understanding of ontological thinking with the naturalistic one, which the former so eagerly delimits itself from. If history turns into the ontological basic structure of the existent, or indeed into the *qualitas occulta* [Latin: secret quality] of being itself, then it is mutability as immutability, copied from inexorable natural religion. This then permits the transposition of what is historically determined at will into invariance and philosophically cloaks the vulgar insight which in modern

242 Marx, *The German Ideology* [Deutsche Ideologie], in: MEGA [Marx-Engels Collected Works], Part 1, Vol. 5, Berlin 1932, pg 567.

times presents historical relationships, formerly God-given, as natural ones: one of the temptations of the essentialization of the existent. The ontological claim, to be beyond the divergence of nature and history, is smuggled back in. Historicity, abstracted from the historically existent, glides past the pain of the antithesis of nature and history, which for its part is just as little to be ontologized. There too modern ontology is crypto-idealistic, constraining what is unidentical over and over again to identity, removing whatever strives against the concept by means of the supposition of the concept of historicity as one which bears history in its place. Ontology is motivated to the ideological procedure however, the reconciliation in the Spirit, because the real one failed. Historical contingency and the concept of history contradict one another all the more mercilessly, the more seamlessly they are interwoven. The accident is the historical fate of the individual, meaningless, because the historical process itself remained what usurped meaning. No less deceptive is the question of nature as an absolute first, as simply and purely immediate in contrast to its mediations. It sets up what it hunts after, in the hierarchical form of the analytic judgement, whose premises command everything which follows, and thereby repeats the delusion, which it would like to escape. The distinction between *thesei* [Greek: thesis] and *physei* [Greek: by nature], once posited, can be evaporated by the reflection, not sublated. Unreflected, to be sure, that dual division would render the essential historical process harmless as a mere addition and would even help, for its part, to enthrone what has not become as essence. Instead, it would be up to thought to see all nature, and whatever installs itself as such, as history and all history as nature, “to comprehend the historical being in its uttermost historical determinacy, there, where it is most historical, as itself a nature-like being, or to comprehend nature, there, where it is apparently most profoundly rooted as nature, as a historical being.”²⁴³ The moment however, in which history and nature become commensurable, is that of transience; Benjamin centrally cognized this in the *Origin of the German Tragedy-Play*. Nature hovers before the Baroque poets, runs the text, “as eternal transience, in which the Saturnine glance of that generation alone recognized history.”²⁴⁴ Not only of theirs; natural history was ever in the canon of the interpretation of the philosophy of

243 Adorno, *The Idea of Natural History* [Die Idee der Naturgeschichte], Lecture at Frankfurt club of the Kant Society, July 1932.

244 Benjamin, *Origin of the German Tragedy-play*, Frankfurt 1963, pg 199.

history: "When history made its entrance onto the stage in the tragedy-play, it did so as script. On the countenance of Nature stood 'History' as the signifying text of transience. The allegorical physiognomy of Natural History, which was introduced to the stage through the tragedy-play, is truly present as ruin."²⁴⁵ This is the transmutation of metaphysics into history. It secularizes metaphysics into the secular category pure and simple, that of decay. Philosophy points to that signifying text, the always new Menetekel, in that which is smallest, the fragments struck loose by decay and which bear objective meanings. No meditation on transcendence is possible any more except by virtue of transience; eternity appears not as such but as shot through with what is most transient. Where Hegelian metaphysics equates, by transfiguring it, the life of the absolute with the totality of the transience of everything finite, it gazes at the same time just the slightest bit beyond the mythical bane, which it captures and reinforces.

245 Ibid. pg 197.

III. MODELS. MEDITATIONS ON METAPHYSICS

1. AFTER AUSCHWITZ 354–358

It can no longer be asserted that the immutable would be the truth and what moves, the transient, would be appearance [Schein], the indifference of what is temporal and eternal ideas towards each other is no longer to be maintained, not even with the daring Hegelian explanation that temporal existence would serve the eternal, by means of the annihilation inherent in its concept, which would portray itself in the eternity of annihilation. One of the mystical impulses secularized in dialectics, was the doctrine of the relevance of the innerworldly, the historical, to what traditional metaphysics delineated as transcendence, or at least, less gnostically and radically, for the position of consciousness to the questions which the canon of philosophy assigned to metaphysics. The feeling which after Auschwitz resists every assertion of positivity of existence as sanctimonious prattle, as injustice to the victims; which is reluctant to squeeze any meaning, be it ever so washed-out, out of their fate, has its objective moment after events which condemn the construction of a meaning of immanence, which radiates from an affirmatively posited transcendence, to a mockery. Such a construction would affirm the absolute negativity and ideologically aid its continued existence, which really lies in any case in the principle of the existent society down to its self-destruction. The earthquake of Lisbon sufficed to cure Voltaire of the Leibnizean theodicy, and the visible catastrophe of the first nature was insignificant, compared with the second, social one, which defies the human imagination by preparing a real hell out of human evil. The capacity for metaphysics is crippled, because what occurred, smashed the basis of the compatibility of speculative metaphysical thought with experience. The dialectical motif of the recoil of quantity into quality triumphs once more, unspeakably. With the murder of millions through administration, death has become something which has never yet been so feared. No possibility anymore, that it could enter into the experienced lives of individuals as something somehow concordant with its course. The individuated is expropriated of the final and most impoverished thing which remained to it. That the individual [Individuum] no longer died in the concentration camps, but rather the exemplar, has to affect the dying of those who escaped the administrative measures. Genocide is the absolute integration, which is everywhere being prepared, where human beings are made

the same, polished, as the military calls it, until they are literally cancelled out, as deviations from the concept of their complete nullity. Auschwitz confirms the philosopheme of pure identity as death. The most provocative dictum from Beckett's *Endgame*: that there would no longer be anything to really be afraid of, reacts to a praxis, which delivered its first test case in the camps and in whose once honorable concept already lurks teleologically the annihilation of the non-identical. Absolute negativity is in plain view, is no longer surprising. Fear was bound to the principium individuationis [Latin: principle of individuation] of self-preservation, which abolishes itself out of its own consistency. What the sadists in the camps told their victims: tomorrow you will be smoke rising from these chimneys into the sky, names the indifference of the life of every individual, which history is moving towards: already in their formal freedom they are as fungible and replaceable as under the boots of the liquidators. Because however the individual, in the world whose law is the universal individual advantage, has nothing else except this self, which has become historically indifferent, the carrying out of the tried-and-true tendency is at the same time what is most horrifying; nothing leads beyond this any more than beyond the electrified barbed wire fences around the camps. Perennial suffering has as much right to express itself as the martyr has to scream; this is why it may have been wrong to say that poetry could not be written after Auschwitz. What is not wrong however is the less cultural question of whether it is even permissible for someone who accidentally escaped and by all rights ought to have been murdered, to go on living after Auschwitz. Their continued existence already necessitates the coldness, of the basic principle of capitalist subjectivity, without which Auschwitz would not have been possible: the drastic guilt of the spared. As if to make up for this they are secretly haunted by dreams in which they no longer live, but were gassed in 1944, as if their entire existence after that was purely imaginary, emanation of the vagrant wish of someone who was killed twenty years ago.

Reflective people, and artists, not seldom have the feeling of not quite being there, of not playing along; as if they were not at all themselves, but a sort of spectator. In many cases others find this repugnant; Kierkegaard based his polemic against what he called the aesthetic sphere on this. What in the meantime the critique of philosophical personalism speaks to, is that this position towards the

immediate, which disavows all existential attitudes, arrives at its objective truth in a moment which leads beyond the delusion of the self-preserving motive. In the “it isn’t all that important”, which for its part indeed is happy to ally itself with bourgeois coldness, the individual [Individuum] can soonest of all, yet without fear, become conscious of the nullity of existence. That which is inhuman in this, the capacity to distance oneself and rise above things by being a spectator, is in the end precisely what is human, whose ideologues react so vehemently against. It is not entirely implausible, that that part, which conducts itself so, would be the immortal one. The scene in which Shaw on the way to the theater showed his identification to a beggar and hurriedly said “press”, hides under the cynicism something of the consciousness of this. It would help to explain the matter-at-hand, which astonished Schopenhauer: that the emotions in sight of the death not only of others but also our own, are many times over so weak. Very likely human beings are without exception under a bane, none capable of love, and for that reason each and every one feels not loved enough. But the attitude of being a spectator expresses at the same time the doubt as to whether this could be all there is, while nonetheless the subject, so relevant in its delusion, has nothing other than that poverty and ephemerality, which is animalistic in its impulses. Under the bane living beings have the alternative between involuntary ataraxy – an aesthetic of weakness – and the animality of the involved. Both are false life. Something of each however belongs to a right *désinvolture* [off-handedness] and sympathy. The guilty pressure of self-preservation has withstood, perhaps even strengthened itself on the unceasing contemporary threat. Only self-preservation must suspect, that the life in which it fortifies itself, is becoming what it shudders at, into a ghost, a piece of the world of spirits, which the waking consciousness sees through as not existent. The guilt of life, which as pure factum already robs another life of breath, according to a statistics, which complements an overwhelming number of murdered with a minimal number of rescued, as if this were foreshadowed in the calculation of probability, is no longer to be reconciled with life. That guilt reproduces itself unceasingly, because it cannot be completely present to the consciousness at any moment. This, nothing else, compels one to philosophy. This latter experiences therein the shock, that the deeper, the more powerfully it penetrates, the greater the suspicion that it would be distancing

itself from how things are; that the most superficial and trivial intuitions would like, were the essence once revealed, to be in the right against those which aim at the essence. Therein a harsh ray of light falls on truth itself. Speculation feels a certain duty to concede the position of the corrective to its opponent, "common sense" [in English]. Life feeds the horror of the apprehension, that what must be cognized would resemble what is found to be "down to earth" [in English], rather than what raises itself up; it could be, that this apprehension is confirmed even beyond the pedestrian, while nonetheless the thought has its happiness, the promise of its truth, solely in the elevation. If the pedestrian had the last word, if it were the truth, then truth would be debased. The trivial consciousness, as it is theoretically expressed in positivism and unreflective nominalism, may be nearer to the *adaequatio rei atque cogitationis* [Latin: making the thing equal with what is thought] than the sublime one, truer in its grotesque mockery of the truth than the august one, unless a concept of truth different from that of the *adaequatio* is supposed to succeed. The innervation, that metaphysics would like to win solely by throwing itself away, applies to such a different truth. It is not the least of the motivations of the transition to materialism. The tendency to do this can be followed from the Hegelian Marx down to the Benjaminic rescue of the induction; the work of Kafka might form its apotheosis. If negative dialectics demands the self-reflection of thinking, then this implies in tangible terms, that thinking must, nowadays at any rate, in order to be true, also think against itself. If it does not measure itself by the extremity, which flees from the concept, then it is cast in advance in the same mold as the musical accompaniment, with which the SS was wont to drown out the cries of their victims.

