

Franz Rosenzweig

# THE STAR OF REDEMPTION



# THE STAR OF REDEMPTION

MODERN JEWISH PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

Translations and Critical Studies

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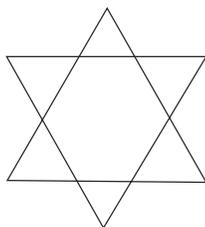
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Franz Rosenzweig

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# **THE STAR OF REDEMPTION**



**FRANZ ROSENZWEIG**

**In Translation by Barbara E. Galli**

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## Acknowledgments

Friendships have formed, are forming, through us, between us, those of us who have met with Franz Rosenzweig upon the pages he left for us, these very rich pages that touch us to think, to think anew.

First to Rosenzweig, and then to all friends known and unknown, to friendships that will form, in a hundred years and in hundreds of years—to these souls, thank you.

Were it proper, and I think it is not for a work of translation only, were it proper to dedicate this volume to someone, it would be to Rafael Rosenzweig, who has been kind to us who have come to his father's writings. Along with his father's, may his memory be for a blessing.

This edition before us is the 1920 original version of Rosenzweig's *Stern der Erlösung*, in an English translation. The appendices that were prepared by Nahum N. Glatzer in accordance with Rosenzweig's instructions included in both the 1930 and the 1954 German editions, are here omitted; they can be found, expanded, in William W. Hallo's English editions of 1970, 1971, and 1985. The marginal headings, or more accurately, subject guides, which were devised by Rosenzweig subsequent to the 1920 publication, and which are set in the 1930 and 1954 German edition, however, are replicated here. Because Rosenzweig wanted his name to appear only at the end of the *Star* (a request denied by his publisher), and because he wished further that one day vaster communities might philosophize in life within the "new thinking," and that this be done without attributing this way of thinking and living to his name, either in association or in thanks, I am therefore partially attempting to comply with these wishes by leaving out the biographical information included in the 1930 and 1954 German editions. By now, at any rate, many places amply provide details of the course of Rosenzweig's brief life on earth. The index, which I hope will be helpful, is likely, even yet, insufficient for the nature of the tastes and needs of all, and certainly insufficient for the nature of Rosenzweig's symphonically, poetically composed opus, with its repetitions comprising reversals, its crescendos, its pianissimos, rest notes, and silent notes of allusion.

A second volume could be prepared, to accompany these silent notes. The sprinkling of footnotes is merely a foretaste, denoting incompleteness on the one hand, and on the other hand the completeness of the *Star* as it stands unannotated. Yet, my smattering of footnotes may provide an impetus for a fuller treatment, indeed for a complete book solely of annotations.

Anna M. Rosenberg, of the older Vienna, my first professor of German, over thirty years ago now, has become an intimate friend, in part through helping me translate some of the more tricky sentences of Rosenzweig's writings throughout many seasons. She did not wish to be acknowledged, but she who breathed the same air as Rosenzweig did—how can I not acknowledge her?

Karin Doerr, professor of German language and literature, has devoted much of her research to the changes in and the usages of the German language leading up to, during, and since the bleak Third Reich. She kindly offered to discuss some of Rosenzweig's terminology, and to read through early versions of my typescript. My attempts at thanking her never seem to measure up, for she (wrongly) claims that no thanks are due.

William W. Hallo's translation of the *Star* has benefited those of us who were first introduced to Rosenzweig in the English language. The benefits of these thirty-four years remain young for a work that is lasting. In many, or even most ways, my own translation seems somehow foreign to me, so long has Hallo's rendering been a part of me. As difficult as it was, during this work, I tried to forget that copies of his edition sit on my shelves, some now tattered from repeated use, and did not turn to them, even though Kafka's policeman would sneeringly laugh on many a day, saying "Give up, give up." May that policeman turn back again, may the fog lift from his blindness to other, mysterious forms of collaboration and conversation. Between black and white, blended, there may be, not gray, but a silvery starlight until that day of golden light, with no words between.

Alexandre Derczansky and Jean-Louis Schlegel prepared a French translation over twenty years ago. This version I did consult, for differences that, oddly, would draw closer into the German through an Anglo mind versed in the Latin languages. Several of my footnotes are directly indebted to theirs. Shortly after the completion of my work, however, in a local francophone bookstore I happened upon the 2003 edition. It has been revised and annotated by Schlegel, and has a preface by Stéphane Mosès.

Alexander van Ligten published a Dutch translation in 2000. The volume is exquisite: beautiful paper, beautiful font, and a comely jacket. It is no surprise to hear that the translation reflects the outer beauty. Alexander's unbidden but gratefully received suggestions and advice, his readiness in standing by, are more appreciated than he will ever know. His appendix of literary references to the *Star* shows the standard that is possible, a shining model indeed.

David Novak, briefly and from time to time, but effectively on every count, gave inestimable encouragement.

Robert Gibbs keeps good cheer, multiplying the brightness of his mind; and infused with good cheer, we can always walk on.

Norman Ravvin, Chair of Concordia University Institute for Canadian Jewish Studies (Montreal), graciously agreed to every request for financial assistance to attend conferences over a three-year period, where, besides the usual presenting of papers, I could meet face-to-face with those, so many of whom are unnamed here, who in various ways became a piece of this enterprise. I am especially thankful for the airfare to Tempe, Arizona, where The Rosenzweig Society met in 2002.

In fact, I owe great thanks to all the members of The Rosenzweig Society who met in Tempe, Arizona, and in Kassel, Germany, Rosenzweig's hometown, in 2004. How I would have loved to offer a copy of this work to Rabbi Professor Albert Hoschander Friedlander. We have all been saddened these past weeks, and we pray that his gentle soul is already resting, in the early fashion of good souls.

Robert A. Mandel, Director of the University of Wisconsin Press, a friend through years of collaboration, has been flexible and generous. Two of his assistants have been marvelous during the publishing process: Tricia Brock and Gwen Walker.

Donna Martin, of Tuscaloosa Alabama, served as compositor. Robert Mandel, who reshapes boxes, permitted Donna and me to work together. I thank Donna and her husband Ron for giving me sultry southern air, a place far away from home, for weeks at a time, to work in their welcoming atmosphere. Who would ever believe that this is Donna's first experience at typesetting? That is the nature of Robert, to take risks and to give people chances, and we both thank him, with enormous respect.

Joseph N. Galli, my father, with civil engineering practicality, constructed bridges from rocky shores to more sheltered coastlines, and these bridges supported many vehicles of transportation, including some advice to the effect that overly tightened bowstrings will not make music.

Dennis and Louise Galli offered another hearth away from home, in Texas. Their unasked for generosity in financial assistance and otherwise, their huge hearts and positive energy, inspired many a day.

Arlene Yusim, respector of language, deep and true, understanding of and in friendship, is very much thanked.

Vivien and Harry Monn, who do not read Rosenzweig, and likely will not, will smile nonetheless whenever I get the chance to describe Rosenzweig's views on eating alone. For their companionship, for teaching, by delightful example, and unbeknownst to themselves, the wondrously restorative properties of restaurant dining, all the while showing warmth to and interest in the surrounding community, the nearest neighbor, leaving each neighbor somehow better for having been found.

Michael Oppenheim was my first "scholarly" contact with Rosenzweig. That this dear friend's foreword is bound between these covers bestows a special note of gladness, with his inviting, enticing, welcoming of readers and viewpoints, opening the "system" to befit the *Star's* end that begins—*anew and differently* to each who might read through to that last page of the book. He is a rare teacher, an even rarer friend. I thank him and Sarah, for now and for the future fields now in sight.

Elliot R. Wolfson, gifted and giving, is to be thanked, beyond my thanking,

beyond my thinking, for his genius of sensitivity, for his sensitivity of genius, so vast, with such depths. He brings good fortune by agreeing to write the Introduction, because, although Rosenzweig forbade introductions to future additions, would he not raise his eyes in gratitude to meet the glance of a poet?

light breaking  
 darkness unutterable  
 give thought in poem  
 to nothing  
 but dawn  
 between nothing  
 of night  
 lingers hope  
 of day  
 nowhere lay  
 motionless  
 time's wheel  
 recollecting  
 force of habit  
 flowering  
 in field  
 frozen scent  
 drowning  
 beneath surface  
 lies more surface  
 weightless  
 silence  
 unutterable darkness  
 breaking light  
 erw

Barbara E. Galli  
 Montreal, 9 August 2004  
 22 Av 5764

## Foreword

A Life: The richness and even greater promise of a life prematurely cut short is witnessed by an extraordinary book. Franz Rosenzweig was born on December 25, 1886 in Cassel, Germany. His parents were acculturated upper middle class Germans, whose identity as Jews was expressed primarily through their sense of loyalty to the Jewish community. Franz's university education was multidisciplinary, including the study of medicine, history, philosophy and law. Two events, two encounters of 1913, were pivotal in establishing the direction of his life. The first was a conversation with an elder peer, Eugen Rosenstock, whose passionate and articulate commitment to Christianity convinced Franz that religion, at least Christianity, could provide a meaningful orientation for modern life. The second was a religious metamorphosis during the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, *Yom Kippur*. His experience of God's nearness taught him that there was still fire in the smoldering embers of Judaism, despite his having earlier dismissed that religious heritage as moribund. From that time, Rosenzweig sought to uncover, express, and to institutionally ground an answer to the puzzle of what constituted a life that was both fully Jewish and fully modern. *The Star of Redemption*, published in 1922, was Rosenzweig's self-constructed philosophic signpost. It was followed by his efforts to translate some essential sources of the Jewish past, the Bible and the poems of the great medieval poet/philosopher Judah Halevi, and to found a Jewish adult education institute, the *Freies Jüdisches Lehrhaus* in Frankfurt. Franz was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis in 1922, but struggled to go on speaking, writing, and engaging with others until his death, at the age of 42, on December 10, 1929.

A Love Poem: The first draft of the *Star* was composed when Rosenzweig was a German soldier stationed at the Balkan front. In the book, Rosenzweig argues that Jews cannot give themselves fully to war, but this original site of composition plays at least some latent role in the structure of a text that begins—"From Death," and ends, "Into Life." Another site in the completion of the text a few months later was the house of a dear friend, Margrit Huessy, who also happened to be the wife of Eugen Rosenstock. In letters to Margrit, Franz acknowledged his closeness to her and the feeling of her presence as he wrote the "heart" of the *Star* (86)\*, the panegyric on Revelation which begins with the quotation from the biblical "Song of Songs," "Love is as strong as death." In the *Star* Rosenzweig explains that it is only love—God's love for us, the soul's love of God, and the orienting love of the neighbor, that endows life with a meaning that even death cannot erase. Yet, this meaning belongs to the registry of eternity; in life it appears as effervescent as "a kiss."

\* Numbers within brackets refer to pages in Rosenzweig's "The New Thinking: A Few Supplementary Remarks to the *Star*," in *Franz Rosenzweig's "The New Thinking,"* edited and translated by Alan Udoff and Barbara E. Galli, Syracuse University Press, 1999. All other material in quotation marks is taken from the *Star* itself.

A Jewish Philosophy: Rosenzweig rejected the label of a “Jewish book” (68) that some of his contemporaries gave to the *Star*. For him it was a “system of philosophy” (69). A text that laid out “a logic, an ethic, an aesthetic, and a philosophy of religion” (70) was a philosophic book. Yet, the *Star* was also Jewish, through and through. It narrated life in terms of fundamental biblical categories, as these are understood from out of the resources of Jewish texts, liturgy, and everyday life. And even in style it intimately addresses its Jewish readers as “us” and “our.” More importantly, the *Star* defines an expansive understanding of Jewish philosophy through its performance; symbolized by the two overlapping triangles of God, World, Man, and Creation, Revelation, Redemption. As Rosenzweig argued, it is not so-called Jewish topics that make a Jewish text (92), or that are the foci for Jewish philosophy. Jewish philosophy finds its complements in Islamic philosophy and Indian philosophy, in unique philosophic endeavors, drawing on communities’ experiences that may stretch over centuries or millennium, to understand nothing less than the meaning of life and the nature of the universe.

The tremendous range and brilliance of individual treatments have brought many critics to mine the *Star’s* depths, turning it this way and that and finding in it always a surplus. It has already proven itself as a living and fertile resource for creative thinkers in North America, Europe, and Israel. In the context of modern Jewish philosophy it stands as a unique classic, occupying a corresponding place to that of Maimonides’ *Guide for the Perplexed* in its setting within medieval Jewish philosophy.

Topics and Registers: What does the *Star* not talk about? A random sampling of the topics that the course of the *Star* runs through, and frequently makes important comments about, includes: Greek history, modern and ancient tragedies, philosophers from Plato and Aristotle through Hegel and Nietzsche, Goethe, biblical texts, religious liturgies, church architecture, music, modern political history, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, such religious holidays as the Sabbath, Passover and Yom Kippur, Christmas and Easter, God, soul, prayer, miracles, names, love, hope, faith, sacrifice, fear of death, trust, personality, character, defiance, humility, mathematics, logic, grammar, speech, time and eternity. What is most impressive is that Rosenzweig does not just allude to these topics but puts them into their disciplinary contexts, that is, narrates correlations between what may be called different registers. In each of the three Parts or “volumes” (70), although usually more sustained in one particular Part than in the others, the text intricately weaves together, that is, addresses, some of the most fundamental human disciplines: mathematics, logic, aesthetics, philosophy, theology, world history, Western intellectual history, world religions, psychology, sociology, political theory, biblical literature, and linguistics.

On System: Order is put into the plethora of topics and fields through the

architectonic of the text as well as a system that is both complex and allusive. The *Star* is structured into three Parts and each Part has an Introduction, three Books, and a conclusion: the latter are consecutively titled Transition, Threshold, and Gate. Beginning with a denial of Oneness or Totality and an affirmation of the plurality of the three “elements” God, World, and Man, each Part is guided by a different “organon:” mathematics, grammar, liturgy. Still, there are convincing reasons to suggest that the overriding method is mathematical, or linguistic, or perhaps even Kabbalistic.

What is unambiguous is that through the route of the *Star*’s system incredibly powerful insights emerge—and from an author in his mid-thirties, woe to us all! The strength of a system is measured by what it leads the author to, the facets that emerge, both customary and surprising, that the author must still illuminate through her or his thought and imagination. Every enumeration of such insights in the *Star* is necessarily partial and reflects most of all the limitations of the commentator. There are innumerable paragraphs and pages that are astonishing in their perspicacity, such as the treatments of the immediacy of love being expressed as commandment to the other, the dialectic of prayer through which God and humans tempt each other, the relationship between art and suffering, and, equally, the way that life ultimately ascends into light.

However, I would also like to suggest, in the spirit of Rosenzweig himself, that what is from one direction a work’s greatest strength, is also, from another perspective, its greatest weakness. The systematic leads to eloquent ideas and correlations, but also hides or distorts, and sometimes deadens. The distortions are, for me, most pronounced in terms of the treatments of world religions. There are passing, gratuitous comments on Indian and Chinese religions, disparaging appraisals about Islam—despite some real insights, the method necessitates that these be put in a negative light—and one-sided treatments of Judaism’s metahistorical feature and Christianity’s tensions that do “not do justice to either” (94). I believe that in each of these cases, the system or force of the narrative brings the author of the *Star* to proffer judgments that are shadows of the full-rounded views that the person, Franz Rosenzweig, would acknowledge in conversation, if he would have put down the pen. Also, at times the narration is mechanical, where important arguments become overly lengthy because they are made for the sake of the system itself. As examples, and this might well again point to my lacunae rather than those of the *Star*, the elaborate commentary on the various equations of Part One, the treatments of some of the religious holidays, and the discussion of the construction of the Star of Redemption at the end of the book.

On Reading: In light of the comments above, it should come as no surprise that reading the *Star* is universally seen as a difficult endeavor. In fact, it has been related that there were few among Franz’s contemporaries who completed the

whole book. Still, this is a book that rewards every effort not only proportionally but exponentially. Rosenzweig himself implicitly acknowledged the difficulties in reading the text by offering a suggestion to his future readers. He insisted that one should not hesitate in the face of obstacles, but employ the Napoleonic tactic, of “courageously” reading on until that vista is reached “where the whole can be seen at a glance” (72). He wrote that a philosophic book spins out one idea, and if the first paragraphs or pages could be fully understood, there would be no need to read further (72). Thus, his advice to continue on is very important. Many themes emerge slowly in the text, are built up from a variety of perspectives, before the full meaning surfaces. The treatment of art reappears both miraculously and appropriately in each of the Parts (70, 95), and the category of Creation, introduced in the Book of the same name, becomes clearer in the next Book, when it is compared and contrasted to Revelation.

And Readings: The text can be read, that is understood, from at least three vantage points. Some critics start with the beginning—which is usually a good idea—and see the first Part as laying the foundation for everything else. In this case, the organon of mathematics, the dialectic of “Yes” and “No” within the three elements of God, World, and Man, are seen as keys not only to that “logical-metaphysical” (78) section but to the others equally. The *Star* can also be understood—once it has been read—from the end, that is, the third Part, backward (95). In this case, it is a vision of God’s Truth, silently emerging in the midst of the liturgical experience of the Jewish and Christian communities, that allows one to look backward to the events of creation and revelation, and to the mathematical grounding of the three elements. I look at the *Star* from the middle outward (inside out) in the two directions. Keeping Rosenzweig’s statement in mind that the core of the *Star* is found in the second Book, “On Revelation,” in the second Part (86), grammar or language is actually the overriding organon and the dialogue of love initiated by God and requited as “return gift” by the soul provides the point of departure as well as the central message. The first Part becomes as much about “urword” and the foundations of language as about mathematics and logic, and the third Part is seen as bringing together the redemptive love of the neighbor, ensouling all persons and all things, with the liturgical experience of eternity inside the two religious communities. Is the *Star* a primer of love, comparable to those Medieval guides describing the stages leading to mystical union? If so, the goal of losing the self in God has been replaced by the divine-human dialogue of love. Its highlight is when the intricate method blossoms into poetry, through the “word and fire” of names.

I trust that the multiple possibilities for interpreting the *Star*, and only a few have been mentioned, will not overwhelm, but encourage its readers. While it is a truism today that there is no one legitimate reading of a book, Rosenzweig’s *Star* should be regarded as a proof-text for this statement. Its combination

of system and direct address, challenges the reader to utilize her or his depth of life experiences (soul) to listen and affirm their own “truly” in response to Rosenzweig’s discourse.

On Cackling: In the essay “The New Thinking” Rosenzweig satirizes those authors who write a Preface to their work, cackling “after the egg had been laid” (67). Taking his own words to heart, he only allowed that essay to be placed as a Foreword to the *Star* a single time. Rosenzweig’s wishes have been respected in this new translation of the *Star*, and I hope that he—and you, his readers—would excuse this, my cackling over someone else’s egg.

Michael Oppenheim  
May 2004



# Introduction to Barbara Galli's Translation of Rosenzweig's *Star*

Elliot R. Wolfson

In deep gratitude, I have accepted the invitation of Barbara Galli to write a brief introduction to her monumental translation of Rosenzweig's *Star of Redemption*, an offer, I hasten to add, that came with no sense of demand or obligation, but as a pure gift, a request that bestowed upon me the honor of giving in receiving.

Readers familiar with the *Star* are quite aware of the complexity of Rosenzweig's language as well as the central place that language occupies in his thought. The confluence of these two points renders the task of translating Rosenzweig particularly challenging. Rosenzweig himself taught us that every act of speech thinking is an act of translation, and, conversely, we may assume that every act of translation is an act of speech thinking. Translation, on this accord, exemplifies, embodies, the character of speech thinking, *Sprachdenken*, Rosenzweig's deft turn-of-phrase to denote the dialogical nature of language. By the latter I assume that, for Rosenzweig, as for Heidegger, *Sprache* encompasses the written as well as the oral. In the case of Rosenzweig, the juxtaposition is exemplified by the fact that he thought it tenable on phenomenological grounds to heed the voice of revelation from the scriptural text—the confluence of the oral and written well captured in the image of giving voice to the inscripted.

We are profoundly indebted to Galli for the wisdom of persisting in the wisdom of her persistence, a feat of conviction illustrated in every line of the translation, truly an act of love dedicated singlemindedly to delivering Rosenzweig to numerous generations of new readers. If I may be allowed to express an opinion that might be considered by some transgressive in its piety, I would contend that it is entirely appropriate to cast Galli's efforts *avodah sheba-lev*, "labor in the heart," a technical rabbinic designation for prayer. The new translation of the *Star*, simply put, is a gesture of worship, not to be understood as a specimen tied to a particular liturgical community, but rather as the linguistic gesticulation as such, the potentiality for speech, which instantiates the very possibility of prayer in any and all given cultural contexts, the deed of disclosing without-limit by enclosing within limit, expanding the circle by circumscribing the line, carrying over by laying down.

For Rosenzweig, and here I note again an affinity to Heidegger, the way of speech—a term, as I remarked above, that denotes the verbal and graphic—is to reveal and to conceal, to uncover and to re-cover, not successively, but concurrently. For both thinkers, moreover, translation is a mode of interpretation, a property that sheds light on the hermeneutic condition of human subjectivity, the always necessarily partial or perspectival grasp of truth, and the consequent inference that untruth is as much a part of the framing of truth as truth itself. For

Heidegger, this is most poignantly expressed in his insight concerning the “double concealment” that “belongs to the nature of truth as unconcealedness.” For Rosenzweig, the analogous move is found in his reading of the Song of Songs. Following an exegetical trajectory that can be traced to the formative rabbinic period, Rosenzweig asserts that the literal meaning of the text is figurative, whence he elicits the parabolic understanding of language more generally, that is, in his judgment, human language on the whole—and not just theological discourse—is inherently parabolic. To render this more precisely in Rosenzweig’s idiom, the Song instructs us that truth is mirrored directly in the mirror of appearance, that is, the mirror of the text. Through the agency of this double mirroring—Heidegger’s double concealment—one can discern the inherently metaphorical nature of eros and the inherently erotic nature of metaphor.

By way of introduction it would be useful to inquire about the nature of introduction. On the face of it this seems a question hardly worth asking. Structurally, the introductory utterance is placed before the beginning of a treatise, and hence it serves quite obviously as the instigation that affords the reader an opportunity to retrace his or her way back to the beginning. The matter is borne out philologically: “introduce” denotes to lead in, to bring forward, to initiate, to institute, to usher another into the middle of something. At the terminus of the taxonomic delineation, we come to the paradox of beginning: To begin the beginning must have begun otherwise it is no beginning. What begins, therefore, can only be what has already been what is yet to come. An introduction, we might say, is a way to begin to illumine the way to begin, a way to begin the beginning, to open the opening, the duplicitous door of exit/entry, the mystery of *beit* that comes before *alef*.

The matter of introduction is still more complex, and before I proceed with the specific theme of this introduction, some obstacles need to be cleared from the path. First, it is necessary to note that to illumine the beginning one must have the end in mind from the beginning, and, yet, to have the end in mind from the beginning suggests that the end can be apprehended only from the beginning. The spot where apprehending the end from the beginning crisscrosses with apprehending the beginning from the end is the midpoint of the circle. As readers of the *Star* well know, the hermeneutic embraced by Rosenzweig partakes of this very circle; his mode of thinking, poetically displayed in the *Star* and other compositions, destabilizes both a linear conception of time and a logocentric alignment of reasoning. The *Star*, no doubt, imparts to its reader the knowledge that when one comes to the end of the line, one comprehends the circularity of the journey, not, however, as a closed cycle of eternal recurrence of the same wherein the end is perfectly prefigured and thus potentially predictable in/at the beginning, but in the form of a circuitous path, a linear circle, that returns one to the beginning where one has never

been, the point whence a new line extends from the open enclosure of the enclosed opening.

On this score it is not misleading to speak of Rosenzweig's opus itself as nothing but an introduction, an initiation that opens the path to an opening that both shelters and lays bare the possibility of transcendence undercutting the historical timeline by expanding the moment to eternity. For Rosenzweig, the texture of lived time is a swerve, a curvature, and it is thus entirely possible for human beings to transform "before" into "after," and "after" into "before," to expect the past and to remember the future in a present that endures as that which is eternally on the way to becoming what it has always been. Furthermore, for Rosenzweig, as for Heidegger, there is an intrinsic connection between hermeneutics and time. The interpretative act—which bespeaks the essential nature of speech-thinking, the dialogical comportment unique to the human being, in its inscribed and oral forms—affords one an opportunity to experience time, and, more specifically, the moment, which encapsulates time in its most elemental cadence, as novel repetition. Alternatively expressed, the understanding of language as translation provides the hermeneutical basis for the theological claim (at least in the case of Rosenzweig) that the word reiterated with each reading of Scripture is the word yet to be spoken. Rosenzweig's affirmation of revelation as a genuine possibility at every moment, the phenomenological cornerstone of his new thinking, rests on the belief in this very possibility, and just as, temporally, the present is the opening through which one accesses past and future, so, theologically, revelation is the experience that makes belief in creation and redemption possible, the phenomenal basis for the mythopoeic narrative.

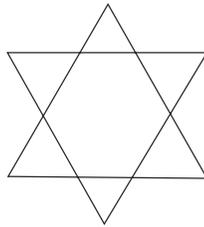
The paradoxical nature of translation as inceptual iteration constitutes a critical component in the correlation of the three theological categories, creation (*Schöpfung*), revelation (*Offenbarung*), and redemption (*Erlösung*), and the respective temporal modes, past, present, and future. The dialogical encounter of the revelatory moment in the always-renewed cosmos of the present paves the path to the ever-enduring protocosmos of creation in the past and to the eternal hypercosmos of redemption in the future. One must be careful, however, not to overemphasize the linear form implied in this narratological account, for, as we have seen, Rosenzweig insists that to live in time means to live between beginning and end, but to live the eternal life outside of time, to deny time actively within time, requires an inversion of the between, to transpose its "after" into a "before," and its "before" into an "after," to transmute its "end" into a "beginning," and its "beginning" into an "end."

From this vantage point we can speak of translation as a bridge that upholds the possibility of crossing over the temporal divide by rendering the old as new, and the new as old, a prospect that is the very essence of creative possibility and redemptive hope. The task of translation ensues from the state of dwelling in the

inverted space between the beginning-in-the-end and the end-in-the-beginning, the manner of living that Rosenzweig proclaims is the distinctive calling of the eternal people who live an eternal life, a life that is lived inside the outside of time, an eternality that bends the timeline such that the end may be found in the beginning and the beginning in the end. The surpassing of time that Rosenzweig ascribes to the eternal life lived eternally by the eternal people is experienced in the fullness of time, a radical deepening of the temporal ground, rather than through a dissolution of time in the timeless sea of eternity. Translation is precisely the venture that both presupposes and occasions the temporal surpassing of temporality.

Rosenzweig, it will be recalled, insisted that at each moment of time the future presents to a person the gift of being present to oneself. The bestowal of the present as presence that offers itself as a present is fully enacted through the medium of translation, for only by rendering the word of the other can one attend the timbre of one's own voice. Can one imagine a greater tribute to Rosenzweig than a scholar struggling heroically to hear again the word yet to be spoken, and thereby confer on countless others an opportunity to receive the gift of being present to themselves through the blazing prism of the *Star*? For this, and much more to be recovered, we bow our heads in deference to Barbara Galli.

**FRANZ ROSENZWEIG**  
**THE STAR OF REDEMPTION**



צֶלַח וּרְכַב עַל דָּבַר אֱמֶת  
(Psalm 45:4)

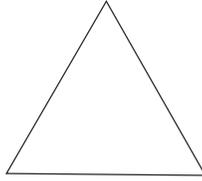


**PART ONE**

THE ELEMENTS

OR

THE EVERLASTING PRIMORDIAL WORLD

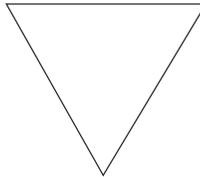


**PART TWO**

THE PATH

OR

THE EVER RENEWED WORLD

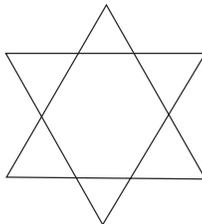


**PART THREE**

THE CONFIGURATION

OR

THE ETERNAL SUPRA-WORLD





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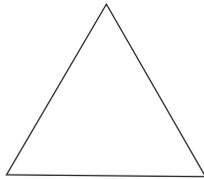
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**PART ONE**

**THE ELEMENTS  
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## INTRODUCTION

# ON THE POSSIBILITY OF KNOWING THE ALL

in philosophos!

**F**ROM DEATH, it is from the fear of death that all cognition of the All begins. Philosophy has the audacity to cast off the fear of the earthly, to remove from death its poisonous sting, from Hades his pestilential breath. All that is mortal lives in this fear of death; every new birth multiplies the fear for a new reason, for it multiplies that which is mortal. The womb of the inexhaustible earth ceaselessly gives birth to what is new, and each one is subject to death; each newly born waits with fear and trembling for the day of its passage into the dark. But philosophy refutes these earthly fears. It breaks free above the grave that opens up under our feet before each step. It abandons the body to the power of the abyss, but above it the free soul floats off in the wind. That the fear of death knows nothing of such a separation in body and soul, that it yells I, I, I and wants to hear nothing about a deflection of the fear onto a mere “body”—matters little to philosophy. That man may crawl like a worm into the folds of the naked earth before the whizzing projectiles of blind, pitiless death, or that there he may feel as violently inevitable that which he never feels otherwise: his I would be only an It if it were to die; and he may cry out his I with every cry still in his throat against the Pitiless One by whom he is threatened with such an unimaginable annihilation—upon all this misery, philosophy smiles its empty smile and, with its outstretched index finger, shows the creature, whose limbs are trembling in fear for its life in this world, a world beyond, of which it wants to know nothing at all. For man does not at all want to escape from some chain; he wants to stay, he wants—to live. Philosophy, which commends death to him as its special little shelter and as the splendid opportunity to escape from the narrowness of life, seems to be only jeering at him. Man feels only too well that he is certainly condemned to death, but not to suicide. And it is only suicide that that philosophical recommendation would truly be able to

*ABOUT  
DEATH*

recommend, not the death decreed for all. Suicide is not natural death, but a downright unnatural one. The dreadful capacity for suicide distinguishes man from all beings that we know and that we do not know. This capacity indicates precisely this step out of all that is natural. It is, of course, necessary that man step out one day in his life; he must one day devoutly fetch down the precious vial; in his dreadful poverty, he must have felt at some time lonely and adrift from the whole world, standing for a night facing the nothing. But the earth wants him back. He may not drink up the brown juice that night. For him, there is reserved another exit from the impasse of the nothing than this fall into the yawning of the abyss. Man should not cast aside from him the fear of the earthly; in his fear of death he should—stay.

He should stay. He should therefore do nothing other than what he already wants: to stay. The fear of the earthly should be removed from him only with the earthly itself. But as long as he lives on earth, he should also remain in fear of the earthly. And philosophy dupes him of this should when around the earthly it weaves the thick blue haze of its idea of the All. For clearly: an All would not die, and in the All, nothing would die. Only that which is singular can die, and everything that is mortal is solitary. This, the fact that philosophy must exclude from the world that which is singular, this exclusion of the something is also the reason why it has to be idealistic. For, with its denial of all that separates the single from the All, “idealism” is the tool with which philosophy works the obstinate material until it no longer puts up resistance against the fog that envelops it with the concept of the One and the All. Once all things are enveloped in this fog, death would for certain be swallowed up, if not in eternal victory, then at least in the one and universal night of the nothing. And here lies the ultimate conclusion of this wisdom: death would be—nothing. But actually, this is not an ultimate conclusion, but a first beginning, and death is truly not what it seems, not nothing, but a pitiless something that cannot be excluded. Even from out of the fog with which philosophy envelops it, its harsh cry resounds unremittingly; philosophy would have liked to swallow it into the night of the nothing, but it could not break off its poisonous sting; and the fear man feels, trembling before this sting, always cruelly belies the compassionate lie of philosophy.

**B**UT when philosophy denies the dark presupposition of all life, when it does not value death as something, but makes it into a nothing, it gives itself the appearance of having no presupposition. In fact, all cognition of the All has for its presupposition—nothing. For the one and universal cognition of the All, only the one and universal nothing is valid. If philosophy did not want to stop its ears before the cry of frightened humanity, it would have to take the following as its point of departure—and consciously as its point of departure—: the nothing of death is a something, each renewed nothing of death is a new something that frightens anew, and that cannot be passed over in silence, nor be silenced. And instead of the one and universal nothing that buries its head in the sand before the cry of mortal terror, and which alone philosophy wants to let precede the one and universal cognition, philosophy would have to have the courage to listen to that cry and not close its eyes before the terrible reality. The nothing is not nothing, it is something. In the dark background of the world there rise up, as its inexhaustible presupposition, a thousand deaths; instead of the one nothing that would really be nothing, a thousand nothings rise up, which are something just because they are multiple. The multiplicity of the nothing that philosophy presupposes, the reality of death that cannot be banished from the world, and announcing itself in its victim's cry that cannot be stifled, it is this that makes a lie of the basic thought of philosophy, the thought of the one and universal cognition of the All, even before it is thought. Schopenhauer revealed, on its tombstone, the secret that philosophy had kept for two and a half thousand years: death was its Musaget;<sup>1</sup> but this secret is losing its power over us. We do not want a philosophy that puts itself in the service of death and deludes us about its lasting reign due to the one and universal harmony of its dance. We do not want any illusions. If death is something, then no philosophy is again going to make us avert our eyes with its assertion that it presupposes nothing. But let us consider that assertion more closely.

With that “sole” presupposition that it presupposes nothing, wasn't philosophy already itself full of presuppositions, indeed presupposition through and through? And yet, thinking has again

*THE  
PHILOSOPHY  
OF THE ALL*

<sup>1</sup>Musaget: Apollo, leader of the Muses.

and again run down the slope of the same question: What is the world? And again and again all sorts of other more problematic realities were linked up with this question; and finally, again and again the answer to the question was sought in thinking. It is as if this presupposition, imposing in itself, of the thinkable All were throwing a shadow over the entire sphere of other possible questions. Materialism and idealism, both—not just the former—“as old as philosophy,” have an equal share in this presupposition. That which, in the face of it, claimed independence was either reduced to silence or paid no attention. It was reduced to silence, the voice that claimed to possess through a Revelation the source of divine knowledge, springing up beyond thinking. The philosophical task has been devoted for centuries to this debate between knowledge and faith; it reaches its goal in the precise moment where knowledge of the All comes to a conclusion in itself. For it must indeed be called a conclusion when this knowledge no longer includes merely its object, the All, but also includes itself with no remainder, with no remainder at least according to its own claims and its own particular modalities. This happened when Hegel enclosed the history of philosophy in the system. It seems that thinking cannot go any further than to present itself visibly, that is to say the innermost reality that is known to it, as a part of the systematic edifice, and naturally as the part that finishes it off. And just at this moment, where philosophy exhausts its ultimate formal possibilities and reaches the limit set by its own nature, it seems, too, as already noted, that the great question put to it by the course of universal history, that of the relationship between knowledge and faith, has been solved.

**HEGEL** More than once, so far, it seemed that peace had been concluded between the two hostile powers, be it on the strength of a tidy separation of the mutual claims, or be it such that philosophy believes it possesses in its arsenal the keys that would open the mysteries of Revelation. In both cases, philosophy agreed to regard Revelation as truth, a truth inaccessible to it on the one hand, but on the other hand confirmed by it. But neither solution was ever sufficient for long. Against the first solution, the pride of philosophy always immediately rose up: it could not bear to acknowledge that a door was locked to it; against the other solution, conversely, it is faith that had to bristle up: it

could not be satisfied with being acknowledged by philosophy in this way, passing as one truth among others. But Hegel's philosophy now promised to introduce something completely different. Neither the separation nor mere agreement was asserted, but an innermost connection. The knowable world becomes knowable by the same law of thinking which returns to the summit of the system as a supreme law of being. And this one law of thinking and being is first announced for universal history in Revelation, so that philosophy is only to some degree the fulfillment of that which is promised in Revelation. And in its turn, it does not exercise this office occasionally, solely, or as it were only at the zenith of its trajectory, but at each moment; to some degree, with its every breath, philosophy necessarily confirms the truth of that which Revelation has uttered. So the old quarrel seems settled, heaven and earth reconciled.

But that was only appearance, both for the solution given to the question of faith and for the self-completion of knowledge. A highly apparent appearance at any rate; for if the presupposition that was mentioned first is valid, and if all knowledge concerns the All, if it is enclosed in it while being all-powerful in it, then that appearance was certainly more than appearance, then it was truth. Whoever still wanted to raise an objection had to feel under his feet an Archimedean point outside of that knowable All. It is from such an Archimedean point that a Kierkegaard, and not only he, contested the Hegelian integration of Revelation into the All. The point in question is Søren Kierkegaard's own consciousness, or the consciousness designated by some other first and last name, of personal sin and of personal Redemption, which neither aspired to nor gave access to a dissolution into the cosmos; it did not give access to it: for even if everything in it could be translated into the universal—there remained the fact of having a first and last name, the most personal thing in the strictest and narrowest sense of the word, and everything depended precisely on that personal reality, as the bearers of these experiences asserted.

At any rate, one assertion here countered another assertion. Philosophy was accused of a deficiency, or more accurately, of an insufficiency which it could not itself admit because it could not recognize it: for, if there really was here an object situated beyond it, then, in the completed form it assumed under Hegel, it had precisely closed off any view of this beyond,

**KIERKEGAARD**

**NEW  
PHILOSOPHY**

as well as that of any other; the objection contested its right on a domain whose existence it had to deny; this objection did not attack its own domain. That had to happen in another way. And this happened in the philosophical epoch inaugurated by Schopenhauer and carried on by Nietzsche, and its end has not yet come.

**SCHOPEN-  
HAUER**

Schopenhauer was the first among the great thinkers to be concerned, not with the essence, but with the value of the world. A highly unscientific concern, if he really was enquiring into the objective value, the value of “something,” the “meaning” or the “purpose” of the world—which, after all, would only be another expression for enquiring into the essence—but if the enquiry was about its value for man, and perhaps even for the man Arthur Schopenhauer. And this is the way it was meant. Of course, it was consciously that one only asked about the value for man, and even this question’s poisonous fangs were extracted so that it found its solution, after all, in a system of the world. For system quite simply signifies that things already have value independently and universally. And so the question of man prior to the system found its answer in the saint, produced by the system in its terminal phase. At any rate, this was already an unheard-of thing in philosophy, that a human type and not a concept closed the arch of the system, really closed it as its keystone, and did not complete it as an ethical ornament or trifling appendage. And more than all the rest, its prodigious influence has only one explanation that corresponds as well to the reality of things: one felt that here there was a man at the beginning of the system, a man who no longer philosophized in the context of the history of philosophy and so to speak as its proxy, as the heir to the present status of its problems, but a man who “had resolved to reflect upon life,” because it—life—“is a toilsome thing.” These proud words of the adolescent in a conversation with Goethe—just the fact that he says “life” and not “world” is remarkable—find their complement in the letter where he proposed the completed work to the publisher. He specifies there, for the content of philosophy, the idea by which an individual mind would react to the impression the world has made on it. “An individual mind”: this was precisely the Arthur Schopenhauer who here occupied the place which, according to the prevailing conception in philosophy, the problem would have had to occupy. Man, “life,” had

become the problem, and because he had “proposed” to resolve it in the form of a philosophy, the value of the world for man had to be questioned—an extremely unscientific question as already admitted above, but all the more a human one. Till now, all philosophical interest had revolved around the knowable All; even man had been entitled to be an object of philosophy only in this relationship to the All. Now, facing this knowable world, there rose another independent reality: the living human being; before the All there rose the One who mocked all totality and all universality, there rose the “Unique One and his property.”<sup>2</sup> It was not in the book of that title—which was after all only a book—but through the tragedy of Nietzsche’s life that this innovation was then encrusted into the riverbed of the evolution of the conscious mind.

For it is only here that it was something new. Since all time poets had spoken of life and their own soul. But not philosophers. And saints had always lived their life and that of their own soul. But once again, not philosophers. Yet here there arrived a man who knew his life and his soul like a poet and obeyed their voice like a saint, and yet he was a philosopher. It almost doesn’t matter today what he philosophized about. The “Dionysian” and the “Übermensch,” the blonde beast, the eternal return—where have they gone? But he himself, who, in the metamorphoses of his figures of thought, himself metamorphosed, he himself whose soul did not fear any height, but who followed in his climbing that madly daring mind of mountain climbers, up to the sheer peak of madness where there was nothing beyond, it is he whom none who must philosophize can henceforth bypass. The frightful and exacting picture of the soul become vassal to the mind is now ineffaceable. With the great thinkers of the past, the soul could play the role of nurse and in any case that of governess of the mind, but one day the pupil grew into adulthood and went his own way, and he had rejoiced in his freedom and in his limitless perspective; it is only with abhorrence that he still remembered the four narrow walls where he had grown up. So, the mind rightly enjoyed being free from the torpor of the soul where the mistaken mind spends its days; for the philosopher, philosophy was the fresh height for escaping from the steaminess of

NIETZSCHE

<sup>2</sup>Reference to Max Stirner *L’Unique et sa propriété*, Leipzig, 1845 (French edition, *L’Age d’Homme*, Paris, 1972; translated by A. Lange).

the plain. For Nietzsche, there was not this separation between the height and the plain in his own Self, he went entirely his way, soul and mind, man and thinker remaining one until the end.

**MAN** Thus man—no! not man, but a man, an entirely specific man became a power dominating philosophy—no! his philosophy. The philosopher stopped being a *quantité négligeable* for his philosophy. The compensation that philosophy promised to give in the form of mind to the one who sold his soul to it, no longer inspired full confidence. Man, not the one who is transported into the intellect, but the man endowed with a soul, the one whose mind was only a frozen breath of his living soul—it is he, doing philosophy, who rallied from philosophy: it had to acknowledge him, to acknowledge him as an inconceivable thing for it, and yet, because he ruled it, could not be denied. Man, in the simple oneness of his own being, in his being which was established on his last name and his first name, strode out of the world that knew itself as a thinkable world, strode out of the All of philosophy.

**THE  
METAETHICAL**

Philosophy had thought it could take hold of man, including man as “personality,” in ethics. But that was an impossible aspiration. For when it grasped him, he could only slip away from it. If fundamentally it wanted to give a particular place of action in relation to all being, ethics could only reintegrate the action by the same necessity into the circle of the knowable All at the moment it elaborated it; every ethics ended by emerging again in a doctrine of the community that forms a part of being. Obviously, it did not sufficiently offer guarantees against such an emergence when one was content to emphasize the particularity of acting in relation to being; one more step back was indispensable to anchor action in the principle, where being is real, of a “character” nevertheless detached from all being; it is only thus that it could have been guaranteed as its own world facing the world. Apart from Kant alone, this never happened; and precisely with Kant, by reason of the formulation of the moral law as an act having universal value, the concept of the All again won the victory over the oneness of man; it is in this way that the “miracle in the phenomenal world”—as he ingeniously called the concept of freedom—sank again with a certain historical logic in the miracle of the phenomenal world among the post-Kantians; Kant himself plays the role of godfather for the concept of world history in Hegel, not merely in his essays of politi-

cal philosophy and the philosophy of history, but already for fundamental ethical concepts. And Schopenhauer certainly took up again from Kant the doctrine of the intelligible character in his doctrine of the will, but he robbed it of its value, and carried it in an opposite direction, like the great idealists. When he made the will the essence of the world, he nevertheless did not let the will rise in the world, but the world in the will, and so he destroyed the living distinction in the will between the being of man and the being of the world.

So, the new land that Nietzsche opened to thinking had to extend beyond the circle described by ethics. Precisely when we do not want to destroy with a blind joy of destruction the spiritual work of the past, but if we want rather fully to value it in what it has achieved, we must acknowledge this beyond of the new question in relation to all that till now we understood only under the concept of ethics, and had to understand it only in this way. Facing the “view of the world,” the “view of life” demands recognition. Ethics is and remains a part of the view of the world. The special relationship between the view of the world and ethics is solely that of the specially intimate opposition, because each seems to affect the other, just as they each claim to solve simultaneously the questions of the other. In which sense this is really the case we shall see later. In any case, the opposition between view of life and view of the world takes such a sharp turn into opposing the ethical part of the view of the world that it would seem preferable to call the questions of the view of life metaethical.

**S**UCH an appearance of what is more or less explicitly called *THE WORLD* personal life, personality, individuality—concepts that are all heavily laden by their use in the philosophy of the view of the world and therefore, for us, only to be used with caution—such an appearance then of the “metaethical” questions from the domain of knowledge about the world cannot go beyond this knowledge itself without leaving traces. By fixing such an acknowledged and so to speak indigestible fact outside the huge mass of facts of the knowable world which the mind masters, one, or maybe even the basic principle of this world is dethroned. It claimed to be the All; “all” is the subject of the first sentence expressed at the time of its birth. Now against this totality that includes the All in its unit, one unit that it enclosed rebelled and

insisted on withdrawing to affirm itself as an individuality, as an individual life of the individual man. So the All can no longer claim to be all: it has lost its unique character.

On what then does the totality rest? Why wasn't the world understood as a multiplicity for example? Why precisely as a totality? Evidently there is a presupposition of origin here, and once again it is the presupposition that was mentioned in the first place: that the world is thinkable. It is the unity of thinking that enforces its right by asserting the totality of the world against the multiplicity of knowledge. The unity of the logos founds the unity of the world as a totality. And in its turn, that unity preserves its value of truth in the act of founding this totality. So, a successful rebellion against the totality of the world signifies at the same time a refutation of the unity of thinking. In that first sentence of philosophy, "All is water," the presupposition of the thinkable nature of the world is already there, even if it is only with Parmenides that the identity of being and thinking was asserted. For it is not obvious that we can ask, expecting a clear answer: "What is everything?" We cannot ask: "What is many?"; to this question, only equivocal answers could be anticipated; by contrast, to the subject "all" an unequivocal predicate is guaranteed in advance. Consequently, he who questions the totality of being, as is the case here, refutes the unity of thinking. He who does this throws the gauntlet to the whole venerable brotherhood of philosophers from Ionia to Jena.

Our times have done this. The "contingency of the world," its "being-so-and-not-otherwise," we have always clearly seen that. But precisely, it was a matter of mastering this contingency. This was, after all, exactly philosophy's task. In becoming thought, the "contingent" turned into necessity. Once again, it is only after the point of completion that this movement of thinking attains an opposite tendency, owing to German idealism, which emerged with Schopenhauer and in the late philosophy of Schelling. The "will," "freedom," the "unconscious" were in a position to do what reason could not do: rule over a world of chance. It is in this way that certain tendencies of the Middle Ages could come back to life, those which asserted the "*contingentia mundi*" in order to safeguard the irresponsible arbitrariness of the Creator. But just this historical recollection leads to the contestable character of that conception. It does not explain what precisely must be explained: how the world can be contingent although it must still

be thought of as necessary. To formulate it very crudely, this non-identity of being and thinking must appear in being and thinking themselves, and not be smoothed away by a third part, the will, which is neither thinking nor being, and which comes into view like a *deus ex machina*. And since the foundation of the unity between being and thinking is sought in thinking, then one would also have to begin by discovering the foundation of the non-identity in thinking.

The reflection where this happens goes something like this: granted that thinking is the one and universal form of being, then thinking has itself a content, a so-and-not-otherwise, which is, in order that one might purely think it, not any less so-and-not-otherwise. It is this "specification" precisely, this its differentiation that gives it the power to identify itself with equally differentiated being. The identity between thinking and being therefore presupposes an internal non-identity. Because it is at the same time related to itself, thinking, which is of course totally related to being, is simultaneously a multiplicity in itself. So thinking, moreover, which is itself the unity of its own internal multiplicity, establishes the unity of being, and certainly, it is not in the degree where it is a unity, but a multiplicity. But now, the unity of thinking, insofar as it directly concerns thinking alone and not being, falls outside of the cosmos of being=thinking. This cosmos itself, insofar as it is the overlapping of two multiplicities, now has its unity entirely beyond itself. In itself, it is not unity, but multiplicity, not an All that includes all things, but an enclosed unit which is infinite in itself, but not closed in. So, if the expression is permitted, an excluding All. One could maybe compare the relationship into which the unity of thinking and the unity of thinking and being enter with each other in this way to a wall on which a painting is hanging. The comparison is revealing even in several ways. Let's examine it more closely.

That otherwise empty wall shows rather well what remains of thinking when its multiplicity in relation to the world is removed. This is by no means a nothing, and yet something that is absolutely empty, the naked unit. One could not hang the picture if the wall were not there, and yet the wall has absolutely nothing to do with the picture itself. The wall would have no objection if besides that one picture, there

THE  
METALOGICAL

were others, or in the place of that one picture, another were hanging instead. If, according to the prevailing representation from Parmenides to Hegel, the wall had been painted in frescos, if therefore wall and picture constituted a unity, then the wall is a unity in itself and the picture is in itself infinite multiplicity, a totality shutting out the outside, that is to say: not unity but oneness—"one" picture.

Where should that unity, upon which the old concept of logic no longer weighs, where should that unity be allocated, which neither knows nor recognizes anything beyond it? This cannot be explained yet. In any case, the world, just because and to the extent that it is the world "from Parmenides to Hegel," does not have that unity within its walls, but outside them. Thinking is entitled to be at home in the world, but the world itself is not the All: it is a homeland; but thinking neither wants to nor may forget its nobler origin that it knows, without being able to demonstrate it with precision in the details—it may not, even for the sake of the world; indeed its performances in it that are favorable to being rest on the power of that nobler origin. In this way the world is a beyond in relation to what is properly logic in relation to the unity. The world is not a-logical; on the contrary, the logical is an essential ingredient in it, one can even say, in a very proper sense, as we shall see, the "essential" part: it is not a-logical, but metalogical—to use the term Ehrenberg introduced.

What this means will become clearer if at least it is possible and necessary with these preliminary hints, by casting a comparative backward glance toward what we called the metaethical when speaking of the concept of man. For metaethical was not in any case intended to mean a-ethical. It was not meant to express the absence of ethos, but only its unusual status, hence that passive position instead of the imperative position that is usually assigned to it. The law was given to man, and not man to the law. This sentence, demanded by the new concept of man, runs counter to the concept of law as it appeared in the world as ethical thinking and ethical order; consequently this concept of man must be called metaethical. It is the very same relationship that presides in the new concept of the world. Here, no longer is the world to be called a-logical. On the contrary: the position which since the Ionians has returned to thinking in all philo-

sophy worthy of the name—*je méprise Locke*:<sup>3</sup> with these words Schelling snubbed Mrs. von Staël when she started to speak to him in English—so we maintain this position unconditionally. But in thinking itself, insofar as it relates to the world, a characteristic is discovered which turns thinking from the form bestowed upon the world into the form of the world: it is the specification, one could even say the contingent; it is in this way that thinking becomes an “ingredient” of the world—we have not been afraid to use this crude expression—it even becomes the essential piece of it, exactly like the ethos which was recognized before an essential part of man. The unity of logic, upon which there rested the conception of logic as form, law, valid thinking, as long as one believed that even that unity, and precisely it, necessarily had to be integrated into the world, this unity of logic is now regarded only as still definitive for logic, and certainly not as “logically” definitive.

Where does logic go from then on in conformity with its concept? We are, of course, leaving this question open for the moment; it differs from the previous case, where the place for ethics, a place conforming to its concept, was easy to establish owing to the historical completion of the philosophy of the world. The simple fact that the world, the thinkable world, is metalogical already precisely in its thinkable character certainly even follows from this emigration of logic outside of it, on the one hand, and from the integration of logic in it, on the other hand. For the world, truth is not law, but content. Truth does not prove reality, but reality upholds truth. The essence of the world is this upholding (not the proof) of truth. Toward the “outside,” the world is thus deprived of the protection that truth, from Parmenides to Hegel, had guaranteed to the All; since it hides its truth in its womb, it does not outwardly offer this Gorgon’s shield of its inviolability; it must let happen at its expense all that could happen to it, even if it should be its—Creation. Yes, we would maybe exhaustively grasp this concept of the world, in its new, metalogical sense, if we dared to address it as creature.

**T**HE unity had deserted the All; comparable to the world of **GOD** art, it was outwardly an individual oneness and re-mained an All only inwardly. So some room was left beside it. Formerly,

<sup>3</sup>“I hold Locke in contempt.”

logic had kept up an endless battle for primacy, apparently against ethics: the metalogical made room for the metaethical. The multiplicity that was collected into an individual oneness, and the individual One from the very beginning (it is in this form that world and man henceforth faced each other) were able to breathe beside each other. So the demand we previously had to make was fulfilled in the interests of the metaethical; the painting could express its disinterest in the event that there could have been hanging a relief, for instance, on the same wall; this was impossible in the case of the fresco; but the painting was not interested in anything that lay outside the four sides of its frame. This cool impassiveness of the painting in relation to the wall, without which it would not have found a place, is certainly now the price to be paid for the peaceful coexistence of picture and relief. The metalogical could show patience with regard to the metaethical only because it had set a chair before the door for the logical. And to be sure, the logical besides, to begin with, was in a more difficult situation than the ethical in relation to the metaethical. For, whereas the ethical knew immediately where to seek refuge, the logical was in the first place without house or home. To the degree the logical would not become a part of the world, that is to say the degree to which it claimed to be an “absolute,” simply a unity, the world had dismissed its services. The world had quite simply become non-absolute. Not only man, but God too could find a place outside its borders, if he in fact wanted one. But this metalogical world, precisely because it was godless, offered no protection against God. From Parmenides to Hegel, the cosmos had been *securus adversus deos*. It was so because it itself enclosed the Absolute, as Thales already expressed it in his other saying that has come down to us about the “All,” that is full of gods. The post-Hegelian cosmos lost this security. The condition of creature, which we have claimed for the world in order to save the selfness of man, therefore let God, too, escape from the world. Metaethical man is the fermentation that breaks down the logical and physical unity of the cosmos into the metalogical world and the metaphysical God.

**THE META-  
PHYSICAL**

There has been a science of “metaphysics” about God for a long time. Moreover, two notions of metalogical and metaethical are formed according to the meaning that that word of metaphysics had assumed in the course of history. Even more than till now in this Introduction, necessarily confined to hints, we

must fear confusion with the very old philosophical concepts, and it is even more difficult for us to avoid them. Already with the observations about the metaethical Self, it had been difficult to avoid confusion with the notion of the moral personality. We had referred to the analogy of the lyrical poet or the saint; we could have referred also to the role of the villain in the theatre, with his “This is how I am and how I want to be,”<sup>24</sup> in order clearly to show the complete freedom regarding the order of a moral realm of purposes. But, as we well know, we had arrived there at the risk of being unclear and of being suspected of philosophical dillettantism. This could not be avoided, not even through the attempt to show the threads that exist between our concept and the post-Hegelian revolution of philosophy. It simply could not be avoided that the metalogical concept of the world should in part succumb to confusion with the concept of nature; one can even say that this second confusion threatened almost as a necessary consequence of the first; for if metaethical man was identified, in spite of his name, with the moral personality, then there remained only to put the metalogical cosmos on the same plane as the critical concept of nature. Here, too, we had to resort to the questionable remedy of comparison—questionable in its turn because we could not yet explain the deeper truth, that which is more-than-comparison in the comparison. By means of comparison, we indicated the internal enclosure and totality of the work of art and at the same time its external individualization. In the comparison of the wall where the painting hangs, we also indicated its need to be external, such as it comes to light everywhere in the necessity of representation—of exhibition, and, finally, in the necessity of the spectator to complete the existence of the work; we dared, lastly, to introduce the particularly risky reference, because it is largely anticipatory of the theological concept of the creature. With all these references, we were trying to distinguish our concept of the world from the critical concept of nature, in relation to which it is more inclusive by far; for it encloses fundamentally all the possible contents of a philosophical system to the degree they submit to the condition of being able to appear not as elements of “the” All, but only of “an” All. We encounter these

<sup>24</sup>Shakespeare, *Richard III*: “Withal, what I have been, and what I am.”

difficulties, renewed and reinforced, for the metaphysical concept of God, which we shall now discuss.

Metaphysical—not a-physical. All a-cosmism, all Indian negation, all Spinozan and idealistic nullification of the world is only inverted pantheism. And it is precisely the pantheistic concept of the All in philosophy that we had to get past only in order to be able to locate our metaphysical concept of God. Just as the metaethical in man makes him the free lord of his ethos, such that he possesses it and not the reverse; just as the metalogical in the world makes of logos an “ingredient” of the world and wholly evident in the world, such that the world possesses it, and not the reverse; likewise the metaphysical of God makes of the nature an “ingredient” of God. God has a nature, his very own, quite apart from the relationship into which he possibly enters with the physical outside of him, with the “world.” God has his nature, his essence by nature, his essence that is there. This is so far from being a foregone conclusion that, right up to Hegel, philosophy always disputed God’s very existence. The most sublime form of this dispute is none other than the ontological proof of God—again an idea as old as philosophy. Whenever, with their insistence on God’s existence, the theologians became troublesome to the philosophers, the latter escaped by taking the track of that “proof”; the nurse philosophy placed into the mouth of the hungry infant theology, as a soother, the identity of thinking and being, so that it wouldn’t cry. With Kant and Hegel, there occurs a twofold end of this centuries-old swindle. Kant is an end to the extent that he shifts the proof of the critique by rigorously separating being and existence; but Hegel praises the proof: doesn’t it coincide with the basic concept of the whole philosophical view of the world, with the idea of the identity between reason and reality, and mustn’t it therefore be just as valid for God as for everything else? And precisely in the naïveté of this praise, without suspecting it, philosopher that he is, he deals it the deathblow in the eyes of theology. The road is then clear for the philosophical construction of the existence of God, independently of the thinking and being of the All; God must have existence before any identity of being and thinking; if a deduction is to be pre-supposed here, then that of being from existence is preferable to that of existence from being, which is attempted over

and over again in ontological proofs. With these considerations, we are following the path of Schelling's later philosophy.

But this natural element in God alone gives him true autonomy in relation to all that is natural outside of him—for as long as God does not enclose his nature in himself, he is in the last resort defenseless against nature's claim of enclosing him in it—but with this natural element in God, the content of the metaphysical concept of God has not yet been fully described. The metaethical concept of man is not exhausted by the fact that he has his own ethos in him; the metalogical concept of the world is not exhausted by the fact that it has its own logos in it; likewise the metaphysical concept of God is just as little exhausted by the fact that God has a—his—nature. Rather: in the case of man, this is to assume, whether it be reluctantly, or with humility, or as self-evident, that this ethical inheritance and these its dispositions are what make him man; and for the world, it is only the plentitude, the interlacing and the unceasing succession of its forms, and not its thinkable character owing to the logos proper to the world, which make of the world a created world; likewise, God is not yet alive just from the fact that he has his own nature. That divine freedom must still be added, which we obfuscate almost more than illuminate with words like those of Dante: "There where one can do what one wants," or with Goethe's achievement of the indescribable: it is only when this something is added, like the authentically divine, that the vitality of God is really realized. Just as we could refer to Schelling for God's "nature," for God's "freedom" we can follow Nietzsche's trail.

The history of philosophy had never yet seen an atheism like that of Nietzsche. Nietzsche is the first thinker who—not negates God—but, in the really proper theological use of the word: "refutes" him. More precisely: he curses him. For it is a curse as terrible as the curse with which Kierkegaard's experience of God began, clearly intimated by that famous remark: "If God existed, how could I bear not to be him?" Never yet had a philosopher held his own in this way, eye to eye, against the living God, so to speak. The first real man among the philosophers was also the first to see God face to face—even if only to refute Him. For that sentence is the first philosophical refutation of God where God is not indissolubly bound to the world. To the world, Nietzsche could not have said: If it existed, how could

I bear not to be it? To the living man appears the living God. The defiant Self looks with furious hatred upon divine freedom liberated from all defiance, a freedom which forces him into a refutation because he must take it for an absence of limits: for how else could he bear not to be God? It is not God's being, but God's freedom that leads him to protect himself in this way; the mere being of God, even if he "believed" in it, he could shake off with a laugh. It is in this way that, like the metalogical before, the metaethical repels the metaphysical and precisely through this makes it visible as divine "personality," as unity—and not as one like the human personality.

*MATHEMATICS  
AND SIGNS*

**B**UT this can suffice for preliminary remarks. Both the historical and the conceptual contexts could still be developed further without achieving anything more than—preliminaries. When we recognized that thought presupposed that thinking has to think the All, at that moment the content of philosophy, till now fundamentally simple, the All of thinking and being, unexpectedly shattered before our eyes into three separate pieces which are mutually opposed to each other in different ways that cannot yet be stated more precisely. Of these three pieces—God world man—we still strictly know nothing at all—although we have already talked much about them by relying freely on the general consciousness of the present times. They are the nothings to which the dialectical critique of Kant reduced the objects of the three "rational sciences" of his time, rational theology, cosmology, and psychology. We are not intending to restore them as objects of rational science, but precisely the reverse, as "irrational" objects. In order to set our initial stakes around their domains, we were served by a method indicated by the prefix "meta": by orienting ourselves from the rational object whose sought after irrational object is excluded in order to appropriate its irrational being; that is, for man, by starting from man, who is the object of ethics; for the world, by starting from the world, which is the object of logic; for God, by starting from God, who is the object of physical science. This could really be nothing more than a means of setting the first stakes. The opening up of the domains thus marked out must happen otherwise. From the nothings of knowledge, our explorers' journey reaches the something of knowledge. We have not come very far yet with our arrival at the something. But still: something is more

than nothing. Of what may lie beyond the something, we can as yet have no idea at all from where we are now, that is to say, starting from the nothing.

The fact that empty being, being before thinking, may be equivalent to the nothing in this brief, almost imperceptible moment before it has become being for thinking, belongs likewise to the perceptions that accompany the entire history of philosophy from its beginning in Ionia to its end in Hegel. This nothing remained just as unfruitful as pure being. Philosophy commenced only when thinking united with being. It is precisely philosophy, and precisely here, that we refuse to follow. We are seeking the permanent, which has no need of thinking in order to be. That is why we could not deny death and that is why we had to receive the nothing in the way it presents itself to us in order to make it the permanent point of departure of the permanent. "The" nothing must not mean for us an unveiling of the essence of pure being, as it did for the great heir of two thousand years of the history of philosophy. But wherever an existing element of the All rests in itself, indissoluble and permanent, the main thing is to presuppose a nothing for this being, its nothing. For such a movement, from a nothing to its something, science offers itself as guide: it is itself nothing other than a perpetual derivation from a "something"—and never more than a something, an anything—from the nothing, and not from the empty nothing in general, but always from "its" nothing, belonging precisely to this something: mathematics.

The fact that mathematics does not get beyond the something, **THE ORIGIN** the anything, and that the real itself, the chaos of the this, is at most still affected by mathematics, but no longer touched by it, is a discovery already made by Plato; to this discovery mathematics owes the respect, or occasionally, too, the contempt shown to it by philosophers ever since, depending whether the "universal" was held in honor or in disdain, according to the prevailing attitude of the times. But that it was assigned from its birth this up-to-here-and-no-further was recognized, and this is not by chance, only after that two-thousand-year movement completed its course. Hermann Cohen who was, contrary to what he himself believed and contrary to the appearance of his works, something other than a simple epigone of that truly completed movement; only he discovered in mathematics an organon of thinking, precisely because mathematics does not produce its elements out of the

empty nothing of the one and universal zero, but out of the nothing of the differential, a definite nothing in each case related to the element it was seeking. The differential combines in itself the properties of the nothing and of the something; it is a nothing that refers to a something, to its something, and at the same time a something that still slumbers in the womb of the nothing. It is, on the one hand, the quantity that is dissolved in that which is without quantity, and then, on the other hand, it has, as “infinitesimal,” and by this right, all the properties of the finite quantity, with only one exception: precisely this property of the quantity. It is in this way that it draws its strength that founds the reality, at one time from the powerful negation with which it breaks the womb of the nothing, and yet then equally at another time from the calm affirmation of all that borders on the nothing, to which it remains, in spite of all, itself bound as infinitesimal. It thus determines two paths that go from the nothing to the something, the path of the affirmation of that which is not nothing, and the path of the negation of the nothing. For these two paths, mathematics is the guide. It instructs how to recognize in the nothing the origin of the something. And so, even though the master<sup>5</sup> would strongly object, we are going ahead here and building the new concept of the nothing upon the scientific masterpiece of his logic of origins. He was possibly more Hegelian than he admitted when working out his other reflections—and hence fully an “idealist” as he wanted to be—but here, with this fundamental concept, he broke decisively with the idealist tradition. In the place of the one and universal nothing, which, like the zero, could really be nothing more than “nothing,” that genuine “non-thing,” he set the particular nothing whose fruitfulness refracted into realities. It was precisely Hegel’s foundation of logic upon the concept of being that he most critically opposed; and consequently the entire philosophy that Hegel had inherited. For here, for the first time, a philosopher who still regarded himself as an “idealist”—a further sign of the force of this event in him—knew and acknowledged that when thinking sets out “to beget purely,” it encounters not being, but—nothing.

For the first time. Even if it remains true that here as everywhere, among all the thinkers of the past, Kant alone—and again,

<sup>5</sup>Hermann Cohen.

as always in those remarks he made that lacked systematic conclusions—showed the way we shall now take. For he himself, who of course demolished those three “rational” sciences that he encountered, did not return from this demolition, as one might expect, to a one and universal despair about cognition. Rather, even if only hesitantly, he dared to take the big step and formulated the nothing of knowledge no longer in a single term, but in a threefold one. At least the “thing in itself” and the “intelligible character” indicate two separate nothings of knowledge, and in our terminology these are the metalogical and the metaethical nothings. And the dark words with which he sometimes expresses their secret “root” no doubt also seek to take hold of a solid point for the metaphysical nothing of knowledge. It is highly significant that our thinking, which a short while ago was understood as proposing the All as its one and universal object, is not understood now as being thrown back into a one and universal *ignoramus*. The nothing of our knowledge is not a singular nothing, but a threefold one. Hence, it contains in itself the promise of definability. And that is why we may hope, as did Faust, to find again in this nothing, in this threefold nothing of knowledge, the All that we had to cut into pieces. “Disappear then into the abyss! I could also say: arise!”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Goethe, *Faust II*, Act 1.



## BOOK ONE

# GOD AND HIS BEING OR METAPHYSICS

**A**BOUT God we know nothing. But this not-knowing is a not-knowing about God. As such, it is the beginning of our knowledge about him. The beginning, not the end. The not-knowing as end and outcome of our knowledge is the fundamental idea of “negative theology,” which demolished and discarded assertions that had been found about God’s “attributes” until there remained only the negation of all these attributes as God’s essence; God could no longer be defined, therefore, other than by his totally indefinable nature. This way that leads from a found something to the nothing and at the end of which atheism and mysticism can shake hands is not the one we are taking; we are instead taking the way leading from the nothing to the something. Our goal is not a negative concept, but a most positive one. We are seeking God, as we shall later seek the world and man, precisely not within a one and universal All, as one concept among others; if we wanted this, then of course the negative theology of Nicholas of Cusa or of the man from Königsberg<sup>1</sup> would be the only scientific goal; for then the negative would already be fixed as the goal at thinking’s point of departure; one concept among others is always negative, at least in its opposition to the others; and if it claims to be unconditional, then science can only deal with an unconditional—nothingness. But it is just that presupposition of the one and universal All that we have renounced. We are seeking God, as we shall later seek the world and man, not as one concept among others, but for itself, dependent upon itself alone, in its absolute factuality—if the expression is not misleading—precisely, that is, in its “positivity.” That is why we must put the nothing of the sought-after concept at the beginning: we must get it behind us; for ahead of us lies a something as a goal: the reality of God.

In the first place then, God is a nothing for us, his nothing. From the nothing to the “something,” or, more strictly: from the nothing to what is not nothing—for we are not seeking a “something”—there are two ways, the way of affirmation and the way

*NEGATIVE  
THEOLOGY*

*THE TWO  
WAYS*

<sup>1</sup>Kant.

of negation. The affirmation, that is to say of what is sought after, of the not-nothing; the negation, that is to say of what is presupposed, the nothing. These two ways are as different from each other and even as opposite to each other as—well, as precisely Yes and No. Likewise, the results that are reached do not converge in a sort of identity with that which was previously called the “sought after,” but they are different among themselves—once again like Yes and No. The Yes applies to the not-nothing, the No to the nothing. To affirm the not-nothing is to posit an infinite—like affirmation that takes place through negation: to negate the nothing is to posit—like all negation—something limited, finite, determinate. So we see the something in a twofold figure and in a twofold relationship to the nothing: on the one hand, it is its inhabitant, and on the other hand, it escapes from it. As inhabitant of the nothing, the something is the entire plenitude of all that is—not nothing; in God, therefore, since for the moment we know nothing else besides him, it is the whole plenitude of what “is” in him; but as an escaped prisoner who has just broken out of the prison of the nothing, the something is nothing other than the event of this liberation from the nothing; it is entirely determined by this its unique experience; in God, therefore, to whom, at least for the moment, nothing can happen from the outside, it is entirely and only action. Endlessly, then, the essence springs up from the nothing; in a sharp delimitation the action separates from it. For the essence one asks about the origin, and for action about the beginning.

**ON THE  
METHOD**

For good reasons, we are not for the moment going beyond these purely formal definitions; we do not want to anticipate. But what has just been said will already become somewhat clear if we consider, just for the sake of comparison, the reverse process, the passage toward the nothing. Here as well there are two possibilities: the negation, of—to replace the word “something,” which today is too narrowly used, by another one that is not encumbered by the past—the negation of the aught<sup>2</sup> and the affirmation of the not-aught, of the nothing. The reversal is so exact that where the Yes appeared on the outward journey, now the No appears, and vice versa. For the formation of the nothing through the negation of the aught, German has a term which we must only liberate from its narrower meaning so that

<sup>2</sup>Of the aught: *des Ichts*—a neologism.

we can use it here: *Verwesung*, dissolution, (just as that mystical word *Entwesung*, disintegration denotes the negation of the aught. For the affirmation of the nothing, however, the German language has the word annihilation. In the dissolution of the essence, the disintegration, the nothing appears in its infinite indefiniteness; neither the body that is dissolving nor the disintegrating soul strives for the nothing as a positive thing, but only for the dissolving of its positive essence; but when this happens to them, they fall into the formless night of nothing. Mephistopheles, on the other hand, who plainly wants evil and, on his own admission, loves the eternally void, desires the nothing, and so the whole thing must of course amount to—"annihilation." So here we do not see the nothing itself as complex thing—for then it would be a definite thing and not the nothing—but as a thing that is accessible from divers and opposing directions; and so now perhaps we understand better how in the indefinite nothing there can be different origins of the finite, and how the still river of essence and the gushing fountain of action might spring forth from the same darkly slack water.

Mind you, we are not speaking of a nothing in general, as did the philosophy of old, which acknowledged only the All as its object. We do not know a one and universal nothing because we have rid ourselves of the presupposition of the one and universal All. We know only the individual nothing of the individual problem (hence not a nothing defined somehow or other, but only one that gives rise to definition). For us, then, it is the nothing of God. God is our problem, our subject and our object. Precisely because, to begin with, he must be nothing more than a problem for us, we mean, by beginning with his nothing, that we are making the nothing his presupposition (and not the result, as we noted at the outset). We are saying as it were: if God is, then that which follows from his nothing is valid. To the extent that we are presupposing the nothing only as the nothing of God, the results of this presupposition do not reach beyond the framework of this object. It would therefore be entirely false, and we would be falling back into the now surpassed concept of the one and universal nothing, if we thought that we had deduced, in the welling forth of "essence" and in the bursting forth of "action," essence and action in general, such as the essence of the world, or action directed toward man or world. As long as we are moving in this zone of hypotheses about the nothing, all concepts

remain in this zone, they remain under the law of the if and so and cannot step out of the magic circle. The essence can always mean only an essence within God, action can never refer to an object situated outside of God. No matter how long one reflects, God's essence—as we'll see later for the world and man—remains within itself. We have broken the All to pieces, and now each piece is an All unto itself. Since we are immersed in this imperfect work of our knowledge, we are, in our wandering into the realm of the Mothers,<sup>3</sup> still the servants of the first commandment: the commandment to drown. The ascent, and the growing together in it of the imperfect work to the perfection of the new All, will come only later.

**DIVINE  
NATURE**

**T**HE Yes is the beginning. The No cannot be beginning; for it could only be a No of the nothing; but this would presuppose a nothing that would be negatable, that is to say, a nothing that had already decided on a Yes. So, the Yes is the beginning. This yes certainly cannot be the Yes of the nothing; for it is the meaning of our introduction of the nothing that it should not be result, but on the contrary a starting point and only a starting point. It is not even yet the beginning. It is at most beginning of our knowledge. It is really only starting point, therefore simply incapable of being affirmed itself. Just as incapable, as of course also, as already stated, of being negated. It is situated before the Yes and before the No. It would be situated before all beginning—if it were situated. But it is not “situated.” It is only the virtual place for the beginning of our knowledge. It is only the mark that indicates that the problem is set. We strictly avoid giving it a name. It is not a “dark ground” or anything else that can be named with Eckhart's, Böhme's, or Schelling's words. It is not at the beginning.

At the beginning is the Yes. And since the Yes must not go toward the nothing, it must go toward the not-nothing. And since this not-nothing is obviously not an autonomous given—for absolutely nothing is given besides the nothing—the affirmation of the not-nothing circumscribes as its inner boundary the infinity of all that is not nothing. It is an affirmed infinity: God's infinite essence, his infinite factuality, his nature.

<sup>3</sup>Goethe's *Faust II*, the primordial forces.

This is the power of the Yes, that it adheres to everything, that unlimited possibilities of reality lie hidden in it. It is the original word of language, one of those which make possible—not sentences, but, to begin with, simply words that go into sentences, words as elements of the sentence. Yes is not an element of the sentence, nor even the shorthand sign of a sentence, although it can be used as such: in reality it is the silent companion of all the elements of a sentence, the confirmation, the “sic,” the “amen” behind every word. It gives to every word in the sentence its right to existence, it offers it the chair where it may sit, it “sets.” The first Yes in God establishes the divine essence in all infinity. And the first Yes is “In the beginning.”