2. METAPHYSICS AND CULTURE 358–361

Hitler has imposed a new categorical imperative upon humanity in the state of their unfreedom: to arrange their thinking and conduct, so that Auschwitz never repeats itself, so that nothing similar ever happen again. This imperative is as unmanageable vis-à-vis its foundation as the given fact formerly was to the Kantian one. To treat it discursively would be heinous: in it the moment of the supplementary in what is moral can be bodily felt. Bodily, because it is the abhorrence, become practical, of the unbearable physical pain inflicted on individuals, even after individuality, as an intellectual form of reflection, is on the

point of disappearing. Only in the unvarnished materialistic motive does morality survive. The course of history compels metaphysics, which was traditionally the unmediated opposite of materialism, towards this last. What the Spirit once boasted of determining or construing as similar to its own, moves towards what the Spirit is not the same as; what escapes its domination and what nevertheless reveals the former as absolute evil. The somatic layer of living beings, distant from meaning, is the staging-grounds of suffering, which burned everything assuaging of the Spirit and its objectification, culture, without consolation in the camps. The process by which metaphysics is irresistibly borne to what it was once conceived against, has reached its vanishing-point. Philosophy since the young Hegel, to the extent it did not sell out to the approved way of thinking, has not been able to repress how very much it has slipped into the questions of material existence. Something of this is apprehended in the childhood fascination, which emanates from the zone of the knacker, of carrion, from the repulsively sweet smell of putrefaction, from the notorious expressions for that zone. The power of that realm in the unconscious may be no less than that of the infantile sexual one; both intermingle in the anal fixation, but are scarcely the same. Unconscious knowledge whispers to the child, that what is repressed by civilized education over there, is what it is all about: the impoverished physical existence sparks the greatest interest, which is scarcely less repressed, into the What is that and Where does it go. Whoever could manage to recollect what once occurred to them in the words Luderbach [proper name, meaning roughly "Baitwater"] and Schweinstiege [proper name, meaning roughly "Pigsteps"] would probably be closer to absolute knowledge than the Hegelian chapter which promises it to the reader, in order to haughtily withhold it. The integration of physical death in culture would need to be theoretically repealed, yet not for the sake of the ontological pure essence of death, but for the sake of what the stench of the cadaver expresses and what its transfiguration into the burial corpse covers over. A hotel owner, called Adam, in view of a child who was fond of him, struck the rats pouring from the holes in the courtyard dead with a club; the child created in his image that of the first human being. That this is forgotten; that one no longer understands, what one sensed once before the dog-catcher's wagon, is the triumph of culture and its failure. It cannot tolerate the memory of that zone, because it does the same as the old Adam, and exactly

this is incompatible with its concept of itself. It perhorresces a stench, because it stinks; because its palace, as a magnificent line from Brecht put it, is built of dogshit. Years after that line was written, Auschwitz irrefutably demonstrated the failure of culture. That it could happen in the midst of all the traditions of philosophy, art and the enlightening sciences, says more than merely that these, the Spirit, was not capable of seizing and changing human beings. In those branches themselves, in the emphatic claim of their autarky, dwells untruth. All culture after Auschwitz, including its urgent critique, is garbage. By restoring itself after what transpired in its landscape without resistance, it has turned entirely into that ideology which it potentially was, ever since it took it upon itself, in opposition to material existence, to breathe life into this latter with the light, which the separation of the Spirit from manual labor withheld from such. Whoever pleads for the preservation of a radically culpable and shabby culture turns into its accomplice, while those who renounce culture altogether immediately promote the barbarism, which culture reveals itself to be. Not even silence can break out of the circle; it merely rationalizes one's own subjective incapacity with the state of objective truth and debases this once more into a lie. If the Eastern states have, in spite of their twaddle to the contrary, abolished culture and transformed it as a pure means of domination into junk, this is what that culture, which moans about this, only deserves, and to what for its part, in the name of the democratic right of human beings to what already resembles them, it zealously tends. It is only that the administrative barbarism of the functionaries over there [in the East], by praising itself as culture and proclaiming its bad state of affairs as a precious and sacred legacy, convicts its reality, the infrastructure, to be as barbaric for its part as the superstructure they demolish, by taking it under control. In the West, it is at least permitted to say so. – The theology of the crisis registered, what it rebelled against abstractly and for that reason in vain: that metaphysics is fused with culture. The absoluteness of the Spirit, aureole of culture, was the same principle which untiringly did violence to what it pretended to express. After Auschwitz, no word intoned from on high, nor any theological one, has any right in its original form. The challenge of the words handed down by tradition; the test, as to whether God would permit this and not wrathfully intervene, once more carried out the judgement on the victims, which Nietzsche had passed long before on the ideas.

Someone who withstood Auschwitz and other camps, with a power which is to be admired, remarked heatedly against Beckett: if he had been in Auschwitz, he would write differently, namely more positively, with the trench-religion of a survivor. The survivor was right in a different sense than he thought; Beckett, and whoever else remained in control of themselves, would have been broken there and presumably forced to confess to that trench-religion which the survivor garbs in the words, he wants to give human beings courage: as if this depended on any sort of intellectual construction; as if the intent, which turns to human beings and arranges itself according to them, would not rob them of what they are due, even if they believe the opposite. This is what metaphysics has come to.

3. DYING TODAY 361–366

This lends the demand to begin at the beginning or, as they put it, to radically put in question, to scrape away at the appearance [Schein], with which a failed culture would paint over its guilt and the truth, its suggestive power. But as soon as that presumed demolition yields to the urge for an unspoiled fundament, it thereby conspires with the culture which it boasts of demolishing. While the Fascists thundered against destructive cultural Bolshevism, Heidegger made destruction respectable as the institution of penetrating into being. Cultural critique and barbarism are not without a certain understanding. It was quickly tried out in practice. Metaphysical considerations, which seek to get rid of the elements which are mediated as culture to them, deny the relationship of their presumably pure categories to social content. Disregarding society, they encourage its continued existence in the existing forms, which for their part bar the recognition of truth along with its realization. The idol of pure Ur-experience gibbers as much as what is culturally prepared, the out-of-date stockpile of categories, which is *thesei* [Greek: thesis]. What solely could lead beyond this is what determines both in its mediatedness: culture as the lid on trash, nature, even where it turns into the capstone of being, as the projection of the bad cultural demand, that things must nevertheless stay the same throughout all changes. Not even the experience of death suffices as what is ultimate and beyond doubt, as a metaphysics similar to the one Descartes once deduced from the untenable ego cogitans [Latin: cognizing ego].

That the metaphysics of death degenerated either into advertising for the heroic death or into the triviality of the pure repetition of what is unmistakable,

namely that everyone has to die, its entire ideological bad state of affairs, is very likely based on the enduring frailty of human consciousness to this day, which cannot stand up to the experience of death, perhaps cannot even accept it at all. No human life, which conducts itself openly and freely towards objects, suffices to complete what is extant in the Spirit of every human being as potential; it and death yawn from each other. The reflections on death which give meaning are as helpless as the tautological ones. The more the consciousness escapes animality and becomes what is solidified and lasting in its forms, the more obdurately does it resist anything which makes its own eternity suspect. Coupled with the historical enthroning of the subject as Spirit was the deception, that it could never be lost. If earlier forms of property meshed with magical practices, which banished death, then the ratio exorcises the latter as tenaciously as only the rites once did, the more completely all human relations are determined by property. At a final stage, in despair, it itself turns into property. Its metaphysical exaltation is unleashed from its experience. The current metaphysics of death is nothing but the powerless solace of society over the fact that through social transformations, human beings came to be deprived of what was once supposed to have made death bearable to them, the feeling of its epic unity with the rounded life. But it may have only transfigured the domination of death by the weariness of the elderly and those sated with life, who for that reason believe it right to die, because their toil-filled previous life was indeed no life at all and stole from them the power of resisting death. In the socialized society however, in the inescapably dense web of immanence, human beings perceive death solely as something external and alien to them, without illusions as to its commensurability with their life. They cannot absorb the fact that they must die. An oblique, severed piece of hope clings to this: precisely because death does not, as in Heidegger, constitute the entirety of existence, one experiences, so long as one is not senile, death and its emissaries, illnesses, as heterogenous, ego-alien. One may ground this, quick-wittedly, in the fact that the ego would be nothing other than the principle of self-preservation opposed to death and incapable of absorbing it with the consciousness, which is itself ego. But the experience of the consciousness yields little to support this view; it does not necessarily have, in the sight of death, the form of contrariness, which one would expect. The Hegelian doctrine, that what is, perishes by itself,

is hardly confirmed by the subject. That one has to die, appears even to the elderly, who are conscious of the signs of venerability, rather like an unfortunate accident caused by one's own physique, with traces of the same contingency as the nowadays typical external accidents. This strengthens the speculation, which counterpoints the insight of the preponderance [Vorrang] of the object: as to whether the Spirit would not have a moment of what is independent, of what is not mixed up together, which becomes free exactly when it is not for its part devouring everything and reproducing itself in thrall to death. In spite of the deceptive interest of self-preservation, the power of resistance of the idea of immortality, as Kant still harbored it, could scarcely be explained without this moment. Admittedly that power of resistance appears to be sinking in the history of the species, as much as in declining individuals. After the downfall of the objective religions, secretly ratified long ago, which promised to take away the sting of death, the latter has turned into something entirely alien today through the socially determined downfall of continuous experience at large.

The less subjects live anymore, the more abrupt, frightening, the death. In that the latter literally transforms the former into a thing, it makes them aware of their permanent death, of reification, of the form of their relations, which they are partly culpable of. The civilized integration of death, without power over it and ridiculous before it, which it covers up cosmetically, is the reaction-formation to something social [Gesellschaftliche], the awkward attempt of exchange-society to plug the last holes still left open by the world of commodities. Death and history, particularly the collective one of the category of the individual [Individuum], form a constellation. If the individual, Hamlet, once deduced its absolute essentiality out of the dawning consciousness of the irrevocability of death, then the downfall of the individual brings down the entire construction of bourgeois existence along with it. What is annihilated in itself and perhaps also for itself is something nugatory. Hence the constant panic in the sight of death. It is no longer to be placated except through its repression. Death as such, or as a biological Ur-phenomenon, is not to be extracted out of the coils of history;²⁴⁶ the individuated [Individuum], which carries the experience of death, is far too much of a historical category for that. The statement, that death would always be the same, is as abstract as

246 See Heinrich Regius, *Twilight* [Dämmerung], Zürich 1934, pg 69.

untrue; the form, by which the consciousness comes to grips with death, varies along with the concrete conditions of how one dies, down to the physical aspect. Death in the concentration camps has a new horror: since Auschwitz the fear of death means, to fear things worse than death. What death does to what is socially condemned, is anticipated biologically in beloved human beings of great age; not only their bodies but their ego, everything which determines them as human beings, crumbles without illness and violent intervention. The remnants of confidence in their transcendental duration disappear as it were into earthly life: what is it supposed to be in them, anyway, which is not dying. The comforting faith, that in such disintegration or madness the core of the human being would continue to exist, has, in its indifference towards that experience, something foolish and cynical about it. It prolongs the snotty, philistine [Spiessbuerger] truism – that one remains always what one is – into infinity. Whoever turns away from what negated their possible fulfillment, pulls a face at the metaphysical need.