ORIGINAL  
WORD<sup>4</sup>

We can try to fix in familiar logical-mathematical symbols the step that this first Yes means on the way to God’s completion. We want first of all to limit ourselves to the use of algebraic letters and the equal sign. In the equation  $y=x$  for instance,  $y$  would designate the object and  $x$  the content of the assertion; therefore  $y$  would be the subject, and  $x$  the predicate. Although elsewhere the affirmative position designates the subject, and the negative definition designates the predicate, here, where it is a matter of origins, it is just the reverse; the affirmation becomes the characteristic of the original definitions; certainly, in the particular case, the predicate is always a particular predicate, that is to say, negative, but according to its original conception the definition is precisely positive—the pure “so”. The fact that this “so” now becomes a “so and not otherwise” only comes into force when the “other” is added to the original one. It is only through this transition to multiplicity that the definition becomes negation. And just as the original definition takes place in the Yes, so the original position, the position of the original subject takes place in the No; for every individual position of a subject is a merely groundless position for itself, but the original position before all individual positions, the pre-supposition, is negation, negation of the nothing; every individual subject is simply “other,” other than the nothing. In the equation we have to establish here, the No will therefore be to the left of the equal sign, and the Yes to the right of it. With the simple  $x$  or  $y$ , we are symbolizing total absence of relation, with  $y=$  the relation of the subject to a predicate, that is to say, the definition with regard to a positioning

SIGN

<sup>4</sup>Original word: *Umwort*.

which is still to be assigned to it, and with =x the positioning with regard to a definition that is still to come. In this symbolic language, we had to designate God's nature, God's simple and infinitely affirmed Being with A and not, for instance, with B or C; for it is infinitely affirmed, and within the domain of its own sphere, conditioned by its nothing, there is nothing that precedes it that it would have to follow; nothing can precede it, because it is placed as infinite and not as finite. It is factuality simply at rest, but infinite; whether a storm might come in this still sea of the internal nature of God and churn up its tides, or whether out of its own womb there might arise whirlpools and waves that break upon the still surface—this we do not know yet. For the time being, it is "A"—unmoved, infinite being.

*DIVINE  
FREEDOM*

**D**O we really not know which of the two possibilities, the storm from without or the whirlpool from within, is going to set the smooth surface in motion? Of the surface itself, certainly, we see nothing. But yet let us remember how this motionless essence emerged for us in the Yes, and how we just now explained in anticipation that the Yes always assumes the right side, the "x"-side in the equation  $y=x$ . By this, we have already opted for the first of the two possibilities. In the Yes, there is nothing that pushes out beyond itself; this is the "so." The movement must therefore come from the No.

The No is just as original as the Yes. It by no means presupposes the Yes. The individual, derived No certainly does depend on this presupposition. The original No, however, presupposes nothing but the Nothing. It is the No of the nothing. But of course: it detaches itself directly from the nothing, precisely as its negation, a Yes does not precede it; but an affirmation certainly does. That is to say: it presupposes only the nothing, but the nothing it presupposes is not a nothing where it could take up its residence, not the eternally void that Mephistopheles took pleasure in, but a nothing from where the Yes had to well up, the nothing which was meant only as a nothing of knowledge, not as a positively placed nothing, not as a "dark ground," not as an "abyss of the godhead," but as a starting point for thinking about God, as a place of the setting of the problem. Certainly, this is not the Yes itself, but the nothing, from where an affirmation preceding the original No had to arise. So the No is "more recent" than the Yes, without detriment to the immediacy of its origin. The *Non* is not *propter sic*, but *post sic*.

The No is original negation of the nothing. When the Yes had not been able to stay attached to the nothing, because the latter did not give it a point of attachment, so to speak, when, for this reason, it was repelled by the nothing, it fell back into the not-nothing and, when thus freed from its point of attachment and rushed into infinity, it had placed the divine essence in the infinite domain of the not-nothing: the No is most intimately intertwined body to body with the Nothing. The close intertwining is now possible, for, by reason of preliminary and infinite affirmation of the not-nothing, the nothing had stayed behind as a finite reality. So the No finds its opponent nearby to it. But the image of two wrestlers is misleading. They are not a pair. It is not a wrestling match of two but of one; the nothing negates itself. It is only in the self-negation that the “other,” the “opponent,” breaks loose from it; and, at the moment of its breaking loose, the No is unbound and freed from the self-negating intertwining of the nothing. As free and original No, it now assumes a shape.

Once again, it is a matter of putting the question in the exactly right place. We are enquiring about God. The self-negating nothing was the self-negating nothing of God; the No born of this self-negation of God is a No of God. The Yes in God was his infinite essence. His free No, springing forth from the negation of his nothing, is not itself essence; for it does not contain a Yes; it is and remains a pure No, it is not “so”; only “not otherwise”, it is always only the “one.” That is to say the “one” as the “one” in God, before which, consequently, all else in him simply becomes the “other.” This quite simply “one,” this simply No to all that is not itself, but “other,” what name could we give to it if not that of freedom? God’s freedom springs from the original negation of the nothing as that which is aimed at everything else only insofar as it is other. God’s freedom is quite simply a tremendous No.

God’s essence was infinite Yes. That Yes left the nothing behind it as a nothing emptied of the infinite. Out of this nothing become finite, the free No disengaged itself into an original self-negation. It bears the scars of the combat that allows it to burst forth. It is infinite in its possibilities, in that which it reaches; for it quite simply is a matter of everything; all is “other” to it; but it itself is always “one,” always limited, always—finite, exactly as it burst forth in the self-negation of the nothing become finite. It bursts forth from all eternity; for all eternity is merely “other” to

it; for it, it is merely infinite time. Facing this always “other” to it, it is at all times that which happens only once, the always new, that which always happens for the first time. Opposite the infinite divine essence, the divine freedom rises up, the finite configuration of action, an action whose might is inexhaustible, which can always newly flow out from its finite origin into the infinite, not an infinite sea, but an inexhaustible source. The essence, created once and for all as it is, is opposed by the freedom of action that always newly reveals itself, but a freedom for which we are not entitled to imagine another object just yet, except the infinity of that eternal essence. It is not God’s freedom; even now God remains a problem for us. It is divine freedom, freedom in God and in relation to God. Even now we do not yet know anything about God. We are still at the imperfect work of knowledge, still at the question, not at the answers.

**SIGN** Let us try to capture the just acquired piece, the divine freedom, in a symbol just as we did previously with the divine essence. As original freedom, we have to place the divine freedom on the left side of the future equation. And since it is a matter of a No, which, as original subject, exceeds itself with unlimited power (even if this excess stays within the limits of God, as must be repeatedly stressed), the symbol will have to be laid out according to the model “y=.” And finally, since this freedom is certainly finite in its constantly renewed unique character, but is infinite in its constant newness and can be preceded by nothing, because nothing exists outside it, it is always a unique thing, but not an individual one: so the symbol for it is “A=.” Now we must explain how this symbol for the divine freedom tallies with the one for the divine essence, and how the equation can be established only in this way, and along with it, the first answer to the question about God.

**VITALITY OF  
GOD**

**F**REEDOM leads to infinity. As freedom, it is finite; insofar as it leads to infinity, it is power, infinite power, or roughly put: infinite arbitrariness. As the infinite object to which it aspires, it finds only the essence before it. But in the essence, symbolized by a simple letter without the equal-sign, no explicit direction of any sort is found, neither an active direction nor a receptive direction that opposes this force; the divine essence rests in the infinite silence of pure existence, of mute factuality. It is. So the arbitrariness, neither summoned nor attracted, seems

able to fling itself upon the essence. But when it approaches the essence, it falls under the spell of the inert being of essence. If that being does not send as it were a force to oppose the arbitrariness, it feels its own force being paralyzed; with each step that brings it nearer to the essence, the infinite power feels a growing resistance, a resistance that with regard to the goal, at the essence itself, would become infinite; for, in this point, the manifestations of power would be swallowed by the “it is” and by the “it is so” of the essence, which are wide-spread and lying there inertly. At the focal point of the infinity of the inert Yes, the infinitely weakened power of the infinitely active No would be extinguished. So the power is itself no longer the original, infinite No, but it is already this No on the way to exercising its power over the inert “so” of the Yes: and so we must catch hold of it before the end of the movement, that is, before the inertia of the being-so can act in its infinity. This point where, as it were, the infinite power of the divine action enters into the field of force of the divine essence, this moment where it still has power over its inertia and yet already restrained by it—we designate this point, in contrast to the point of the divine power and arbitrariness, as the point of the divine necessity and destiny. Just as the divine freedom turns into arbitrariness and power, so the divine essence turns into necessity and destiny. So out of the infinite movement which comes out of the freedom to flow into the domain of the essence, there arises the divine countenance, infinitely self-configuring: with a nod of his head, he shakes far-off Olympus, and yet his brow is furrowed, because he knows the verdict of the Norns.<sup>5</sup> Both, the infinite power in the free outpouring of pathos and the infinite subjugation under the constraint of destiny—both together constitute the vitality of God.

We are pausing here for a moment in order first to understand, after the fact, this obviously decisive step that we have just taken beyond the simple Yes and the simple No. We have accepted as self-evident the movement which brought us from the No to the Yes, without asking which original word, corresponding to the Yes and the No of the two first steps, has led to this third step. The original Yes was the word of the original position, and as such, in every word, was the silent partner, its role in the whole of the sentence. Likewise, the original No is operative in each

**ORIGINAL  
WORDS**

<sup>5</sup>In Scandinavian mythology, virgins who rule the destiny of men.

word in the sentence, not insofar as this word is an assertion, but insofar as it is an object of assertions, and so its most proper place in the sentence is near to the subject, as already explained; whereas the Yes con-firms as “so” the individual word, i.e., assures it of its “lasting” and permanent value, independent of the position it occupies in the sentence in relation to the other words, the No relates precisely to this position of the word in the sentence. It is as “not-otherwise” that it pin-points this “point” of the singular word, a point which permits it to im-pose its own character in the face of the “others”—not its own lasting character, but a character proper to it which depends on the entirety of the sentence, on the “other” elements of the sentence. Let’s take first, for example, two extreme cases: for the Yes, the nothing-but-assertion, the predicate adjective; for the No, the nothing-but-object-of-the-assertion, the substantive subject. The word “free” has a specific meaning that is not tied to its use in the sentence “man is created free, he is free” or in the sentence “man is not created to be free.” This set meaning is the work of the secret Yes. On the other hand, the word “man” is something quite different insofar as it is said of him that he is a citizen of two worlds, at least when he is called a political animal; this difference, each time created by the other members of the sentence which are placed over against this unique subject, is the work of the secret No. And now, finally, an example that is by no means extreme: the word “until” always means the conclusion of a quantity that is conceived, in a succession; but in the phrase “until tomorrow” it refers to a temporal distance and a future time; and “until the stars” refers to a spatial distance. The impression that is otherwise easily given here, that the “secret Yes” would in reality have to precede the “secret No,” and not only in the conceptual sequence (as possibility of affirmation), and the impression that the “secret No” would therefore be less original, is removed by the simple consideration that in reality we infer those “lasting” and fixed meanings of words only from their sequences in the sentence, and that consequently this “lasting character” is not at all acquired beforehand in the particular case: rather, each new sequence of the sentence where a word enters changes the “lasting” character of the word, and so language is always renewed in living speech.

We have just been speaking, without coming to a decision, about sentence and context. But properly speaking the Yes and the No

always only prepare the particular word, even though the No already has a relationship to the sentence. The sentence itself only acquires con-sistence, only ek-sists from the moment where the No which local-izes and im-poses, seeks to gain power over the con-firming Yes. The sentence, even already the smallest member of the sentence—where language isolates, by the word; where language binds, by the association between two words; where language inflects, by the association between the root and the inflected ending of a word—the smallest member of the sentence therefore presupposes Yes and No, so and not-otherwise. With this, we have the third of those original words, whose original character is not equivalent to the other two, but presupposes them, yet does not contribute any the less to their living reality: the word “and.” The and is not the secret companion of the particular word, but of the sequence of words. It is the keystone that completes the vault of the cellar above which is erected the edifice of logos, of reason in language. In the answer previously found to the question about God that we had raised by establishing the nothing of our knowledge about him, we came to know a first test of strength of that third original word.

The conclusion of this answer, to begin with at least, is symbolized by the equation where the paths that led to the answer became invisible. In the equation  $A=A$ , we no longer see whether it is constructed by  $A$ ,  $A=$ ,  $=A$  or  $A$ . It let nothing else be known than the pure original character and God’s satisfaction in himself. He is dependent on nothing besides himself and seems not to need anything besides himself: “Freely in the aether reigns God; the mighty desires of his breast, natural law restrains”—the law of his own nature. The internal play of forces, fashioned by this living configuration of the gods, is swallowed up. This is the very reason why the equation symbolizes the immediate vitality of this configuration, the vitality of God.

**O**F God first and foremost. For the gods of antiquity are also living, and not only He whom today we call the living one. They are even, if you will, much more alive. For they are nothing but alive. They are immortal. Death lies beneath them. They have not conquered it, but it does not dare approach them. They let it rule over its realm, by sending someone from their immortal circle to rule over that empire. This is the most unlim-

**THE  
MYTHICAL  
OLYMPUS**

ited dominion, and actually the only dominion, in the strict sense, which they exercise. They intervene in the world of the living, but they do not reign there—they are living gods, but not gods of the living; because for this they would really have to step outside themselves and that would not suit this “carefree” life of the Olympians; it is only to keeping death far from their immortal world that they give some methodical attention. Otherwise, the gods live among themselves. In this regard, even their often cited relationship to the “forces of nature” changes nothing. For the concept of nature as a realm that has its own laws, in contrast to some “supernatural” one, does not yet in any way exist. Nature is always the nature proper to the gods. When a god is joined to a constellation or something of this sort, he does not for this reason become the god of the constellation, as we would like to represent him over and over again by retrospectively projecting our concept of nature: it is rather the constellation that becomes God or at least a part of God. And when, from this divine reign of the constellations, a field of force emits its rays over every earthly event, this earthly event is not for this reason subject to the reign of the celestial constellations; but it is, so to speak, raised up to that divine sphere, which is a part of this whole. It ceases to be independent, if it ever was so; it becomes itself divine. The world of the gods always remains a world in itself, even when they enclose the whole world; then that world that they enclose is not on its own and with which God would have to enter into a relationship, but something that encloses him. So here God is without a world; or, conversely, if we wanted to characterize this representation as precisely a view of the world, this world of the life of the gods who remain among themselves would be—a world without gods. And with this we would have expressed the essence of what can be designated as a mythological conception of the world.

For this is the essence of myth: a life that knows nothing above or beneath itself; a life that knows neither of things ruled over nor of ruling gods, a life purely in itself, whether the bearers of this life are gods, people or things. The law of this life is the harmony of arbitrariness and fate, an inner harmony that does not resound beyond itself and always returns within itself. God’s passion that flows freely outwards breaks on the inner dam of the dark law of his nature. The configurations of myth are neither mere powers nor mere essences; neither as the one nor

as the other could they live; only in the alternating current of passion and decree of fate do their most lively traits emerge: groundless in hate as in love, for there are no grounds beneath their life, for there is nothing left behind that they have to look after, their free effusion not guided, only hindered by the verdict of fate; their necessity is not dissolved by the free force of their passion; and yet both, freedom and essence, one in the mysterious unity of the living—this is the world of myth.

**T**HIS spirit of the mythical in which God becomes a living God has its strength from that closure which is itself a result of the conclusiveness of this concept of God. Its weakness too rests on this closure and on its conclusive kind, which produces nothing but has the nature of a product. But we must first stress its strength. Until its decline in the religions of the Near East and of Europe, the mythical prevailed everywhere as a stage of evolution; it does not mean an inferior form, but, rather, a higher form with regard to the Eastern “religions of the spirit.” It is no coincidence that the Revelation, when it went out into the world, did not take the path of the East but that of the West. The living “gods of Greece” were worthier opponents for the living God than were the phantoms of the Asiatic East. The godheads of China and India are immense edifices built from the blocks of ancestral times; like monoliths, they still tower up to this day in the cults of the “primitives.” China’s Heaven is the concept raised to be world-embracing, of divine power which, without pouring forth over the divine essence and thus being configured into the divine vitality, arranged the entire universe into an enormous ball of its ruling arbitrariness; is not as another thing, but as a thing that it contains in itself, a thing that “inhabits” it; nowhere does the graphic sense of the idea of immanence become as clear as in this Chinese deification of the vault of the heavens, outside of which— is nothing. And just as China’s God is exhausted in going from the nothing to the all-embracing power, so, too, for India’s God on the road between the nothing and the pure, all-penetrating silence of the essence, of the divine nature. The sound of divine freedom never penetrated into the silent circle of the Brahmin; so it itself remains dead, although it may fill all life and absorb all life into itself. Seen from the living shapes of the gods of myth, these “deities”—the word of all those who take flight before the counte-

*ASIA: THE  
UNMYTHICAL  
GOD*

nance of the living God into the dense fogs of abstraction—are the regressions into that which is rudimentary. We learn the extent to which these are regressions by a glance at the regressions that those elementary constructions mentioned above undergo in their turn: for once begun, this momentum of regression does not cease before it has reached almost its outer limit—the nothing.

The devotees of Brahmin expressed the essentiality in its deep meaning with the tirelessly repeated syllable of affirmation, which is supposed to contain all its secrets. But when at the same moment they recognized this one unstructured essence as that which absorbs all multiplicity, the Self of all things, there appeared behind the unstructured unique Yes a new determination of the essence, a determination with the same meaning as the Yes, but suggestive of the infinite multiplicity that it enclosed: “No, No.” So the Yes became known as negation of the nothing. To the one infinite “so” there was added the “not so, not so” of infinite number. The essence of the deity was the negated nothing. And there was just one final leap backwards from here. If the leap were not to be shattered in the nothing itself, it would have to reach the last point still lying between it and that not-nothing. But in this neither-nor of the nothing and not-nothing, we recognize once again the ultimate idea of Buddhism, a dizzying idea, Nirvana, which has its place beyond God and gods, but also equally beyond the mere nothing, a place that even by imagination only a *salto mortale* may reach. Apparently, there is nothing beyond; it is a border point; beyond there is only the pure nothing; this concept marks the first station on the road from the nothing to the not-nothing in a last still somehow possible evaporation of all essence.

**CHINA** The power of Heaven that classical China believes in is separated from the nothing, like all active power, by a simple negation. The multiplicity of things is not drawn into this inclusive power as was the Self, and every Self, into the stillness of the sea of the Brahmin; Heaven contains all insofar as it has power over all things. Its power is action; the symbol of this power is the violence that the masculine exercises against the feminine. So it is not expressed as an infinite Yes, but as a No renewed every moment against all that it encloses. Here too the abstraction has again attempted to leap backwards behind this elementary abstraction right up to the border

of everything elementary in the nothing; it had to put de-“ity,”<sup>6</sup> in the place of God and the gods, a concept of the supreme power that was distinguished from the nothing only by being related to action and effect; but that relationship was only that of—doing nothing. The Tao is only this being effective without action, this God who stays “quiet as a mouse” so that the world can move around him. It is entirely devoid of essence; nothing is in it as for example, every Self “is” in the Brahmin. Rather, it is itself within all, but again not as every self “is” in the Brahmin, so not—according to the simile in the Upanishads—like salt crystals in solution, but it is—and here again the similes are very compelling—like the hub in the spokes, like the windows in the wall, like the empty space in the vessel: it is that which, by the fact that it is “nothing,” makes the something “usable,” the itself unmoved mover of the movable. It is the non-action as the original ground of the action. Here too it is a border point: the one possible shape that atheism can assume if it really wants to be atheistic and not stay stuck in pantheism or disappear in pure nihilism, free of any particular tie to God and the gods.

This is how the construction plans are drafted in Nirvana and Tao, which up till today are necessary for every building in which thinking about God wants to flee in order to escape the voice of the true God. It is only here that thinking is safe before this voice—*securus adversus deos* as well as *adversus Deum*. From here, there is no longer any road back. The nothing is a solid tent-peg; what is fastened to it cannot become unfastened. And only because this last abstraction of all divine life is unbearable to the living Self of man and to the living worlds of the peoples, and hence in the long run, life always again becomes master over the lifeless pallor of the abstraction—in short, because it is the destiny of the Buddha’s and Lao-tse’s disciples that a flourishing paganism grows again over the unyielding stone blocks of their non-thoughts, only for this reason in spite of their fascination, the ears of men are inclined to become receptive again to the voices before which those men once fled in order to hide in the spaces of Nirvana and Tao, where sound does not reach. For only where there is life, be it a life intoxicated by the gods or one that is hostile to God, only there does the voice of the Living

**PRIMITIVE  
ATHEISM**

<sup>6</sup>De-ity: *Gott-heit*.

One find an echo. In the empty room of non-thought, into which there flees the fear of God that did not muster up the courage to be in awe of God, that voice gets lost in the void. Even if the mythological gods did not live beyond their realm surrounded by walls—they still lived. India's God, and China's God, even before their final evaporation in Nirvana or Tao, share the weakness of those gods of myth: they cannot get beyond themselves. But they are infinitely inferior to those gods of myth insofar as they stop halfway, to the extent that they do not have the strength for that which breathes powerfully out of the mythic gods: life.

**FUNDAMEN-  
TAL  
AESTHETIC  
PRINCIPLES:  
EXTERNAL  
FORM**

**T**HIS self-contradictory wealth of life, which becomes possible through the closure of the mythical world, has nevertheless remained in force till today outside of its original domain: in art. Still today, all art remains under the law of the mythical world. The work of art necessarily has that closure in itself, that indifference to everything that may be found outside of it, that independence of higher laws, that freedom from baser duties; these are the traits we recognized as belonging to the world of myth. It is a basic requirement of the work of art that its shapes reflect a tremor of the "mythical," even if they should be dressed in the attire of our everyday garb; the work of art must be closed off by a crystal wall from all that it is not; a kind of breath from that "easy life" of the Olympian gods must rest over it, even if the existence it reflects is to be made of misery and tears. In the threefold mystery of the Beautiful—outer form, inner form, content—the first of its thoughts, the miracle of outer form, the "that which is beautiful is blissful in itself," originates in the metaphysical spirit of myth. The spirit of myth founds the realm of the Beautiful.

**TWILIGHT OF  
THE GODS**

**I**F ever God should go beyond his vitality already attained in order to become the living God of life, the result obtained till now on the road from the nothing would have to be brought back again to a nothing, to a starting point. The elements of power and necessity, of arbitrariness and destiny, which joined together into the configuration of the living God, would have to be separated again, and the apparently final result would have to become an origin. Already the theology of antiquity, which was oriented toward myth, had fallen into an uneasiness that pushed forward to go beyond the self-satisfied sphere of myth and

seemed to demand that reversal of that which is simply living into the generator of life. But, with regard to the violence of the mythical view, it is a wonder that the attempts in this direction in the mysteries and ideas of the great philosophers always strove to put man and world into the sphere of the divine: exactly like myth, then, they possessed only the divine. The autonomy of the human and the worldly disappeared, both in the mysteries to do with deification and in the concepts of love and yearning, which permitted the philosophers to bridge over the abyss; these concepts never led from the divine to man and worldly things, but it was always the reverse. This is true of the Greeks in their loving quest for the perfect, and of the Indians in their love of God. It would have seemed to be a restriction of God, of the God on whom one was priding oneself for just now having elevated him to the one who includes all things by amassing on his one head all the noble qualities of the many gods, if one had wanted to entangle him again in the passion of love. It may be that man loves him; but his love, God's love for man, could be at most an answer to the love of man, the just reward then, and not the free gift which extends its blessings beyond all norms of justice, not the original divine power that makes choices without constraints, or even anticipates all human love and makes the blind see and the deaf hear. And even where man believed he had attained the highest form of love, like in those circles of the Indian friends of God, by renouncing, for the sake of God, all that belonged to him, all desire and all longing as well as all ascetic efforts, awaiting God's grace in complete surrender—even here this surrender was the performance achieved by man, and not first the gift of God. In other words, God's love in the first place was not for the hardened one, but for the perfect one. The doctrine of surrender to divine grace passed for a dangerous "mystery of all mysteries"; one had to avoid, so it is taught, disclosing it to those who do not worship God, those who murmur against him, those who do not mortify themselves. It is precisely these lost ones, these hardened ones, those uncommunicative ones, that is to say the sinners, whom the love of a God had to seek, a God not merely worthy of being loved, but who himself loves, independently of the love of men; no, it is just the reverse: a God who is the very One who awakens the love of man. But of course for that, the infinite God would have to become so finitely near to man, so face to face, a named person to a named

person, that no reason of the rational ones, no wisdom of the wise ones could ever admit. At the same time it would be necessary that the abyss between the human-worldly and the divine, an abyss which indicates precisely the impossibility of effacing proper names, be recognized and acknowledged so deeply, so really, and as so impossible to leap across by all the ascetic powers of man and all the mystical powers of the world, that no arrogance of the ascetic and no self-conceit of the mystic would ever recognize it in their contempt for the “sound and smoke” of names, be they earthly or heavenly.

And so the essence of this mythical God certainly remained accessible to the longing of man and world, but only at the price, for man, of ceasing to be man, and for the world, of ceasing to be world. The wing-beat of longing carried man and world off into the consuming fire of deification. But by carrying them away up to the divine, this longing left far behind it that which is human and worldly and did not, as might be expected, need them to enter there with a deeper love. Likewise, for God’s friends in India, action is only that which must not be evil, but not that which must be good. And the divine never overflows beyond the borders of its own life; antiquity succeeded in getting as far as the monism of God, but not any further; the world and man must become the nature of God and let themselves be deified, but God does not lower himself to them; he does not present himself, does not love, he must not love. For, he keeps his nature for himself. And so remains what he is: the metaphysical.

## BOOK TWO

# THE WORLD AND ITS MEANING OR METALOGIC

**W**HAT is it we know of the world? It seems to surround us. We live in it, but it is also inside us. It gets into us, but with every breath we breathe and with every move of our hands, it flows back out of us. It is what is an obvious fact to us, as obvious as our own Self, more obvious than God. It is obviousness itself, that which has the property as well as the determination to be understood, and to be understood as obvious—as self-evident. But long ago, philosophy carried on regardless of this obviousness to turn to the order of the day, and in a ceaselessly renewed momentum, it wanted to make now the I, now God, into the starting point of understanding; in so doing, it reduced the self-evidence of the world exactly to zero. That which remains of the obviousness of the world then, as knowledge of the “thing in itself,” or however this infinitesimal little remainder is called, is what would very rightly be the object of a negative cosmology. The fact that one has not used this name with the same facility as that of a negative theology surely depends more on cultural sympathies or antipathies than on objective grounds. For, frequently, lovers of God are not lovers of knowledge, and vice versa. This opposition does not exist between lovers of the world and lovers of knowledge; on the contrary, they, like the concepts of world and knowledge themselves, more or less match each other. It is in this way that the “result of science” which wants it that nothing can be known about God is better accepted than the same result about the world. We resist the former “result” as we do the latter. We refuse to see results in this. If science could lead to such a result has itself led *ad absurdum*. To tell the truth, it is not the result that is necessarily false in this case, but the path that had to make it into a result. That is why, as previously for the question about God, we are taking this “result” as beginning.

**NEGATIVE  
COSMOLOGY**

Of the world we know nothing. And here too the nothing is a nothing of our knowledge, and a definite and singular nothing of our knowledge. Here too it is the springboard from which the leap into the something of knowledge, into the “positive,” is to be made. For we “believe” in the world, at least as much as we

**ON THE  
METHOD**

believe in God or in our Self. Therefore the nothing of these three entities can only be a hypothetical nothing; it is only a nothing of knowledge, owing to which we attain the something of knowledge that circumscribes the content of that belief. We can only hypothetically free ourselves from the fact that we have that belief; hypothetically because we are building it from the ground up; in this way that we shall finally reach the point where we shall see how the hypothetical had to turn back into the a-hypothetical, the absolute, the unconditional of that belief. Science can and must provide only this for us. We cannot count on it at all to free us from that threefold belief; science will teach us precisely that we cannot expect this and why we cannot. And so the apparently unscientific side of “belief,” that is to say according to older concepts, will be justified. The *de omnibus dubitandum* of Descartes was valid under the presupposition of the one and universal All. Facing this All, there was the one and universal thinking, and as instrument of this thinking the just as one and universal doubt *de omnibus*. If that presupposition vanishes—and our first concern was to show its unsteady character and in fact that it was already null and void for the conscious mind—so if that presupposition falls, then in the place of the one and universal doubt, thus of absolute doubt, there enters the hypothetical doubt; just because it is no longer *de omnibus*, it can no longer be perceived as an end of thinking, but only still as a means. So we are diving once again into the depths of the positive.

**WORLDLY  
ORDER**

**O**UT of the nothing there once again wells up, just because it cannot remain nothing, the original affirmation, the Yes of the not-nothing. But since this affirmation must affirm an infinite, the affirmed not-nothing here cannot mean being like in the case of God. For the being of the world is not an infinite essence at rest. The inexhaustible plenitude of visions in the world, without cease newly generated and newly received, the “being full-of-figure” of the world—this is exactly the opposite of an essence unceasingly at rest, in itself and at every moment infinite, as we address the being of God. So the original Yes must affirm something else here; the original statement about the world must be different. As an infinite—and as such the not-nothing alone can be affirmed—as an infinite only that which is found “everywhere” and which “always” can be confirmed. The words “everywhere” and “always” would have only the meaning of an

analogy in relation to the divine nature, they would only be the stammering expression of the inexpressible; but here, in the case of the world, they ring true. The being of the world must really be its everywhere and its always. But only in thinking everywhere and always the being of the world. The logos is the essence of the world.

Let's recall here what we said beforehand in the Introduction about the relationship between the world and its logos. Thinking has spread into the world like a system where a multiplicity of particular determinations is interlaced. This is what is valid in it in every place and at every moment. It owes its meaning for the world, its "possibility for application," to that interlacing, to that multiplicity in whose favor it has decided. As the tragic poet says, it left behind itself "the naïve word of truth"; it is precisely from this aversion that there springs the strength of its conversion to being. The system of determinations of thought is a system not because of its uniform origin, but rather because of the unity of its point of application, the unity of its domain of validity, the world. Certainly a uniform origin can and even must be presupposed for this thinking that is directed toward being and toward it alone, but it neither can nor may be proved. For by becoming entirely applied thinking, entirely involved in the world, it revoked the ability to prove the unity of its origin: since this uniform origin was not founded in the world, it also happened that the road from thinking that has to presuppose "pure" with regard to "applied" thinking is excluded from the sphere of influence of applied thinking. It may be that purely presupposed thinking must be thought, but it does not think; only real thought thinks, thinking that is valid for the world, applied to the world, involved in the world. So the unity of thinking remains outside; thinking must console itself with the unity of its point of application inside the hermetic walls of the world. The infinite unity of the divine being, this unity that is expressly before any identity of thinking and being, and therefore as much before thinking that is valid for being as before thinkable being—is this unity the source from which springs the logical and manifold irrigation system of the world's fields? This cannot be dismissed outright, but still less can it be proved; it remains a mere presumption; in the world where it is at home, thinking finds no gate that is locked to it, but "beyond, the view is cut off to him."

**ORIGINAL  
WORD, SIGN**

Since it is only possibility of application, but possibility everywhere and always, the logos of the world is that which is universally valid. With this concept of the universal, we have spotted a new aspect of the efficacy of the original Yes. The Yes, let's recall, was the word of the original statement, the statement by which the "so" is fixed and con-firmed—once and for all. In the original Yes, therefore, there is already universal validity. The predicate taken by itself, for example the word "free," has its meaning everywhere and always, independently of the meaning it assumes with its use in the definite case of a particular statement. It is not the universal that is realized in the application, but simply that which is open to application. The Yes simply grounds the possibility of application; it is not itself the law of application. In the affirmation that caused the divine essence to spring up from the nothing of God, the infinitude of the affirmed not-nothing appeared as infinite being of the divine nature. On the other hand, the infinitude of the affirmed not-nothing of the world appears as infinite possibility of application of the worldly logos. If we want to designate by a formula this logos that is quite simply universal and yet everywhere attached to the world, bound to the world, we would have to make it appear on the right side of the equation, seeing that it is a result of an affirmation; by reason of its universality that leaves no space outside of it, we could designate it only by A; the character that it has of being applicable, which we recognize as essential to it, indicates the necessity that the application upon it also really takes place; this passive force of attraction which emanates from it was expressed symbolically by the antecedent equal sign. This is how we get "=A". It is the symbol of the spirit of the world. For this would be the name we would have to give to the logos that is spread and amalgamated everywhere and always in the world, both the so-called "natural" world and the so-called "spiritual" one. In doing this, we would certainly have to keep our distance from the Hegelian connotation that makes the name in the godhead become blurred; we would prefer the music hummed by this word and related words, "spirit of the earth" and "soul of the world," in the beginnings of the philosophy of nature of the Romantics, in the case of the young Schelling and to some degree also in the case of Novalis.

**WORLDLY  
PLENITUDE**

**B**UT really, what is dismaying in the world is that it is not spirit. There is still something else in it, something always

new, pressing, imposing. Its womb is insatiable in conceiving, it is inexhaustible in giving birth. Or better—for both masculine and feminine are in it—it is, as “nature,” as much the mother who endlessly gives birth to its figures as it is the indefatigable procreative force of the “spirit” that is at home in it. Stone and plant, state and art—without cease, every organism is renewed. This plenitude of figures is just as original as the round dance of thoughts. There are just as few conditions for their bursting forth as there are for the order of that round dance. The sun is no less a miracle than the sunniness of the eye that catches sight of it. Beyond both of them, beyond the plenitude and beyond the order, there is immediately the nothing, the nothing of the world.

But the emergence of the plenitude out of the nothing is once again different from the emergence previously of the logos of the world. The spirit of the world left behind the night of the nothing and, with a serene, infinite Yes, moved toward the not-nothing, the bright reality of the world. But the plenitude of faces breaks the nocturnal prison of the nothing in an ever renewed convulsion of procreation and giving birth; each new thing is a renewed negation of the nothing, something that has never been, a beginning for itself, something unheard of, something “new under the sun.” Infinite is the force here of the negation of the nothing, but finite is each singular effect of this force, infinite is the plenitude, finite is the figure. Without reason and without direction, the diverse phenomena emerge out of the night; it is not written on their foreheads from where they come, to where they are going; they are. In being, they are singular, each for its part against all the others, each for its part separate from all the others, “particular,” a “not-other.”

So the inner-worldly plenitude of particularity opposes the inner-worldly order of the universal. Hidden in the universal is a need for fulfillment, a turn to application. In the particular there is nothing like this. Indeed, in the particular there is no need of anything, neither of direction nor of force—not even against its like. Each particular is certainly a particular with regard to the other; but it does not regard this regard; at birth it is blind, it does nothing but be. Its force is only the blind weight of its being. According to our terminology, its symbol is B, simply B, the naked sign of individuality, without an equal sign referring to it.

Like the Yes, the No thus led to a result just as characteristi-

cally different in relation to previous results. The warp of its “existence” which God had found in his nature, the world found in its logos. For God, the woof of the fabric was furnished by divine freedom, for the world, it is the inexhaustible fountain of the phenomenon. The free action in God, the phenomenal something in the world: both are equally sudden, equally unique, equally new revelations from out of the night of the nothing, there the nothing of God, here the nothing of the world. Both arise from the hard, body-to-body wrestling of the No with the nothing. Every divine action, every earthly phenomenon is a new victory over the nothing, an event as glorious as on the first day. But whereas in God an unbounded clarity breaks free out of the night of the nothing, it is the colorful birth, though itself still blind, of the singular something that bursts in from out of the dark womb of the nothing of the world. It bursts into the world, not through any impulse, only carried along by its own weight. But the world is already there, exactly as God’s sleeping nature was already there when the clear wake-up call of divine freedom resounded. The world is there, in the royal treasure of the vessels and dishes of its logos, infinitely receptive, infinitely in need of “application.” And into these vessels the contents fall from the source that springs forth ceaselessly. Over the Yes and the No, there closes the And.

**REALITY OF  
THE WORLD**

**T**HE particular is unpropelled, without movement in itself; it bursts in, and so it is there. It is not the “given”—a mistaken designation in which is reflected the error of all pre-metalegical philosophy of the world; it is not for nothing that its systems again and again arrive at an impasse in this problem. It is not the given; “givens,” once and for all, are sooner the logical forms in the simple and infinite validity of their Yes; the particular is a surprise; not a given, but a gift ever new; more precisely, a present, for in the present the thing offered as present disappears behind the gesture of presenting. And the logical forms are not the spontaneous beasts—*spontequae se movent*—that break into the gardens of the given to seek their nourishment there; they are instead the precious, ancient vessels, always ready to hide the wine of new harvests in their fat bellies. They are the unmoved, the “eternal yesterday,” the “universal,” which for that reason is not yet, as the angry rebel doubtless would have it, the “totally mutual”; but still he does correctly characterize it as that “which always was

and always returns and will be valid tomorrow because it was valid today.” But the phenomenon is the ever new—the miracle in the world of the spirit.

The phenomenon had been the crux of idealism, and thus of all philosophy from Parmenides till Hegel; idealism could not grasp it as “spontaneous,” because with this it would have denied the omnipotence of the logos; idealism had never done it justice and had had to falsify the sparkling plenitude of the many and present it as the dead chaos of the given. The unity of the intelligible All did not authorize any other conception. The All as a one and universal All can only be sustained by a thinking that possesses an active and spontaneous force; but in attributing life to thinking in this way, it must, like it or not, be denied to life—vitality denied to life! Only the metalogical view of the world can restore life to its rights. For here the All no longer counts as the one and universal one, but as “an” All, and so the logos can fill it as the truth at home in it, without first having to effect the unity; the inner-worldly logos, itself a unity through its natural relationship, of whatever kind, to an outerworldly unity, wherever it is at home, this inner-worldly logos, then, no longer needs to be saddled with an activity that practically contradicts its worldly essence, its diversity, and its applicability; the logos brings about the unity of the world only from within; the unity as it were not as its outer form, but as its inner form. From the very beginning, this metalogical All possesses external unity, to the extent that it is not a matter of “the” thinkable All, but of “an” All—rich in thought—, not of an All created by the spirit, but permeated with the spirit. The logos is not, as maintained from Parmenides till Hegel, creator of the world, but spirit of the world, perhaps better still, soul of the world. The logos, thus again turned into soul of the world, can do justice to the miracle of the living body of the world. The body of the world no longer needs to stay there as a mass of undifferentiated “givens,” full of chaotic agitation, ready to be seized and shaped by logical forms; but instead becomes the living, ever renewed flow of the phenomenon, a flow that sweeps down on the calmly opened womb of the soul of the world and unites with it to shape the organized world.

Let’s follow more closely the path of the particular’s descent upon the universal. The particular—if we recall the symbol “B”—is without direction; the universal—“A”—is itself passive, with-

out movement; but because it demands an application, a force of attraction emanates from it. So there is formed around the universal a field of force of attraction into which the particular plunges under the constraint of its own weight. By particularly distinguishing, as a moment ago within God, two points of this movement, we are describing as it were the entire curve of the process. One of these points is as follows: after a stretch of a pure, blind fall without direction or awareness, the particular becomes conscious so to speak of its movement, which draws it toward the universal, and then its eyes open to its own nature. At this moment, the particular in general, previously blind, becomes a particular that is conscious of its particularity, and that means: a particular conscious of its direction toward the universal. A particular that “knows” that the universal exists is no longer merely a particular, but a particular that, without ceasing to be essentially particular, has already reached the frontiers where the power of the universal is exercised. This is the “individual,” the singular, which bears on its body the marks of the universal, not of the universal in general, which obviously does not have “marks”—but of its universal, of its genus, of its species, while remaining essentially a particular, except that now it is an “individual” particular. The individuality is not a sort of higher degree of particularity, but a station on the road that leads the pure particular to the universal. The other station is located at the point where the particular has fallen under the resolute dominion of the universal. What lies beyond this point would be the pure universal where the particular would have appeared without leaving a trace; but the point itself indicates the moment of the movement where the particular, in spite of the uncontested victory of the universal, yet still lets its passage be felt. At this point, there is, in this case, just as at the preceding point there was the “individual,” the “species” or whatever name one wants to give to this universal, which is not simply universal, but an individualized universal, a particular universality. For the genus, the species, or, to cross over into the human sphere, the community, the people, the state, are all concepts which are only unconditioned universalities in terms of their own particular; apart from there, these are unities that can be perfectly united among themselves into pluralities—species, peoples, states. Just as on the other hand the individual, too, is only a simple feature in terms of its species, and yet only on that account is it capable of being repre-

sentative of a—its—species, because it already represents a plurality in relation to the naked and blind particular; of course a plurality of at least two allocations, the mark of the species and that of its own characteristics.

In the individual, then, as in the species, and in the movement that leads the individual into the open arms of the species, the configuration of the world is perfected. Even within God, essence and freedom were only conceptual extremes, and his characteristic of vitality was attested to in the internal confrontation between divine power and divine necessity: the arbitrariness of the power was limited by the necessity, and the constraint of the necessity was dissolved by the power; in this way the configuration of the world arises, not directly from the fall of the particular into the universal, but rather from the insertion of the individual into the species. The real And of the world is not the And of inspired world and of spirit at home in the world—those are extremes—but much more directly: it is the And of the thing and its concept, of the individual and its genus, of man and his community.

There is an occurrence where these two elements of the essence of the world are reflected with the strongest, most richly meaningful clearness. The individual arises at birth, whereas the genus, as the word already implies, appears in the coupling. The act of coupling precedes that of birth and takes place as a singular act without the fixed relation to the birth insofar as it is singular; yet in its universal essence, it is strictly related to and directed toward it. But the birth breaks forth in its individual result, as a full miracle, with the shattering force of the unforeseen, of the unforeseeable. There has always been coupling, and yet each birth is something absolutely new. From the most un-individual of human actions there arises a result of a truly “inexpressible,” truly unthinkable individuality. The feature of that which is born—mind you, its feature as a part of the world, not its Self—is concentrated entirely in the moment of birth; this is the deepest meaning of astrological faith, which fails because and insofar as it imagines that it grasps man as Self, when in truth, it only meets him insofar as he is an individuality, that is to say a particular part of the world, like any other extra-human essence or thing; but for the daimon of individuality, the astrological law really applies: “As on the day that gave you to the world, the sun rose to greet the planets.” Man and every individual part of the world

are never, therefore, more individualities than in the moment when they—precisely are individualized, when they enter into the phenomenon and “come into the light of day” as parts of the world which refuse separation. Yet this individuality is attracted with a dark violence by the power of its species; it moves toward this central point by always distancing itself further from the day of its birth, full of all possibilities, with a constant loss of possibilities—within individuality; in order finally to renounce it as much as possible at the moment of coupling. In coupling, the individual has entered fully into the species, he who from the time of his birth was fully individual, practically like a thing, with neither connection nor relation, only touched by the concept and not by the reality of his species. In its continuous course, this cyclical process turns out to be, contrary to idealism’s concept of generation, the concrete illustration of the metalogical essence of the world.

**SIGN** It is a circular process. We had to designate it symbolically with  $B=A$ . The origins of the two “terms” of the equation have disappeared. But the equation is characteristically different from previous ones. Whereas the formula for God,  $A=A$ , equated two equally original and equally infinite entities, the formula for the world affirms the equation of two unequal entities: the content of the world and the form of the world. To begin with, it explicitly confirms that the equation is  $A=A$ , and not, by chance,  $A=B$ . That is to say: it affirms the passivity of the form and the activity of the content; it grants that the concept is an obvious fact, and yet the thing appears to it as miracle. And so for it, the world becomes a whole closed in itself, excluding everything outside, the filled vessel, a cosmos of many figures. All fundamental relationships in it are those that lead from B to A, those therefore that make the plenitude, the content, the individuals enter into the order, the form, the species. All the relationships going in the opposite direction are not original, but derivative. The spirit can only build the body because the body, to our astonishment, presses toward the spirit. Apollo’s lyre can assemble the stones into a wall only because the stones are themselves miraculously inspired individuals—“full of gods.” So this world is the crucial counterpart of the world of idealism. For this latter, the world is not miraculous factuality, thus not a closed whole. It must be all-encompassing All. The fundamental relationships must go from species to individuals, from concepts to

things, from form to content. The given material must be there in a chaotic and gray obviousness until the sun's rays of its spiritual form make its colors sparkle; but these are only the colors of the light which emanate from that miraculous source of light. From that chaotic grayness itself, nothing sparkles.  $A=B$ , not  $B=A$ , would be the formula of this view of the world. And this is really the case, as it turns out to be in the age of its completion. The  $A=B$  of idealism possesses within it the possibility of its "derivation" from an  $A=A$ . Hence the profound paradox of the equation of two unlike entities, which we also affirm, is broken. The idea of emanation leads almost imperceptibly beyond the abyss that of course still opens here, too, between the universal and the particular. And  $B$  can only "emanate" from  $A$ , but not  $A$  from  $B$ .  $B$  can always only "exist," but not be origin. Accordingly only the equation  $A=B$  can be the equation of idealism, because only it is really a deduction from an equation that is formally non-paradoxical. The  $B=B$ , from which the equation  $B=A$  would have to be deduced, would certainly be just as formally obvious, but materially incapable of letting something be derived from itself—and we have not yet examined the possibility itself of an equation  $B=B$ . But an immediate relationship, say of  $A=A$  and  $B=A$ , could by no means be established inside the world. A paradoxical statement about  $B$  (that is to say  $B=A$ ) does not become less paradoxical by means of the relationship to the non-paradoxical statement about  $A$  (that is to say  $A=A$ ). Whereas in any case the paradox of a statement that is in itself paradoxical about  $A$  (that is to say  $A=B$ ), even if it does not disappear forthwith, through its connection to a non-paradoxical statement about  $A$  (that is to say  $A=A$ ), it does nevertheless decrease appreciably in it. Like an unexplained remainder, nothing else continues to exist here except the—concept of relationship, thus a difficulty that just as much affects the possibility for relationship between two equations as for the one internal to each single equation. But this difficulty remains quite beyond our horizon since we are still concerned only with the single equation and only by anticipation, and only to explain to the originality of  $B=A$  opposite  $A=B$  or the difference of the metalogical conception of the world opposite the idealistic conception, that we had to indicate the path that idealism takes. This path leads to  $A=B$  as a path of emanation, streaming forth, or idea-listic generation. Later, we will have to treat in more detail the meaning of this

inner path of the world. For the moment, we are returning to the simple equation  $B=A$ , or rather to that which it is meant to symbolize, the metalogical world.

*THE PLASTIC  
COSMOS*

CONTRARY to the world of idealism which fills all, it is the completely filled world, the organized world. This is the whole of its parts. The parts are not filled by the whole, and not upheld by it—the whole is simply not All, it is really only whole. That is why many roads lead from the parts to the whole; indeed, strictly speaking, each part, insofar as it is really part, really “individual,” has its own road toward the whole, its own trajectory of descent. Whereas from the All of the idealistic view which fills all its members and upholds every single one of them, only one road leads to these members, namely precisely the road on which the power current of the All flows. Here we clearly see the reason for the phenomenon we mentioned in the Introduction. The idealistic systems of 1800 without exception display a trait that would have to be called one-dimensionality; it is present most clearly in Hegel, but potentially, too, in Fichte and Schelling. The singular is not deduced immediately from the whole, but it is developed in its position between the nearest realities above it and below it in the system; for instance, the “society” in Hegel is developed in its position between the “family” and the “state”; the power current of the entire system flows as a one and universal current through all the singular forms. This corresponds exactly to the idealistic view of the world. This also explains the professional impersonality by vocation of philosophers from Parmenides to Hegel, which we mentioned in the Introduction. The concept of the unity of the All does not leave open any other possibility of a point of view than the one whose “turn in line” it is in the history of philosophical problems. And hence Hegel had to make the history of philosophy itself the systematic conclusion of philosophy, for in this way the last thing that seemed capable of contradicting the unity of the All, the personal point of view of the singular philosopher, was rendered harmless.

The metalogical view, likewise in a necessary connection with the new view of the world, also creates a new concept and type of philosopher. As from each singular thing as individual, a road, and to be sure its own road, leads to the so too from the single philosopher. For the philosopher is the bearer of the unity of

the metalogical system of the world; it itself lacks the unity of one-dimensionality; it is fundamentally multi-dimensional; from every single point there run threads and relationships to each other and to the whole; and the unity of these countless relationships, their relative conclusion, is the personal, lived and philosophized unity of the point of view of the philosopher. It is only the relative end; for certainly, conceptually, the idea of the whole of the world must be grasped strictly in its own metalogical nature, but the single system will always only be able to realize this idea relatively; and as this relativity in the idealistic system, which Hegel rightly recognized, was conditioned by the place the problem had reached in history, so in the metalogical system by the subjective point of view of the philosopher. The problem of the "philosopher" is not yet exhausted with these remarks; but we must save a deeper clarification for later.

In the world's being overwhelmed by the miracle of individuality, the world of the basic genus still everywhere as the "given," not the all-filling world but the fully filled one of the metalogical view, is what we could designate as configured world. Configured, not created. With the createdness we would have claimed more than we could claim here. Just as the living God of metaphysical theology was absolutely not "the" living God, but "a" living God, so the world configured from the metalogical cosmology is not yet the created one, but merely the configured. Just as the living gods indicated the pinnacle of ancient theology, so this configured world designates the summit of ancient cosmology. And it is certainly not only a matter of the cosmology of the macrocosm, but above all of that of the microcosm, that is to say, of both the "natural" world and the "spiritual" world. For the natural world, the relationship is not even all that clear, because the fundamental idea of idealism, the identity of being and thinking, had already come up in Antiquity. But this idea had had no cosmological effect in antiquity, where it remains meta-physical. Even the concept of emanation appears only with the Neoplatonic School, which develops precisely in reaction to new ideas, and no longer to ancient ones. But even Plato and Aristotle do not teach, within the world, any emanatory or an active relationship of any sort between idea and phenomenon, concept and thing, genus and individual, or however else that opposition is seen. Rather, here there appear the remarkable notions that things "imitate" the

ANCIENT  
COSMOLOGY

idea, that they “look” toward it, “long” for it, “develop” toward it, which is not cause but “end.” The idea rests. The phenomenon moves toward it. It seems to be exactly the metalogical relationship.

**PLATO AND  
ARISTOTLE**

The difficulties unresolved by the ancients are obvious in this interpretation. They are expressed in part in Aristotle’s polemics against his master, but he himself did not master them. Against Plato’s theory of Ideas, Aristotle in effect sets in motion the idea of infinity; beyond concept and thing, a concept of the possible relationship of the thing to the concept must again be posited, and so on. But against this concept of infinity, the metalogical view of the totality of the configured world in general is disarmed, and Aristotle’s cosmos is just as finite as Plato’s is. It is precisely here that we see the limit of the isolated metalogical idea. Aristotle evades the problem by a *salto mortale* into the metaphysical. For his divine “thinking of thinking” is just thinking only of thinking; that it might also be thinking of the unthinkable is expressly and fundamentally rejected; divine thinking can only think the “best,” that is to say only itself. But this a-cosmos of his metaphysics makes it incapable of exactly what it must realize. It must—as a doctrine of the final cause—present the “principle” of the world. But as a result of its purely metaphysical essence, it is a principle only of itself. And if we disregard its determination as being self-consciousness, and want to see it only as that which it must realize, without asking whether it actually realizes it, then it becomes, as final cause, a principle purely internal to the world; against its relationship to the effect, there rise up all the doubts that Aristotle had stacked up against the relationship between idea and thing. If it was considered from a theological point of view, his metaphysics was exposed to the reproach of a-cosmism; if considered from a cosmological point of view, then to that of a-theism—a reproach in both cases, for it claims to explain the world, that which in the one case becomes impossible because it disappears from the field of vision, that which in the other case is impossible because it becomes a whole closed in itself, a “here” to which the view into the infinite, “toward yonder,” has been blocked. This great theologian of paganism does not manage to get rid of the metalogical view of the macrocosm, which makes of it a plastic form with limits facing the outside and configured within. What he is seeking is the solution of the contradiction between the infinite demand

of thinking to be the One and the All, and the finite, but infinitely rich totality of the world; but he did not find it. What prevents him from finding it is that the either-or dilemma between theology and cosmology cannot be replaced with the both-and affirmation of the one and the other.

With regard to the macrocosm, consequently, the metalogical view of the world could not be sustained without internal difficulties; on the contrary, it seemed easy to implement for the microcosm, but of course only apparently. The problem of the relationship between individual and genus was solved by the ancient world, in theory and in practice, in the apparently metalogical sense. People, State, and all forms of community that Antiquity knew are lions' dens: the individual clearly sees the footprints going in, but none coming out. Strictly speaking, man comes up against the community as a whole, of which he is only a part, and well he knows it. These entireties of which he is only a part, these genera of which he is only a representative, reign as absolute powers over his moral life, although they are in themselves by no means absolute and are themselves in their turn only particular cases of the genus State or the genus people in general. For the individual, it is his community that is simply the community. Just by reason of this being closed to the outside and this unconditional characteristic within, those communities become the singular essences configured throughout, which a little careful reflection will inevitably compare with the work of art. This is not the organization that is the secret of the ancient State. The organization represents an altogether idealistic formation of the State. In the thoroughly organized State, the relationship between State and individual is not that of the whole to its parts; but that of an All to its members, the State being the All which sends a single power current circulating through all its members. Each has his well-defined place, and insofar as he occupies it, he belongs to the All of the State. The social classes and other *puissances intermédiaires* existing in the modern organized State are fundamentally only intermediate powers; they mediate the relationship of the State to the individual when defining the place of the individual in the State; the State is realized through man, it generates him by the intermediary of his "situation," his "position." By contrast, the ancient caste is not an intermediary of the State; for the consciousness of the individual, it completely obscures the whole of the State; where the caste exists, it takes the place of the State for the individual. For the ancient State knows

THE POLIS

only the immediate relationship of the citizen to itself, precisely because it is a whole in the configuration of which its parts come to an end; whereas the modern State is the All from which its members draw strength to configure themselves. This is the reason for which the ancient slave is not part of the State, as opposed certainly to the medieval serf.

The ancient individual does not therefore lose himself in the community in order better to find himself in it, but quite simply to build it; he himself disappears. The familiar distinctions between the ancient notion of democracy and all the more recent notions are entirely in order. It is just as clear why antiquity did not develop the notion of representation. Only a body can have organs; a building has only parts. The idea of representation in ancient law after all comes up against very characteristic difficulties. Every singular man is only he himself; he is only individual. Even where it must necessarily come to the idea of representation, in worship and especially in the sacrifice, in the case of man who sacrifices as well as in the case of the one who is sacrificed, even there this difficulty is perceived in the constantly perceptible effort to transfer to the one sacrificing a personal purity and to the victim a destiny to die, for instance, like a criminal, or at least like an object of a curse of magical effectiveness. The fact that precisely the one who is personally impure is fit to offer the sacrifice, or that the one who is personally pure is fit to undergo the sacrifice for everyone, constitutes the notion of the absolute collective responsibility of human-ity in everyone, which remains as remote from ancient individualism as—well, precisely the notion of collective human responsibility.

**THE  
OECUMENE**

For this is the final characteristic of the metalogical ethic of the ancient world: the whole composed of parts can always only be in its turn a part of a whole, it never becomes All. Insofar as it is his community, the community is an ultimate reality for the individual, beyond which he cannot see. The thing, too, knows only its own concept. That the genera build in their turn, insofar as they are individuals, the higher genus, is what remains unknown to the individual of the lower genus; only the act can get it into his head, without for all that getting into his consciousness, of course; in any case, the world empires of Antiquity succeed in depoliticizing the peoples that make them up; this does not result in a positive consciousness on the part of a world empire. The Portico teaches only the equality of what is origi-

nally human in every singular man, but not a community of a renewed humanity. On the contrary, where man sees in his own community the power that generates him himself, where he is a part of it without regarding himself as an individual of his genus, but as a member of an All, there the community, too, is compelled to regard itself as a member of an All. For, whereas the whole reposes in itself and has no impetus to advance to a higher whole, what possesses the nature of a totality is not pacified before finding rest in the All. So it happens that in the smallest cell of the idealistic organism, for example, in a corporation or in a rural community, there is more consciousness of the universal than in the empire of Augustus, for this was always precisely a closed whole, a world appeased and satisfied in itself, without any impetus to carry its peace beyond its borders; that which was outside remained outside; with the clearest of conscience it identified itself with the world: *oikoumene*.

Against this metalogical view of the common life of men, whose limits we have shown here by comparing it to the idealistic view, even Antiquity itself rebelled, not with a different doctrine of the common life, but simply from the point of view of the singular man who refuses to admit that he is only a part of a whole. It is just for this reason that the Sophist revolution is so instructive, because it does not go beyond this fundamental idea, in itself profound and accurate. It proclaims the free sovereignty of man in the face of all things and above all existing orders. But that's as far as it goes. It is incapable of saying how this free nature of man is supposed to assert itself in all things and in all the existing orders. It makes man the measure of things. But it is indifferent to things how and by whom and with which measuring stick they are measured; only the one who moves them, not the one who measures them, makes an impression on them. And so the Sophist revolution is a tempest in a teapot; it is not true that it would have eradicated the ancient consciousness of the State. The *polis* remained what it was, indeed it became even more so; the great centuries of the greatest *polis*, Rome, took their course already in the full light of the Sophist critique of the State, a critique which had little hold over it. The deficiency of activity makes the Sophist concept of man just as unsuitable for a new solution to the problems of the metalogical microcosm as the inactivity of the philosophical concept of God made the

SOPHISTS

latter unsuitable for giving the solution to the problem of the macrocosm.

**ASIA: THE  
NON-PLASTIC  
WORLD**

**INDIA**

**F**OR, in the metalogical view of the world, there is still an unsolved problem, just as previously in the metaphysical concept of God. And yet: here as there, “it was the Greeks” who brought the idea to its highest development possible in its isolation. Again they, and not the legendary peoples of the East. Here again, it was they who remained on the porch of the Yes and the No, of twilight and intoxication, where the Greeks progressed to the And, to the completed figure. Once again, India and China each developed an aspect of the elementary being, prior to structure, by energetically limiting itself to the most elevated being. For long before, with its obstinate spirit, Indian thinking covered the world’s plenitude with the veil of the Maya, long before it asserted only the “Self” in all things and dissolved this Self anew in the oneness of the Brahmin; this thinking, already since its first beginnings, deviates from the determination of the particular and seeks a universal that would be behind it. It has been noted that as far back as those world hymns that accompanied the sacrifice, the singular God assumed the traits of the supreme and unique God, by forfeiting his own face for the poet. Hymns that begin in the greatest individuality die away in colorless universality. Amid the troop of the oldest gods tied to nature, at an early stage divine figures creep in of a purely allegorical origin, as later happened in Rome. But in India, this is only the symptom of dissolution in the thinking of the world in general. The question of the origin of the world is solved by a legion of juxtaposed, learned pseudo-myths, each of which, under cover of a legend of origin, actually developed a system of categories. Water, wind, breath, fire and all the rest—these are not elements of a reality, but early on they borrow the countenance of prescientific fundamental concepts to explain the world, a world which is certainly not received, not experienced, but first of all “explained.” The priest does not offer up real things, but the essence of things; it is only because they are essence that they can be put on the same footing as the essence of the world and can thus directly affect it. So, everything is ready for the world to become a system of concepts; it is certainly still a system of the world and reality, but without any autonomous right conceded to the particular, which can only be reckoned as “illusion.” And,

in its turn, the doctrine of the Buddha reaches back beyond this objective world of concepts and designates, as essence of these essences, the concepts of knowledge. In a series of concepts of knowledge there dissolved that which had still remained solid in this world that had vanished in the concept; and in the suppression of the knowing and desiring I, the whole world, generated by this knowledge and desire finally disappeared along with its gods and its essence into the nothing. Into nothing? No, here also, to avoid the term "nothing," which still always contains a musty taste of positivity, into a realm beyond knowledge and not-knowledge. Again the point is reached just before the border of the nothing and yet far behind the infinite universality of knowledge that denies the nothing and thus affirms itself infinitely.

The spiritual powers, recognized here only as essences of the world, and the suppression of which itself still had to take place spiritually, these powers of the concept China just as decisively denied. For it is precisely the plenitude of the world that is the only real thing. All spirit must be concrete, particular, for it to obtain a place here and the freedom of the city. Spiritual powers withdraw before earthly interests. The least metaphysical of all systems of national ethics, that of Confucius, still today gives form and color to the life of the people. The spiritual, insofar as it still plays a role, turns into spirits. The spirits become entirely individual individuals, themselves having a name and bound most particularly to the name of the worshipper: the spirits of his ancestors. It is for them that the sacrifice is intended; they are present, amid the living, visible, and indistinguishable. Unobjectionably, the abundance of the world is still overcrowded with their abundance. The question concerning the abode of the dead, and how it could be that the world is not overcrowded with them, was one of the impetuses that led to the doctrine in India of the metamorphosis of the person into changing figures; such a unity of the concept beyond the diversity of the phenomenon is entirely foreign to ancient China. There is no fear here of increasing the masses of spirits; each is immortal for itself, new ones are unceasingly added to the old ones, all have their proper names that distinguish each from the other. And if in India the individual lost his particularity through the caste that includes him not like a community, but like a universality that is superior to him, then in China the community where

he is directly inserted is the chain of ancestors; an insertion that does not rob him of his particularity; on the contrary, he himself is confirmed like a last link of the chain that meets in him, in his external particularity, which is only particularity in the world of which he is part. And just as in India Buddhism went back behind universal concepts to conceiving itself, and attained salvation from the world in the suppression of conceiving, so in China Lao-tse goes back beyond the world of Confucius, a world too visible, too active, too busy, too governed, and, without refuting its essence of reality, he seeks where the root and source of all this distracted agitation might be. From that source of the non-doing there arises all the plenitude of action. From that original abyss of the One there emerges the immense plenitude of essences. The mystery of ruling is solved in this way: not to rule, not to dominate, not to prescribe nor proscribe in overly busy calculations, but to be oneself, like the root of things, “without doing and without not-doing”: thus will the world be organized. Just as the Buddha teaches his followers the dissolution of the world already become concept in the conceiving, and then in the conceiving, of conceiving and finally in a beyond of conceiving, so Lao-tse teaches the overcoming of the concrete plenitude of becoming by means of the silent entry, without any activity, into the original, nameless abyss of becoming visible and named.

**PRIMITIVE  
PHENOMEN-  
ALISM**

Here again, nearest proximity to the nothing and yet not the nothing itself. Once again, and in that farthest point that the Indian spirit reached, there are the poles of all worldliness, which does not have the courage of a clear perspective, the only courage to which the figure reveals itself. For the world disappears as much when we turn our back on it as when we plunge into it; only he sees the figure who keeps his eyes open and his head up. The cool emptiness of flight from the world, the intimate depth of love for the world—again, here as there, India and China, the people that dreams with eyes closed and the people that dreams with eyes open—are the heirs of man of primitive times who takes refuge in the delirium of the world because he lacks the courage to observe the world; and once again the Greeks, the people of discoverers, are the guides of our breed on the road of clarity. For the clearly sketched structure of the world is yet in spite of all destined to triumph over the “supra-worldly greatness, now full of figures and now empty of figures.”

ON another point, configuration already triumphed with the Greeks, and it has dominated since then. Because, for the work of art, at least at first, those problems of a connection beyond do not exist, which just now seemed to put the metalogical view of the world in danger. At first it has its connection only in itself. And just as the mythical had already shown its lasting power as external law governing the realm of the beautiful, in itself independent of all exteriority, hence law of outer form, so, too, the world as configuration provides the second fundamental law of art, inclusiveness in itself, the general connection of each part with the whole, and of every detail with each other detail; a connection which cannot be brought to a unity by any logic and which is yet absolutely a unity; each part is not integrated solely by the mediation of other parts, but each is immediately integrated into the whole—the law of inner form has its basis here, in the metalogical view of the world, once and for all. And if the law of outer form, although effective even in the work of art, in spite of all goes still further in establishing the realm of the beautiful, the “idea of the beautiful,” then the second law is the law proper to the work of art and in general to the singular beautiful thing, to the beautiful figure—Hellas.

*FUNDAMENTAL  
AESTHETIC  
CONCEPTS:  
INNER FORM*

BUT it stopped at the figure. Infinitely rich within, a grand waterfall, colorfully illuminated, which in its eternal renewal always purifies itself and grows calm in the silent depths that collect it, this world is poor and powerless on the outside. Does an outside exist for it? The answer would probably have to be yes. But it must add that it knows nothing about this outside and—worse—wants to know nothing about it. It cannot deny it, but it doesn’t need it. There may be a God there—as long as he remains outside and does not become an integral part of the world itself, his existence is invisible to its macrocosm. There may be a man there—as long as he is content to be a mere measuring stick that is applied to this world from the outside without becoming an active force in it, its microcosm remains deaf to this pre-sence. And really, it has the right to remain blind and deaf as long as God does not shine forth and man does not speak. It may still be content to carry its logos in itself, its entire and sufficient foundation. It may still stay what it is, grounded in itself and founded upon itself; inspired by its own spirit,

*THE SLEEP OF  
THE WORLD*

resplendent in its own plenitude, the world is still entitled to be: the metalogical.

## BOOK THREE

# MAN AND HIS SELF OR METAETHICS

**A**BOUT man—about him, as well, are we supposed to know nothing? The Self's knowledge about itself, consciousness of self, has the reputation of being the surest of all knowledge. And common sense bristles up almost more fiercely than does scientific consciousness when it is a question of pulling the true foundation from under its feet, and it goes without saying, literally the scientific foundation. And yet it happened, though only a late hour. One of Kant's most surprising facts is that he made this most obvious thing, the I, the problem par excellence, the most problematic thing. With regard to the cognizant I, he teaches that it is only cognizable in its relationship to cognition, to its fruits, consequently, and not "in itself." And even about the I that wills, he claims that morality in the proper sense, that is to say merit and blame for actions, including our own actions, remains always hidden from us. So he establishes a negative psychology that gave food for thought to a whole century, the century of a soulless psychology. We hardly need to underline that, here, too, the nothing does not represent a result for us, but rather the starting point of thinking. Doubtless the absurd once had to be thought. For this is the profound meaning of the so much abused *credo quia absurdum*: all belief needs to presuppose an *absurdum* of knowledge. So, in order for the content of faith to become obvious, it is necessary that that which apparently goes without saying in knowledge receive the stamp of the absurd. This happened respectively with the three elements of this content, with God, the world, and man: with God, from the beginnings of the Middle Ages; with the world, at the start of modern times; with man, at the start of the last century. Only after knowledge no longer left anything in its simplicity and in its clarity, only since then has faith been able to take under its wing the simplicity that was expelled from knowledge, and so become itself perfectly simple.

Man cannot be proved any more than can the world or God. Yet, if knowledge takes it into its head to prove one of these three, then it will necessarily disappear into the nothing. From these coordinates, between which it leaves traces with every step

**NEGATIVE  
PSYCHOLOGY**

**ON THE  
METHOD**

it takes and with every move it makes, knowledge cannot escape—whether it takes the wings of dawn or stays at the ends of the sea, for it cannot break free from the orbit defined by those three elements. So the nothing of demonstrating knowledge is always only a nothing of knowledge and more exactly a nothing of the demonstration; in relation the demonstration, the fact which is involved in establishing the space where the knowledge itself lives and moves and exists, stays quite simply unmoved in its factual status. And knowledge can therefore here do nothing more than to follow the road from the non-demonstrable, from the nothing of knowledge to the factual status of the fact—that is to say precisely what we have already done here twice and now shall do a third time.

*HUMAN  
ATTRIBUTE*

**A**BOUT man also we know nothing. And this nothing, too, is only a beginning, and even the beginning of a beginning. In him, too, the original-words awaken, the Yes that creates, the No that generates, and the And that articulates. And here, too, the Yes creates the true being, the “essence,” in the infinite not-nothing.

What is this true being of man? The being of God was simply being, being beyond knowledge. The being of the world was in knowledge, a known being, a universal being. But facing God and the world, what is the essence of man? Goethe teaches us: “What distinguishes the gods from men? It is that many waves go past the gods—us, the wave raises, the wave swallows, and we sink.” And Ecclesiastes teaches us: “A generation goes, a generation comes, but the earth remains eternal.” The ephemeral, which is foreign to God and the gods, and which for the world is the bewildering experience of its own force always and at all times renewed, is therefore for man the abiding atmosphere which envelops him, which he inhales and exhales—with every breath of his breathing. Man is ephemeral, being ephemeral is his essence, as it is God’s essence to be immortal and unconditional, and it is the world’s essence to be universal and necessary. God’s being is being in the unconditional, the world’s being is being in the universal, man’s being is: being in the particular. Knowledge is not under him as it is for God, it is not around him and in him as it is for the world, but above him; he is not beyond the universal validity and necessity of knowledge, but rather he is in this world; he is not when knowledge comes to a stop, but before it

begins; and it is only because he is before knowledge that it happens that he still is after and that he shouts his victorious cry: "I am still here" to all knowledge, however completely it may imagine that it has put him into the vessels of its universal validity and its necessity. His essence is precisely that he does not let himself be put into a bottle, that he is always "still there," that, in his particularity, he always says what he thinks of the universal's pretensions to domination, that his own particularity is not an event for him, as the world probably would willingly concede to him, but precisely a thing that goes without saying—his essence. His first word, his original Yes, affirms his own being. In the boundless No of his nothing, this affirmation founds his particularity, his attribute as essence. A singular, then, but not a singular like the singular of the world which, at certain moments, explodes in a continuous series of singulars, but a singular in boundless space, a singular, then, which knows nothing of other singulars beside it, which moreover knows nothing at all of a "beside it," because it is "everywhere," a singular not as act, not as event, but as perpetual essence.

This attribute of man is therefore something other than the individuality he assumes as a singular phenomenon inside the world. This is not an individuality that secedes from other individualities, it is not a part—and even though he prides himself in his indivisibility, he recognizes that he is himself a part. His own nature is certainly not itself infinite, but "in" infinity; it is a singular reality and yet it is everything. Around it lies the infinite silence of the human not-nothing; it itself is the sound that resounds into this silence, a finite and yet unlimited entity.

Our symbolic language has a clearly laid-out path here. The original affirmation which always sets the right side of our equations, the original "so," had effected its total simplicity in the nature of God, and its universal validity in the logos of the world; in the first case, then, it is the force that had become effective in securing for the single word a meaning in general, in the second case it is that force which guarantees it the identity of its signification. Here the direction of the original Yes comes into effect, which for the single word gives grounds not merely for one and always the same meaning, but for its particular meaning, hence unlike the particularity newly determined by each usage, the particularity which the word already has before any usage. So the particularity which is not a surprise from one moment to the

**ORIGINAL  
WORD**

next, but the particularity as permanent character, finds its place only in the personal ethos of man—"only man can do the impossible, he can confer duration upon the moment"; he can do it precisely because he carries within him, as his lasting essence, that which "calls forth the moment in a precarious appearance." For him alone, the particularity does not change into a partial "individuality," but into an unbounded attribute of "character."

**SIGN** As particular, the attribute can be designated only by B. We have not been able to establish a direction in it. It is just as directionless, just as beyond active and passive, and even, in its finitude, just as purely and simply being as God's infinite being; to its simple A, stripped of an antecedent sign, it appears as a B also stripped of an antecedent sign. Here, being confronts being. Yet, with regard to the being of the world, desirous of completion and infinitely formal, the particular being of man, which desires nothing and is unbounded, is not opposite, but totally separate. Between  $=A$  and B there is no relationship at all. If it were merely a matter of essence, then enmity would be set up between God and man; but world and man would be on different planes and not even enmity would be possible between them. It is not a matter only of the essence, but something remains from this relationship of the elements even in the final configuration of the equation; certainly, there, too, it happens that, precisely between world and man, in spite of all, there is in other respects an especially close relationship, namely the regular presence of particularity pure and simple, without direction, B: in the world it is "No," in man it is "Yes"; in the former is the always new miracle of individuality, in the latter it is the lasting being of character. But still, it is the first and, as we shall see, the only time in our equations that a member figures more than once. The significance of this case can be recognized only later.

**HUMAN WILL** **S**O about man, too, we know nothing. We cannot even be satisfied with the so of character any more than we could with an earlier so. The strength of the No can also test itself on the nothing of man after being authenticated in character as a nothing, out of which affirmation could arise. Once again, it is a matter of throwing down the nothing in the hand-to-hand combat of finitude, once more it is a matter of making a fountain of living water flow from this barren rock. The nothing of the world capitulated before the victorious No in the bubbling up pleni-

tude of the phenomenon. God's nothing shattered before his No into a divine, always new freedom of action. For man, his nothing also opens in the negation to a freedom, his freedom, certainly very different from the divine. For God's freedom was, owing to its infinite and totally passive object, the divine essence, infinite power directly, namely: freedom for action. But the freedom of man will run into a finite, even if it is unlimited, namely unconditional; so even in its origin it will be a finite reality. Not merely finite in the always renewed instantaneous character of its springing up, as for God's freedom; this would be the finitude as already required by the direct springing up from out of the denied nothing; for all negation which is not simply infinite affirmation in the form of negation posits a determinate, finite reality. So then, not only a finitude such as exists also in God's freedom, but a finitude which itself dwells within it, without regard to its emergence, and this is the finitude of human freedom. Human freedom is finite, but due to its immediate origin from out of the denied nothing, an unconditional unconditioned freedom that presupposes the nothing, only the nothing and no other thing. So it is not freedom for action, like God's, but a freedom for willing; not free power, but free will. In contrast to the freedom of God, this power is refused to it from the very beginning, but its willing is as unconditional, as unlimited as the power of God.

This free will is finite and instantaneous in its expressions, **SIGN** as is the plenitude of worldly phenomena. But in contrast to this, it is not content simply with its existence and knows another law than that of its own gravity; it does not fall, it has direction. As for the plenitude of phenomena, its symbol, therefore, is a B on the left side of the equation, but by contrast, not a simple B but a "B=". Therefore, the symbol has the same form as the symbol of divine freedom, "A=", but the opposite content—free will is as free as the free divine action; but God does not have free will, man does not have free power; "to be good" means in God's case to do good, in man's to will good. And the symbol has the opposite form but the same content as the symbol of the worldly phenomenon: freedom appears in the world of phenomena as one content among others, but it is the "miracle" in it; it is different from all the other contents.

*THE  
AUTONOMY  
OF MAN*

KANT, whom we have just cited, has thus secured the essence of freedom with an undeniably marvelous intuition. The further developments also will bring us back again and again into his vicinity, even if always only into the vicinity of his intuitions. We are again beginning by following the path that leads from free will to attribute; on this path, man, who was still a pure abstraction as free will and as attribute, acquires only the Self. For what is free will as long as it is merely direction without yet having a content? And what is attribute as long as it no more than—is? We are seeking the living man, the Self. The Self is more than will, more than being. How does it become this more, this And? What happens to human will when it follows its inner direction in order to take the road toward the being of man?