Nevertheless the thought that death would be the simply and purely ultimate is unthinkable. Attempts to express death in language, are in vain all the way into logic; whoever would be the subject, of which it is predicated, that it is here, now, dead. Not only pleasure, which, according to Nietzsche's luminous word, wants eternity, recoils against transience. If death were that absolute, which philosophy positively conjured in vain, then everything is nothing at all, every thought is thought into the void, none could be somehow truly thought. For it is a moment of truth, that it would endure along with its temporal core; without any duration, there would be none at all, even its last trace would be devoured by absolute death. Its idea defies thinking no less than that of immortality. But what is unthinkable in death does not render the thought immune against the unreliability of every metaphysical experience. The context of delusion, which encompasses all human beings, has a share in what they imagine to tear the veil with. In place of the Kantian epistemological question, as to how metaphysics would be possible, steps the one from the philosophy of history, as to whether metaphysical experience is even possible at all. This latter was never so far beyond what is temporal as in the scholastic usage of the word metaphysics. It has been observed that mysticism, whose name hopes to rescue the immediacy of metaphysical experience against its loss through institutional construction, forms a social tradition for its part and

stems from tradition, across the demarcation lines of religions, which are heresies to each other. The name of the corpus of Jewish mysticism, Kabbalah, means tradition. Metaphysical immediacy, where it dared to venture the furthest, did not deny how very mediated it is. If it appeals however to tradition, then it must also confess its dependency on the historical condition of the Spirit. In Kant the metaphysical ideas were indeed removed from the existential judgements of an experience, which was to be fulfilled in the material, but were supposed to be located in spite of the antinomies in the consistency of pure reason; today they would be as absurd as the ones named, by a zealously classifying defense-mechanism, as what their absence expresses. The consciousness however, which refuses to deny the fall in the philosophy of history of metaphysical ideas, and yet cannot bear this latter, if it is not supposed to also deny itself as consciousness, tends thereby in more than a merely semantic confusion to elevate the fate of metaphysical ideas straightaway to something metaphysical. Despair in the world, which nevertheless has its fundament in the thing and its truth and is neither aesthetic *weltschmerz* nor a false consciousness worthy of damnation, would already guarantee, so runs the false conclusion, the existence of what is hopelessly relinquished, even though existence has turned into the universal context of guilt. Of all the disgrace, which theology experienced with good reason, the worst of all is the howl of joy in which the positive religions break out, over the despair of the unbelieving. They voice their *Te Deum* at virtually every denial of God, because they at least use the name of God. Just as the means usurped the ends, in the ideology swallowed by the entire population of the Earth, so too has the resurrected metaphysics of today usurped the need, for what it lacks. The truth-content of what is absent becomes indifferent; they assert it, because it would be good for human beings. The solicitors of metaphysics argue as one with the pragmatism which they detest, which dissolved metaphysics *a priori*. Likewise, despair is the latest ideology, as historical and historically conditioned, as the course of the cognition which has gnawed at the metaphysical ideas, which is not to be stopped by means of any *cui bono* [Latin: who benefits].

4. HAPPINESS AND WAITING IN VAIN 366–368

What metaphysical experience would be, to those who eschew the reduction of this to presumably religious primal experiences, is closest to how Proust imagined

it, in the happiness promised by the names of villages like Otterbach, Watterbach, Reuenthal, Monbrunn. You think that if you go there, you would be in what is fulfilled, as if it really existed. If you really go there, that which is promised recedes like a rainbow. Nevertheless you aren't disappointed; rather, you feel that you are too close, and that's why you don't see it. This is presumably why the difference between landscapes and the districts, which determine the world of images of childhood, is not that great. What Proust experienced at Illiers was something many children of the same social strata shared at different places. But for this generality, what is authentic in Proust's portrayal, to form, one must be enraptured at that one spot, without squinting at the generality. To the child it is obvious that what delights it about its favorite little town is to be found there and only there, and nowhere else; it errs, but its error constitutes the model of experience, that of a concept, which ultimately would be that of the thing itself, not the poverty of that which is shorn away from things. The marriage, during which the Proustian narrator gazes as a child for the first time at the Duchess de Guermantes, may have taken place just so, and with the same power over his later life, at another time and another place. Solely in view of what is absolutely, indissolubly individualized is to be hoped, that this is how it already was and would be; only by approaching this, would the concept of the concept be fulfilled. It clings however to the promise of happiness, while the world which denies it, which is that of the dominating universality, is what Proust's reconstruction of experience opposes *entêtement* [French: obstinately]. Happiness, the only aspect of metaphysical experience which is more than powerless needing, grants the interior of objects as what is simultaneously removed from such. Whoever meanwhile naïvely enjoys this sort of experience, as if they held what it suggests in their hands, succumbs to the conditions of the empirical world, which they wanted to escape from, and which nevertheless grants them the only possibility thereof. The concept of metaphysical experience is still antinomic, in other ways than the transcendental dialectic of Kant taught. What is announced in what is metaphysical without recourse to the experience of the subject, without its immediate being-present [*Dabeisein*], is helpless before the desire of the autonomous subject, to permit nothing to be foisted on it, which would not be comprehensible to it. What is immediately evident to it however ails from fallibility and relativity.

That the category of reification which was inspired by the wishful image of unbroken subjective immediacy no longer deserves that key character to which apologetic thinking, absorbing the materialistic one early on, overzealously accords it, has a reciprocal influence on everything which goes under the concept of metaphysical experience. The objective theological categories, which philosophy attacked as reifications since the young Hegel, are by no means only remains, which dialectics would eliminate. They stand complementarily to the weakness of the idealistic dialectic, which as identity-thinking lays claim to what does not fall into thinking, which nevertheless, as soon as it is contrasted to that as its mere other, loses every possible determination. What is precipitated in the objectivity of metaphysical categories is not solely, as existentialism would have it, hardened society, but just as much the preponderance [Vorrang] of the object as a moment of dialectics. The liquefaction of everything thingly without a remainder regressed to the subjectivism of the pure act, hypostasized the mediation as immediacy. Pure immediacy and fetishism are equally untrue. The insistence on the former against reification relinquishes, as Hegel's institutionalism descried, the moment of the otherness in dialectics, as arbitrarily as this in turn, according to the practice of the later Hegel, is not to be detained in something solidified beyond it. The surplus over the subject, however, which the subjective metaphysical experience does not wish to be talked out of, and the truth-moment in the thingly are extremes, which touch in the idea of truth. For this latter would be so little without the subject, which escapes from the appearance [Schein], as without that which is not the subject and in which the truth has its Ur-image. – Pure metaphysical experience becomes unmistakably paler and more desultory in the course of the process of secularization, and this softens the substantiality of the older one. It conducts itself negatively in that "Is that all?", which comes closest to being realized as waiting in vain. Art has demonstrated this; in *Wozzeck* Alban Berg ranked those bars as highest, which express, as only music can, waiting in vain, and cited its harmony at the decisive caesuras and conclusion of *Lulu*. No such innervation however, nothing of what Bloch called symbolic intention, is immune to adulteration by mere life. Waiting in vain does not vouchsafe what the expectation aims at, but reflects the condition, which has its measure in the denial. The less of life which remains, the more tempting for the consciousness, to take the wretched and abrupt remains of

living beings for the phenomenal [erscheinende] absolute. Nevertheless nothing could be experienced as something truly alive, which would not also promise something transcendental to life; no exertion of the concept leads beyond this. It is and is not. The despair in that which is, overshadows the transcendental ideas, which once commanded it to halt. That the finite world of unending misery would be circumscribed by a divine world-plan, turns for everyone, who is not engaged in the business of the world, into that madness, which comports itself so well with the positive normal consciousness. The unsalvageability of the theological conception of the paradox, a last, starved-out bastion, is ratified by the course of the world, which translates the skandalon [Latin: scandal], at which Kierkegaard tarried, into open profanation.

5. "NIHILISM" 369–374

The metaphysical categories live on, secularized, in what the vulgar higher urge calls the question of the meaning of life. The ring of the word, reminiscent of a world-view, condemns the question. Almost irresistibly it conjoins upon itself the answer, that the meaning of life would be the one the questioner gives it. Not even the Marxism debased into an official credo, as in the late Lukacs, will answer much differently. The answer is false. The concept of meaning involves an objectivity beyond all making; as something made it is already a fiction, duplicating that subject, be it ever so collective, and swindles it out of what it seems to grant. Metaphysics deals with something objective, without however being permitted to dispense with subjective reflection. The subjects run into themselves, their "constitution": it is up to metaphysics to reflect on how far they are nevertheless capable of seeing beyond themselves. Philosophemes which dispense with this disqualify themselves as counsel. The activity of someone connected to that sphere was characterized decades earlier: he travels around and gives lectures to employees about meaning. Whoever sighs with relief, when life shows a resemblance to life for once and is not, as per the cognition of Karl Kraus, set in motion solely for the sake of production and consumption, eagerly and immediately reads the presence of something transcendental out of this. The depravation of speculative idealism into a question of meaning retrospectively damns the one which even at its zenith proclaimed such a meaning, although with slightly different words, the Spirit as the absolute, which cannot get rid of its origin in the inadequate subject and

placates its need in its mirror image. This is an Ur-phenomenon of ideology. The total of the question itself exerts a bane, which amidst all affirmative posturing becomes nugatory before the real catastrophe. If someone in despair, who wants to kill themselves, asked someone who is trying to talk them out of it, what the meaning of life is, none could be named by the helpless helper; as soon as they try, they are refuted, the echo of a consensus omnium [Latin: universal consensus], which forms the kernel of the proverb, that the Kaiser after all needs soldiers. A life which had meaning would not have to ask about such; the latter flees from the question. The opposite however, abstract nihilism, would have to fall silent before the counter-question: why do you live yourself. To size up the whole, to calculate the net-profit of life, is precisely the death which the so-called question of meaning wished to escape, even to the extent the latter, without any other exit, prefers to enthuse over the meaning of death. What would have a claim on the name of meaning without disgrace, is in what is open, not in what is closed in itself; the thesis, that life would have none, would be as a positive one just as foolish, as its opposite is false; the former is true only as a blow against the asseverating phrase. Not even Schopenhauer's inclination to identity the essence of the world, the blind will, as what is absolutely negative under the humane view, befits the state of consciousness any longer; the claim of total subsumption, all too analogous to the positive one of the contemporaries he detested, the idealists. Natural religion flickers up once more, the fear of demons, against which the Epicurean enlightenment once painted the wretched idea of disinterested observing gods as something better. In contrast to Schopenhauerian irrationalism, the monotheism which he attacked in the Spirit of the enlightenment also has its true aspect. Schopenhauer's metaphysics regresses to a phase, in which the genius has not yet awoken amidst what is mute. He denies the motive of freedom which, for the time being, and perhaps even in the phase of complete unfreedom, humanity remembers. Schopenhauer gets to the bottom of the illusory appearance [Scheinhafte] of individuation, but his recipe for freedom in the fourth book, the repudiation of the will to life, is just as illusory [scheinhaft]: as if what is ephemerally individualized could have the least power over its negative absolute, the will as a thing in itself, could step out of its bane otherwise than in self-deception, without the entire metaphysics of the will escaping through the breach. Total determinism is no less mythical than the totals

of the Hegelian logic. Schopenhauer was an idealist malgré lui-même [French: in spite of himself], spokesperson of the bane. The totum [Latin: the whole] is the totem. The consciousness could not despair at all over what is grey, if it did not harbor the concept of a different color, whose scattered trace is not lacking in the negative whole. It always stems from the past, hope from its counter-force [Widerspiel], from what must fall or is condemned; such an interpretation would very likely accord with the last sentence of Benjamin's text on the *Elective Affinities*, "Only for the sake of the hopeless are we given hope." It is tempting nevertheless, to seek meaning not in life at large but in fulfilled moments. These compensate in this world's existence for the fact that it no longer tolerates anything outside it. Incomparable power emanates from the metaphysician Proust, because he gave himself over to this temptation with an unbridled demand for happiness like no other, without wishing to retain his ego. But through the progress of the novel the incorruptible one reinforced the fact that even that fullness, the moment rescued by meditation, would not be it. As close as Proust was to Bergson's circle of experience, which raised the conception of the meaningfulness of life in its concretion to a theory, so much more was Proust, inheritor of the French novel of disillusionment, at the same time the critic of Bergsonianism. The talk of the fullness of life, a *lucus a non lucendo* [Latin: the forest is so-called because there is no light] even where it illuminates, is rendered idle by its immeasurable discrepancy with death. If this is irrevocable, then the assertion of a meaning which arises in the light of a fragmentary, albeit genuine experience, is ideological. Proust thus helped, in one of the central passages of his work, the death of Bergotte, the hope for the resurrection towards its groping expression, contrary to all philosophy of life, yet not under the cover of the positive religions. The idea of the fullness of life, even the one which the socialist conceptions of humanity promise, is for that reason not the utopia for which it is mistaken, because that fullness cannot be separated from the greed which the Jugendstil called "living to the full", of a need which has the act of violence and subjugation in itself. If there is no hope without the sating of desire, then this latter is still enmeshed in the notorious context of like for like, of what is precisely hopeless. No fullness without power-jousting. Negatively, by virtue of the consciousness of nullity, theology is in the right against those who believe in life on earth. That much is true in the jeremiads on the emptiness of

existence. Only it is not to be cured from within, in the sense that human beings would have a change of heart, but solely through the abolition of the principle of renunciation. With it, the cycle of fulfillment and appropriation would in the end also disappear: so deeply are metaphysics and the arrangement of life interwoven.

Nihilism is associated with the keywords of emptiness and meaninglessness. Nietzsche adopted the expression, which Jacobi first used philosophically, presumably from the newspapers, which reported on Russian atrocities. With an irony, for which the ear has meanwhile grown too dull, he employed it for the denunciation of the opposite of what the word meant in the praxis of conspirators, of Christianity as the institutionalized repudiation of the will to life. Philosophy need not do without the word any longer. Conformistically, in the opposite direction of Nietzsche, it has refunctioned it into the epitome of a condition, which is either accused of or accuses itself of nullity. For the thought-habit, to which nihilism is in any case something bad, that condition awaits an injection of meaning, indifferent as to whether the critique of this, which one ascribed to nihilism, is well-founded or not. In spite of its non-committalness [Unverbindlichkeit], such talk of nihilism abets demagoguery. It demolishes however a straw-man, which it itself set up. The statement, that everything would be nothing, is as empty as the word being, which the Hegelian movement of the concept identified it with, not in order to hold fast to the identity of both but rather, advancing past and once again falling behind the abstract nihility, in order to place something determinate in both places, which alone by virtue of its determinacy would be more than nothing. That human beings would want nothingness, as Nietzsche occasionally suggests, would be ridiculous hubris for each determinate individual will, even if organized society should succeed in making the earth uninhabitable or blowing it up sky-high. To believe in nothingness – under this is scarcely more to be thought than under that of nothingness itself; the something, which, legitimately or not, is meant by the word belief, is according to its own meaning not any nothingness. The naïve belief in nothingness would be as fatuous as the naïve belief in being, the palliative of the Spirit, which proudly finds its satisfaction, in seeing through the swindle. Since the indignation over nihilism once more being ladled out these days scarcely applies to that mysticism, which still discovers in nothingness, as the nihil privativum [Latin: empty object of a concept], that something which is negated there, and which

comes to pass in the dialectics unleashed by the word nothingness, then what is in all likelihood supposed to be morally defamed, by means of the mobilization of a word which is everywhere detested and incompatible with universal good cheer, are those who refuse to accept the Western inheritance of positivity and do not subscribe to any meaning of the existent. If they prattle on about the nihilism of values, that there would be nothing which one could hold on to, then this cries out for the overcoming, native to the same subaltern sphere of language. What is covered up is the perspective, as to whether the condition in which one could no longer hold on to anything might be the only one worthy of human beings; one which permitted the thought to at last behave as autonomously, as philosophy had always merely asked them to do and in the same breath prevented them from doing. Overcomings, even those of nihilism along with the Nietzschean kind, who meant it otherwise and yet delivered slogans to Fascism, are at all times worse than what is overcome. The medieval nihil privativum [Latin: empty object of a concept], which recognized the concept of nothingness as the negation of something instead of something auto-semantic, is as far ahead of the zealous overcomings as the imago of Nirvana, of nothing as a something. Those to whom despair is not a terminus may ask, as to whether it were better, that there be nothing at all rather than something. Even this admits to no general answer. For a human being in a concentration camp, if someone who had escaped in time could at all judge over this, it would be better if they had not been born. Nevertheless the ideal of nothingness would evaporate before the momentary quiver of an eye, indeed before the feeble tail-wagging of a dog, which one has just given a treat, which it promptly forgets. To the question, as to whether one is a nihilist or not, a thinking person would very likely have to answer with the truth: too little, perhaps out of coldness, because one's sympathy with that which suffers is too slight. In nothingness culminates the abstraction, and the abstract is what is reprehensible. Beckett reacted to the situation of the concentration-camps, which he does not name, as if there were a ban on such like that of the graven image, in the only befitting manner. What is, is like the concentration-camp. Once he speaks of a lifelong death-sentence. The only hope, faintly dawning, is that there would be nothing anymore. This too he rejects. Out of the fissure of inconsistency formed by this, the image-world of nothingness appears as something which tethers his

poetry. In the legacy of its treatment, of the apparently stoical carrying-on, what is noiselessly screamed is that things ought to be different. Such nihilism implies the opposite of the identification with nothingness. Gnostically, it regards the world as it has been created as radically evil and its repudiation the possibility of a different, not yet existent one. So long as the world is as it is, then all images of reconciliation, peace and quiet resemble those of death. The smallest difference between nothingness and that which has come to rest, would be the refuge of hope, the no-man's-land between the border-posts of being and nothingness. From that zone needs to be extricated, instead of overcoming, the consciousness of what the alternative would have no power over. Nihilists are those, who oppose nihilism with their more and more washed-out positivities, conspiring by means of these with all existent malice and finally with the destructive principle. What honors thought, is defending what nihilism is castigated as.

6. KANT'S RESIGNATION 374–377

The antinomic structure of the Kantian system expressed more than contradictions, in which the speculation on metaphysical objects would necessarily be entangled: something indeed in the history of philosophy. The powerful effect of the critique of reason, far beyond its epistemological content, is to be ascribed to the faithfulness with which the work demonstrated the state of the experience of consciousness. The historiography of philosophy regards the achievement of the text primarily in the conclusive separation of valid cognition and metaphysics. In fact it first appears as the theory of scientific judgements, nothing more. Epistemology, logic understood in a broader sense, is concerned with the investigation of empirical world according to laws. Kant intends however more. Through the medium of epistemological reflection, he issues the by no means neutral answer to the so-called metaphysical questions, that these actually ought not be asked. To this extent the *Critique of Pure Reason* anticipates the Hegelian doctrine, that logic and metaphysics would be the same, as much as the positivistic one, which circumvents the questions, on which everything would depend, by means of their abolition, and mediately [mittelbar] decides them negatively. German idealism extrapolated its metaphysics from the fundamental claim of epistemology, which makes the attempt to carry the whole. Thought to the end, the critique of reason, which disputes the objectively valid cognition

of the absolute, exactly thereby judges itself the absolute. This is what idealism emphasized. Nevertheless its consistency bends the motif into its opposite and into what is untrue. Kant's objectively much more modest doctrine – read: theory of science – is accorded a thesis, which the former fights against, in spite of its inescapability, with good reason. Kant is expanded, against himself, beyond the theory of science by means of conclusions which are stringently drawn from him. By means of its consistency idealism violates Kant's metaphysical reservation; pure consistency-thinking turns irresistibly into the absolute. Kant's confession, that reason would necessarily entangle itself in those antinomies, which he then dissolved through reason, was anti-positivistic.²⁴⁷ Nevertheless he does not disdain the positivistic solace, that one could settle into the narrow realm, which the critique of the property of reason leaves behind to this latter, satisfied with the firm soil underfoot. He joins in with the eminently bourgeois affirmation of one's own narrowness. According to Hegel's critique of Kant, the issue of whether the jurisdiction of reason has overstepped the boundaries of possibility of experience and whether it may do so, already presupposes a position beyond the realms divided on the Kantian map, a third court of appeals, as it were.²⁴⁸ As the possibility of the decision, Kant's topological zeal insinuates, without giving an account of this, exactly that transcendence in contrast to the realm of the understanding, over which he disdains to positively judge. This court of appeals became the absolute subject of German idealism, "Spirit", which would first produce the dichotomy subject-object and thereby the borders of finite cognition. Once however such a metaphysical view of the Spirit loses its potency, then the only thing the border-setting intention still restricts is what cognizes, the subject. The critical one turns

into the renouncing one. No longer trusting the infinity of the essence which

247 "A dialectical thesis of pure reason must accordingly have this distinction from all sophistical suppositions in itself, that it does not concern an arbitrary question, which is drawn up only in a certain random intent, but one which every human reason must necessarily run into in its course; and second, that it along with its opposite would not merely lead to an artificial appearance [Schein], which, once perceived, promptly disappears, but a natural and unavoidable appearance [Schein], which itself, if one is no longer fooled by it, still continues to deceive, though does not defraud, and can thus indeed be rendered harmless, but never cancelled out." (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, WW III, Academy Edition, pg 290)