Will is finite from the start, and since it has direction, it is consciously finite; indeed it wants nothing other than that which it is; like God's freedom, it wants its own essence; but this its own essence that it wants is not an infinite essence where freedom could know itself as power: it is a finite essence. So, whereas it is still entirely in its own domain while nevertheless already observing its object from afar, free will knows itself in its finitude without in the least renouncing anything of the world's absoluteness. At this point of its way, will, still entirely unconditional and yet already conscious of its finitude, turns, from will which it was, into defiant will. The defiance, the proud yet, is for man what power is for God, the lofty so. The entitlement to defiance and the right of power are equally sovereign. It is as defiance that the abstraction of free will takes shape.

It is as defiance that it now proceeds along its path—let us recall: it is a matter only of inner movements in man, the relationship to things does not at all come into consideration—up to the point where the existence of the attribute becomes so perceptible to it that it can longer continue without changing, without paying attention to it. This point where the attribute in its silent, existing factuality comes to lie across the path for free will—“steps across the path” already would be saying too much—this point is designated by a name which we have already used once before, in anticipation, to explain the notion of attribute in relation to “individuality”: the character. In the attribute, the will would dissolve into nothing; in evoking the attribute, Mephistopheles humbles the will: “You will always remain what

you are.” For defiance, not like the will with regard to the attribute, the character is not annihilated, but it continues absolutely as defiance; it does not find its suppression here, but its determination, its content. The defiance remains defiance; formally it remains unconditional, but it takes the character as content: the defiance defies the character. This is self-consciousness of man, or, more briefly: it is the Self. The “Self” is that which springs up in this encroachment of the free will on the attribute, as And of defiance and character.

The Self is simply closed in itself. It owes this to its rootedness in the character. If it were rooted in the individuality, so if the defiance had thrown itself on the particularity of man facing others, on his indivisible participation in universal humanity, it is not the Self, the Self closed in itself and not looking outside itself that would have sprung up, but the personality. As the origin of the name already indicates, the personality is man, he who plays the role assigned to him by fate, one role beside others, a voice in the polyphonic symphony of humanity. It is really a “highest good of the children of the earth”—one for each of them. The Self has no relation with the children of men, always only with one man alone, with the “Self” precisely. Certainly, when he is considered as simply one unique group, the people for example for which all other peoples are “barbarians,” the group, too, can have a Self. The Self does not have a plural. The singular “personality” is only an abstraction that draws its life from the plural “personalities.” The personality is always one among others; it is compared; the Self is not compared, and it is incomparable. The Self is not a part, not a secondary part, nor is it a jealously guarded participation in the common Good, which it could deservingly “abandon.” Those are all thoughts applicable only to the personality. The Self cannot be abandoned—to whom? For no one is there to whom it could give anything; it is alone; it is not one of the “children of men”; it is Adam, man himself.

Many statements about the personality are possible, as many as there are about individuality. As single statements, they follow the diagram  $B=A$ , where all the statements about the world and its parts are prefigured; the personality is always defined as singular in its relationship with other singulars and to one universal. For the Self, there are no derived statements, only the one original statement  $B=B$ ; likewise for God and the world there is

SIGN

no plurality of statements, but only the original ones, symbolized in the equations. Although the character in itself is something just as singular as individuality, and consequently in itself is designated also by the same naked symbol B, yet it is a symbol that is quite distinct from it through the fact that, as opposed to individuality, it appears on the right side of the equation. By appearing on the left side of the equation, individuality is designated as object. The character, which is on the right side of the equation, turns out itself to be a statement, an affirmation. We shall not be coming back to the fact that it is particular, as this place in the equation precisely indicates, for the particular develops its particularity, like everything particular in the world, including individuality, by being inclined to turn into the object of a statement. A particular which itself is placed on the statement side of the equation renounces what was stated about it; it renounces the development and the representation of its particularity. It is changed into the content of the statement for something else. In every particular, only the character does this. The character is the statement that “more precisely defines” free will. What does free will will? Its own character. So free will becomes the will of defiance, and the defiance of the will is condensed with character into the configuration of the Self.

Symbolized in the equation  $B=B$ , the Self thus stands directly facing God. We see how the fully external opposition as regards to the content was already visible in the equation by coming into being with just as perfect an identity of form as in the finished equation. The finished equation indicates the pure enclosure in itself in a finitude that is just as pure. It is as Self, truly it is not as personality, that man is created in the image of God. In contrast to the world, Adam is really exactly “like God,” only the world is pure finitude where the latter is pure infinitude—with good reason the serpent addresses man only in the whole of Creation. As finished Self, man no longer has the complex relationship with the world as the elements had before their meeting in the And: he is quite simply an equal, yet about whom the contrary is stated. The subject B can be either A or B. In the first case,  $B=A$ , it is world; in the second,  $B=B$ , it is Self. Obviously, man can be both, this is what the equations teach us; in Kant’s words, “he is a citizen of two worlds.”

But this strong expression at once betrays the whole weakness of Kant, thanks to which his imperishable contribution was soon

forgotten: this weakness is equating the two spheres as “worlds.” For only one of them is world. The sphere of the Self is not world, and it does not become that because it is called so. In order for the sphere of the Self to become world, it is necessary that “this world perish.” The analogy that renders the Self into a world is already misleading in Kant himself, and it very frankly leads his epigones to mistake this “world” for the existing world. It obscures the irreconcilable conflict, the hardness of space and the resistance of time. It blurs the Self of man when precisely it seems to circumscribe it. Our equation emphatically underscores the formal difference—by positing as equal two unequals in one case, two equals in the other: it therefore does not run any risk; so it can easily give to contemplation the parallelism of content, for, in both cases, these are statements about the same thing, even if it is a matter of opposite statements.

SEEN from the outside, the Self is therefore indistinguishable from the personality. But on the inside, they are as different, indeed, as we are going to see right away, as opposed as character and individuality. We have explained the essence of individuality as a phenomenon of the world through the circuit of its path through the world. Natural birth was also the birth of the individual; in coupling, the individuality died by returning to the species. Natural death adds nothing more; the circuit is already closed; the fact that individual life still continues beyond the generation of the descendents is inconceivable from individuality’s point of view; all things considered, the phenomenon of the persistence of individual life even beyond the years of generative power, that is to say old age, is totally incomprehensible for a purely natural view of life. Already from this, we would need to reach the insufficiency of ideas of individuality and personality in order to understand human life.

But here the notions of Self and character bring us further along. The character, and likewise the Self which is founded on it, is not the whole of the gift that the Muses set down “from the time of its birth” into the cradle of the young citizen of earth as his share of the common good of humanity. Quite on the contrary: the day of natural birth, which is the great day for the fate of individuality, because in individuality the fate of the particular is determined by its participation in the universal, is therefore covered with darkness for the Self. The birth date of the Self is

*THE  
HEROIC  
ETHOS*

LINES OF LIFE

a different one from that of the personality. For the Self and the character each have their date of birth; one day they are there. It is not true that the character “becomes,” that it “is formed.” The Self invests man one day like a soldier in arms and takes possession of all the goods of his house. Up to this day—it is always a definite day, even if man no longer remembers it—man is a piece of the world even before his own consciousness; no later age of life ever again attains the concreteness of the child. The breaking in of the Self robs him in one blow of all the riches and all the goods that he claimed to possess. He becomes very poor, he has no more than himself and knows only himself, no one knows him any longer; for there is no one there besides him. The Self is the lonely man in the hardest sense of the word. The “political animal” is the personality.

So, on a definite day, the Self is born in man. Which day is it? The same as the one where the personality, the individual, dies to enter into the death of the genus. It is precisely this moment that allows the Self to be born. The Self, the *daimon*, not in the sense of Goethe’s orphic stanza, where the word designates precisely the personality, but in the sense of Heraclitus’ words, “The *daimon* of man is his ethos,” this blind and mute *daimon*, enclosed in itself, which surprises man for the first time in the mask of Eros, and from then on accompanies him throughout his life up to that moment where it removes its mask and reveals itself to him as Thanatos. This is the second date of birth of the Self, and if you will, the more secret day, as it is the second death of individuality, and if you will, its official death. Moreover, natural death makes even the most limited eye see that the personality will have to be depersonalized, the individual be re-generated. The part of man in which the species had not yet taken its due, this part becomes in death the prey of the totally naked universal, of the universal that exceeds the species, that is to say nature itself. But whereas the individual renounces the last vestiges of his individuality and returns home, the Self awakens to the ultimate isolation and loneliness. There is no greater loneliness than in the eyes of one who is dying, and there exists no isolation that is prouder and more arrogant than that which is painted on the set countenance of a dead person. Between these two births of the *daimon* there is everything that becomes visible of man’s Self; what is there before this, what afterwards? The visible existence of these figures is tied to the life cycle of individuality and is lost

in the invisible, where it is dissolved in this cycle. The visible existence is tied to individuality only as material where it is rendered visible; it is what already teaches us the opposite direction it takes in the decisive points facing the cycle of life. The life of the Self is not a cycle, but a straight line leading from unknown to unknown; the Self knows neither whence it comes nor whither it goes. But the fact that the second birth of the *daimon*, as Thánatos, is not a mere epilogue like the death of individuality that gives its own status to life beyond the limits of the species that is empty and meaningless in the light of belief in the personality: old age. The old man no longer has a personality of his own; his share in mutual humanity vanishes into mere memory; but the less he is still individuality and the harder he becomes as character, the more he becomes Self. This is the transformation of the essence which Goethe achieves in *Faust*: at the beginning of Part II, he has already lost his rich individuality and just for this reason appears in the last act as a character of most perfect hardness and utmost defiance, truly as Self—a faithful image of the ages of life.

For this Self, the ethos is certainly content; the Self is the character; but it is not defined by this its content; it is not Self owing to the fact that it is this definite character. But Self is already Self from the fact that it simply has character, of whatever kind. So, whereas the personality is personality through its solid connection with the definite individuality, the Self is Self only by its firm attachment to its character altogether. Or in other words: the Self “has” its character. It is precisely the inessential nature of the definite character that is expressed in the general equation  $B=B$ . The same particularity that individuality is in the equation  $B=A$ , object of all statements, target of all interests, must be content to be here in its particularity the universal ground where the always singular and yet ever same edifice of the singular Self is erected.

But when the Self thus makes of the individual’s particularity its mere “particular presupposition,” the whole world of ethical universality that depends on this ethical particularity of individuality is at the same time pushed into this mere background of the Self. Consequently at the same time as individuality, the genus is reduced, and societies, peoples, States are reduced, and the whole ethical world is reduced to a role of mere presupposition of the Self. For the Self, all this is only something that it has; it does not

**LAWS OF THE  
WORLD**

live in the world as does the personality; for it, it is not the air it breathes in its existence; the atmosphere of its existence is only itself. The whole world, and especially the entire ethical world, is behind it; it is “beyond” —not as if it did not need it, but in the sense that it does not recognize the laws of the world as its laws: they are mere presuppositions that belong to it without having to obey them. For the Self, the world of the ethical is merely—“its” ethos; nothing more of it has remained. The Self does not live in an ethical world; it has its ethos. The Self is meta-ethical.

ANCIENT  
MAN

In its solitude of “farthermost silence,” the solitude of a mountain, in its detachment from all relations to life, in its sovereign closure in itself, the Self—how is it known to us, where have we already seen this with our own eyes? The answer is easy if we remember where we saw the metaphysical God and the metalogical world as configurations of life. Metaethical man was also a living figure in antiquity, and above all, once again, in the really classical antiquity of the Greeks. Just where the force of the genre that consumes personalities was given a shape in the phenomenon of the *polis*, without being limited by counter-forces, precisely there, too, the figure of the Self, freeing itself from all the rights of the genus, takes possession of its throne in a defiant isolation; it was certainly present, too, in the Sophists’ claims which made of the Self the measure of things, but above all, with all the face of visibility, in the great contemporaries of those theories, the heroes of Attic tragedy.

ASIA: NON-  
TRAGIC MAN

INDIA

THE tragic hero of antiquity is nothing other than the metaethical Self. So the tragic came alive only where antiquity traversed the entire road that produces this image of man. India and China, which stopped on the way before reaching the goal, achieved the tragic neither in the dramatic work of art nor in the prefiguring of the folk-tale. India never arrived at the identity of the Self that displays its defiance in all the characters; the Indian man stayed stuck in the character; there is no world more rigid from the point of view of character than that of Indian poetry; there is no human ideal which stays as much a prisoner of all articulations of the natural character as does the Indian ideal; it is certainly not only to the sexes, or the castes, but even to the ages of life that a particular law of life applies; the highest duty is that man obey this law of his particularity; not everyone has the right or even perhaps the duty to become a

saint; quite on the contrary, it is forbidden to the man who has not yet established a family; even saintliness is here one particularity among others, whereas the heroic is the universal and same inner necessity of life for everyone. Once again, the asceticism that culminates in the Buddha is the first to go back behind this particularity of character. The perfect one is detached from everything, except from his own perfection. All conditionings of the character have fallen away, neither age, nor caste, nor the sex counts here; the one unconditional character remains, liberated from all condition, precisely that of the liberated one. Even that is still character; the liberated one is separated from the not-liberated one; but the separation is quite different from what usually separates one character from another; it is behind these conditional separations as the one unconditional separation. So the liberated man is the character in the moment of his emergence from—or more accurately of his entry into the nothing. Between the liberated one and the nothing there is really nothing more than the complement of individuality which combines with the character, owing to the participation in the world of all that lives as long as it lives. Death, which allows this piece of individuality to stream back into the world, removes this last wall of separation which separates the liberated man from the nothing, and it robs him even of the character of liberation.

Where India accords too much to character and particularity, **CHINA** accords too little. Whereas here the world is rich and too rich in individuality, man however, at least to the extent he is not outwardly seen as a part of the world, is thus the inner man, that is to say without character; the idea of the sage, whose classical embodiment is once again Confucius, strays from all possible particularity of character; this is really the man without character, that is to say the ordinary man. It must be said to the honor of mankind that really nowhere else except in China could such a boring man as was Confucius have become the classical model of the human. Something quite other than character is the mark of the Chinese man: a completely elementary purity of feeling. Chinese feeling has no relation to character, it has as it were no relation at all to its own bearer, it is pure objectivity; it exists in the moment where it is felt, and it exists because it is felt. No lyricism of any people so clearly mirrors the visible world and the impersonal feeling released from the poet's I, or rather that has trickled out of it. There are verses of the great Litaïpe which

no translator dares render without using the word “I,” but in the original text, as is allowed in Chinese, these verses do not allude to any personality, and consequently they are as it were purely in the form of the “it.” The purity of the perfectly instantaneous feeling—what else is this if not the will to which it had not been granted embodiment in a character, the emotional upsurge that remains only upsurge without a substratum? Once more, Lao-Tse, that great sage who conquered China even in China, reached behind this purity and this fixedness of feeling. As elementary and devoid of character as it was, feeling still had content; it was still visible, it could still be expressed—and named. But it is said of Lao-Tse that he wanted to remain nameless. This “hiddenness of the Self” is what he also stipulates for his perfection: not to let himself be noticed; not to let himself be witnessed, to let all things go; so like the original abyss itself, man too must be beyond doing and not-doing; he does not look out the window and so see heaven; by practicing not-doing, he helps all creatures in their doing; his love is like himself nameless and hidden.

**PRIMITIVE  
IDEALISM**

Just as the perfect denial of God and the perfect negation of the world are twofold, so too are the perfect self-dissolution in the Buddha’s self-conquest and Lao-Tse’s self-concealment. They all must be twofold, for the living gods cannot be denied, the configured world cannot be negated, the defiant Self cannot be extinguished. The forces of destruction and disintegration exercise their violence only over the pure elements, the halves not yet joined to form the unity of the figure. In self-conquest and self-concealment, therefore, the extinguishing of the Self takes place at all times, which alone leads to the brink of the total nothing of the Self, but yet does not disappear in it; for in the conquest as in the concealment, it is still man who always conquers and conceals. Beside the fear of God and world illusion comes the last of the elementary forces of primitive time: the human conceit of the magician who by force or by trickery can escape the fate that rules only over the Self and so is spared the defiance of the hero. Here, once again, India and China have shown the only two ways in which man can at all times turn away before his Self when he does not have the courage to become tragic. This can only be the case, in the strict sense, for those two last degrees of the conceit of primitive man, the Buddha-like liberated man and the perfect man of Lao-Tse—historically, on the soil of India and China, the flowers of the tragic have not grown at all. The

conditional nature of the particularization of the character in the former, the impersonality of feeling in the latter, and the separation of each from the other—all this prevents the tragic from flourishing; because its emergence presupposes the growth of both a will and an essence to form the deep-rooted unity of defiance. Instead of the hero, this soil at most succeeds at creating moving situations. But when moved, the Self suffocates in its misfortune. In the tragic, however, the misfortune loses all autonomous power and meaning; it belongs to the elements of particularity upon which the Self imprints the seal of its defiance, always this same seal—*si fractus illabatur orbis*: oh, may my soul die with the Philistines!

**E**VEN before the tragic defiance of Samson and Saul, the most ancient Near East invented the prototype of the tragic hero in that figure bordering between the divine and the human, in Gilgamesh. Gilgamesh's life curve goes through three fixed points: the beginning is the awakening of the human Self in the encounter with Eros; the straight line of the eventful journey comes next, which abruptly breaks off in the last and decisive episode, the encounter with Thanatos. This last point is made powerfully concrete since it is not first of all and immediately the hero's own death that awaits him, but the death of the friend; only with this does he feel the fear of death in general. Words fail him in this encounter; he "can neither cry out nor be silent," but nor is he resigned; his entire existence consists of successfully withstanding this encounter; his life receives his own death, which he has glimpsed in the friend's death, as the sole content. It is all the same to him that death ends by taking even himself; the essential thing is already behind him; death, his own death, has become the event that dominates his life; he himself has entered into the sphere where the world, with its alternation of cries and silences, becomes a stranger to man; he has entered into the sphere of pure and sovereign muteness, the sphere of the Self.

For that is the distinctive sign of the Self, the seal of its greatness, and the mark of its weakness: it is silent. The tragic hero has only one language that is in perfect accord with him: precisely, silence. So it is from the beginning. Precisely for this reason, the tragic forged for itself the aesthetic form of drama, which allows the representation of silence. In narrative poetry,

**THE TRAGIC  
HERO**

**GILGAMESH**

**ATTIC  
TRAGEDY**

silence is the rule, whereas dramatic poetry knows only the spoken word, and it is only then that silence becomes eloquent. By being silent, the hero dismantles the bridges that link him to God and the world, and he tears himself away from the landscapes of personality, which, through the spoken word, marks out its limits and individualizes itself in the face of others in order to climb into the icy solitude of the Self. For the Self knows nothing outside itself; it is quite simply solitary. How else is it to manifest its solitude within itself, this rigid defiance, other than by being silent? And this is what it does in Aeschylus' tragedies, as his contemporaries noted. The heroic is mute. If the great silences that last for the length of an act on the part of Aeschylus' personages do not occur in his successors, this gain in "naturalness" is purchased at a greater loss in tragic force. For it is not at all for instance the case that Aeschylus' mute heroes would find the language of their tragic Self in Sophocles and Euripides. They do not learn how to speak, they learn only how to debate. Here that art of debate of the dramatic dialogue that intrudes upon everything and that today casts upon us its despairingly icy breath: in the countless circlings this way and that, it shows the content of the tragic situation in such a way that one understands it, thus concealing from view that which is properly tragic, the Self in its defiance beyond all situations, until one of these lyrical monologues, to which the presence of the chorus always gives occasion, puts the tragic back in the center. The enormous importance of these lyrical and musical parts in the economy of the dramatic whole rests precisely on the fact that the Athenians did not find in the properly dramatic register, in the dialogue, the form to express the heroic and the tragic. For the heroic is will, and the Attic dialogue is, to use the expression of the oldest theoretician, Aristotle himself, "dianoetic"—a debate about understanding.

This limit of the Attic drama, of course, is not merely a technical one. The Self can only be silent. In any case, it can always seek to express itself in lyrical monologues, although this expression, precisely as expression, is no longer quite fitting; the Self does not express itself, it is buried in itself. But as soon as it enters into conversation it ceases to be Self; Self is Self only as long as it is alone. So in the dialogue it loses even the momentum toward a language, which it had already assumed in the monologue. The dialogue does not achieve a relationship

between two wills, because each of these wills can only want its singularity. For this reason, the Attic drama does not know the technical bravery of the modern drama, the scene of persuasion where one will breaks and guides another will, the scene, for instance, where “in such a mood a woman is wooed.” Even the much-noted fact that the love scene is foreign to ancient drama finds its final explanation here at once technical and spiritual. In the monologue, love can at most appear as unsatisfied desire; Phaedra’s misfortune of unreciprocated feeling is possible on antiquity’s stage, but not Julia’s happiness in the mutually increasing giving and having. From the will of the tragic Self there is no bridge to any outside, even if this outside is another will. As defiance directed upon its own character, its will gathers all violence to the inside.

This lack of any bridge or connection, this Self turned only inward, is also what this characteristic darkness pours out over the divine and the worldly where the tragic hero moves. He does not understand what is happening to him, and he is conscious of not being able to understand it; he does not even try to penetrate the puzzling behavior of the gods. Poets may ask Job’s questions about guilt and fate; but unlike for Job, it does not even occur to the hero to ask these questions. If they did so, they would have to break their silence. But that would mean going outside the walls of their Self, and before doing that they would rather suffer in silence and climb the rungs of the inner elevation of the Self, like Oedipus, whose death leaves the riddle of his life completely unresolved and yet, precisely because he does not touch this riddle, locks up and reinforces the hero in the Self.

This, moreover, is the meaning of the hero’s ruin. Tragedy readily makes the ruin of the individual appear as if it would have to restore a kind of balance to things. But this appearance rests only on the contradiction between the tragic character and the dramatic fable; as work of art, the drama requires both halves of this contradiction in order to survive; but then that which is properly tragic is blotted out. The hero as such has to be ruined only because his ruination makes him capable of the supreme heroic consecration: the closest self-realization of his Self. He longs for the solitude of disappearance, because there is no greater solitude than this one. For this reason, the hero does not in the strict sense die. Death cordons off for him as it were

only the *temporalia* of individuality. The character dissolved in the heroic Self is immortal. For him, eternity is hardly sufficient to echo his silence.

**PSYCHE** Immortality—with this we have touched on an ultimate longing of the Self. Not the personality, but the Self demands eternity for itself. The personality is content with the eternity of the relationships where it enters and opens up; the Self has no relationships, it cannot engage in any, it remains always itself. It is thus aware of being eternal; its immortality consists in not being capable of dying. Every ancient doctrine of immortality amounts to the liberated Self's inability to die; theoretically, the difficulty consists only in trying to find for this inability to die a natural bearer, a "something" that cannot die. This is how ancient psychology is constituted. The psyche is supposed to be the natural something that already by its nature is incapable of dying. So it is theoretically separate from the body and bearer of the Self. But this linking of the Self to a bearer that is finally however only natural, precisely the "soul," makes immortality into a most precarious possession. The soul, it is asserted, cannot die; but since it is interwoven into nature, the inability to die becomes an inexhaustible capacity for transformation; the soul does not die, but it migrates through bodies. So the Danaides' gift of the migration of souls is given to the Self along with immortality, and hence immortality loses its value precisely for the Self. For when it demands immortality in the defiance toward the boundlessness of its transitory essence, the Self is really demanding an immortality without change or migration; it demands Self-preservation. But since it is linked to the "soul," "soul" in the ancient sense of the word, which explicitly designates not the whole of man, but only a "part," the part that cannot die, the Self's demand is fulfilled only as a mockery. The Self remains itself, but it goes through the most unrecognizable configurations, for none of those configurations becomes its possession; but also, it preserves what is its own, the character, the attribute, only as regards the name; actually, there remains nothing recognizable from its passage through the forms. It stays Self only in perfect muteness and absence of relationship; it preserves these even in its transformation, it stays always the singular, solitary, unspeaking Self. It is just this absence of speech that it would have to renounce; from solitary Self it would have to be transformed into a soul that speaks—but soul here in another sense, where the

word means a whole of man beyond the opposition of “body and soul.” If the Self were to become soul in this sense, then immortality would also be secured for it in a new sense, and the ghostly thought of migration of souls would lose its power. But how that might happen, how the Self’s tongue might be loosened and its ears opened, cannot be represented from the point of view of the Self such as we know it till now. There is no road that leads from the B=B buried in itself to the cry from without; all roads lead only more deeply into the inner silence.

AND yet, there exists a world where this silence itself is already speech, not, of course, speech of the soul, and yet speech; a speech before the speech, a speech of the unexpressed, of the inexpressible. Just as the mythical of the metaphysical theology founded in the excluding seclusion of the outer form the realm of the Beautiful, just as the plastic of the metalogical cosmology founded the work of art, the beautiful thing, in the inclusiveness within itself of inner form, so the tragic of the metaethical psychology places in the eloquent silence of the Self the ground of wordless understanding upon which art can only become a reality. It is the content that emerges here. The content is what throws bridges between the artist and the spectator, or between the artist as living man and the artist who sets the work into the world beyond his vitality. And this content is not the world, for it is common to all, but such that each has his individual share in it, and his particular point of view. The content must be something immediately like it, something that men do not share among themselves, like the world that is common to them, but something that is the same in everyone. And this is quite simply the human, the Self. The Self is that part of man that is condemned to silence in him and yet is immediately understood everywhere. It needs only to make it visible, only to “present” it, in order to awaken the Self likewise in every other. It itself feels nothing in this, it remains exiled in the tragic silence, it looks fixedly into its innermost; but in him who sees it there awakens, as again Aristotle already formulated it, full of intuitive depth, “fear and pity”. They are awakened in the spectator and go immediately into his own innermost; they make him into a Self. If they were awakened in the hero himself, then he would cease to be a mute Self; *Phobos*

**BASIC  
AESTHETIC  
PRINCIPLES:  
CONTENT**

and *Eleos* would be unveiled as “respect and love,” the soul would acquire speech, the newly gifted utterance would go from soul to soul. Here, there is no such meeting. Everything remains mute. The hero, who awakens fear and pity in others, himself remains unmoved fixed Self. In the spectator, they at once strike inwards, and they make him, too, into the Self that is closed in itself. Each remains for itself; each remains Self. No mutual participation arises. And yet a mutual content arises. The Selves do not come to one another, and yet in everyone the same sound resounds, the feeling of one’s own Self. This wordless transference of the Same takes place, although no bridge yet leads from man to man. It does not happen from soul to soul—the realm of souls does not yet exist; it takes place from Self to Self, from one silence to the other silence.

This is the world of art. A world of mute accord which is not a world, not a real lively to and fro connection of a conversation that goes back and forth, and yet capable at every point of being animated for moments with life. Not a sound pierces this silence, and yet everyone at every moment can experience within himself the innermost of the other. It is the similarity of what is human that exercises its effect here as content of the work of art, before all real unity of that which is human. Even before all real human language, art creates as language of the inexpressible the first and for all time indispensable mute understanding of the inexpressible, beneath and alongside the real language. The silence of the tragic hero is silent in all art and in all art is understood without any words. The Self does not speak and yet is heard. The Self is seen. The pure, mute seeing effects in each spectator the turn inward into his own innerness. Art is not a real world; for the threads that are drawn in it from man to man last only for moments, only for the brief moments of the immediate seeing and only at the place of seeing. The Self does not come alive by being heard. The life awakened in the spectator does not awaken to life that which is looked upon; in the spectator himself, life at once turns inwards. The realm of art provides the soil where the Self can grow everywhere; but every Self is again an entirely solitary singular Self; art nowhere creates a real plurality of Selves, although it creates everywhere for Selves the possibility of awakening: the Self that awakens knows still only of itself. In other words: in art’s world of appearances, the Self remains always Self, it does not become—soul.

AND how is it to become soul? Soul, that would mean coming out from the enclosedness in itself, but how is the Self to come out? Who could summon it—it is deaf; what could entice it to come out—it is blind; and, outside, what would it do—it is mute. It lives turned totally toward the inside. The magic flute of art could perform the miracle of making the same note of man's content resound in separate beings. And yet how limited this magic was! How much it remained a world of illusion, how much it was a world of mere possibilities that appeared here! The same sound resounded and yet was everywhere heard only in one's innermost heart; no one had a presentiment of what is human as human in the other, each felt it immediately only in his own Self. The Self could not look out over its walls, the world remained outside. If it had the world within itself, this was not as world but only as its own possession. The humanity it knew was only the humanity contained between its four walls. The only other it saw was itself, and any other who wished to be seen by it had to come into this its field of vision and forgo being seen as other. The ethical orders of the world thus lost all proper meaning in this field of vision of the Self enclosed upon itself; they became simply the content of the Self's vision. So the Self without a doubt had to remain what it was, that which was above any sort of world, staring with a transfixed defiance at its own innermost heart, and capable of seeing anything foreign only in its own reality, and thus only as its own—all ethical order garnered into its own ethos: so the Self was and remained the lord of its ethos—the metaethical.

**SOLITARY  
MAN**



## TRANSITION

**T**HE mythical God, the plastic world, tragic man—we are holding the pieces in our hands. We have really shattered the All. The more deeply we descended into the night of the positive in order to capture the something immediately in its flight out of the nothing, the more the unity of the All is broken apart for us. The imperfect work of knowledge now surrounding us glances up at us with an oddly strange look. These are the elements of our world, but we do not know the world this way; this is the world we believe in, but we do not believe in it as it is presented to us here. We know a living movement, an electric circuit in which these elements swim; now they are pulled out of this current. In the path of the star shining over our life, they are familiar to us and in every sense credible; but detached, reduced to pure elements of a mathematical structure of the path, we no longer recognize them. And are we to recognize them!? Only the curve of the path can make visible the mystery of the elements. Only the curve leads from what is purely hypothetical about the elements into the categorical of perpetual reality. Maybe the elements were more than pure “hypotheses”: only their capacity to construct the visible path can bear this out.

The hypothetical—this word explains to us that strange aspect of the pieces of the All. None of these pieces has a sure, unalterable place; above each of them an “if” is secretly written. Behold: God is and is existing life; behold: the world is and is inspired configuration; behold: man is and is solitary Self; but if you ask how they might find each other, how man in his solitude is seated in the world that is moved by spirit; how God, in his unboundedness, tolerates remaining beside a world closed within itself and a man solitary within himself; or how this world, in its peaceful structuring, still leaves room for God’s infinite life and man’s own being; should you ask such questions, you will see a whole swarm of “if’s” rushing toward you masked as answers. Before your questions, the three elements could very possibly seem to co-exist in a tranquil solidity, each of them caught up in the feeling of the One and the All, a feeling, blind to the outside, of their own existence. On this point, all three are the same. God and the world as well, and not only man, are each a solitary Self staring within itself and knowing nothing of an outside; man and world as well, and not only God, live in the inner vitality of their own nature; they have no need of a being outside of them;

*RETROSPECTIVE:  
THE CHAOS  
OF THE  
ELEMENTS*

*THE SECRET  
“IF”*

man and God as well, and not only the world, are enclosed structures within themselves and inspired by their own spirit.

**THE PUBLIC  
"PERHAPS"**

So all limits and differences seem to disappear; each part is monistically set down as the whole, for it is a matter of three monisms, three consciousnesses of the One and the All that appear beside each other; three wholes were certainly possible, but three Alls are unthinkable. And so we must ask the question of their relationships after all. But this just adds to the confusion in the extreme. For in this case there is no relationship that could be excluded. There is no fixed order between the three points of God, world, man; there is neither above nor below, neither right nor left. There is no order among the three to which the pagan consciousness would agree without qualification. Each one is called to account. The "perhapses," spring from the "ifs." Is God the Creator of the world who imparts himself to man in a Revelation? Perhaps; Plato teaches the Creation, as well as does many an author of myths in Europe and the Near-East; in the hundreds of sanctuaries where oracles are told, upon thousands of altars, in the palpitating entrails of the sacrificial victims, in the flight of birds, in the silent drifting of the stars—everywhere the lips of the gods speak to man, everywhere the God stoops to us and communicates his will. But behold: perhaps it is again otherwise? Aren't the gods parts and products of the eternal world? This is what Aristotle teaches and, besides him, many theogonists from all places. And doesn't the mouth of the old earth reveal to man everything that it benefits him to know? Paganism's battle between Gaia and the gods for the right to the oracles is not yet over. And the gods themselves descend to take counsel from the mouth of the earth, and they worry about their divine destiny disclosed in the lucid and wise oracles of the old mother's son. And man—who knows then whether he is not himself the measure of all things, the true Creator, and whether all has not been fashioned according to his decree? Isn't it a human verdict that conveys men up to the stars? Who makes them into gods? Really, wouldn't all who are worshipped today as gods be men who had died some time ago, kings and heroes of olden times? And wouldn't everything divine be nothing but the human Self exalted to the divine? But no—in its earthbound and god-fearing weakness, human life creeps along, trying through humble prayer to bend the will of the gods; against the constraint of the outside, man opposes the counter-constraint of his magic

powers, but he can never exceed human limits; a dark power of the earth and that of incomprehensible fatality bend his proud neck—how could he presume to be master over the earth and over destiny?

Perhaps, perhaps—we have come upon a swarm of contradictions: now it appears as if God, the Creator and the Revealer, is enthroned on high, while the world and man are at his feet; now it is as if the world sat on the throne while God and man were its products; now it is man who would dominate everything by imposing the law of his species upon the world and the gods, as if he were the measure of all things. For there is no impetus in the three to come to each other; each has appeared as result, as conclusion; closed in itself, its eyes directed toward its own inner core, each is an All for itself. There, only the arbitrariness and the perhaps can claim relationships: no, not claim, at most presume, and just as much any relationship or order as another. Perhaps, perhaps—there isn't any certainty, only a wheel whirling in possibilities. An if piles upon another if; a perhaps is buried under another perhaps.

And even in the inner core of the three, the perhaps rules. Nothing less than number and order remain uncertain here. If each is an All for itself, each carries equally within itself the possibility for unity or multiplicity. In pure being, all is possible, and only possible. And what we have found till now was solely being, "factuality," a great thing as regards the pure uncertainty of doubt: the factuality of the divine, the human and the worldly; but this is a very small thing for faith's longing. For belief cannot be satisfied by the mere factuality of being; it wants to go beyond this being; all is still possible within the one presupposition of being; faith longs for an unequivocal certainty. But being can no longer offer this. Only the relationship that serves as intermediary, as reality, between the facts of being, grounds a univocal number, a univocal order. This is true already for the simplest relationships. For example, whether the number 3 is a unit or a multiple is determined only by the equation that places it in relation to other numbers; so, only the equation defines it as a unity in  $=1 \times 3$  and as a multiple in  $=3 \times 1$ ; prior to the equation, this was simply being, and as such, an integral, a totality, a universal possibility: only the product of  $\infty$  or 0, an absolutely indeterminate product, comprising within itself all possibilities, can give it a determination. It is the same for order as it is for number. Is the

singular being, for example, the point  $X_1, Y_1, Z_1$ , of an element a straight line, a curve, a surface, a body? Which straight line, curve, surface or body? It can be determined only by the equation that places it in a differential relationship with  $X_2, Y_2, Z_2$ . Before this, the point is universal possibility, precisely because it possesses being in space, by virtue of its solid factuality. Likewise, the three elements of the All can each be recognized in its internal power and structure, in its number and order, only when they mutually enter into a real, and clear relationship, removed from the whirl of possibilities.

**THE RULING  
OF THE “WHO  
KNOWS?”**

So, antiquity certainly possessed the factuality of man, the world, and God, but it did not carry their reciprocal relationships out of the fog of the perhaps, so packed with forms, in order to bring them to a clear light; nor could it arrive at clarity in the many questions that go beyond the mere factuality. One God? Many gods? A realm of gods? Several realms? In competition with each other? In alliance against each other? Taking over from each other in the succession of the epochs? Who knows, who knows, who knows— —? One world? Many worlds? Juxtaposed worlds? Superimposed? Successive? In a linear succession? Meeting in a circular trajectory, in an eternal return? Who knows, who knows, who knows— —? One Self of humanity identical in all? Many Selves? Humanities that are successive through generations? Assembled in groups, one against the other? Splintered to infinity in single Selves? Or again, are the heroes reunited among themselves in order to form a heroic community? To form a Valhalla or an Elysium? To combat the Achaeans or the Trojans? For a history of patriarchs and epigonic revenges coming one after the other? Or does the hero perform his works alone, in a world without heroes, and does he raise himself alone, in an eruption of flames, up to the gods? Who knows, who knows, who knows— — —?

A shimmering glitter of perhaps extends over gods, worlds, and men. Paganism fully fashioned the monism of each of these three elements in the feeling of the One and All that they each have in their factuality: so paganism is not simply a—polytheism, but a “polycosmism,” a “polyanthropism”; this is precisely why, once again, it flies into splinters—splinters of its possibilities. The factuality of the elements, which weighs with its own weight but is devoid of light, frays in the ghostly fogs of possibility. Above the gray realm of the Mothers,

paganism celebrates the brightly colorful dance of the spirits of its classical Walpurgisnacht.

**T**HE orgiastic pell-mell of the possible is therefore only the externally visible phenomenon of the internal carving up of the elements in the real. If we want to bring order, clarity, univocity, reality into that drunken dance of the possible, then it is essential to re-weld these elements carved up underground, to bring them out of their reciprocal exclusivity into a clear, flowing connection and, instead of the “sinking away” into the night of the positive, where every something could assume the gigantic forms of the All and begin to “climb” upwards again. But upwards, back into the one All of reality, there is only one river of universal time that carries us there: it carries away in its rolling movement these elements themselves, apparently at rest, and in this movement, which goes from the morning to the night of the world by passing through its noon, it gathers together again the elements of the All, which were scattered in the obscurity of the something, in order to lead them to the one universal day of the Lord.