248 "Normally... a great store is set on the limits of thought, of reason etc., and it is asserted, there is no going beyond the limits. In this assertion however lies the lack of consciousness, that when something is itself determined as a limit, it has already been surpassed. For a determinacy, the border, is only determined as a limit, in opposition to its Other at large, as against what it does not restrict; the Other of a limit is precisely the surpassing [Hinaus] of the same." (Hegel, *WW 4*, pg 153)

animates it, it secures itself contrary to its own essence in its own finitude and in what is finite. It wishes to be undisturbed all the way into the metaphysical sublimation, the absolute turns into an idle concern for it. This is the repressive side of criticism; the idealists who followed were as far ahead of their class, as they were in rebellion against it. In the origins of what Nietzsche still praised as intellectual honesty, lurks the self-hatred of the Spirit, the innervated Protestant rage at the whore Reason. The rationality which eliminates the imagination, still held in high esteem by St. Simon and the enlighteners, which, complementarily to this, dries up by itself, is irrationalistically corrupted. Even criticism changes its function: the change of the bourgeoisie from a revolutionary class into a conservative one is repeated in it. The echo of this philosophical matter-at-hand is the malice of the sound human understanding, proud of its own narrow provincialism, which fills the world today. It says, *e contrario* [Latin: to the contrary], that the borders, in whose cult virtually all are united, are not to be respected. It is "positive", marked by that selfsame caprice of what is subjectively instituted, for which the "common sense" [in English] embodied in Babbitt denounces speculation. Kant's allegory of the land of truth, the island in the ocean, objectively characterizes the intellectual happiness squirreled away in the corner as a Robinsonade: just as the dynamic of the productive forces quickly enough destroyed the idyll, in which the small-town citizen [Kleinbürger], justifiably mistrustful of dynamics, would gladly have tarried. The Kantian pathos of the infinite crassly conflicts with the home-baked nature of his doctrine. If the practical reason has primacy over the theoretical one, then this latter, itself a mode of conduct, would have to reach into what its superior is presumably capable of, unless its own concept should become untenable by means of the cut between understanding and reason. Kant is pushed however precisely in that direction by his conception of scientificity. He may not say it and yet must say it; the inconsistency, which is so easily entered into the ledger of the history of the Spirit as a relic of older metaphysics, is realized by the thing. The island of cognition which Kant boasted of measuring, ends up for its part through self-righteous narrowness in that which is untrue, which he projected onto the cognition of what is unlimited. It is impossible to endow the cognition of the finite with a truth, which is for its part deduced from the absolute

– in Kantian terms: from reason – in which the cognition would not reach. The ocean of Kantian metaphor threatens to swallow up the island at every moment.

7. DESIRE OF SALVATION AND BLOCK 377–382

That metaphysical philosophy, as it essentially coincided historically with the great systems, has more glamour than the empiristic and positivistic ones, is not, as the inane word conceptual poetry would have us believe, something merely aesthetic, also not any sort of psychological wish-fulfillment. The immanent quality of a thought – what manifests itself therein in power, resistance, imagination, as the unity of the critical with its opposite – is, although no index veri [Latin: index of truth], then at least a clue. That Carnap and Mises would be truer than Kant and Hegel, could not be the truth, even if it were so. The Kant of the critique of reason said in the doctrine of ideas, that theory would not be possible without metaphysics. That it however is possible, implies that right of metaphysics, to which the same Kant, who smashed it through the effect of his work, held fast. The Kantian rescue of the intelligible sphere is not only, as everyone knows, Protestant apologetics, but would also like to intervene in the dialectic of enlightenment there, where this latter terminates in the abolition of reason. How much deeper the Kantian desire of the rescue is grounded than solely in the pious wish, to hold something of the traditional ideas in hand in the midst of and contrary to nominalism, is attested to by the construction of immortality as a postulate of practical reason. It condemns the intolerability of what exists and reinforces the Spirit, which cognizes it. That no innerworldly betterment would suffice to do justice to the dead; that none would touch upon the injustice of death, is what moves Kantian reason to hope against reason. The secret of his philosophy is the unthinkability of despair. Compelled by the convergence of all thoughts into an absolute, he does not leave it at the absolute border between the absolute and the existent, which he was no less compelled to draw. He held fast to the metaphysical ideas and forbade nevertheless the thought of the absolute, which might one day be realized just like eternal peace, from jumping to the conclusion that the absolute would for that very reason exist. His philosophy circles, probably just as every other one does, by the way, around the ontological proof of God. With magnificent ambiguity, he left his own position open; the motif of the “An eternal Father must dwell” [line from Schiller’s *Ode to Joy*], which Beethoven’s composition of

the Kantian hymn to joy [i.e. Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony*] put the emphasis, in true Kantian spirit, on the "must", stands in contrast to passages in which Kant, therein as close to Schopenhauer as this latter later claimed, rejected metaphysical ideas, especially that of immortality, as ensnared in the conceptions of space and time, and thus for their part delimited. He disdained the transition to affirmation.

The Kantian block, the theory of the boundaries of possible positive cognition, derives, also in keeping with Hegel's critique, from the form-content dualism. The human consciousness would be, so runs the anthropological argument, condemned to eternal arrest, as it were, in the forms of cognition which it was once given. That what affects these latter would escape every determination, it would receive only from the forms of consciousness. But the forms are not that ultimate, which Kant described them as. By means of the reciprocity between them and the existent content they also develop in their own right. This however is incompatible with the conception of the indestructible block. Once the forms are moments of a dynamic, which would in truth befit the treatment of the subject as an originary apperception, then their positive form can so little be stipulated for all future cognition than any other sort of content, without which they are not and with which they transform themselves. Only if the dichotomy of form and content were absolute, could Kant maintain that the dichotomy would reject every content coming from the forms, not from the material one. If the forms appropriate this material moment themselves, then the block shows itself to be something created by precisely the subject, which it inhibits. The subject becomes as much exalted as debased, when the borders are located in it, in its transcendental-logical organization. The naïve consciousness, to which very likely Goethe inclined as well: that one simply does not yet know, but perhaps one could still solve the puzzle, is closer to the metaphysical truth than Kant's *ignoramus*. His anti-idealistic doctrine of the absolute limit and the idealistic one of absolute knowledge are not at all so hostile to each other, as they said of each other; the latter too amounts to this, that in keeping with the course of thought of the Hegelian *Phenomenology*, the absolute knowing would be nothing but the course of thought of phenomenology itself, thus by no means would transcend.

Kant, who frowned upon the precipitate rush into intelligible worlds, equates the subjective side of Newtonian science with cognition, the correspondingly

objective one with truth. The question of how metaphysics would be possible as a science is thus to be taken precisely: as to whether it satisfies the criteria of a cognition oriented towards the ideal of mathematics and so-called classical physics. The Kantian posing of the problem, which bears in mind the metaphysics he assumes to be a natural predisposition, refers to the “how” of the generalized and necessarily supposed cognition; but really means its “what”, its possibility itself. He repudiates this, according to the measure of that ideal. Science, which is released from any further reservations due to its imposing results, is however the product of bourgeois society. The rigidly dualistic basic structure of Kant’s rational-critical model duplicates that of a relation of production, in which commodities fall out of machines like his phenomena fall out of the cognitive mechanism; where the material and its own determinacy are as indifferent in relation to their profit as in Kant, who has it stenciled in. The end-product, which has exchange-value, resembles the Kantian objects, which are subjectively produced and accepted as objectivity. The permanent *reductio ad hominem* [Latin: reduction to the person] of everything which appears equips cognition for the ends of internal and external domination; its highest expression is the principle of unity, borrowed from that of compartmentalized production, divided into partial acts. What makes the Kantian theory of rationality grandiose is that it is really interested only in the realm of authority of scientific propositions. The delimitation of the Kantian posing of the question to the organized natural-scientific experience, the orientation to validity and epistemological subjectivism are so interwoven that one could not be without the other. As long as the subjective inquiry is supposed to be the test of validity, so long are cognitions which are not scientifically sanctioned, namely non-necessary and non-universal, inferior; that is why all efforts to emancipate the Kantian epistemology from the natural-scientific realm had to fail. Inside the identifying approach, one cannot completely make up for what the former eliminates according to its own essence; at most, the approach is to be transformed out of the cognition of its inadequacy. That it however does so little justice to the living experience, which is cognition, indicates its falsehood, the incapacity to achieve what it sets before itself, namely to ground experience. For such a foundation in something fixed and invariant contradicts what experience knows about itself, which indeed, the more open it is and the more it realizes itself, is always changing

its own forms. The incapacity of doing this is the incapacity of experience itself. One can add no cognitive theorems to Kant, which are not explicated by him, because their exclusion is central to his epistemology; the systematic claim of the doctrine of pure reason is registered in the exclusion unmistakably enough. Kant's system is one of stop signals. The subjectively arranged constitutional analysis does not transform the world, as it is given to the naïve bourgeois consciousness, but is proud of its "empirical realism". To it, however, the height of its claim to validity is as one with the level of abstraction. It tendentially stamps out, obsessed with the a priority of its synthetic judgements, everything in cognition which does not fit into its ground-rules. The social division of labor is respected without reflection along with the defect, which became flagrant in the two hundred years since then: that the sciences, organized by the division of labor, illegitimately seized a monopoly of truth in themselves. The paralogisms of the Kantian epistemology are, put in bourgeois and very Kantian terms, the uncovered bills of exchange, which went to protest with the development of science into one of a mechanical bustle. The authority of the Kantian concept of truth became terroristic with the ban on thinking the absolute. Irresistibly it drives towards the ban on thinking pure and simple. The Kantian block projects the self-mutilation of reason on truth, which it inflicts on itself as the rite of initiation of its scientificity. That is why what happens in Kant as cognition is so scanty, compared with the experience of living beings, to which the idealistic systems, be it ever so invertedly, wished to do justice.

Kant would scarcely have disputed the fact that the idea of truth mocks the scientific ideal. But the discrepancy is revealed by no means only in view of the *mundus intelligibilis* [Latin: intelligible world] but in every cognition achieved by the unconstrained consciousness. To this extent the Kantian block is an appearance [Schein], which blasphemes in the Spirit, what in the hymns of the late Hoederlin is philosophically ahead of philosophy. This was not foreign to the idealists, but what was open to them ended up under the same bane, which forced Kant to contaminate experience and science. While many an impulse of idealism wanted to aim at what is open, it would pursue it by the extension of the Kantian principle, and the contents became even less free in it than in Kant. This in turn is what lends his block its moment of truth: it prevented the mythology

of the concept. The social suspicion is well-founded that that block, the limit before the absolute, would be one with the privation of labor, which really does hold human beings in the same bane, which Kant transfigured into philosophy. The imprisonment in immanence to which he, as honestly as brutally, damns the Spirit, is that in self-preservation, as it is imposed upon human beings in a society, which conserves nothing but the denial which it would no longer need. If the beetle-like natural-historical care [Sorge] were once broken through, then the position of consciousness towards the truth would be transformed. Its current one is dictated by the objectivity, which constrains them in their condition. If the Kantian doctrine of the block was a piece of social appearance [Scheins], then it is nevertheless just as firmly grounded, as the factual rule of the appearance [Schein] over human beings. The separation of sensibility and understanding, the nerve of the argument for the block, is for its part a social product; sensibility is designated by means of the chorismos as the victim of understanding, because the arrangement of the world, in spite of all institutions to the contrary, does not satisfy it. With its social condition, the division would in all likelihood be allowed to disappear one day, while the idealists are ideologues, because they glorify the reconciliation in the midst of what is unreconciled as achieved or ascribe it to the totality of what is unreconciled. Their efforts to explicate the Spirit as the unity of itself with what is non-identical to it, were as consistent as in vain. Such self-reflection overtakes the thesis of the primacy of practical reason, which reaches from Kant via the idealists straightaway to Marx. The dialectic of praxis would also demand: the abolition of praxis, of production for production's sake, of the universal cover of a false one. That is the materialistic basis for the traits, which rebel in negative dialectics against the official doctrinal concept of materialism. The moment of independence, of irreducibility in the Spirit may very likely concord with the preponderance [Vorrang] of the object. Where the Spirit becomes autonomous here and now, as soon as it names the fetters in which it ends up, by putting others into fetters, it, and not the entangled praxis, anticipates freedom. The idealists made a heaven of the Spirit, but woe betide whoever had one.

8. MUNDUS INTELLIGIBILIS 382–386

The construction of the block faces opposite in Kant to the positive one of metaphysics in the *Practical Reason*. He was by no means silent about what is

despairing in it: “Unless meanwhile a transcendental property of freedom is added in, in order to begin transformations of the world, then this property would nonetheless have to be at the very least only outside of the world (though it always remains a bold presumption, to assume an object outside of the summation of all possible intuitions, which cannot be given to any possible perception)”.²⁴⁹ The parenthesis of the “bold presumption” registers Kant’s skepticism about his own *mundus intelligibilis* [Latin: intelligible world]. That formulation from the footnote to the antithesis of the Third Antinomy comes quite close to atheism. What was later zealously demanded, is called here theoretical presumption; Kant’s desperate fear of imagining that the postulate would be an existential judgement, is strenuously evaded. According to the passage, what ought to be able to be thought as an object of possible intuition, at the very least, is what must simultaneously be thought as something removed from every such intuition. Reason would have to capitulate to the contradiction, be it only for prescribing itself borders through hubris, irrationalistically delimiting its own realm of validity, without being objectively tied, as reason, to those borders. But if intuition too was incorporated into infinite reason, as in the idealists and also the neo-Kantians, then transcendence would be virtually cashiered by the immanence of the Spirit. – What Kant briefly hints at with respect to freedom, would apply first and foremost to God and immortality. For these words do not relate to any pure possibility of conduct, but are, according to their own concept, postulates of an existent, however stylized. This latter requires a “matter” and would depend in Kant completely on that intuition, whose possibility he excludes from the transcendental ideas. The pathos of what is intelligible to Kant is the complement of the difficulty of assuring itself of anything, even if it were only in the medium of the self-sufficient thought, which the word intelligible designates. It may not name anything real. The movement of the *Critique of Practical Reason* meanwhile proceeds towards a positivity of the *mundus intelligibilis* [Latin: intelligible world], which was not envisioned in Kant’s intention. As soon as the ought-to-be [Seinsollende], emphatically separated from the existent, is exemplified as the realm of its own essence and endowed with absolute authority, it takes on through the procedure, be it ever so involuntarily, the character of a second existence. The

249 Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, 2nd Edition, WW III, Academy Edition, pg 313.

thought that does not think any something, is none at all. Ideas, the content of metaphysics, may no more be graphically clear than mirages; otherwise they would be robbed of every objectivity. What is intelligible would be swallowed up by exactly that subject, which the intelligible sphere is supposed to transcend. A century after Kant the flattening of the intelligible into the imaginary became the cardinal sin of neo-Romanticism and the Jugendstil, and of their tailor-made philosophy, the phenomenological one. The concept of the intelligible is neither one of something real nor one of something imaginary. Rather aporetic. Nothing on earth and nothing in the empty heavens is to be saved, by defending it. The “yes but” retort to the critical argument, which does not wish something to be torn away from it, already has the form of the stubbornly insistent existent, of the clinging, irreconcilable with the idea of salvation, in which the cramp of such prolonged self-preservation would relax. Nothing can be saved untransformed, nothing, which has not made its way through the door of its death. If salvation is the innermost impulse of every Spirit, then is there no hope except that of unreserved abandonment: of what is to be rescued as well as of the Spirit, which hopes. The gestus of hope is that which holds onto nothing of what the subject itself wishes to hold onto, by which the latter promises itself, that it would endure. The intelligible, in the spirit of Kant’s setting of boundaries no less than that of the Hegelian method, would be to go beyond these, to think solely negatively. Paradoxically, the intelligible sphere envisaged by Kant would be once more “appearance” [Erscheinung]: what returns to that which is hidden from the finite Spirit, what it is compelled to think and by virtue of its own finitude deforms. The concept of the intelligible is the self-negation of the finite Spirit. What merely is becomes, in the Spirit, aware of its defect; the farewell from the existence obdurate in itself is the origin of that in the Spirit, which separates it from the principle in it, which exploits nature. This turn of phrase wishes, that not even it itself would turn into the existent: otherwise the monotony would repeat itself endlessly. What is hostile to life in the Spirit would be nothing but heinous, if it did not culminate in its self-reflection. The asceticism which it demands from others is false, good its own: in its self-negation it goes beyond itself; this was not so alien to the later Kantian *Metaphysics of Morals*, as one might expect. In order to be the Spirit, it must know that it does not exhaust itself in what it reaches; nor in the finitude,

which it resembles. That is why it thinks what would be beyond it. Such metaphysical experience inspired Kant's philosophy, once it is broken out of the mythical armor [Panzer] of the method. The consideration, as to whether metaphysics would be at all still possible, must reflect the negation of what is finite, which the finite demands. Its enigma animates the word intelligible. Its conception is not entirely unmotivated thanks to that moment of independence, which the Spirit lost through its absolutization and which this latter obtains for its part as what is not identical with the existent, as soon as the non-identical is insisted upon, that not everything existent is evaporated in the Spirit. The Spirit participates, in all its mediations, in existence, which substituted for its alleged transcendental purity. It is in the moment of transcendental objectivity in it, which can be no more split off than ontologized, that the possibility of metaphysics has its inconspicuous locale. The concept of the intelligible realm would be that of something which is not and yet is not only not. In keeping with the rules of the sphere, which negate themselves in the intelligible one, these would have to be unresistingly rejected as imaginary. Nowhere else is truth so fragile as here. It can degenerate into a hypostasis of something thought up for no reason at all, in which the thought imagines to possess what is lost; the effort, to comprehend it, is easily confused in turn with the existent. The thought is nugatory which confuses what is thought with what is real, in the false conclusion, demolished by Kant, of the ontological proof of God. The mistaken conclusion is a result however of the immediate elevation of negativity, of the critique of the merely existent, into something positive, as if the insufficiency of that which is, would guarantee, that what is, would be rid of that insufficiency. Even in extremity the negation of the negation is no positivity. Kant called the transcendental dialectic a logic of appearance [Schein]: the doctrine of the contradictions, in which every treatment of the transcendental as something positively cognizable would inevitably entangle itself. His verdict is not rendered obsolete by Hegel's effort to vindicate the logic of the appearance [Schein] as that of the truth. But the reflection does not break off with the verdict on appearance [Schein]. Become conscious of itself, it is no longer the old one. What is said by finite beings about transcendence, is the latter's appearance [Schein], however, as Kant well knew, a necessary one. That is why the salvation of appearance [Schein], the object of aesthetics, has its incomparable metaphysical relevance.

9. NEUTRALIZATION 386–391

In Anglo-Saxon countries Kant is often euphemistically called an agnostic. As little of the wealth of his philosophy this leaves, the horrid simplification is not completely nonsensical. The antinomic structure of the Kantian doctrine, which survives the dissolution of the antinomies, can be crudely translated into the injunction upon thinking, to refrain from idle questions. It excessively increases the vulgar form of bourgeois skepticism, whose solidity takes seriously only that which is held safely in hand. Kant was not entirely free of such a mentality. That in the categorical imperative and already in the ideas of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he adds in that denigrated sublimity with raised forefinger, a bonus, which the bourgeoisie is as loathe to dispense with as its Sunday, the parody of freedom from labor – this surely reinforced Kant's authority in Germany, far beyond the effect of the thoughts themselves. The moment of non-committal [unverbindlicher] conciliation in rigorism fits well with the tendency towards the neutralization of everything intellectual in décor, which after the victory of the revolution or, where this did not occur, through the imperceptible bourgeoisification which ended up prevailing, conquered the entire scenery of the Spirit and also the theorems which bourgeois emancipation previously employed as a weapon. Since the interests of the victorious class no longer needed them, they became, as Spengler astutely enough noted in Rousseau, uninteresting in a double sense. The function of the Spirit is subordinated in society, although the latter ideologically praises the former. The Kantian non liquet [Latin: not proven] contributed to the transformation of critique of the religions allied to feudalism into that indifference, which donned a veil of humanity under the name of tolerance. The Spirit, as metaphysics no less than as art, neutralizes itself the more that what society is proud of as its culture, loses any relation to possible praxis. In the Kantian metaphysical ideas this latter was still unmistakable. With them bourgeois society wanted to escape its own restricted principle, to sublate itself, as it were. Such a Spirit becomes unacceptable and culture into a compromise between its bourgeois utilizable form and, after modern German nomenclature, what is insupportable in it, which it projects into the unattainable distance. The material circumstances render an additional service. Under the compulsion to expanded investment, capital becomes master of the Spirit, whose objectifications are by virtue of their own and unavoidable

hypostatization spurred to turn the latter into property, into commodities. The satisfaction of aesthetics, devoid of interest, transfigures the Spirit and debases it, in that it is satisfied to consider, to admire, in the end to blindly and disconnectedly revere everything which was once created and thought there, regardless of its truth-content. With objective mockery, the increasing commodity character aestheticizes culture for the sake of utility. Philosophy turns into the manifestation of the Spirit as a showpiece. What Bernard Groethuysen traced back in religion to the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries: that the devil is no longer to be feared and God is no longer to be hoped for, expands beyond metaphysics, in which the recollection of God and the devil lives on, even where it critically reflects on that fear and hope. What disappears, is what ought to be most urgent to human beings in a highly unideological sense; objectively it has become problematic; subjectively the social web and the permanent overtaking through the pressure to conform grants them neither the time nor the power any longer to think about it. The questions are not solved, not even their insolubility is referred to. They are forgotten, and where they are talked about, they are lulled only that much deeper into their bad sleep. Goethe's fatal dictum, that Eckermann need not read Kant, because his philosophy has had its effect, has crossed over into the general consciousness, has triumphed in the socialization of metaphysical indifference.