But how could the elements come to enter into the river? Can we bring the river to them from the outside? Never, for in this case the river would itself be an element, and the three elements would not belong to it. No, the path of the flowing movement must originate from the elements themselves, and exclusively from the elements; otherwise it would not be the elements, and our belief in their factuality, which up to now we have courageously taken as a basis, would not be confirmed by the image of reality in motion in which we live. The elements themselves must conceal the force out of which movement arises and have in themselves the basis for their order of entry into the river.

Must they carry the force in themselves in which a movement arises? But how would they have it—if we found them just in their factuality in their blind introversion? How would they turn their eyes toward the outside? What does this longing mean? How could the results be transformed into sources? And yet that’s what they will become. But how? Let us recall how they became results for us. It is from the nothing of knowledge that we made them “suddenly appear,” guided as we were by the belief in their factuality. This sudden appearance is not a sudden appearance in reality, but it is an entry into the space that is be-

**PROSPECTIVE:  
THE WORLD  
DAY OF THE  
LORD**

**MOVEMENT**

**METAMOR-  
PHOSIS**

fore all reality. It is not on the real that the reality of the three results border; it is not from a real that they suddenly appeared for us; these are the watersides the nothing, and the nothing of knowledge is their source. So the forces that end by flowing together in the result—an act of power and necessity of fate in God, birth and genus in the world, defiance of the will and his own nature in man—so these forces are not forces of visible reality, but either mere stopping points on our way for us, the ones who know, a way that goes from the nothing of knowledge to the something of knowledge; or, when to the nothing of our knowledge there corresponds a “true nothing” (as we must probably admit), secret forces beyond all reality ever visible to us, dark forces which are at work inside of God, the world and man, before God, the world and man—are revealed. But their Revelation then pushes back these secret and generative forces into the past and sets up at the beginning the same that appeared to us till now as a result. And even if we preferred to see the nothing only as a nothing of knowledge, and if we climb in this way by carefully holding onto the cable which is the consciousness of cognition, here, too, reality only begins with the end result, and here, too, facing the real, this result becomes the beginning. But what we took for symbolic forces, even if secret, before the birth into manifest reality, or for last steps on the route laid out by the construction of cognition, is what emerges from them as a first Revelation of their inner nature, once the results are inverted in order to become origins. That which beyond reality flowed together within them in order to realize them, is what will flow back from them into this side of reality, as the first witness of their turning toward a real action. For this is a turning, a conversion. That which flowed together on the inside as Yes will radiate as No, that which had entered as No will come out as Yes. For becoming-manifest is the conversion of becoming. Only the becoming is mysterious. But the becoming-manifest is—manifest.

**ORDER** So, that which is purely factuality changes into the source of the real movement. Completed rings become links of a chain. But how are the links ordered? In spite of their blind introversion in the elements themselves, perhaps there will already be seen at least an indication of their arrangement and order in relation to the chain of the path? Just as, despite their introversion, they already contained the preliminary condition of their

conversion to the manifest. Let's see. We have found God, the world and man in the figures where paganism in its maturity imagined them: God was the living God of myth, the world was the plastic world of art, and man was the heroic man of tragedy. But at the same time, we had depicted three living realities of historical antiquity as constituting a present of our thought: as a matter of fact we had claimed that the metaphysical, the metalogical and the metaethical were the fundamental traits of the sciences of God, man and the world; indeed, by anticipating in the *Introduction*, we sought to prove that these fundamental traits of science were the specifically modern and contemporary traits. An apparent contradiction—unless we are thinking perhaps of immediately re-establishing paganism through the modernity of this metaphysical, metalogical, metaethical view? Let's leave the answer to this last question for later; surely the apparent contradiction will be solved without that answer.

For, in the three cases, our presentation did not place modern science on an equal footing with the respective realizations in history. For the mythical God, the place of historical reality was the representation of God believed in in antiquity, for tragic man it was his consciousness of living self, for the plastic world it was the conception of the world produced by antiquity. The difference does not seem to strike deep; in truth it goes even deeper than we can show in these only transitional remarks. For in the representation of God who is the object of belief we find the legacy that had been handed down to antiquity since a past immemorial; in the consciousness of living self, we see the air it breathed, and in the view of the world the heritage that it handed down to posterity. So antiquity appeared in a triple temporal figure: a preliminary life situated in the past even in its own eyes, a present that has come and disappeared with it, and later life that goes beyond it. The first figure is theology, the second is psychology, the third is cosmology. In all three, we have learned to see only elementary sciences—for even in their modernity, they are for us only a doctrine of the “elements.” Elementary sciences, that is, as it were sciences of the prehistories, of the dark grounds of suddenly appearing; ancient theology, psychology, cosmology are equivalent then so to speak in our eyes to a theogony, a psychogony, a cosmogony. And here we established the significant difference, and this without especially looking for it, merely in the execution of our general task: the difference it

SEQUENCE

makes that theogony, the history of the birth of God, already signified a past for antiquity; the difference it makes that psychogony, the history of the birth of the soul, already meant a life in the present; the difference it makes, finally, that cosmogony, the history of the birth of the world, already meant a future. This would signify, consequently, that the birth of God would be before the origin of antiquity, the birth of the soul takes place in Antiquity and the birth of the world is accomplished only after the decline of antiquity. And so, in this triple birth from out of the dark ground, in these three—if we this once dare to use the word—creations, it would suggest to us a distribution of the “elements” over the great world day, over heaven where the path marked out by them is inscribed. Let us formulate it briefly and safely leave the more detailed explanation for the later course of things: God was since always, man became, the world is becoming. As regards any distinction we could still make between these three births from out of the grounds, between these three creations, we could recognize here already this first fact, their sequence in world time. For what we recognized till now of the All, by recognizing the everlasting elements, was only the mystery of their ever-lasting birth. It is a mystery: for it is not yet manifest to us, and cannot be manifest to us that this everlasting birth from out of the ground is—Creation. This becoming-manifest of the everlasting mystery of Creation is the endlessly renewed miracle of Revelation.

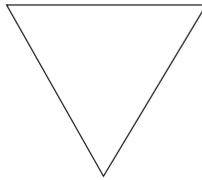
We stand at the transition—the  
transition of the mystery  
to the miracle.

**PART TWO**

**THE PATH**

**OR**

**THE EVER RENEWED WORLD**





## INTRODUCTION

# ON THE POSSIBILITY OF EXPERIENCING MIRACLE

in theologos!

**I**F miracle really is the favorite child of faith, then, at least for some time, faith has been seriously neglecting its parental duties. For at least a century, the child has been only a source of great embarrassment for the wet nurse dispatched by its parent, theology: she would gladly have got rid of it somehow or other, if only—yes, if only—a certain consideration for the parent had not held her back while the child was alive. But time brings counsel. The old parent cannot live forever. And the wet nurse will know what to do with the poor worm, incapable as it is of living or dying on its own. She has, moreover, already begun making the preparations. *ON BELIEF*

What happened, then, to ruin what, until relatively recently, had been such a happy family life, if we can trust old news at least, such that today we can scarcely remember those better times so recently vanished? For, as it stands today, it is difficult for us to believe that there was once such a time, and that it was only a while ago when miracle was not an embarrassment, but instead, theology's strongest and surest companion. What has happened in the meantime? And how did it happen?

Already the first observation that strikes us is surprising enough: the moment of that reversal, of that transformation of the line of resistance, till now the most solid, into a front-line trench, very weakly manned, risking surrender at the first assault, the moment of reversal, then, coincides with the one which, in the Introduction to the previous Part we located as the critical moment also for philosophy, the moment philosophy exploded in its hands, where philosophy thought it had firmly grasped it, the fundamental concept of the knowable All. At this moment, philosophy had felt its ancient throne falter; the dynasty of over two thousand years—including an exile of a thousand years—founded by Thales and Parmenides, seemed to die out as brilliantly and as suddenly with one of the most eminent heirs. And it was almost at the same time that theology also saw itself forced to carry out, higher up,

the evacuation of the line it had held for thousands of years and to take refuge in a new position in a further retreat. A striking coincidence!

**THEOLOGY  
OF MIRACLE**

**THE  
BELIEVED  
MIRACLE**

**W**HEN Augustine or another Church Father had to defend the divinity and the truth of revealed religion against the attacks and doubts of the pagans, they seldom missed the opportunity to refer to miracles. Although it was not only revealed religion that claimed miracles, since Pharaoh's wise men also confirmed their wisdom with miracles, they were its most powerful argument. For, it could well be that the pagan magicians also turned their rods into snakes: the rod of Moses swallowed the rods of idol worshippers. His own miracles were even more miraculous than the miracles of the adversary. The weight of the miracle, which a rationalist mindset would have reduced as much as possible, was therefore, on the contrary, increased to full strength. The more miraculous it was, the truer it was. Although a concept of nature already existed, it did get in miracle's way like today's concept that, in the common consciousness, destroys joy in the face of the miraculous. Natural events that are subject to laws, this basic dogma for us today, was just as obvious for the ancients. For all practical purposes, in our case it amounts to the same thing whether everything is guided and determined by forces residing in things or by the influence of higher powers. If it were otherwise, the way miracle as such could be perceived would have to seem puzzling for us; for us, today, miracle seems to need the backdrop of natural laws, for it is only against this that it stands out as it were as miracle. But in so doing, we see only that, for human consciousness at that time, the miraculous character of miracle rested on a completely different context: not on its divergence as regards the course of nature predetermined by laws, but on the fact that it was predicted. Miracle is essentially "sign." As just noted, it is quite correct that the singular miracle, in a totally miraculous world, totally devoid of laws, and enchanted as it were, could not stand out as miracle. Nor does it stand out more due to its unusual character—this is only "make-up" and not core, although this unusual trait may often be most useful for the effect it produces, but no, miracle stands out because it is predicted. That a man could lift the veil that commonly extends over the future, this is miracle and not that it oversteps pre-existing determinations.

Miracle and prophecy go together. If at the same time a magical effect is involved in miracle, this is a question that can remain and does remain entirely unanswered and in any case, this is not essential; magic and sign are on different planes. The Torah commands, You shall not let a sorcerer live. On the other hand, the Torah commands that the prophet be tested in order to see whether his predicted sign comes to pass. A quite different judgment is expressed here. The magician actively intervenes against the course of the world, and is therefore in the judgment of the city of God committing a crime deserving of death. He attacks God's Providence and wants to snatch, bully and force from it, by trickery or by force, that which is unforeseen and unforeseeable of it, that which is willed by its own will. The prophet, however, unveils by foreseeing that which is willed by Providence; by telling the sign—and even that which would be sorcery in the hands of the magician would be sign in the mouth of the prophet—he demonstrates the hand of Providence, which the magician denies. He demonstrates it; for how would it otherwise be possible to see the future ahead of time if it were not “pro-vided” for? So it is necessary to go beyond pagan miracle, to curb its spell that carries out the command of man's own power, through the sign that proves God's Providence. Hence the joy in miracle. The more miracles there are, the more Providence there is. And unlimited Providence is precisely this, the fact that really, without God's will, not a hair falls from man's head, is the new concept of God that Revelation brings; the concept establishes God's relationship to world and man with a unequivocalness and unconditionality totally foreign to paganism. In its time, miracle proved to be precisely that upon which today its credibility seems to founder: the predetermined constraint of the laws of the world.

The idea of natural law, as far as it went, tallied wonderfully well with miracle. So it comes to pass that even later, when that idea assumed its modern form, our current one, of immanent natural law, belief in miracle was not at all shaken. On the contrary: that epoch took surprisingly seriously the fact, almost gone from the common consciousness, that natural law establishes only the inner connections, and not the content of the event, and so, everything that happens, happens naturally; but still, nothing has been said yet about what “happens naturally.” So here, too, miracle still did not seem at all to contradict the imme-

diate validity of natural law; as it were, from Creation on, miracle was placed on the same level as everything else, and then one day, it came to light with the necessity of a natural law. The difficulties, then, had to come from elsewhere.

**DEMON-  
STRATED  
MIRACLE**

The skepticism with regard to miracle did not basically further contest its possibility in general, but its particular reality, the credibility to be given to the singular miracle. Miracle did not have to be proven like a universal proposition, but as a singular event. It needed witnesses. It is this necessity and only this necessity to prove the miracle that was always recognized and satisfied as much as possible. All forms of juridical proof are found here: the weakest is proof by circumstantial evidence, the strongest comprise testimony by oath and interrogation by torture. Circumstantial evidence won respect in courts of law, but only much later; so it plays only a small role for miracles, smaller at any rate than might have been expected here; the reason for this is that the success of the miracle, which alone could provide circumstantial evidence, demonstrates the miracle only in the eyes of those who were present as eyewitnesses at the unfolding of the miracle, and at its complete unfolding, that is to say in the two decisive moments of its miraculous character, the prediction and the fulfillment; the prediction, the awaiting for the miracle, always remains the constitutive moment in the strict sense; the miracle itself is only the moment of its realization; the two together form the “sign,” as the Holy Scripture and the New Testament show it: both attach the greatest importance to the character of sign to be given to their miracle of Revelation, the former through the promise made to the Patriarchs, the latter through the prophecies of the Prophets.

For the proof of the miracle, it is therefore fundamental to go back to the eyewitnesses. In their hearing under oath, it is personal credibility, the judgment of their capacity for observation, and even their numbers that are decisive; as regards the number, for example, the ancient Jewish dogma confirmed the miracle of Sinai as more credible than the miracle of the empty tomb, due to the impressive number of “600,000” eyewitnesses. But this is no longer the deposition under torture that crowns the proof; in spite of all, it can be false, consciously or unconsciously, without him who is judging noticing it. Already Satan knows this in the *Book of Job*: only the testimony adhered to during the tortures of the interrogation is an absolute guarantee; the witness who spills

his blood is the true witness. Thus, reference to the martyrs is the greatest proof of the miracle, and above all the martyrs whose torture was to confirm the quality of eyewitness, but later, the appeal to the subsequent martyrs as well: by spilling their blood, they demonstrate the solidness of their faith in the credibility of those who transmitted the miracle to them, that is to say, in the final resort, in the eyewitnesses: a witness for whom others are literally ready to pass through fire must be a good one. So the two proofs, testimony by oath and testimony by blood, blend and, after several centuries, finally became a single proof in Augustine's famous appeal from all single reasons based on the present, historical phenomenon, the *auctoritas ecclesiae*, without which he would accord no credence to scriptural testimony.

This is how perfect the belief in miracles is, and not only belief in the decorative miracle, but also historical belief in the central miracle, the miracle of Revelation. Even Luther's Reformation changes nothing here. It only shifts the path of personal confirmation from the periphery of the tradition where the present prevails, to the immediate center where the tradition springs up; the Reformation thus brings about a new type of believer, but not a new faith; faith stays anchored in history, even when a kind of mystical eyewitness testimony throws into shadow the proof that represents the visible Church, a proof that is yet cemented by the testimonies under oath and the testimonies of blood that has been shed. As we have already explained, the Enlightenment, born of the natural sciences, which appeared at the same time or a little later, was absolutely incapable of changing anything in this situation. Another Enlightenment than that of the natural sciences had to occur in order to make life hard for this faith—an Enlightenment of history.

**T**HERE is not just one Enlightenment, but several enlightenments: according to the times, they successively represent, for the faith that has entered into the world, the knowledge it has to confront. The first is the philosophical Enlightenment of antiquity. The whole of Patristics deals with this. The campaign of this Enlightenment against pagan myth is taken up quite calmly again by the Patristics; at first its claim to omniscience is challenged—what does the disciple of Greece have in common with the disciple of Heaven?—but gradually and step by step, even if with the greatest reservations, it was given room.

**THE THREE  
ENLIGHTEN-  
MENTS**

What still marked an Origen as a heretic is in any case closer to what Thomas Aquinas taught a thousand years later about the relationships between faith and knowledge and what the Church retained of it than to what Aquinas' adversaries taught. It was not by chance that Luther fought against "Aristotle" when he rose up against the Medieval Church. The epoch he inaugurated, however, accompanies a new Enlightenment: the Renaissance; this one participates as well, from its own point of view, in this battle against Aristotle and, after the philosophical mists of its childhood had evaporated, it appeared more and more distinctly like an Enlightenment marked by the natural sciences. An undesirable ally of faith, it leads the battle against the rational knowledge of scholasticism; exactly like faith, the legacy it inherits from scholasticism is mainly the positive evaluation of nature: according to the idea that ripened in the Middle Ages, this was of course overtaken by the supernatural, but is neither denied nor rejected. This concept of nature centers next on trust in experience and the demand for personal verification for both faith and knowledge: this is how the new "Enlightenment" usually designated by this name received it. The critique of the Enlightenment of antiquity had been directed against the dreams of myth, that of the Renaissance against the webs that reason spins; from then on, the Enlightenment rose up against credulity based on experience. As critique of experience it became slowly but surely historical criticism. And as such, it collided with the belief in miracle, which up till now had been unshakable.

From Voltaire on, the whole discussion about miracles lasted for a century: it shocks us today with its almost total lack of foundation. The choice pieces of the critique, Voltaire's own, Reimarus', Lessing's and Gibbon's, are always directed at a quite specific episode of the miraculous event; the attempt is made to demonstrate the non-credible character of the tradition, the insufficiency of the reasons alleged till now that favor their credibility, the possibility of explaining by natural causes that which can sometimes withstand the critique, that is to say of explaining without having to admit a foreseeable and thus foreseen evolution; but the possibility of miracle in general is left entirely in abeyance. As opposed to what we think today, they did not consciously truncate things; it was an honest uncertainty. As long as it was not proven with certainty that the attested miracles of the

past did not take place, one does not dare question, fundamentally, the possibility of miracle.

The moment where this trial essentially seems to decide against miracle is characterized by a regularly appearing, transitory phenomenon: the rationalist interpretation which is opposed to miracle. It begins in the final decades of the eighteenth century and reaches its peak in the first decades of the nineteenth. Until then, no need had been felt for this—on the contrary. Until then, miracle had really been the favorite child of faith. The rationalist interpretation of miracle is the avowal that it is no longer miracle and that faith is beginning to feel ashamed of its child. It would prefer to show as little of the miraculous as possible, and no longer the maximum of the miraculous. The support of old has become a burden. There is an attempt to get rid of it. When the old one breaks, it is time to seek a new crutch. And as we have seen, the Enlightenment, in its battle against the completed epoch, furnishes each time, against its will, the arms for the upcoming one even now. For a new epoch dawns around 1800.

**T**HIS time the Enlightenment had been an enlightenment of history. As historical criticism, it had discredited the eyewitness evidence of the miracle, and thus miracle had itself lost its credibility as historical fact. It had become a wavering subject, not only for the mediated faith of the visible Church, but also for Luther's faith that goes directly back to Scripture as the ultimate source. But since the end of the seventeenth century, the new pietist mysticism had prepared a new notion of faith that was as good as independent of the historical objectivity of miracle. And it was just here, with the Enlightenment that had undermined the old faith, that this new faith found an unexpected support. The historical conception of the world grew directly out of historical criticism. The simple acceptance of tradition was no longer admissible; a principle had to be discovered which would permit the tradition's *membra disiecta* left over from the criticism to be assembled into a living whole. This principle was found in the idea of "progress" of humanity, an idea that originated with the eighteenth century and, since 1800, has been widely and diversely foisted upon intellectuals. The past was thus surrendered to cognition, but the will felt liberated from it and turned

**THE  
HISTORICAL  
CONCEPTION  
OF THE  
WORLD**

toward the present and future; because for the will, progress is set between the two.

This orientation toward present and future was now also welcomed in the new turn taken by faith. If the Enlightenment connected the present to the future due to the trust in progress, if the individual was nourished by the certainty that this century simply was not equal to its ideal, and if he felt he was a fellow-citizen of future men, then the new faith firmly bound the present moment of the inner breaking in of grace to the trust in its future consequences in life. A new faith, even if it tried to speak Luther's language, as actually happened. For on the one hand, it sacrificed Luther's anchoring of living faith in the solid foundation of the past and tried to concentrate faith entirely in the present of lived experience; and on the other hand, through an emphasis quite opposite to Luther's teaching, it let this present experience flow into the future of "practical" life, and moreover (through this hopeful trust in future consequences, which for Luther's Paulinism could at most be a consequence of faith) it expected to give incontestably to faith the objective support that Luther had tried to give it by founding faith on the past attested to in Scripture. This hope for the future realm of morality became the star that guided faith's journey in the world. One has to hear how Beethoven, the great son of this epoch, expresses his jubilation in the Credo of his *Missa Solemnis* through the ever newly repeated words *vita venturi saeculi*, as if they were crown, sense and confirmation of the entire faith. And precisely for this hope of the new faith, seconded as worldly second, and of course also rival, the idea of progress in the new worldview.

**SCHLEIER-  
MACHER**

With Schleiermacher, this whole system found its classical representative dedicated as it was to denying the permanent value of the past and to anchoring the always present experience of the feeling of belief in the eternal future of the moral world. All subsequent theology had to contend with him. Theology has hardly shaken his basic position. Yet in the detail, this edifice of thought did not set too many problems. Of course, the past, which was overly encumbered with miracles and now suspicious, could be thrown overboard, and it could be imagined that the ship of faith, already dangerously shaken without this ballast, yet could still safely cross the sea of the present. But this does not say that what was sunk also really—sank. Far from pleasing theology by really sinking, the past stuck like glue to the exterior of

the vessel from which it had been thrown and caused an excess weight, worse than previously when it had been stowed inside, which is the proper nature of things. It is not because of, but in spite of Schleiermacher that nineteenth-century theology had to become historical theology, and yet again, it had to do so for Schleiermacher's sake; for here was the point where the final decision was made about the solidity of his thought, which, after all, had become the fundamental thought of the times.

Which task did historical theology assign itself as regards the past? Sought by theologians, knowledge could only be a means to an end. To which end? For faith, the past could be only a trifling matter. But since it was there, it was a matter of interpreting it so that at least it would not become obtrusive to faith. And this is what did happen in the extreme. Once this target was spotted, the road couldn't be clearer: the past must don the traits of the present. Only in this way does it become quite inoffensive to the present. The idea of evolution, its soul damned, is charged with arranging the material up to a culminating point, that is to say up to miracle that was once central to revealed faith; then the past is given notice; it has discharged its debt, it can go. As for the content, it is said quite simply that this culminating point and the content of present experience are equivalent; so we arrive at the following result: in its unessential parts, the past is neutralized by the idea of evolution; in its essential part, which alone could claim to count as a measure of present experience, it seems to be mistaken about the content of this experience, such that for faith only present and future exist, in conformity with the new, dominant state of mind. Historical theology had cleared a piece of ground for the Kantian theology of Ritschl and his school; it is beyond doubt that this theology affirms, in continuity with Schleiermacher's fundamental idea, a complete independence of faith in relation to knowledge. For in the last instance, isn't it the objectivity of knowledge which hides behind the notion of the past? The controlling of the past, now isolating it, now reclothing it anew, is the task entrusted to historical theology, and this basically means erecting a Chinese wall against knowledge. Of knowledge itself, "liberal" theology expects a contribution that orthodox theology does not dare ask of it: to challenge, by a "scientific" approach, the claims of science in each individual case, although they are already rejected on principle. And historical theology actually does what is asked of it.

**HISTORICAL  
THEOLOGY**

**THE TURN  
OF THE  
CENTURY**

No wonder then that with these contributions it was so hopelessly compromised as a science that no one today could any longer give it credence. For the process was after all much too transparent. If not at once, at least with time, and especially when the present itself paid its tribute to time by becoming past, one had to be struck by the fact that these transformations of the present are quickly accompanied by the transformations of the past, thanks to the “mirror” of science. The turn of the century saw the edifice of historical theology collapse with no hope of reconstruction, owing to Schweitzer’s immanent critique and to the rash hypotheses of the deniers of the historical Jesus on the one hand, and to the hypotheses of the pan-Babylonianists on the other. Now it is a matter of contracting, beside the field of ruins, a completely new building. But it could well happen that one might come off as cheaply as with the historical theology. Precisely when one wants—and this is just what the present epoch wants—to maintain the fundamental position, the primacy of hope, or, more exactly, a faith that is personal and experienced in the moment, oriented on the pole of certitude that “the kingdom of the ideal will finally come,” then precisely in this case the demands of knowledge must be satisfied more profoundly and above all more immediately than by simply putting make-up on the past. Knowledge of the world in its systematic totality that cannot be compensated for by the knowledge of a single part, as central as it may be—philosophy to call it by its name—will have to prepare itself to co-operate with theology. And already the weathervanes of the times are without a doubt turning unquestionably in this direction. We already hear theology’s call to philosophy everywhere. A new theological rationalism is on the move. While the epigones and renewers of “German idealism” are preparing themselves to “give birth” to faith out of idealistic reason and to “justify” it by this means, the orthodox circles are seeking, still in a very modest fashion, to define and to secure a place for faith; and the most decidedly systematic philosopher of the last generation has a theology of faith, its flame nourished by a whole system, exactly like a fool in love makes the sun, the moon and the stars explode before his sweetheart, as an amusement for her.

**TASK** The separation between theology and philosophy established by Ritschl’s school involved a neglect of “Creation” to the one-sided benefit of “Revelation”—to express it in theological

words, which themselves were certainly used with some repugnance. So it is a matter of giving back to Creation its full weight of objectivity by putting it back on the level of the experience of Revelation; and still more: it is a matter of re-inserting into the concept of Creation Revelation itself with its bond and origin that connects it to the firm hope in the coming of the ethical kingdom of the ultimate Redemption. For this whole connection that hope makes between the notions of Revelation and Redemption is perceived today as the veritable core of faith. In certain respects, still in some confused way, both Revelation and Redemption are Creation. And so here lies the point from where philosophy can construct anew the whole edifice of theology. It is Creation which theology had neglected in the nineteenth century in its obsession with the idea of a living and present Revelation. And now it is Creation itself that is the portal through which philosophy enters the abode of theology.

In this relationship to Creation, we see the bond that joins knowledge to the notion of the “past.” The truth is always that which was, whether it is “a priori,” or, as in Plato, “that which towers in its ancient and sacred power,” or the object of “experience.” So the trust in historical theology was unjustified from the start solely because it surrendered only a segment of knowledge to the confrontation with faith; of course, it suffered besides from posing the wrong questions: it denied to knowledge its own character, which must be just as unalterable as the past, and rightly so; instead it called for knowledge to take present experience into consideration, or even that it take care of it. So, by building knowledge on the notion of Creation, we allow it freely to deploy its own character which is to get “to the bottom” of things. We are making faith completely into the content of knowledge, but of a knowledge that sets itself upon a fundamental principle of faith. The fact that it does this we shall, of course, see only in the course of the doing itself since the principle of faith as such can only be recognized when knowledge manages to portray faith, and not before.

But against this new theological rationalism, evoked here in broad strokes, don't we see rising up again all the reservations that gave the deathblow to its old brother? Once again, doesn't philosophy have to fear being reduced to the servant of theo-

**NEW  
RATIONALISM**

logy, or theology becoming superfluous to philosophy? How can we counteract this mutual distrust? Perhaps only by showing that a need exists on both sides that can only be filled by the other party. And this is how things really happen. And yet again, we must reiterate the remarkable fact that at the same historical moment, philosophy saw itself at the point where any additional step was forbidden to it, and indeed where any attempt to go further could only be a fall into a bottomless abyss, whereas theology felt itself robbed of its surest support, miracle. Is this simultaneity more than a coincidence? That this is so is already pleaded by the historical contexts of persons, sometimes going as far as union in the same person, which, in any case, with the representatives of this sudden change, come and go from one to the other: so if it is more than a coincidence here, it must be possible to demonstrate such a mutual need and thus the inanity of the mutual mistrust.

**PHILOSOPHY  
AND  
THEOLOGY  
OLD  
PHILOSOPHY**

**W**E should not be afraid of repeating here what we have already said—around 1800, philosophy worked out its self-imposed task, which was to know the All by means of thinking; by understanding itself in the history of philosophy, nothing more remains for it to understand; it has overcome even the opposition to the truth content of faith by “generating” this content and by discovering in it its own methodological root. So, having reached the goal of its objective task, it testifies to its having-arrived-at-term by building itself into a one-dimensional idealistic system: it has always carried this evolution in it, but it is only at this moment that it is ripe for it. In this evolution, this moment of historical closure finds its right and appropriate representation. The one-dimensionality is the form of the one and universal knowledge that includes all things in it, without remainder. The being which always appears in its multiplicity is totally subsumed in that unity as absolute; to suppose that one content should occupy a particularly pronounced position, as faith claims for its content, then, in this system, it can only be a matter of one position: that of the principle which, as method, gathers the system itself in order to make it into a unity; and it is precisely this position that the Hegelian system grants to the content of faith. If one more step from this height is to be taken without falling into the abyss, the foundations must be shifted; a different concept of philosophy must come to light.

We have already seen how that happened. The new notion of philosophy essentially turned against all the elements that had joined at the peak of the old one. Philosophy does not have as object the objective, thinkable All and the thinking of this objectivity; rather, it is a “view of the world,” the idea with which an individual mind reacts to the impression the world makes on it; it does not have as content the content of faith; but, through an eternal paradox now thrown in sharp relief from both sides, from the theological as well as the philosophical, this content rebels against it; possibly, with the presupposition of an objective world and of a one and universal thinking, the one-dimensional form of the system would be the scientific form—there corresponds to the pure and simple multiplicity of views of the world, which already in the individual man do not absolutely need to be reduced to only one, only a multidimensional form, and at its extreme limit, it would result in philosophizing in aphorisms.

**THE POINT-  
OF-VIEW  
PHILOSOPHER**

This new concept of philosophy at least serves to make philosophizing possible after Hegel. All these properties are henceforth joined together into a single one: in the place of the old type of philosopher, impersonal by vocation, employed as a mere lieutenant of the history of philosophy, and of a philosophy that is naturally unidimensional, a most personalized figure appears: the philosopher of the view of the world, or the philosopher of the point of view. But then also the doubtful aspect of the new philosophy appears in the brightest light, and the question in objection to Nietzsche is necessarily posed to all philosophy worthy of consideration: is this still science?

Well, is it still science? This examination of things, each for itself and each in its countless connections, now from this point of view and now from that, is this examination whose unity resides at most in the unity of the examiner—how problematic for this alone!—is this still science? This, too, is the question we are asking, a question everyone asks who did not get anything out of philosophy or science in the philosophical works that have appeared in recent times. It was thus that a lack in philosophy was felt, which philosophy was obviously not in a position to satisfy by itself. If it does not want to give up its new concept—and how could it, when it owes to this concept alone its having survived beyond the critical point that had broken up its traditional tasks—help must be found elsewhere, for it and just for its scientific character. It must keep a firm grip on its new starting

point, the subjective and even extremely personal Self, and even more, the incomparable Self, absorbed in itself; it must maintain its point of view, while achieving the objectivity of science. Where can we find this bridge that connects the most extreme subjectivity, we could almost say deaf and blind ipseity, and the luminous clarity of an unlimited objectivity?

**THE NEW  
PHILOSOPHER**

Our answer must anticipate, but then stop half-way and remain in the allusion: that bridge from the most subjective to the most objective is thrown by theology's concept of Revelation. Man, who receives Revelation and experiences the content of faith in his life, carries both in him himself. And, whether or not the new philosophy acknowledges it, this man is the only one who philosophizes at present and, even scientifically, is the only possible philosopher of the new philosophy. Philosophy today requires, in order to be freed of its aphorisms, and hence precisely for its scientific character, that "theologians" do philosophy. But theologians in a different sense, of course. For, as we shall see, the theologian whom philosophy requires for the sake of its scientific character is himself a theologian who desires philosophy—out of concern for integrity. What was a demand in the interests of objectivity for philosophy will turn out to be a demand in the interests of subjectivity for theology. They complete each other, and together they bring about a new type of philosopher or theologian, situated between theology and philosophy. Here again, we are postponing the last word on this subject. For now, to return to our actual theme, we begin by examining the need that the new theology brings to philosophy, a need coming to meet that need of philosophy with which we have just dealt.

**THEOLOGY  
AND  
PHILOSOPHY**  
  
**THE OLD  
THEOLOGY**

AS we have seen, since its new turn about a century ago, theology had tried to live without *auctoritas*; for "historical theology" represented a police force for it against the attacks threatening its present living consciousness, for example the attacks that came from the "dead past" of the *verbum scriptum* or even those of the *ecclesia visibilis*; but it did not represent a positive *auctoritas* for it, which founds its truth through cognition. So it played a role somewhat comparable to that of philosophy in scholasticism, which also surrounded faith essentially with an outer rampart, at times as *Summa contra gentiles*, in order to defend it against external attacks, at times as *Summa theologica* in order to

conquer new spiritual lands for it; yet, it was not *auctoritas*; this was the Church itself, present in its visibility, just as later for Luther it was the *verbum scriptum* which they “should leave out of reach” and which he wrote down on his table in front of him. For his faith, which he had firmly founded on the new *auctoritas*, Luther also set up a protection against the outside, but vehemently rejecting philosophy for this role; for, to him, such a protection is furnished by the “civil power”; it had the same attitude toward the Word and its messengers as did scholastic philosophy with regard to the visible Church.

The theology of the new times had also been given such a protection against the outside, but it believed it could economize on something more important: the foundation of an authority. So it stayed hanging in the air; and this was really what it wanted. For it jealously guarded over the pure presentness of lived experience; it had to protect it against all contact with the hard, solidly grounded earthly realm and against objective reality; the only support it could maybe seek was anchorage in the hope stretched above it, in the starry heaven of the moral ideal. It did not want to feel solid ground under its feet. It wanted to deny truth.

But truth cannot be denied, not even in the name of the ideal, let alone in the name of lived experience. Truth is and remains the solid ground on which alone authentic experience can grow, where alone the ideal can be verified. The miracle of personal experience of Revelation may be strengthened, for the will, in the certitude of its future confirmation through Redemption; but cognition wants to see another foundation on which that experience rests, including when it throws that anchor of hope.

Theology therefore calls in philosophy today in order, theologically speaking, to throw a bridge from Creation to Revelation, a bridge on which the connection may take place between Revelation and Redemption, which is of central importance for today's theology. From the theological point of view, what philosophy must accomplish for it is not a sort of re-construction of theological content, but its anticipation or, more accurately, its foundation, the exhibiting of the pre-conditions on which this content rests. And since theology itself does not see its content as contents, but as event—that is to say not as life, but as lived experience—the pre-conditions are not conceptual elements, but existing reality; in the place of the philosophical concept of truth, therefore, the notion of Creation arises for it. Philosophy

THE  
THEOLOGIAN  
OF LIVED  
EXPERIENCE

THE NEW  
THEOLOGIAN

contains the entire content of Revelation in this way, but it does not possess this content as Revelation, but as pre-condition of Revelation, as a before of Revelation, so not as revealed, but as created content. In Creation, Revelation is—“foreseen” in its entire content, exactly in accordance with today’s notion of faith, hence including also Redemption. Philosophy, as the theologian practices it, becomes the prediction for Revelation, so to speak the “Old Testament” of theology. But before our astonished eyes, Revelation then gains its character of authentic miracle—authentic, for it becomes wholly the fulfillment of the promise that took place in Creation. And philosophy is the Sybil who, by predicting the miracle, turns it into a “the sign,” the sign of divine Providence. After its false start in critiquing the historical proof, the Enlightenment had reduced miracle to magic, certainly not to cosmic magic, but to magic-hat tricks: miracle seemed to be a funny deception; so the Enlightenment had robbed it of its true essence that bears the marks of the descent from faith on its brow and paganized it; was only fitting that faith was ashamed of its presumed paternity of this changeling that had been substituted for its favorite child. Today, where philosophy seeks to cooperate with theology, which for its part looks out longingly for that *auctoritas* as the authentic one suitable to its new form after the collapse of the *auctoritas* that is only substituting, that is to say only apologetic and not constituting of history—today knowledge is again placing into the arms of faith its favorite child, authentic miracle, which it believed to be lost.

**GRAMMAR  
AND WORD**

We have essentially reached the goal of what we were considering in the Introduction. We still have to add some reflections about the how of philosophical anticipation of the miracle of Revelation; of course, this will have to be only allusive and unsatisfactory; and maybe these reflections will bring increased clarity not so much to this Part as, retroactively, to the previous Part. Concerning the questions of the how, the “method,” we should in fact speak only after the work has been finished, and not beforehand. And it is a matter here of a question about the how. How can the possibility of experiencing miracle that arose for us with Creation be recognized within Creation itself? Or, to ask more materially—apparently more materially—where within Creation is the “creature”? In the realm of philosophy, where is the “object” that bears on its countenance the visible seal of Revelation? Where is there found in Creation the book that time only

needs to consult in order to read on its pages the word of Revelation? Where is the mystery unveiled as miracle?

When we saw the elements of the All emerging in its silence from the secret abysses of the nothing, we had made their muteness speak by lending them a language which could be theirs, because it is not a language. A language before language then, just as that emergence is Creation before the Creation. Seen from living language, it was a matter of the “original words” that are the hidden as secret ground beneath every single manifest word, and come to light in it, elementary words as it were that make up the manifest course of language, mathematical elements from which the curve of the path is to be developed as the peculiarity of the elements in their emergence was well shown in mathematical symbols. In living language, the inaudible original words become audible as real words, they themselves and, along with them, all real words. Instead of language before language, real language stands before us.