The indifference of the consciousness towards metaphysical questions, which are by no means resolved through satisfaction in this world, is by no means a matter of indifference to metaphysics itself. Hidden therein is a horror, which, if human beings did not repress it, would take their breath away. One could be led to anthropological speculations, as to whether the developmental-historical recoil, which endowed the human species with the open consciousness and thereby that of death, contradicts a nevertheless ongoing animal constitution, which does not permit it to bear that consciousness. The possibility of the continuation of life would entail the price of a restriction of consciousness, which protects it from what it nevertheless is itself, the consciousness of death. Inconsolable the perspective, that the narrow provincialism of all ideologies could be traced back biologically, as it were, to a necessity of self-preservation and would by no means disappear with a right arrangement of society, though indeed it is only in the right society that the possibility of the right life would arise. The present one still

spreads lies about how death is not to be feared, and sabotages the reflection on this. Schopenhauer's pessimism took notice of how little human beings media in vita [Latin: in the midst of life] are wont to concern themselves with death.²⁵⁰ He read this indifference, just like Heidegger a hundred years later, as the essence of human beings, instead of reading human beings as products of history. The lack of metaphysical meaning turns into a metaphysicum [Latin: something metaphysical] for both. By this at any rate the depths are to be measured, which neutralization, an existential in bourgeois consciousness, plumbs. This depth awakens the doubt as to whether things, as a romantic tradition which survived all romanticism has drilled into the Spirit, were all that different in the times allegedly overflowing with metaphysics, which the young Lukacs called the ones of plenitude [sinnerfüllten]. The tradition drags along a paralogism. The enclosure of cultures, the collective committalness [Verbindlichkeit] of metaphysical intuitions, their power over life, does not guarantee their truth. Rather the possibility of metaphysical experience is the sibling of that of freedom, and only the developed subject, which has torn the bonds praised as holy, is capable of it. The socially sanctioned, dull-witted intuition of allegedly blissful times is by contrast related to the naïve positivistic belief in facts. The ego must be historically strengthened, in order to conceive of the immediacy of the reality principle beyond the idea of what is more than the existent. The social order, which shrinks itself down into its own meaning, also seals itself off against the possibility beyond the social order. Metaphysics is in contrast to theology not merely, as per positivistic doctrine, a historically later stage, not only the secularization of theology into the concept. It preserves theology in its critique of it, by uncovering to human beings the possibility of what theology imposed on them and thereby violated. The forces exploded the

250 "The human being alone carries the certainty of its death along with itself in abstract concepts: these latter can nevertheless, which is quite strange, frighten it only at particular moments, where an occasion concretizes it in its imagination. Against the mighty voice of nature the reflection can do little. Even in itself, as in animals, which do not think, an enduring condition prevails as that assurance, which originates out of the innermost consciousness, that it is itself nature, the world, by virtue of which no human being is noticeably troubled by the thought of certain and never distant death, but each lives there, as if they would live eternally; which goes so far as to say, that none would have an actual living conviction of the certainty of their death, since otherwise there could be no great difference between their mood and that of the condemned criminal; otherwise each would indeed cognize that certainty in abstracto [Latin: abstractly] and theoretically, but would put it aside, as other theoretical truths, which are not applicable to praxis, without accepting it in any fashion in its living consciousness." (Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Idea*, SWW, ed. Frauenstädt, II. Volume, Leipzig 1888, pg 332).

cosmos of the spirit, which bound them; the latter received its just deserts. The autonomous Beethoven is more metaphysical than Bach's ordo [Latin: social order]; therefore truer. Subjectively emancipated and metaphysical experience converge in humanity. Every expression of hope, which emanates from great works of art more powerfully than the theological texts handed down by tradition even in the era when the former are falling silent, is configured with that of human beings; nowhere more unambiguously than in the moment of Beethoven. What signifies that not everything is in vain, is the self-reflection of nature in subjects, through the sympathy with that which is human; solely in the experience of its own natural base [Naturhaftigkeit] does the genius escape from nature. It is to Kant's lasting honor that he, like no other philosopher, registered the constellation of the human and the transcendental in the doctrine of the intelligible. Before humanity opened its eyes, human beings exhausted themselves under the objective pressure of life-and-death necessity in the disgrace of their neighbors, and the life-immanence of meaning is the cover of their prejudice. Ever since something like organized society arose at large, as a solidly buttressed, autarkic context, the pressure to leave it was only weak. The child which was not already prepared, could not help but be struck by how impoverished and thin the section in its Protestant song-book is, which bears the title *The Last Things*, compared with all the practice drills of what the believers are to believe and how they are to behave. The long-standing suspicion, that magic and superstition continue to flourish in religion, has as its flip side, that the core of the positive religions, the hope of the beyond, was scarcely ever so important as its concept demanded. Metaphysical speculation unites with the one of the philosophy of history: it has faith in the possibility of a right consciousness even of those last things solely in a future without life-and-death necessity. The curse of the latter is that they do not drive beyond mere existence so much as disguise it, solidifying it as a metaphysical authority. The "all is vanity", with which the great theologians since Solomon bethought immanence, is too abstract to lead beyond immanence. Where human beings are assured of the indifference of their existence, they raise no objections; as long as they do not change their position towards existence, any other one is idle for them. Whoever accuses the existent of nullity without distinction and without a perspective of what is possible, furnishes assistance to the dull bustle. The animality

towards which such total praxis tends is worse than the first: it becomes itself a principle. The Capucin sermon of the vanity of immanence secretly liquidates the transcendence as well, which was once fed from experiences in immanence. Neutralization however, deeply complicit with that indifference, has still survived the catastrophes, which according to the fanfares of the apologists are supposed to have thrown back human beings onto what radically concerns them. For the fundamental constitution of society has not changed. It damns the theology and metaphysics resurrected out of necessity, in spite of many brave Protestant attempts to resist, to the passport of the mindset of conformity. No rebellion of mere consciousness leads beyond this. Even in the consciousness of subjects, bourgeois society would rather choose total destruction, its objective potential, rather than bringing itself to reflections which might threaten its foundations. The metaphysical interests of human beings require the undiminished perception of their material ones. As long as they are veiled from them, they live under the veil of Maya. Only when, what is, is changed, is that, which is, not everything.

10. ONLY AN ALLEGORY 391–394

In a commentary published decades after his composition of George's *Rapture*, Arnold Schoenberg praised the poem as the prophetic anticipation of the feelings of astronauts. By naively reducing one of his most significant works to the level of "science fiction" [in English], he involuntarily acted out of the privation of metaphysics. Doubtless the material content is in the neo-Romantic poem, the face of someone who steps on "other planets", the allegory of something internalized, of ecstasy and elevation reminiscent of Maximinus. The ecstasy is not any in space, were it even in the cosmic experience, although it must borrow its images from this latter. But exactly this betrays the objective ground of the far too earthly exegesis. To take the promise of theology literally would be as barbaric as this latter. Only historically accumulated respect inhibits the consciousness of that. And the poetic elevation is purloined from the theological realm like the symbolic language of that cycle generally. Religion à la lettre [French: literally] would indeed resemble "science fiction" [in English]; space travel would lead into the real promised heaven. The theologists could not refrain from childish reflections on the consequences of rocket travel for their Christology, while conversely the infantilism of the interest in rocket travel brings the latent one of tidings of

salvation to light. If these were however purified of all material content, utterly sublimated, then they would encounter the most excruciating embarrassment at having to say, what they stand for. If every symbol only symbolizes another one, something once more conceptual, then its core remains empty and thereby the religion. This is the antinomy of theological consciousness today. The Tolstoyan – anachronistic – Ur-Christianity would get along with it the easiest, the successor Christi here and now without any reflection, with closed eyes. Something of the antinomy is already hidden in the construction of Faust. With the verse, “I hear the tidings indeed, but I lack the faith” he interprets his own depth of emotions, which preserves him from suicide, as the return of deceptive consoling traditions from childhood. Nevertheless he ascends into the Marianist heaven. The poem does not decide, as to whether its progressive course would refute the skepticism of the mature thinker or whether its last word would be once more a symbol – “only an allegory” – and transcendence secularized, in well-nigh Hegelian fashion, into the image of the whole of fulfilled immanence. Whoever makes transcendence thingly-solid [dingfest], can be justifiably charged, as by Karl Kraus, with lack of imagination, hostility to the intellect, and in these the betrayal of transcendence. If by contrast the possibility of redemption in the existent, be it ever so distant and weak, is totally cut off, then the Spirit would turn into an illusion, ultimately deifying the finite, conditioned, merely existent subject as the carrier of the Spirit. This paradox of what is transcendent had an answer in Rimbaud’s vision of a humanity emancipated from oppression as the true deity. Later the Old-Kantian Mynona undisguisedly mythologized the subject and rendered idealism manifest as hubris. With these sorts of speculative consequences, “science fiction” and rocketry easily came to an understanding. If in fact the earth was the only heavenly body inhabited by rational beings, then that would be a metaphysicum [Latin: something metaphysical], whose idiocy would denounce metaphysics; in the end human beings would really be the gods, only under the bane, which prevents them from know it – and what gods! – indeed without domination over the cosmos, whereby such speculations are fortunately once again rendered void.

All metaphysical ones however are pushed fatally into the apocryphal. The ideological untruth in the conception of transcendence is the separation of body and soul, reflex of the division of labor. It leads to the idolization of the res

cogitans [Latin: thinking substance] as the principle which exploits nature, and to the material denial, which would dissolve in the concept of a transcendence beyond the context of guilt. Hope however clings, as in Mignon's song, to the transfigured body. Metaphysics does not want to hear anything of this, does not want to demean itself with what is material. That is why it crosses the line to the inferior belief in spirits. There is no difference between the hypostasis of a noncorporeal and nevertheless individualized Spirit – for what indeed would theology have left in its hands without it – and the fraudulent assertion of existing purely spiritual beings through spiritism, than the historical dignity, which garbs the concept of the Spirit. Social success, social power turns through such dignity into the criterion of metaphysical truth. Spiritualism, in German the doctrine of the Spirit as the individual-substantial principle, is, without its final letters, the English word for spiritism. The equivocation rests upon the epistemological privation, which once motivated the idealists to go beyond the analysis of the individual consciousness towards the construction of a transcendental or absolute one. Individual consciousness is a piece of the spatio-temporal world, without any prerogative over this and not to be conceived of as detached from the world of bodies according to a human faculty. The idealistic construction however, which intends to eliminate the earthly remains, becomes devoid of essence, as soon as it totally stamps out that egoity, which was the model for the concept of the Spirit. Hence the assumption of an insensible egoity, which is nevertheless supposed to manifest itself as existence, contrary to its own determination, in space and time. According to the current state of cosmology, heaven and hell as existents in space are simple archaisms. This would relegate immortality to that of the spirits, lending it something ghostly and unreal, which mocks its own concept. The Christian dogmatics, which thought of the awakening of souls as coinciding with the resurrection of the flesh, was metaphysically more consistent – more enlightened, if you will – than speculative metaphysics; just as hope means corporeal resurrection and knows through its intellectualization that it has been robbed of what is best. With that meanwhile the unreasonable demands of metaphysical speculation increase unbearably. Cognition weighs heavily on the side of absolute mortality, which is intolerable to it, before which it turns into something absolutely indifferent. This is what the idea of truth drives towards, the

highest among the metaphysical ones. Whoever believes in God, can therefore not believe in Him. The possibility, for which the divine name stands, is held fast by those who do not believe. If the ban on the graven image was at one time extended to the naming of the Name, then it has itself become suspected of superstition in this form. It has exacerbated itself: to even think of hope, violates it and works against it. So deeply is history sunk into the metaphysical truth, which denies history – progressing demythologization – in vain. This last however devours itself like the mythical gods were wont to do with their children. By leaving nothing left over except the merely existent, they recoil into mythos. For it is nothing less than the closed context of immanence, of what is. Today metaphysics has contracted into this contradiction. The thinking which attempts to remove it, is threatened with untruth here and there.