If those inaudible elementary words that were standing among themselves beside each other without relationship were the language of the pre-world of the mute elements lying individually side by side, the language that is understood in the silent realm of the Mothers, the merely ideal possibility of understanding, then real language is language above ground. That language of logic is the prediction of a real language of grammar; in each individual for himself, thinking is mute and yet mutual to everyone; through this mutuality, thinking grounds the true mutuality of speaking; what was mute in the thinking becomes audible in the speaking, but the thinking is not speaking, that is to say, not real “imperceptible” speaking, but a speaking before speaking, the secret ground of speaking; its “original words” are not real words, but promises of the real word. But yet the real word that “calls” the object by its name gets solid ground under its feet because the original word has pro-mised it. What was mute becomes audible, the secret manifest, what was closed opens up, that which as thought had been complete inverts as word into a new beginning; for the word is only a beginning until it reaches the ear that re-ceivees it and the mouth that re-ponds to it.

Here, in this relationship between the logic of language and its grammar, we now already have, to all appearances, the sought after object that binds Creation and Revelation. The language that, in the original words of its logic, made perceptible to us the

mute, everlasting elements of the primordial world, Creation will, in the forms of its grammar, make understandable to us the course of the sphere of the eternal surrounding world ever resoundingly renewed. The prediction of the original words of logic finds its fulfillment in the well-known laws of real words, the grammatical forms. For language is truly the wedding gift of the Creator to humanity; and yet at the same time the mutual possession of the children of men, in which each has his particular share and finally the seal of humanity in man. It is whole from the beginning, man became man when he spoke; and all the same there is until this day no language of humanity, on the contrary this will be only at the end. Real language between beginning and end is mutual to all and yet a particular one for each person; it unites and divides at the same time. So real language includes everything, beginning, middle and end; the beginning as his visible and present fulfillment: for language, of which we say that it makes of man a man, is today, in its many figures, his visible distinguishing mark and the end: for also as individual language of today and even as language of the individual, it is ruled by the ideal of perfect understanding, which we envisage in the language of humanity. Thus the grammatical forms also are themselves formed according to Creation, Revelation and Redemption, after the instruction of the linguistic forms as a real whole opposite the original thought of language, which for us had become the methodical organon of Creation, became the organon of Revelation: Revelation, just because in knowledge it is founded on Creation, and in volition it is oriented toward Redemption, is at the same time Revelation of Creation and Redemption. And language as its organon is, at the same time, the thread on which is aligned all that is human that moves under the miraculous light of Revelation and of its ever renewed presentness of experience.

**MOMENT** But as we already feared, we feel that we are venturing too far ahead here and, by speaking of unknown things, getting lost in the obscure. So we are dropping the subject here. In its inexhaustible youth, the concept of experience anyhow easily seduces even calm thinking into enthusiastic excess. Let's stay grounded and hold fast: language, as it is entirely there, entirely created, yet only awakens to its real life in Revelation. And so there is nothing new in the miracle of Revelation, nothing of a magical intervention in the created Creation; on the contrary, it is entirely

sign, entirely a making visible and a becoming audible of the Providence originally hidden in the mute night of Creation, entirely—Revelation. Revelation is therefore always new only because it is immemorially old. It renews the immemorial Creation into the ever newly created present because that immemorial Creation itself is already nothing other than the sealed prediction that God renews from day to day the work of the beginning. The word of man is symbol: at every moment it is newly created in the mouth of the one who speaks, yet only because it is from the very beginning and already bears within its womb each speaker who one day brings about the miracle of renewal in it. But this is more than symbol: the word of God is Revelation only because at the same time it is the word of Creation. God said: Let there be light—and what is the light of God? Is it man's soul.



## BOOK ONE

# CREATION OR THE EVERLASTING FOUNDATION OF THINGS

**G**OD spoke. That comes second. It is not the beginning. It is already the fulfillment, the audible fulfillment of the mute beginning. It is already the first miracle. The beginning is: God created.

God created. This is what is new. Here, the shell of the mystery breaks. Everything we knew about God till now has been only knowledge of a hidden God, of a God who hid both himself and his life in his own mythical domain, in a citadel of gods, a mountain of gods, a heaven of God. This God whom we knew was coming to an end. But God the Creator is in the beginning.

In the beginning. What seemed to be an end, God's vitality, reverses itself into a beginning. Here again, God's birth from out of the foundation, his creation before the Creation, will appear as the prediction of his Revelation. For what is the difference between promise and fulfillment? Isn't it that the former remains still, finished, immovable, whereas the latter happens, or rather: intervenes? From promise to fulfillment, then, nothing has changed: the content of the promise and the phases of the fulfillment are one and the same thing; only, that which was finished is reversed to become beginning. But through this, the pieces that contribute to finishing the content of that which is finished are reversed and become the prediction of the event that emerges from what is finished, having become beginning again. As already stated, this reversal can be externalized only as inversion of the two first original words. That which came out as Yes appeared as No, and vice versa, just as we unpack things we put into a suitcase in the order that is opposite to how we packed them. As trivial as the comparison might sound, we must not take it any less seriously. For if the birth from out of the foundation is disassociated in these actions, and especially in the first two, they do not develop dialectically such that the second would emerge from the first; the No is not the "antithesis" of the Yes; on the contrary, facing the nothing, the No has the same imme-

diacy as the Yes; and for its confrontation with the Yes, it does not presuppose the Yes itself, but only the emergence of the Yes from out of the nothing. The enormous importance of this equally immediate relationship of both acts to their origin, the importance, consequently, of the opposition between the method used here and the dialectical method, can be clearly seen only in the developments to come in this Part. But the perfect applicability of the comparison with packing a suitcase and so also of the comparison with the subsequent unpacking, has its basis here.

**THE  
CREATOR  
POWER**

**I**N God's creating as the beginning of his self-externalization, his divine power that flowed into his vitality with the primordial No is thus externalized. But this power, which came from his divine freedom, hence from his primordial No, now emerges otherwise, no longer as No, but as Yes. As Yes, so not as singular "act" that is torn from God in a spasm of self-negation, but as quiet, infinite "attribute" whose essence is shown in that which lasts. The figure of God, until now hidden in the metaphysical beyond of myth, steps into the visible and begins to light up. The figure of God—for what else is it if not a figure, that which allows us to say that he has an essential "attribute." It is the only attribute; all else that lays claim to this name does so wrongly, as we shall see. Before his emergence from himself, God cannot have any attributes at all; for the attribute is something outside in relation to which the bearer of the attribute is something quite simply inside, that is to say something that externalizes itself only in the attributes. At any rate, this attribute includes in it that which is rightly designated otherwise as an attribute of God.

**ARBITRARI-  
NESS AND  
NECESSITY**

What is power once it has become attribute? We have already said it: no longer singular act, no longer arbitrariness, but essence. God the Creator is essentially powerful. His creative work is therefore omnipotent, without being arbitrary act. The God who is visible in Creation can do all that he wills; but he wills only what he must will by nature. In this formula, which for us is so plainly obvious, all riddles are solved which the idea of Creation, as far as God is concerned, could give rise to.

It is not so long ago that we presented the difficulty inherent in the idea of Creation as a contradiction between God's "omniscience" and his "omnipotence." We asked: how can God be

omnipotent if his knowledge constantly limits him and must prevent him from doing all that he can will? Posed in this way, it is thus shown that power is wrongly understood as action: it is action only in the mystery of the inner self-configuring of God; in his configuration as it becomes visible, where it is not action, but essence, it has this essential bonding in an inner necessity; and nothing other than such bonding is meant by the notion of God's own wisdom. The true idea of the attribute of power involves that of wisdom. This is just the case in that formula considered a moment ago: the Creator can do all that he wills, but he wills only what his essence compels him to will. In implanting the power as an "attribute" into the essence, we solve not merely the academically framed problem of its relationship to "wisdom," but also the authentic and profound problem hidden in the idea of the Creator: does God create out of arbitrariness or necessity? The two seem to be irreconcilable. To affirm the first seems to be a demand of the concept of divine perfection and absoluteness; God cannot be dependent on anything, and least of all on a need, be it external or internal. So he must not be compelled to create; it is not possible for him to feel "lonely," as Schiller speaks of the "Master of the World"; according to the formulation of the Koran, he must be "wealthy without any world." So the idea of the absolute arbitrariness of the Creator during Creation is widespread, especially in Arabic Scholasticism, but also in the earlier Christian and Jewish theology. But it is not as harmless as its advocates think. For, relieving him of any need and refusing to establish his creative work in his essence, it threatens to free God from any necessary connection to the world; but by doing this, God's creative self-emergence is made into a mere unessential factuality for him, and God's essence is thrust into a height that is foreign to the world, raised above the world—but isn't this what the pagans teach? What distinguishes this raising of God above the world from the cool apathy of the Epicurean gods who, in the "intermediate spaces" of existence, lead a life neither touched nor moved by it in Olympian serenity? So, the authentic notion of Revelation, of the emergence of self, the reciprocal belonging and the meeting of the three "real" elements of the All, God world man, is effective after all in resisting the claim of the arbitrariness of the Creator. And thus, in the face of Arabic Scholasticism, in fact in sharpest divergence on this exact point, it was Maimonides, the

great Jewish theoretician of Revelation who with an unsurpassed rigor claimed God's Creation his essential attribute, and even developed the whole theory of the attributes of the divine essence in a clear methodical assimilation with this attribute of creative power.

But that emphasis on arbitrariness was not entirely unjustified. This is seen in the later destinies of the idea of God's essential creative act of power. It always verges on being understood as a need within God. Since the Creation of the world is essential necessity for God, it is he, the "lonely Master of the world," who has, like the artist, satisfied a need of his nature in Creation, divesting himself of an inner burden. This is further emphasized when, not content with the concept of necessity, a drop of passion is added and makes Creation into an act of longing love. Longing, and not—although this, too, would be a shift in the emphasis—flowing over. If not for the sake of God, then certainly for the sake of the world such formulations are to be rejected; for, just as God is robbed of his inner freedom in them, so too the world is deprived of its inner connection in itself, of its autonomy, which should not be taken from it by the idea of Creation but on the contrary should be precisely guaranteed amid a host of possibilities. If bound in this way to a need within God, the world would lose all its own meaning, all inner unequivocalness, and like the work of an elegiac poet, its essence would be less "independent work of art" than testimony of the inner life of its originator, which is more striking than all works. And therefore it would not be Creation, nor the indigenous formation predicted in the metalogical world.

Here the concept of divine arbitrariness comes to the rescue. But how are we now to make this stone, which we expressly rejected in constructing the concept of the Creator, into the cornerstone? The cornerstone by no means, and not "making" but—recognizing as foundation stone. For it is not in the creative act of the Creator that the arbitrariness resides, not in it, but in God's self-configuring that precedes his creative act. The power of the Creator is essential attribute, but it had its origin in the arbitrariness which is not attribute but event and blazes in a perpetually renewed flame in God's breast before Creation. That secret self-revelation of God's freedom before Creation, which becomes clear only in the impact on the necessary destiny of the divine essence from an absolute arbitrariness into active power, was the

sealed prediction that was manifestly fulfilled in the essential power of the Creator. But the fact remains that the wonderful power of the Creator was prefigured in the flaming arbitrariness in which the Creator brought himself to life. The arbitrariness of the hidden God rests on the foundation of the creative power of the manifest one, revealed in tranquil vitality. God's power is externalized with pure necessity precisely because in its interior it is pure arbitrariness, absolute freedom. As "created" God, enclosed in himself, "hidden," he could abstain from creating if he could—which won't do—as such emerge from himself and create but as manifest God, he can do nothing other than create. So, as opposed to the proponents of arbitrariness in the divine act of Creation, the ones who attribute to it an inner, essential necessity are right; but as opposed to those who, based on the reversal of the hidden to the manifest, raised this inner necessity to a passionate need and re-interpreted power as love, those others were on the right path with their assertion of divine arbitrariness, because they pointed out the inner core of limitless freedom within God who, as he breaks outwards, loses his inner boundlessness and reveals himself as tranquil omniscience, creating with necessity.

**W**ORLD history has provided proof of this example: Islam. Mohammed found and took over the idea of Revelation as one picks up a find, that is to say without producing it from out of its presuppositions. The Koran is a "Talmud" that is not based on a "Scripture"; it is a "New Testament" without the "Old." Islam has only Revelation, and not prediction. So the miracle of Revelation is not a "sign" in it; it is not a Revelation that divine providence operative in Creation would be a "plan of salvation": rather, the Koran is a miracle in itself, a magical miracle then, and it acquires legitimacy as miracle not from being predicted in advance, but from its inexplicability; this is why, up to today, the proof of the divine character of the Koran is seen in the fact that a book of such incomparable and wonderful wisdom and beauty cannot have arisen from a human brain; on the contrary, the Talmud and the New Testament theoretically authenticate their divine origin through their connection with the "Old" Testament: the Talmud claims that it is logically deduced in its entirety; the New Testament claims that it possesses the full character of an historical fulfillment. So, when Mohammed

*ISLAM: THE  
RELIGION OF  
REASON*

took over the concepts of Revelation outwardly, he necessarily remained deeply pagan as regards the fundamental concepts of Creation. For he did not see the connection that binds Revelation to Creation.

So he could not understand that the concepts of Creation, God world man, are only reversal from finished figures into original powers of Revelation. He took them as he found them, as finished, only not like the concepts of Revelation from belief in Revelation but from the pagan world. And so, he threw them as he found them into the movement that leads from Creation to Redemption, through Revelation. From predictions veiled in themselves, they did not become Revelations that step forth; their closed eyes did not open to shine out; on the contrary, they kept their glances mutely turned inwards, even when they turned them outwards toward one another. What was Yes stayed Yes, what was No stayed No. And in this remarkable case of world historical plagiarism, we can place before our eyes—and we shall continue to do so—what a belief in Revelation would necessarily look like when springing directly from paganism so to speak without God's will, without the plan of his providence, that is, in "purely natural" causality. For the essential in such a purely natural emergence would be the absence of the inner inversion of the "pre-signs," the absence of the turning of the prediction into the sign, of Creation into Revelation, by which the former first reveals itself as foundation of Revelation, and the second as renewal of Creation. Islam therefore possesses neither one nor the other, although it boasts of both, as it found them, proudly parading them around. As we already mentioned, Mohammed's Creator is "wealthy without any world". He is really the Creator who could have abstained from creating. His power is shown, like the power of an oriental despot, not in the creating of the necessary nor in the authority to decree the law, but in the freedom for arbitrary action. But most remarkably, rabbinic theology formulates our concept of the creative power of God by asking the question whether God created the world out of justice or rather out of love? In the producing and carrying out of the law the power which we recognized as belonging to the Creator stands the test, the power that acts out of inner necessity and realizes the necessary. The obvious opposite of such power is arbitrariness, it proves itself precisely in the absence of this inner compulsion, in the proportionate freedom to realize

justice and injustice, to carry out an action or to refrain from it. Arbitrariness knows no necessity. It does not feature its expressions with infinite necessity as something equally necessary of itself, but every singular action arises from the fleeting mood of the single moment, bound only to this moment and denying right away the moment just past, as if it were refusing to create, with the action of this moment, a sort of precedent that pledges it for the following moment. Its infinity is proved only by according to every future moment the same freedom for all things as is accorded to the present moment. It will never stretch across heaven, above its work, the rainbow that signifies its pledge that it will not repeal the laws of its existence “as long as the earth lasts”; for arbitrariness, creating and destroying are the same; in the same movement, it glories in both and demands of its believers to venerate both, or rather precisely only: to fear both equally; while the God of Revelation never directly compares his judgment of the world to come with his creative work, though even that is not arbitrariness; rather, like the creative act itself, this judgment hangs on the inner connection of the necessity which Revelation has stitched together. So singular arbitrary action springs from the singular moment in which it denies itself as the principle of all its other moments, whereas the action of the essential power came out of the essence in full necessity and is set into infinity. The creative act in Islam, like every arbitrary act, is again tied absolutely to the moment, and only to that moment; and so in the sense just explained, it is self-negation for the Creator; like all externalization of the essence due to an inner necessity, the creative act, according to belief in Revelation, frees from itself a lasting necessity, and consequently is the Creator’s affirmation of the world. Affirmation of the world—the Creation is Creation of the world. Now what about the world?

**W**E had accompanied the world in its self-configuration to the point where it seemed complete in itself, entirely configured, a figure filled with spirit within itself. For it, too, this result is a peak from where no path any longer leads away, unless the result here too becomes beginning. But this is what being created means. Only the idea of Creation tears the world from its elementary enclosure and motionlessness and carries it away into the river of the All, opens its eyes, till now turned inward, to the outside, and makes its mystery manifest. It seems paradoxical-

*THE  
CREATURE*  
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NOTHING*

cal, at first glance, again to assert a Creation of the world “after” its completion as configuration. In any case, at least it seems that we have moved irrevocably away from the concept of Creation “out of nothing” which we had received from tradition. Having come out of “nothing,” it had already appeared to us as configuration. Would that which has structure have to itself become nothing in order to represent the “nothing” out of which the world would have been created?

This is how it is. Let us recall the light which we cast before us on the path of Creation, when we stated that the “metalogical” world, projected as an image of antiquity, sprang up in reality only at the decline of antiquity, thus at the beginning of the era of faith; insofar as this era has certainly begun, but has not come to its end, we defined the world as that which becomes, in contrast to God who became before all beginning, and in contrast to the Self which became in the course of past time. By reason of “its becoming out of nothing,” we set the world at the end of the world, as we had set God at the dawn of the world and the Self at the light of its noon. The universal dawn of Creation does not therefore necessarily mean for the world that it is created. That God created the world is—like any sentence comprising subject, predicate, object—unlimited truth only for the subject; about the object alone, with no relation to the subject, no analysis will obtain a true assertion from that sentence; for example, from the sentence that the stork ate the frog, one can certainly deduce, purely analytically, that other unlimited truth, that the frog was eaten by the stork; the relationship of the stork to the frog, like that of the frog to the stork, is clearly established, but not the destinies of the frog, apart from its relationship to the stork; besides the fact of being eaten, there still exists a host of other possibilities; only the stork’s participation goes without question. Likewise, the sentence “God created the world” represents unconditional truth only as it concerns the relationship between God and world; only for that relationship is the form of the past tense valid, the “once and for all” of the sentence; however, for the world alone, the Creation has not necessarily ended with the creative act of God performed once and for all; that which for God is from the past, and from an immemorial past, really “in the beginning,” can still be entirely present for the world, even until its end; the Creation of the world only needs to find its end in Redemption; only from there, or, seen

retrospectively, from whatever point such an end would be placed, and seen from there the Creation of the world would necessarily, and absolutely, be “Creation out of nothing.” Facing this world created at the end, but really facing it, the configured world of the metalogical worldview would really have to be “nothing,” that is to say something absolutely incomparable with the created world, something unbound, something which has disappeared along with its interests.

But in the Creation by God at the dawn of the world, it is not necessary that the world “become” something created as “finished,” but above all, to begin with, nothing other than—creature. That which is Creation from God’s point of view can, from its side, mean nothing other than the breaking in of the consciousness it has of being a creature, of its consciousness of being constantly created. In the Creation, the configured world would therefore open its eyes to recognize its created condition. From its point of view, being created would be its self-revealing as creature. In this consciousness of being a creature, that is in the consciousness of not having been created one day in the past, but of constantly being in the circumstance of creature, this consciousness is something absolutely objective; it is certainly not yet a kind of immanent event in the world, but authentic Revelation and hence an event that shines by itself onto the consciousness of the Creator to give to it its ultimate determination. The world’s consciousness of being a creature, that is, its consciousness of being constantly created, and not of having been created, is objectified in the idea of divine Providence.

It goes like this: the relationship we are seeking between the world and the Creator was not, for the world, the fact of having been created once and for all, but its continuous Revelation as creature. For the world, it is therefore not its appearance as Creation, but as Revelation. So this will appear as a reversal of the first and not the second act of the self-configuring of the world, it will appear as a reversal of that which was its lasting essence. The lasting essence of the configured world was the universal, or more exactly the genus; by being itself universal, the genus contains within itself the individual, and it endlessly gives birth to it out of itself. In the world, which reveals itself as creature, this lasting essence changes into a momentary essence, “endlessly renewed” and yet universal. An unessential essence then. What does that mean? An essence of the world which has en-

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AND  
EXISTENCE**

tered into the river of reality, an essence which is not “always and everywhere,” which does not cease constantly to spring up anew with the whole content of the particular which it encloses in it. This essence that encloses in itself all particularity, but is itself universal and recognizes itself at every moment as a whole is existence. In contrast to being, existence means the universal, full of the particular and not always and everywhere, but—affected by the contagion of the particular—must perpetually become new to preserve itself. In contrast to the world as solid figure from which being-there arises and which it denies every moment in its constant need for renewal, is needy, in need not only of the renewal in its existence, but as the whole of existence itself still in need of—being. For being, absolute and universal being, is what existence is lacking and this is what it calls for to acquire a lasting existence and a truth in its universality that overflows with all the phenomena of the moment. Its own being, which it has behind it or which it had before crossing over to this Creation, cannot guarantee this to it, for that being has remained behind it in the unessential appearance of the primordial world. It is a being “outside” of it, but present in the circuit of reality, which must undergo its multiple ramifications, although it itself is not ramified. It is under the wing of such a being, which could confer upon it consistency and truth, that its created condition takes refuge.

So the difficulty will be solved here which we found in the very ramified system of logical forms that has poured into the metalogical world. Beyond that manifold being of the logos, we were seeking “somewhere” a simple being of truth; we had not succeeded in discovering with any certainty, in the metalogical world or anywhere else, such a “somewhere.” The neediness of the creature shows us, to speak freely, the direction to take to find this “simple word of truth” on which rests the manifold existence of the logos and of the reality that pours into it. Yet let us stay first of all with the creature itself.

It possesses its neediness as existence altogether, and not as the universal existence of the particular. As such, existence demands in its perpetual momentary nature perpetually renewed being. And as such, it is also seized by the power of the Creator. In the world, God’s Providence—for this is what we are talking about—directly applies only to the universal, to the “concepts,” the “species,” and to things solely “each after its own kind,” and

to the particular consequently only through the mediation of its universal and, ultimately, through the mediation of universal existence in general. By thus objecting to “particular providence” over things of the world, as opposed to man, we are in the company of Maimonides. To what extent God’s sovereignty immediately touches things as also individual ones, however, we shall see only later. But for the Creator, things are only there in the universal connection of the whole of existence. It is only by this that he touches his Creation again, “each after its own kind.” That this universal is not, however, universal in essence, but a universal that momentarily struggles forth in the No, is shown in the fact that this divine understanding of being does not happen in the Creation that took place once and for all, but momentarily; it is, of course, universal providence, but one that is renewed in every tiniest particular moment, for all existence of the sort that God “renews from day to day the work of the beginning.” This providence renewed every morning is thus what is really meant in the idea of the creature.

ONCE again, Islam furnishes proof of this example. Here again, it introduces the concept of the primordial world, in this case that of being, into the whole of the concept of Revelation, and without undergoing the inner reversal of its direction. Islam equates, without further ado, the being, as it contributed to the configuring of the world, this many-branched but essentially calm being of the worldly logos, to the being of the creaturely world. So its being is not existence, not universal being and yet only momentary and hence, as a whole, is in need of daily renewal; but, in essential affirmation, the world exhibits its being outwardly and places it, as the world’s created nature, at God’s feet. And now Allah has the choice as to how he wants his providence to rule; he can have it expanded once and for all to the whole of the world and to every singular thing only because it is somehow enclosed and included in this whole. This is the idea of *Kismet*, according to our customary representations. But the other possibility is even more remarkable, for it comes closer to the real concept of providence as we have just developed it, and precisely for this reason it is typically distinguished from it. Of course, Allah can also want to directly seize the singular thing, since it is after all included in the universal; for, as we recall, the universal such as it entered the configured world is not merely

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universal, but “concept,” a universal of the particular, a principle of the universal, which governs all the particulars. But in contrast to the preceding situation, where it was momentary, the particular can only cease to be so essentially in this universal that is essential. An essential particular, that is a particular which is as it were a universal in miniature, a particular which, although particular, is nevertheless “always and everywhere” as far as it itself is concerned. But what does this mean? It means that only a creative liberation, thus only “affirmation” can raise it up, and not the regeneration that negates itself. So Allah is required at every moment to create every singular thing, exactly as if it were itself the universal. So providence now consists in an infinite multiplicity of splintered creative acts which, unconnected among themselves, each have the span of an entire Creation.

Such was the doctrine of the orthodox philosophy that prevailed in Islam. At every moment, the full impact of God’s creative power falls upon the singular thing. It is not “renewed” at every moment, but rather at every moment is “created” from A to Z. It cannot protect itself from this frightful providence of Allah that is infinitely splintered. The idea of the “renewal” of the world safeguarded for the individual his relationship with the one Creation and consequently with the unity of existence, precisely because this idea recaptures the singular only in the whole and bases providence on Creation; but the conception of providence in Islam destroys any possibility for such a connection; in the first case, providence, as event of renewal for the act of Creation, fulfills that which is already inaugurated in Creation; in the second case, it is an intervention of an essential nature, at every moment, in Creation, despite its momentary aspect, and it represents a permanent competition between the creative acts and the unity of the Creation; it is basically wizardry, aimed by God the ruler of the world at God the Creator, and not a sign made by God the ruler of the world for God the Creator. In spite of the idea of the unity of God, posited vehemently and proudly, Islam slips into a monistic paganism, if you will allow this term; at every moment God himself competes with God himself, as if one were in the gaily-colored heaven of the gods of polytheism amidst their conflicts.

To summarize then: Islam asserts “particular providence” in immediate connection with the creatureliness of the world. The true faith, on the other hand, asserts only universal providence

in connection with creatureliness, and it directs the idea of “particular providence” to the detour of Revelation, which ends moreover by returning again to the created condition since it leads to Redemption. Above all, man, and God’s relationship to man are thus removed from the domain of Creation already by the very concept of Creation, whereas in Islam this relationship has apparently totally vanished in the concept of Creation. Here again, the real concept of Creation points to its fulfillment in the miracle of Revelation. It is true that man appears as creature, and it is as creature that he attains his particular existence through the providence which applies to all existence in general; but this relationship that he has as creature with God is only “prediction.” Man created by God is the portent of man as child of God. The fulfillment is more than the preparation, the sign exceeds the portent—the child exceeds the creature. But let us not get ahead of ourselves here. We have seen the poles of the act of Creation, God and the world—in their active effect and passive effect on each other: God calling the world into existence in the wisdom of his creative power, the world which through its existence is revealed in its created dimension facing divine providence; let us now turn to the result, Creation itself.

**T**HE symbolic language of mathematics we used above to explain the becoming of the elements fails here. Already the reversals cannot be represented in the framework of equations, because the meaning of the inversions only becomes clear through the radiation outwards of that which previously had been fused together. In this effulgence outwards, the portent of the singular letters would have to be changed regularly, but for their joining up, this would end in impossibilities; yet, what emerges above all from the completed elementary figures are not the pure forms of the Yes and No that sprang from the nothing and alone are represented through symbols, but the forms that have already reversed their roles by going from the No to the Yes, and have already experienced their mutual influence on each other. The fact that such an influence still exists, or in other words, that the particular is already no longer simply the particular, but the singular as representative of its genus, is what the algebraic symbols are now totally incapable of representing. It would be different if, instead of algebraic symbols, we could use geometric ones: thanks to the latter, we would be in a position to represent

**GRAMMAR OF  
THE LOGOS  
(THE  
LANGUAGE OF  
COGNITION)**

**LIMITS OF  
MATHEMATICS**

the reversal along with its alteration of portents, however many the reciprocal influences of the points in space—by calculating likewise the distances between these points through which the various concepts are symbolized. But we must refrain from using these symbols in the essential Part to come; we shall introduce them only later. This has to do with the character of geometry; it rests, of course, on the presuppositions of algebra, and for its part, by appearing as fulfillment of what is previously signified in algebra, it becomes, like analytic geometry, a mathematics of concrete nature; but here, the order of cognition does not correspond to this order of the concrete: on the contrary, subjectively, for its apprehension, geometry presupposes not only the concept of equality and inequality of algebra, but also the knowledge of the natural figure, as opposed to the order which is valid in the concrete; although it establishes the objectivity of figures of nature, geometry is subjectively possible only as an abstraction of them. So we would have to explain in advance the finite figure of the symbol if we wanted at this point to use its growth to illustrate its successive steps. And that would distract the reader instead of capturing his attention. Moreover, it seems that this difficulty also exists in the presentation by this language; subjectively, the “path” would have to be presented to readers of this book who come to it not merely with knowledge of the “elements,” but already with an intuition of the “figure.” Actually, we can also easily presuppose the presence of their intuition, as will be seen with the presentation of the “figure.”

But it is not only for these reasons of presentation that it is tempting here not to work with mathematical symbols; there is a deeper reason. We could give the meaning that we gave to mathematics in the presentation of the elements and of their birth from out of the dark abysses of the nothing, because in accordance with its essence the mathematical has its place here. Mathematics, these mute signs of life, prefigure for the learned this life in its entirety; mathematics is the language which, in the strictest sense, is the language of this world before the world. Accordingly, within mathematics, in its most essential part, one could say in its most specific part, in the most mathematical, that is to say, in that which bears directly on the basic concepts of all mathematics, the equal and the unequal, namely algebra, has its place here. It is the place that belongs essentially to mathematics in general; so, it is that which assumes, within mathematics, its

most essential discipline. It has to share this role of language of the mute primordial world with art, which is the language of the expressible and which presents to it the basic concepts, the essence. But art represents subjective language here, the “saying” as it were, of this mute world; as its necessary setting down in writing already shows; mathematics is the objective language, the “sense” of that silence. This task of presenting the sense, this role of the organon of providing symbols is therefore taken over by another bearer in the world, which externalizes and reveals itself. Instead of a science of mute signs, there has to come a science of living sounds; instead of a mathematical science, there has to appear the instruction of linguistic forms, grammar.

The mute, original words, only escorted by thought but made visible through algebraic symbols, created as its undertone the resounding color of the bass for three voices in our world symphony; audible words must directly spring from them, linguistic root words so to speak: as definite words, still in close contact with the original words, they are yet capable of producing the entire body of rules which includes the realm of real language. For, just like the categories of logic, the categories of grammar possess the characteristic of not conforming to genealogical presentation; presentations of this kind are possible only after the entry into force of those categories; wherever we may wish to begin, they are themselves already entirely presupposed: the notion of noun, for instance, already presupposes the notions of case, number, and even person, and finally, the notions of subject and of object; but, in their turn, they are explained only by being based on the notion of the noun. So a real order is necessary, not an immanent order, but an order that is brought to grammar, and in some degree to language in general, from outside, that is to say from the role that language plays in relation to reality; an order capable of integrating in it the multiplicity of linguistic forms, through successive synoptic tables drawn up by means of the root words. Instead of the genealogical form, the form of a table alone would be suitable for this presentation. The root words generate subdivisions, which intersect among themselves and so no longer align with the image of the genealogical tree; accordingly, each has to be considered for itself, in direct relationship with the root word; and only the form of the table can offer such a presentation.

**LAW OF  
GRAMMAR**

**ROOT WORD** It is requisite that these root words appear in a form that justifies only one unequivocal use in the sentence; for it is not words that constitute language, but the sentence; therefore the root words must assemble through an unequivocal necessity in order to form a sentence, which would then have to be designated as genealogical-sentence. The word “dog,” for example, would certainly not be a root word in our sense, for it can designate both the actively howling dog and the passively beaten dog, dog as subject and dog as object. We are seeking here, to begin with, the root word which leads from the primordial, inaudible Yes to the audible reality of language; from the primordial Yes, to begin with, for here we find ourselves in the domain of Creation, characterized by a movement of God toward the world, by the form of divine activity and not by worldly passivity, thus by the Yes.

Affirmation gives infinity a free run to a so. It is not a noun that concretizes this free so, for the noun itself needs the determination of its how, without which it is a “thing in itself” without any configuration. The so aims to answer the question of the—how. But the how calls for an adjective, and an adjective in the grammatical form where it is exclusively adjective, exclusively assertion and nothing else; the word “raised” can occur in the locution “a building” as well as in the locution “that which is raised must be lowered”; “raised” will always only be able to have the adjectival form; so the form of the predicate is the specific configuration of the adjective, and, as we already sketched out in the first section, it is the linguistic form which belongs to the original Yes. But which specific word will assume, in this form of the predicate adjective, the transition to the audible universe from the original word, as long as it is a root word? Obviously all words are excluded that are related to concrete qualities. For concrete attributes can be affirmed only by supposing at the same time an infinite negation, hence implying the And of the so and not otherwise. It is different for the attributes that express a valuation. Whereas, in order to affirm yellow, not only blue has to be negated, but all the colors of the rainbow, all the rich diversity of perceived colors and the infinity of colors ever to be perceived: rather, for an attribute that has a valuation, for the adjective “beautiful,” for instance, it would have to be its direct opposite, but in its turn, this opposite would only be defined through negation, that is to say through the beautiful—a circle, then, which we break by observing that the value judgment takes place; it is, of

course, quite simply a matter only of the positive value judgment (the negative judgment is in reality only negation of the positive judgment, and the term “value judgment” itself moreover only designates in itself the positive judgment); the positive value judgment is nothing other than the primordial Yes become audible. As is shown in other respects by the usage of many languages that say “Fine!” or “Good!” in order to say “Yes.”

Let us go on now from the root word to the schematization of the linguistic forms. From the root word we arrive immediately at the linguistic form to which it belongs, the adjective; for the adjective posits essentially and above all a so. Unlike the noun and verb, the word of “attribute” is the expression designated for the free being-so. It quite simply seizes the so without considering a possible bearer of the relationships into which it enters, or of the origins to which it refers. Just like the eye of the artist is nourished by the blue of the sky, by the green of the meadow, without, to begin with, being much interested in either the sky or the meadow. The world is only attribute; it is so from the beginning.

The attribute is simple attribute. It is not compared. Every attribute is as it is. Comparison, amplification, absolutization—comparative and superlative then—are not produced directly from the singular affirmed attribute, but they presuppose that the attribute became attribute of a thing. In themselves, things are multiple; they are compared, and with them, their attributes are then compared. For itself, the attribute is singular, incomparable, simple affirmation—“a positive.”

But the thing comes and joins it, the bearer of the attributes. As such, it is pure abstraction in relation to the reality of the attributes. On the way from this reality to that abstraction there is the indicator to show the way. So the pronoun is much more pre-noun than pronoun; it does not designate the already known thing, but the thing as long as it is neither known nor named, as long as it is perceived only with its attributes. The “this” merely indicates the thing, and in this indicating, it expresses that it must seek a “something” here. In the “here” which is hidden in the “this” is therefore the space that is fixed as the universal condition under which it must seek the thing, defined till now only as a “something.” It must be sought, for it has not yet been found. “What” it is remains problematic. Only the indefinite article gives an answer to this “what”: it is a representative of this

ATTRIBUTE

THINGLINESS

or that genus; and only the definite article seals all this great process and shows that it has been accomplished: “the” thing is known. But in the definite article—or whatever the expression of the determination might be, the thing is directly recaptured, as its fusion with the noun shows, in the immediate neighborhood where it always stands; the thing is henceforth known as this singular thing.

**SINGULARITY** Really as this singular thing? Was it not known as a representative of a genus and as a dark abstraction in relation to the reality of the attributes? How little it is in itself individual we shall see clearly if we just think for a moment of the proper name. It is not individual. To become so, in spite of its prediction through the genus, a very suspect prediction which we had observed in its source, it must legitimate itself through its belonging to a multiplicity. Only multiplicity gives to each of its members the right to feel that they are individuals, singularities; they are not so in themselves, like the singular individual designated by the proper name, but they are so in relation to the multiplicity.

**OBJECTIVITY** The singular thing, fixed by the definite article, can finally, therefore, be easily designated as object. It now “stands” on its own feet “facing” a possible Creator; it is a definite, affirmed object in the infinite space of cognition or Creation. The fact that as “object” it comes to rest becomes clear too from the fact that it receives as such, as “object,” its place in the sentence. Nothing goes out from it, for this to happen it would have to negate itself, and it would not therefore be an object at rest, freely there in its character of affirmation. It is only as object that it travels through the “cases”; as nominative in a passive sentence, it is only a camouflaged accusative or, in any case and more accurately: a prediction of the subject still veiled in the form of the object. In the genitive, the possessive form, there flows together a double current that came from the nominative and the accusative; after the confluence, they assume, in the dative, their own name and their own direction. But the dative, the form of belonging, of offering, of thanking, of both surrendering and making an effort, goes beyond the mere object and the mere point of departure; in the dative, subject and object meet.

**REALITY** Now that the world, which at first seemed to be pure attribute, a chaos of attributes, has filled up with things and has become object, we shall go back to the beginning, to the attribute. Until

now, we had developed the affirmation it contains only in the direction of its how. But the Yes conceals not only the so; it already contains the that. In the “genealogical” Yes, for instance “Good!”, there is not only a how, but also a whether; “Good!” means: “it is good.” The attribute “red” implies the sentence: “Red exists.” The copula “to be” resides in every attribute that is affirmed; and it also allows us to go beyond the fixed equivalence up till now between object and thing. For things are in motion; the movement itself, and consequently with it its presupposition projecting beyond things, time, and also the circumstances and forms where the movement takes place—all this overlaps in the copula “to be” with the only attribute originally affirmed. The overlapping takes place, in this case, in the form that governs the relationship between adjective and verb, that is, the relationship between thing and event; in the late stages of the evolution of languages, in our case, for instance, throughout the passive, this form quite simply pushes the verb aside: it is the participle. The activity is then conceived as a quality, and it is only the copula, the general designation as being, which fixes its relationship to time, to specific things and to reality in general. These fixities that are put on the copula of course presuppose the already fully developed verb; so they only appear at a late stage, as simplifications. The fact that they are generally possible underlines the close connection that joins the verb also to the root word, that is to say, to the adjective.