11. APPEARANCE [SCHEIN] OF THE OTHER 394–397

The ontological proof of God is, in spite of the Kantian critique and, as it were, absorbing this latter into itself, resurrected in the Hegelian dialectic. However in vain. In that Hegel consistently dissolves the non-identical into pure identity, the concept becomes the guarantor of what is not conceptual, transcendence is captured by the immanence of the Spirit and is so much as abolished into its totality. The more transcendence is subsequently disassembled through enlightenment in the world and in the Spirit, the more it turns into something hidden, as if it had concentrated itself into an extreme point beyond all mediations. To this extent the anti-historical theology of the utterly divergent has its historical index. The question of metaphysics sharpens itself, as to whether this wholly thin, abstract, indeterminate thing would be its ultimate and already lost defensive position, or whether metaphysics survives alone in what is slightest and shabbiest, in the state of complete inconspicuousness [Unscheinbarkeit], which brings the high-handed reason, which takes care of business without resistance and without reflection, to reason. The thesis of positivism is that of the nullity of metaphysics, even that which fled into profanity. Even the idea of truth is sacrificed, for whose sake positivism was initiated. To have established this, is Wittgenstein's achievement, however well, incidentally, his vow of silence fits with the falsely resurrected, dogmatic metaphysics, no longer to be distinguished from the wordlessly ecstatic naïve faith in being. What would not be affected by demythologization, without apologetically

making itself available, would be no argument – whose sphere is the antinomical pure and simple – but the experience, that the thought, which does not cut off its own head, culminates in transcendence, down to the idea of a constitution of the world in which not only existent suffering would be abolished, but would revoke even the sort which is irrevocably past. The convergence of all thoughts in the concept of something, which would be different from the unspeakable existent, the world, is not the same as the infinitesimal principle with which Leibniz and Kant had thought to render the idea of transcendence commensurable to a science, whose own fallibility, the confusion of the exploitation of nature and being-in-itself, motivates the correcting experience of convergence. The world is worse than hell and better. Worse, because not even the nihility of that absolute would be, as which it ultimately still appears in Schopenhauerian Nirvana as reconcilable. The inescapably closed context of immanence denies even that meaning, which the Indian philosopheme of the world as the dream of an evil demon glimpses in such; Schopenhauer thinks mistakenly, because he declares the law, which preserves immanence in its own bane, unmediated to that which is essential, which is barred from immanence and could not at all be conceived other than as transcendent. The world is better, because the absolute conclusiveness which Schopenhauer credits to the course of the world is borrowed for its part from the idealistic system, pure identity-principle and as deceptive as any. The disturbed and damaged course of the world is, as in Kafka, also incommensurable with the sense of its own sheer senselessness and blindness, not to be stringently construed according to their principle. It conflicts with the attempt of the despairing consciousness, to posit despair as an absolute. The course of the world is not completely conclusive, also not absolute despair; this latter is on the contrary its conclusiveness. As untenable as the traces of the Other are in it; as much as all happiness is distorted by its revocability, the existent is nevertheless shot through, in the gaps which stamp identity as a lie, with the promises, constantly broken again, of that Other. Every happiness is a fragment of the total happiness, which human beings are denied and which they deny themselves. Convergence, the humanly promised Other of history, points unswervingly to what ontology illegitimately resettles before history or exempts from it. The concept is not real, as the ontological proof would have it, but it could not be thought, if something in the thing did not press towards it.

Kraus, who, armored against every tangible, imaginatively unimaginative assertion of transcendence, preferred to read this latter longingly rather than cancel it out, was no romantic liberal metaphorist. Though metaphysics is not to be resurrected – the concept of resurrection belongs to creatures, not to something created, and is, in intellectual forms, the index of their untruth – but perhaps it only originates with the realization of what is thought in its sign. Art anticipates something of this. Nietzsche's work overflows with invective against metaphysics. But no formulation describes the latter more faithfully than that of Zarathustra: pure fool, pure poet. The thinking artist understood the unthought art. The thought, which does not capitulate before the miserably ontic, turns by the latter's criteria into nothing, truth into untruth, philosophy into folly. Nevertheless it cannot abdicate, lest stupidity triumph in realized unreason. Aux sots je préfère les fous [French: To pigs, I prefer fools]. Folly is truth in the form, with which human beings are stricken, as soon as they do not, in the midst of the untrue, let go of truth. Even in its highest achievements art is appearance [Schein]; the appearance [Schein], however, what is irresistible in it, it receives from what does not appear [Scheinlosen]. By refraining from judgement, it says, especially the ones scorned as nihilistic, that everything would not be just nothing. Otherwise, what always is, would be pale, colorless, indifferent. There is no light on human beings and things, in which transcendence is not reflected. Inextinguishable, the resistance against the fungible world of exchange in that of the eye, which does not want the colors of the world to be destroyed. In appearance [Schein] is the promise of what does not appear [Scheinlose].

12. SELF-REFLECTION OF DIALECTICS 397–400

At question is, whether metaphysics, as the knowledge of the absolute, would at all be possible without the construction of absolute knowledge, without that idealism, which lends its title to the last chapter of the Hegelian *Phenomenology*. Doesn't it say, that whoever deals with the absolute, would necessarily be the thinking organ, capable of doing this, precisely thereby itself the absolute; would not dialectics, on the other hand, in the transition to a metaphysics, which is not simply the same as dialectics, violate its own strict concept of negativity? Dialectics, the epitome of negative knowledge, would like none other beside it; even as the negative kind, it drags along with itself the commandment of

exclusivity from the positive kind, from the system. It would have to negate, according to such reasoning, non-dialectical consciousness as finite and fallible. In all its historical forms it has refused to step out of it. It mediated conceptually, whether willed or no, between the unconditional and the finite spirit; this made theology intermittently time and again into its enemy. Although it thinks the absolute, the latter remains, as something mediated by the former, in thrall to conditioned thought. If the Hegelian absolute was the secularization of the deity, then nevertheless precisely that of its secularization; as the totality of the Spirit that absolute remained enchained to its finite human model. If thought however in the undiminished consciousness of this reaches, gropingly, beyond anything of this sort, in that it names the Other as something utterly incommensurable to it, which it nevertheless thinks, then it will find shelter nowhere else than in the dogmatic tradition. Thinking is in such thoughts alien to its content, unreconciled, and newly condemned to two sorts of truth, which would be incompatible with the idea of the true. Metaphysics depends upon whether one can get out of this aporia without underhanded trickery. To do this, dialectics, at once the imprint of the universal context of mystification and its critique, must turn in one last movement against itself. The critique of everything particular, which posits itself absolutely, is that of the shadow of absoluteness over the critique itself, of the fact that it, too, against its tendency, must remain in the medium of the concept. It destroys the identity-claim, by honoring it in its testing. That is why it only reaches so far as this latter. The latter stamps the former as the magic circle with the appearance [Schein] of absolute knowledge. It is up to its self-reflection to cancel it out, exactly therein the negation of the negation, which does not cross over into a position. Dialectics is the self-consciousness of the objective context of delusion, not something already escaped from this latter. To break out of the latter from inside, is objectively its goal. The power to break out grows in it from the context of immanence; what would apply to it, once more, is Hegel's dictum, that dialectics would absorb the power of the opponent, turning it against the latter; not only in what is dialectically individual but in the end in the whole. It grasps, with the means of logic, this latter's character of compulsion, hoping that it would yield. The absolute however, as it hovers before metaphysics, would be the non-identical, which would only emerge until after the identity-compulsion

dissolved. Without the identity-thesis dialectics is not the whole; but therefore also no cardinal sin, to leave it in a dialectical step. It lies in the determination of negative dialectics, that it does not come to rest within itself, as if it were total; that is its form of hope. Kant indicated something of this in the doctrine of the transcendental thing in itself beyond the mechanism of identification. However stringent the critique of that doctrine by his successors, they regressively reinforced the bane that much more, just like the post-revolutionary bourgeoisie as a whole: they hypostasized the compulsion itself as the absolute. To be sure Kant, for his part, in the determination of the thing in itself as that of an intelligible essence, conceived of transcendence as the non-identical, but equated it with the absolute subject, bowing nonetheless to the identity-principle. The process of cognition, which is supposed to approach the transcendental thing asymptotically, slides it ahead of itself, as it were, and removes it from consciousness. The identifications of the absolute transpose it onto the human beings, from whom the identity-principle derives; they are, as they at times confess and as the enlightenment can strikingly demonstrate to them every time, anthropomorphisms. That is why the absolute, which the Spirit approaches, melts away before it: its approach is a mirage. However the successful elimination of every anthropomorphism, with which the context of delusion would be removed, very likely coincides in the end with this latter, with absolute identity. To deny the secret by identification, by constantly tearing more chunks out of it, does not solve it. Rather, as though in play, it stamps the control of nature as a lie, by means of the memento of the powerlessness of its power. Enlightenment leaves as good as nothing left of metaphysical truth-content, *presque rien* [French: almost nothing] after a modern musical term. What shrinks back becomes ever smaller, just as Goethe portrayed in the parable of the little box of the New Melusine, which names an extremity; ever more inconspicuous [unscheinbarer]; this is the reason that, in the critique of cognition as much as in the philosophy of history, metaphysics migrates into micrology. This latter is the place of metaphysics as the refuge from what is total. Nothing absolute is to be expressed otherwise than in the subject-matter and categories of immanence, while nevertheless this latter is not to be deified either in its conditionality or as its total summation. Metaphysics is, according to its own concept, not possible as a deductive context of judgements over the existent. Just as little can it be thought

according to the model of that which is absolutely divergent, which fearsomely mocks thinking. Consequently it would be possible solely as the legible constellation of the existent. From this latter it would receive its material, without which it would not be, would not however transfigure the existence of its elements, but would bring them instead into a configuration in which the elements assemble into a script. To that end it must be good at wishing. That the wish would be a bad father to the thought has been since Xenophanes one of the general theses of the European enlightenment, and still applies undiminished against the ontological attempts at restoration. But thinking, itself a conduct, contains the need – at first the life-and-death necessity – in itself. One thinks out of need, even where “wishful thinking” [in English] is dismissed. The motor of the need is that of the effort, which thinking involves as activity. The object of critique is therefore not the need in thinking but the relationship between both. The need in thinking wishes, however, that there would be thinking. It demands its negation through thinking, it must disappear into thinking, if it is really supposed to be satisfied, and in this negation it lives on, representing in the innermost cells of thought, what is not the same as the latter. The smallest innerworldly markings would be relevant to the absolute, for the micrological glance demolishes the shells of that which is helplessly compartmentalized according to the measure of its subsuming master concept and explodes its identity, the deception, that it would be merely an exemplar. Such thinking is solidaristic with metaphysics in the moment of the latter’s fall.