For the verb, the simple affirmation, not of course its that but **PROCESS** its what takes place in a different grammatical form, the infinitive. This form requires a really original possibility of according with movement. Instead of saying: “The stork swallowed the frog,” many languages say: “There was swallowing on the part of the stork in relation to the frog.” The verb, therefore, contains the form of the process, as we find, for instance, in “It is raining”—the Greeks said, “Zeus is raining”—“Dreams were tossing in me” beside the active form “I was dreaming”; it is the form where the movement is inscribed in its simple factuality: it is fixed only in its specific presupposition, the temporal relationship, but still without regard for its particular insertion among the things of the world. In the “process,” the movement is still itself a being, and so to speak a thing among things.

This thingliness must also be safeguarded within the verb, when **RELATIONSHIP** the singular movement is brought into the serene relationship of

parallelism with the whole of becoming; this relationship creates for it the indicative, as opposed to the converging or diverging lines of the imperative, conjunctive, optative, with regard to the other orientations of becoming.

**THIRD  
PERSON**

Even when it ceases to be pure process beside existing objects and becomes, as action, movement among things, the movement will assume by itself the form of the third person. The passage through the pronoun establishes the thingliness of things which are, of course, due to this passage, straight off in the third person. And, owing to its passage through the form of the event, and as well through its relationship to the participle, the verb likewise tends, already by itself, toward the third person: it is its most “objective” person; for the participle has already traveled part of the way from adjective to thing, that is to say the step which leads to the indefinite article.

**COMPLETED  
FORM**

Independently of its position in the sentence, the singular noun reaches the height of its objectivity at the point where, despite its relationship to the genus, it is fixed by the definite article to one singular point in space—for its plurality is added only in this domain—likewise for the verb, when its relationship to time is fixed. But in this case, fixing its relationship to time in general is insufficient; this fixedness is already regulated when the indicative comes into play; here there has occurred that which corresponds to the fixedness in a spatial point by the definite article, for the member of a multiplicity. But because of the qualitative difference of its respective “dimensions,” which space does not show, the tense demands to be fixed still otherwise. Among the tenses, there must be one that occurs as specifically objective. Objective, with the immobility of a thing, “eternally silent” “the past extends.” The form of the past tense completes the objectivity of the becoming just as the thingliness defined by the article completes that of being. Within the past tense of even the active form, in spite of the specific verbal dress it wears that is absolutely its own—the adjectival root word of affirmation still shines through. “Good!”: this is the “royal reward” which can be claimed only once the work is completed.

**LOGIC OF  
CREATION  
BEING AND  
BEING  
CREATED**

**F**INALLY, that with which we started comes to the light of day: the concept of Creation, the idea of being in the beginning, which implies the representation of being created “in the beginning.” What we learn here is that the world is there

before everything. Simply there. This being of the world is its being-already-there—"Why are you working on the world? It is already made." Where we had recognized the figure where the world reveals itself as creature, we now see the characteristic of Creation in general when we understand existence as being-there, already-being-there, no longer as a simple universal being, but as being which gathers all the singular in itself. For the creature is only one pole in the thought of Creation. The world must have the character of creature as God must have a power to create, so that the Creation can result as the real process between the two. In this new sense of the concept of being-there, the existence of the world and the power of God converge: both are "already there"; because of its condition of being created and its ability to be endlessly recreated, the world is already made; from the moment of his eternal power to create, God has already created it, and it is only for this reason that it is "there," and that it is renewed every morning.

That is why all concepts that attempt to embrace reality universally try to adopt the form of the past. So, too, the concept of "basics" and concept of "basic," the concept of "cause," of "origin," of "presupposition," of "a priori": each time, the world is projected into the past in order to be knowable. Even the idea of natural law is explicitly thought of as position, as a pos-ited thing, a statute; it is not to the unstable present that the occurrence of events are reduced, but everything, including the present, the moment of movement, must be brought back to the form of rest, and hence to the past: it happens this way in differential calculus. Even the future seems totally inappropriate, "unfruitful," for knowing the real. Bacon's words to which we have just alluded recall the famous discredit cast on the final cause to which "nothing is born, like a virgin consecrated to God": but in these words, the image is already shining through which will make possible a scientific conception of the created world, when the idea of Creation is avoided and yet it is the problem it raises, a problem which really is resolved owing to the relationship of Creation to a larger context. We have in mind the image that opens the idealist book of images of the world, generation.

For, the metalogical image of the world, in itself dissatisfied despite its plastic enclosure, requires a complement. About the logos of the metalogical world, established everywhere in the world and hence only too at home in the world, we well knew

**THE  
SCIENTIFIC  
IMAGE OF  
THE WORLD**

**THE  
CREATED  
WORLD**

that it needed one thing only, a “simple” thing beyond itself, indeed beyond the world, in order to be able really to claim to be logos: we had discovered that the same thing was also fully valid for the existence of the creature, born of that logos: in its universality, that existence was also a whole, certainly, but not a unity. But, this time, the “beyond” where we would have to seek the unity had not been an “anywhere” for us: on the contrary, it was pointed out to us in a clear direction; that sense of the world become too “sensible” had to have its foundation and its origin in a supra-sensible; as “existence” it opened itself up to the influence of such a supra-sensible foundation; the idea of Creation reconciled it to this foundation, to the degree that the form of causality was henceforth imprinted upon existence, and that existence became the already-being-there. Precisely this, such a temporalization and, more especially, the fact that it bears the distinctive feature of the past was what was still completely missing for the sense of the world in the framework of the metalogical world: so only an “anywhere” could be invoked there as regards its unity—the unity of the logos of the world; and that totally closed world itself never referred to the place “anywhere” clearly and recognizably.

Then the existence of the creature pointed out the direction, the being-there of Creation reached the point we were seeking. This point guarantees the truth of the world in its concrete reality while preserving the validity of the elementary image, the metalogical image of the world. The world is neither a shadow, nor a dream, nor a painting; its being is being-there, real being-there—created creation. The world is totally concrete, and all action in it, all “making,” from the moment that it is in it, is supervening event. The process, at least, is the foundation of reality, a foundation that founds also the action. So the event that happens in it has itself the character of a thing, it yields to the fundamental concept under which the concrete reality of the world in general is carried out, that is to say, under the thingliness. The world is made of things; in spite of the unity of its concrete reality, it does not constitute a single object but a multiplicity of objects, precisely things. The thing does not possess stability as long as it is there quite alone. It is conscious of its singularity, of its individuality, only in the multiplicity of things. The thing can be shown only in connection with other things; it is determined by its spatial relationship with other things, within such a con-

nection. Furthermore, as specific thing, it has no essence of its own, it does not exist in itself, it exists only in its relationships. The essence it has is not within it, but in the relationship it keeps according to its genus; it is behind its determination, and not in it that it must seek its essentiality, its universality. Yet, before becoming “a representative,” a delegate as it were, of its genus, it must in some manner be a thing, “anything,” something that can at least be pointed out. Its general condition is to be, at the least, spatial, that is to say, referring to space. To the unity of the concrete reality, this unity that is searched for in the world does not correspond to any concrete object besides this one alone that is not an object: space.

But the world is not originally space; space is not the first-fruit of Creation. Before space comes to be there as the condition of all determination given in the here, the determination of the here itself must be there; the here is preceded by the that; it is only from the that and the here that the determination appears as “this here.” So, condition of the here, the that which acts as indicator therefore precedes even space; quite originally, the world is the plenitude of the that; in its constantly brimming-over newness, this plenitude is expressed only through the pure formless adjective, like “blue” or “cold.” This plenitude, this chaos, is the first fruit of Creation, the endless renewal of its existence, only after—this existence has itself been called into existence, after the world has been created. Existence, in its universality and its all-inclusive nature as form, remains the immediately created foundation, the “beginning” from where the constantly new births of the plenitude spring up. The world can be plenitude because it is there; existence is itself the plenitude, it is its mode of appearance, the first of all statements about being-there. The root word is still before the plenitude of adjectives; chaos is in Creation, not before it; the beginning is—in the beginning.

This metalogical image of the world that loses its last obscurities due to the idea of Creation is certainly not for this reason a “proof” for this idea. Creation renders the world totally transparent without for that reason removing its reality; for, if it were a matter of a sort of “dream,” the world would certainly also be transparent, but this at the price of its reality, of its sense, of the natural habitat of the sense which it contains in itself, a

***IDEALISTIC  
LOGIC***

sense that would only belong to dreamers. But Creation itself is not demonstrated by the world. Already from the fact alone that God is more than a mere creator. If one wanted to draw the conclusion of God's creative action from this image of the world to which we are referring and from the demand for a Creator concealed in it—one would readily object to such a conclusion by asking: but who then is God? The Creator himself must be demonstrated, that is to say, pointed out in his totality, in order to answer this question. The Creator is also the Revealer. Creation is the prediction that is confirmed only through the miraculous sign of Revelation. It is not possible to believe in Creation because it provides a coherent explanation of the riddle of the world. He who has not yet been reached by the voice of Revelation has no right to accept the idea of Creation, as if it were a matter of a scientific hypothesis. Once the discussion was opened about the problematic character of the metalogical image of the uncreated world owing to the revealed idea of Creation, it was only right that thinking should seek a substitute for the idea of Creation, which it was not entitled to appropriate. We have already said that the doctrine of emanation of late antiquity was to be interpreted as an attempt in this direction; but as we have already shown, this effort only came to its end in idealist philosophy.

**GENERATION** Its basic concept with which it seeks both to bypass and to replace the idea of Creation is that of generation. Generation must play the same role as Creation; to the plastic, objective world, such as antiquity envisaged it, it must give that which it lacks, the solid point out of which its multiplicity comes together and is arranged into a unity. It is only owing to this process that the world could be drawn, on the inside, out of the uncertainty of the perhaps, and acquire on the outside the stability of an authentic certified reality. In this process, it must preserve its elementary character, precisely its "picturesque nature," its plastic enclosedness. The idea of Creation fulfils this condition for it sees the solid point outside the boundaries of the world and it refuses to confound the Creator with the world: in fact, between it and the world, it establishes no relationship at all, except that the Creator created and that the world, as creature, aspires after being created. There remains the question of knowing at which point the notion of generation does justice to this demand.

The idea of generation also seeks the solid point, the begetter, outside the world which is to be generated. But between the point of unity and that which is to be united, it thinks it must establish a connection that reason must and—can conceive. In some regard, there must be something like a cause and effect. There does not have to be equality between the two, but a possibility for comparison—proportionality. Between an apple and a pear there is neither equivalence nor proportionality; between an apple and three apples, there is no longer an equation, but there is a proportion. Generator and generation are necessarily equal in one relation. This is precisely why the image of generation compels recognition. The Creator can say to the creatures: “To whom could you compare me, who would be like me?” On the other hand, begetter and begotten are not the same person, of course, but they are of the same species—they can be compared. But where then, outside the world, is there such a “point” which could assume, with regard to the world, the role of generator? The shortest way was naturally the recourse to God. Between God and the world, it seemed that there could exist the relationship of both generation and Creation. And in conformity with his concept of conditionality, God seemed perfectly suited to represent the origin and the condition of the existence of the world. For, as unconditioned condition, as origin without origin, as pure A equal only to itself—to use mathematical symbols again, the resumption of which will soon be explained—as  $A=A$ , then, it was necessary that he be conceived as both generator and Creator.

If it turned out, then, that he is begetter, this reality would have to be expressed first by a change of the mathematical symbol of the world; in order to be rationally comparable with its origin the world must not be conceived as  $B=A$ , but as  $A=B$ —a reversal foreign to the idea of Creation, which, on the contrary, accepted the world in its elementary figure: it is only in the emergence of its content from out of the calm of the completion in order to enter into the movement of the becoming that it authorized a reversal, a reversal not of the whole, but of the pieces; for it is only over a world which is “A” and which is only defined as B that this rational and conceptual influence of a God who is “A” is possible; there can be a “proportion” only between  $A (=A)$  and  $A (=B)$ , that is to say between two different A’s, but not between  $A (=A)$  and  $B (=A)$ , that is to say between an A and a B.

EMANATION

Only a world that is A (=B) can have sprung up, can be “emanated” from a God who is A (=A). And emanation, the flow of the world from out of God and into the world, the flow that is endlessly begun anew from out of that which represents at every moment the last inflow, this is the representation which in universal history strove above all to rival the idea of Creation in Revelation. For each new emanation, that from which it emanates constitutes an analogy of the divine origin of the whole, and, in its turn, this represents in its own eyes an analogy of the original springing-up of the world; for each emanation, its origin is symbolized in “A (=A)”, and for itself, it is “A (=B)”; for each, its being-there in general plays exactly the same role with regard to the created world as that which first and actually appeared; but the plenitude of the particular within it is the assertion, the universality that is the presupposition in which that existence is inserted through its creation—for the assertion must always be thought of “before” the object of the assertion: the path of emanation is a “sloping path”; to use the customary image, it is the shining of a light into the dark, a darkness which must therefore be presupposed everywhere, from the first origin of the springing up, and which is therefore posited beforehand. The doctrine of emanation cannot do without the idea of a primordial chaos, of the original night, older than the light, of “the darkness that in the beginning was everything.”

But beyond this, the idea of emanation does not satisfy the demand of reason that invoked it. By a too immediate offensive against the idea of Creation, rightly indigestible for it, it had replaced the Creator God with the begetter God, without asking itself whether pure reason, in whose service it was acting, could be in agreement with occupying the place of the begetter. For, was not God himself the object of knowledge? How could one reasonably see him as origin and remove him from knowledge in this manner? No, God, too, had to be known and, consequently, cease to be origin and thus become content for the principle of all that is known. Instead of God there had to appear a different origin of the world, including maybe possibly God himself. But since the appearance of Revelation in the notion of Creation, it could no longer be ignored that the world itself is not its own origin, but that just for its enclosure upon itself, it demands an origin outside itself; so at most the Self can still be envisaged as taking the place of that origin. But, of course, it is no longer the

Self such as we had known it in its objective “factuality,” although blind, as “ $B=B$ ,” but as a Self which likewise remains engulfed in itself, and yet is purely subjective; and as pure subject, it can assume the role of the origin of knowledge in the face of all objectivity: it is the “I” of idealism.

The “I,” the “subject,” the “transcendental apperception,” the “spirit,” the “idea”—these are all names that the Self assumes, the only element still there, outside of the world and God, once it has decided to take the place of the begetter “ $A=A$ .” It, too, can only solve its problem if the world accommodates it by entering into the form of an equation; so it, too, demands of the world the reversal from  $B=A$  to  $A=B$ . It can only “beget” this world. It begets it from out of itself: the world is its like, subject like itself: “A”; but it begets it as not-I; the subjectivity of things draws from the particularity B in order to fill up with objectivity. As concepts, things have the traits of their begetter, the I; but as things they are something for themselves, having emerged from the begetting I—they are things. Each thing maintains the same relationship with its concept as does the world of things in general with the “I”: it is the “I” that begets its thing. Insofar as they still have a “content,” the concepts in their turn are themselves things, and as such, they have a concept in their turn, and so on. So a single flow of generation goes from the I through the whole of the world of things; they all arrange themselves in a series, a “descending path,” from the pure I to the not-I, from the I-in-itself to the thing-in-itself. This is the result of the reversal of the world brought about, too, by idealism, exactly as in the doctrine of emanation; certainly, the conceptuality of the world is its universal being-there, which appeared first, but this universal being-there fills up with the particular until it becomes thingliness. So, the plenitude of the particular has again become the non-begotten, the womb where being-there is conceived. For idealism, too, chaos is the presupposition of generation, as is suggested by the presupposition of such a passive “given” owing to the image of “generation” as opposed to “springing up” in the doctrine of emanation. None of the great idealistic systems could avoid this concept. “Thing in itself,” “diversity of sensibility,” “given,” “resistance,” “evil infinity”: always, chaos appears before Creation, the chaos without which the absolute subject would have no reason to “come out” of itself and its absoluteness.

THE “I” AND  
THE “THING”

THE LOGIC  
OF CREATION  
AGAINST  
THE LOGIC  
OF THE IDEA

Besides, we clearly see the importance of the concept of “Creation out of nothing,” of which we could not make proper use until now. It contains in itself the refusal of chaos. We see how, for every “rational” theory of the origin of the world, the affirmation of chaos is impossible to get around, whether it is a matter of generation or emanation: for these theories demand a concept of the world according to the symbol  $A=B$ , a concept of the world which posits the particular as assertion, and the universal as object of the assertion. In all cases, the proposition that asserts can be apprehended only if the assertion is known “for longer time” than its object; this is how the particular becomes the pre-supposition of the generation of universal existence. If we set this notion of the world over against ours, where the particular B signifies the object of the assertion, and the universal A, which is also in the Creator, signifies the assertion, we would see right away how the chaotic plenitude of the particular in Creation is the first created thing, and how the universal constitutes the “given” receptacles set out by the Creator: it is for them that the plenitude of the particular in Creation freely flows forth. Hence, in real confrontation of the notions of the world, the concept of “Creation out of nothing” would be perfectly in order.

But we shall not partake in this confrontation. We shall not develop Creation as the scientific concept of the world; already, an event that brings into relationship only two “elements” of the world without even evoking the third, how could we validate it as such? If we did, then of course the confrontation would be necessary. But in this case, we would not have had to contest that algebraic symbols are applicable to Creation, or to appeal to grammatical symbols. For us, the concept of Creation is located in a larger scientific context: as such, it affects only two elements of the world, and still, these two elements are not affected in their totality, but each of them only in a fragmentary fashion; so, while abandoning the symbolic language of mathematics to those “finished” elements of the pre-world, we had to construct the concept of Creation only from the elements that emerge from themselves and which separate in order to form the singular pieces. To speak less formally: we are developing the idea of Creation in the light of Revelation; the elements of the All before Revelation cannot come together such as to become Creation, but they must burst out of their closed state and open up

to one another; in this mutual opening, nevertheless, it happens that in a single concept as the concept of Creation is for itself, the content of the elements is absolutely incapable of assembling into a totality; in their emergence, the two elements still retain contents which can only effectively become active in other directions: for God, to reveal himself, and for the world, to take part in Redemption.

So, in the feeling it has of having to solve, as it were, the enigma of the world right here, “on the spot”—because outside of the world and knowledge, it cannot validate anything else—it is at a price that idealism must posit a reasonable relationship between the elements world and knowledge, between subject and object, and so it is obliged to hang on tightly to mathematical symbols; on the other hand, for our part, we can leave these symbols aside. We can easily consider the concept of Creation to be a beginning of knowledge without bringing everything to completion in it. We are placing it in the larger context of Revelation. It does not need to be captured in the rationality of mathematical symbols; it is beyond; the symbolism that elucidates its content was furnished for us by the construction of living language, grammar. And since science, as we understand it, has a broader content than the mere concept of Creation, Creation must not be placed beside the concept of generation, although the partisans of this latter concept do place it beside the concept of Creation, as they do previously with the concept of emanation. If we were practicing the “philosophy of religion,” if we were presenting religion according to philosophical criteria, then and only then would we have to remove Creation from its native soil, the land of Revelation, and construct it parallel to these philosophical ideas, and in that case, we would have to set the philosophical concept of chaos over against that of Creation out of nothing. For this concept of chaos was historically begun with the philosophy of religion, and not with the science we are elaborating here, not with theology.

**B**UT let's return here to the route idealism takes. For it is not theology that believes it can develop the All of knowledge by presenting the “origin”; for it, Creation is only beginning and promise, it is neither means nor end. But philosophy feels at home here and will not stop until it can imagine that it has “grasped” everything in this domain. We had followed idealism

*IDEALIST  
METAPHYSICS*

and its fundamental concept of generation on its way down from the I in itself to the thing in itself. The whole world of things, as objects of cognition, is stretched between these two poles. The concept of generation goes through it at all points. In the previous section, we showed how, for this reason, this world is distinguished at every moment from the metalogical world. Here we must only add that idealism tries accordingly to develop its own logic, independent of grammar, as opposed to us who keep the metalogical character of the world thanks to Creation. Certainly, in the detail, the image of the world that we offered in the symbol of grammar seemed to coincide with the idealist image of the world. All the effort in the last resort to reduce the non-objectivity (not to mention the subjectivity) of action upon the event, upon the thing, to the attribute insofar as it is pure objectivity itself, seems also true, does it not, of the image of the world presented by idealism? Grammatically, the latter is also under the governance of the past tense, of the third person, of the intransitive, of the two articles, the definite and the indefinite, of the pronoun, from the indefinite to the demonstrative by passing through the interrogative, and finally of the adjective. This appearance is perfectly natural. Both, the image of the metalogical world founded in Creation and the idealist image of the world founded upon generation, want to guarantee the objectivity of the world, and it is precisely objectivity that is described through this selection among the grammatical categories. The reason why idealism tries to elevate itself above language with its own logic that is hostile to language, must reside in the foundation, and not in that which is founded; this will show clearly in the original emergence of the first reality founded from the founding reality.

**THINKING  
VERSUS  
LANGUAGE**

Actually, we see a grammatical connection appearing here that idealism cannot accept. We founded the last founded reality, the symbol of the first created reality, the attribute, upon the root adjective, the “(it is) good,” which says yes. In place of this free affirmation, featured as it were effortlessly, without striking a blow, which simultaneously represents the first grammatical category, since it is already a matter of an adjective, so in the place of this adjectival Yes, idealism puts a pronominal “root word,” but which is not truly a root word, because it does not grammatically belong to the adjective, where even idealism recognizes the fundamental form of objectivity. Instead, the connection between

the I and the attributes is “purely logical”; both turn out to be presuppositions; both are there “before” generation, the I as well as the chaos of the given. But in this failure of language from the first moment, its naïve confidence in itself is paralyzed: with this, however, it knew itself as the never-failing instrument of the spirit in Creation; the idealist world is not created by the word, but by thinking. It is only in “pure thinking,” that is to say in thinking foreign to the natural soil of language, a thinking that thinks oppositions dialectically, that it can grasp the transition from the I to the attribute, a transition which idealism takes as a basis. And since this first transition is decisive for all later transitions, the distrust toward language and its apparent “harmony” with thinking remains a lasting legacy of idealism, and it always pushes further on the descending slope of its “pure” logic, foreign to language, recessed behind man.

The thing in itself is the other pole of the idealist world, a pole whose presence is already demanded explicitly by the concept of generation. One could characterize it by  $B=B$ , such that  $A=B$  would be enclosed between an  $A=A$  that begets and a  $B=B$  that gives birth. But idealism detests this return to a dark chaos of the particular where it would be founded, and it tries to get away from it as quickly as possible. The opportunity to do so is furnished by a detail we may find already evoked in  $B=B$ , a detail already known to us as symbol for the Self. On this point, idealism also noticed for a short while the incomparable character and absolute enclosure of the Self. The fact that the indissoluble foundation of the world and the mystery of the character have a “common dark root” is an intuition clearly stated by Kant, even if, in his idealism, he could not surmise its true meaning. The common character is designated by the symbol  $B=B$ . From here on in, idealism prepares to take the “way up,” at the end of which it will achieve for the first time its circular enclosure: it must indeed precede it as the last goal of its perfectly reasonable nature (for reason feels secure only in the return into itself): but idealism abandons as fast as possible this realm of intuitions and starts looking for the way back toward the real world, made up of a mixture of particular and universal.

From  $B=B$ , this way back leads therefore, to begin with, to “ $B=A$ ”; for it is this formula, and not “ $A=B$ ,” that can be rationally reached from  $B=B$ . Since “ $B=B$ ” means the Self,  $B=A$

**THE FLIGHT  
BEFORE THE  
THING**

**IDEALISTIC  
ETHOS**

means that the particular defines itself more precisely through a universal that overlaps it and, in this case, that the Self surrenders to a universal. In the notion of surrender we have the counterpart to the notion of generation. The latter occupies the path that goes from the universal to the particular, the way down, and the former occupies the path that goes from the particular to the universal, the way up. Both together, generation and surrender, close the idealist world to make it into a whole. The way up begins with that original surrender of the “maxim” of one’s own will—and how could  $B=B$  be anything else!—on the principle of a universal legislation—and how could  $B=A$  be anything else! This goes on and on; always, the last reached principle of “a universal legislation” is again immediately taken up in “the maxim of one’s own will,” and on this will, the force of the idealistic surrender has to be tested, while becoming in its turn the principle of a universal legislation. On this path of surrender to more and more elevated generalities, to more and more inclusive universalities of life, the universal turns out to be the presupposition, that which is posited in advance, exactly like the particular was posited beforehand in the generation. And, in both cases, it is against the initial tendency; in generation as well as in surrender this tendency was oriented toward “purity”; generation does not want to be bound to any foreign matter, to any surrender to a foreign law; generation and surrender want to give to themselves their own law; here and there, it is a matter of “rescuing freedom.”

**IDEALISTIC  
RELIGION**

But here and there, it is not rescued: in the one case, in generation, it disperses into the dark womb of the lowest matter, in the other case, surrender, it dies out in the dazzling brilliancy of the highest law. For it is there, in this sovereign universality of the law, this final form that, all things considered, the way up ends. Surrender always takes place only in order to find again at its goal that which “surrendered” in the surrender—for it is a matter of surrender being a “gain”—this surrender therefore always rediscovers the personality, in every universal; it discovers again and again that the  $A$  to which it surrendered itself is never anything other than the assertion about a  $B$ , and that it must see to it, in order to obtain a gain, that it renounces itself for a higher  $A$ . Moreover, the doctrine of emanation already knew this lighting up of the personality in the mystical enjoyment of divinization. But it is idealism that develops it by intercalating the entire world

to make of it a true counterpart of the cognizant subject, which descends to beget the world; it is only here that the ascending will of the subject gives birth, through ever renewed surrenders, to a construction of the world as the realm of the multiple ladders of personality. Every single rung means, for the one who surrenders, a parable and a most valuable substitution of the highest rung, just like every rung of the descent toward the pure object, in the moment of generation, means for the subject the full value of objectivity. The blissful height of surrender to the higher, the purer, the unknown, is signified in the expression “to be pious”: man feels he is a participant in this blissful height at every preceding member of the series, and not only when he stands before God, but already when he stands before “it”; it must be noted, too, that in the comparatives “higher” and “purer” the extension to the infinite of the series is indicated.

The goal of the series remains an “unknown,” as was already the case for the descending series. An unknown, that is to say something that is invisible at every single point of the series, a thing whose visibility is not even demanded from the fact that in each point, each singular member realizes in it a full substitution. It is the same moreover for the individual cognition: it does not need to worry about the ultimate objectivity, but only about the objectivity of the object which is right before it; likewise, the singular will need not worry about the highest personality, but only about the personality of the man or the community before which it finds itself at that exact moment. But philosophy ends by reaching this extreme point with regard to the concrete world and the personality. And just as in the thing in itself the inexhaustible plenitude of the cognizant I that begets things found its condition and hence its “up-to-here-and-not-beyond,” so, too, the surrender of the will-ing I, a surrender which always places its personality in the world, comes to its end in the highest personality. In “ $A=A$ ,” the will knows no return, here it renounces itself, just as cognition breaks to pieces on the  $B=B$  of the thing-in-itself, without any prospect of recovery.

Who is this “ $A=A$ ”? It is a personality, but a personality where the human will is no longer found any more than knowing is raised once it has arrived at the thing in itself. Obviously, it is a matter of the personality of God—and idealism did not shrink from this consequence. So idealism drew to its end what it had dared to undertake from the beginning of the game: to make of

**GOD AS  
OBJECT**

the I the source of cognition. For God has become object, absolute object, not of cognition, of course, but of the will. God as personality, even if this personality is absolute. For a personality is, strictly speaking, a contradiction. The formula for expressing the personality,  $B=A$ , characterizes it as one content of the world among others. If God is called absolute personality, this can only mean that he is the brightness before which all personality pales, but also, that it could well be that he is nothing other than the limit of all human and worldly personality. For example, to address the spoken word to him as he “appears” here, as absolute I, is inconceivable, and moreover, even idealism did not do it. The name that idealism invented for him is not “absolute I,” but absolute Spirit.” Not an I, then, but a He—no, less than a He: an It. The object remains object, even when it has become God. But having reached this point, idealism regularly discovers that which our symbolic language displayed before our eyes, and we have only picked up the result: God as Spirit is none other than the—subject of cognition, the “I”. And the ultimate sense of idealism now becomes clear: Reason is victorious, the end returns to the beginning, the supreme object of thinking is thinking itself; nothing is inaccessible to Reason; the non-rational is only its limit, and not a beyond.

**COLLAPSE** It is a triumph then along the entire front, but a triumph at what price! The great edifice of reality has collapsed; God and man have evaporated into the limit concept of a subject of knowledge; the world and man, for their part, have evaporated into the limit concept of simple object of this subject; and when originally idealism had set out to know the world, this world became the mere bridge between those limit concepts. In the metalogical universe, factuality was the character of the world, and idealism had rivaled this subject with the idea of Creation; however, this factuality was utterly ruined, and on this occasion, the factuality of God, which is foreign to idealism, and the factuality of the Self, which is indifferent to it, have been thrown directly into the universal whirlpool of collapse.

It is a chaos where no more than one solid point continues to exist, the thing in itself, pushed back by idealism to the outermost edge of objectivity by idealism, but not “elaborated” by it. It has the intuition of a common root for this thing in itself and for the human character, and with this intuition, for which it moreover denies its own essence for the sake of an instant-

neous intuition, idealism only gets to open the perspective of an All where the three elements—world human God—live undisturbed in one factuality. It itself is incapable of treading the soil of this land which it sees at the limits of its being-there. With its self-sufficiency that bypasses belief in God, it is forbidden to enter this land; with its self-sufficiency, it wanted, with the rod of its own thinking, to force the living water of Creation to spring up, instead of being content with having complete trust in the source of language, this source which God had promised to make spring forth from this rock. It is with a blind one-sidedness that idealism wanted to force everything into the scheme of Creation; for it wanted to play a trick on this concept, and it believed it could isolate it from the whole circuit of Revelation and leave it behind as isolated concept thanks to science—but this one-sidedness is the sin for which it was punished.

**A** REMARKABLE thing: by believing it could stand apart from the river of Revelation, idealism rejected language as organon, as we saw above, and following its own positions, we had to establish algebraic symbolism in its stead. Idealism lacks naïve trust in language. To lend its ear to this voice, to answer this voice that resounds in man apparently without reason, but all the more really, idealism was in no way disposed. It asked for reasons, justifications, and forecasts, everything that language could not offer it, and for its part it invented logic, which provided all this. It offered all this, but not that which language possessed in its own right: to be self-evident; it is, of course, deeply rooted in the original words in the subterranean foundations of being, but already in the root-words language shoots up to the light of life on earth, and in this light it opens its petals into a colorful multiplicity, a bouquet in the middle of life which grows everywhere; language is nourished by this life, and this life nourishes it, and yet it is distinct from all this life by the fact that it does not move freely and arbitrarily on the surface, but sinks roots down into the dark foundations, buried beneath life. But idealistic logic believes it must stay entirely in these dark, subterranean foundations; and it is in this way that, without knowing it, this logic prefers to breathe, within the lower world, the life of the upper world where it fears to grow, thus transforming the living into a realm of shadows.

At its peak, idealism thus fully surrenders to the capacity of its

**THEORY  
OF ART**

**THE  
IDEALIST AND  
LANGUAGE**

**IDEALIST  
AESTHETICS**

own power to conceive, that is to say to logic: yet, it itself necessarily had to feel how it had lost touch with the living existence which it had undertaken to found and to comprehend. Sunk in the shadow realm of logic, a realm situated beneath and before the world, it sought to keep open an access to the upper world. At the same moment where philosophy was chased out from the paradise of trust in language—once again, the sin consisted in trusting its own wisdom over the creative power of God which visibly surrounded it—so, at the same moment where it lost trust in language (a trust of which even its critical precursors in England had saved something), philosophy began to look for a substitute. In place of the garden of language created by God, where it had lived without distrust and the after-thoughts of logic, and which it had had to leave through its own sin, it set out in quest of a garden of men, a human paradise. It had to be a garden that man himself had cultivated, without being conscious that this is his work; for if it were so, he would not have been able to offer any substitute for the lost garden, cultivated by God himself. Like that lost garden, this garden had to be such that it surrounds man, without him knowing from where it comes; it had to be he who cultivated it, but it had to be such that he himself did not know it; it had to be his work, but unknown to him; it had to bear all the signs of a labor that has a finality to it and yet to have appeared without reason; it had to be a complete work, and yet grow like a plant. So it happened that idealism came to deify art at the very moment it rejected language.

Never had philosophy done that. It had certainly already seen the work of God in its living beauty, with Plato, Plotinus, Augustine and, less consciously, with many others; yet idealism from the start gave top rank not to living beauty in general, but to “fine arts.” For idealism, art was the visible real; in it, the shadows from the realm of Ideals can drink in life at the edge of their subterranean world: remembering their own life long since swallowed up from the time where the blood of reality circulated in them, these shadows thus assured themselves of a supplement of life. Idealism did not need to set up distrust against the work of art, for this was a conceived work; and yet it is there, unconsciousness of its becoming and not questioning its being, like a piece of nature: so idealism can invoke it and honor it as the Revelation of reality. For the reality of the All—with the exception of thinking—a reality of which it had only the intuition of

the “common root,” this it believed it perceived here in its visible form. It is in this way that for idealism art became the great justification of its way of proceeding, if assailed by doubts about the permissibility of its method, that of the pure “panlogical” generator, it sufficed it to gaze upon the work of art, a reality begotten by the mind and yet natural, in order to retrieve its good conscience. The work of art sank roots in the colorless night of the primordial world, a night of pure spirit, while making its flowers grow on the beautiful greening pasture of being-there. So art seemed like an ultimate point and at the same time confirmation of the method of thinking—an “organon” therefore—and a visible phenomenon of an “Absolute”: this step was in sight and already prepared in Kant, with his allusion to the “common root.” The trust that idealism denied the human word, where it did not want to see an answer to the word of God, this trust it accorded instead to a human work. Instead of having faith in the spoken word of the soul, in the revelation of man’s innerness, which embraces, bears, and completes all that man externalizes, it made the entire weight of its blind trust be carried on a single limb, torn from the whole of the body of humanity.

For art represents only a limb. A limb without which, of course, man would be only a mutilated man, while remaining man nevertheless. It is one limb among others. Man is more. The visible witness of his soul, that which could not be lacking without him ceasing to be man, is the spoken word, exclusively. Art, too, rests within the heart of the spoken word. For its part, it is only the language of the inexpressible, it is language as long as there is not yet language, it is the language of the primordial world. For the world before the miracle of Revelation, which is there, for us, as an historical expression of that primordial world, it is art and not the spoken word that is the true language. For the elements of the All that rise up from the dark grounds of the nothing, art is the visible illustration in the formation of their essence. But facing the reality of real language which makes its life spring up, its reality as work of art insofar as it is a “thing said,” not a language. If it were also a matter of language, this would be a language beside language, for it is possible for many languages to exist, but there is only one language. But, as a “thing said,” art is right inside all living reality, inseparable from it, necessary for its completion, a limb among its other limbs and

**ART AS  
LANGUAGE**

recognizable as such. Recognizable as such, but it cannot, as idealism would want, be integrated in its whole reality into the relationship of the world to its origin and be measured by this relationship. On the contrary, in the idea of Creation, we have access only to a part, only to the beginning of the work of art. Life is richer than the world and its becoming; likewise, in its singular configuration, language, like art as well, is too rich to be entirely knowable from the idea of Creation. Even when it is reflected in the living day of the work of art, the time of the world that is dependent on Creation is always only the—of course everlasting—beginning.

Only in one point does the independent linguistic value of language continue to play a role in the simply “said” reality of the work of art—the work of art had assumed this linguistic value in the mute primordial world. Real language presupposes the inner reversals of the elements elaborated in the silent primordial world, and the emergence of their singular pieces into the manifest world—and it is therefore entirely in a relationship of “identity” with Revelation, exactly like the relationship of “thinking” to “being” in the fundamental dogma of idealism; on the other hand, art comes directly from its essential elements such that they emerged in the twilight of the primordial world. The “mythical,” the “plastic,” the “tragic,” that is, the totality closed against the outside, which, in the same frame, throws being into relief against everything else, the connection of the inner form that holds together all the diversity of details in the work of art, the ground of man that confers upon the beautiful the power of language—these three foundational pillars are overhung by the arches which join two by two and lead from one to the other in order to construct the work of art. Upon the free emergence of the singular from out of a whole and as it were upon the elaboration of an aesthetically rich reality from out of a pre-aesthetic one that preceded it, there rests immediately the beginning of the day of the life accorded to the work of art, the creative series of the basic concepts, the first of which we are briefly going to examine.

**GENIUS** The Creation of the work of art happens due to the originator. Not that the originator creates the work of art; that would be opposed to the unconscious becoming of the work, expressed as early as Plato’s *Ion* and strongly emphasized, and rightly so, by idealism. But the breaking in of the work of art presupposes the

advent of its originator. The originator is not the Creator of the work, but his being-created, this is the creation which precedes the appearance of the work of art, just as on the other hand, the work of art achieves its own vitality only in the process raised up through the spectator. As little as does any other master, the originator does not fall ready-made from heaven; the genius is absolutely not innate, as all contemporary culture believes; but because it is based upon the Self and not solely on the personality, it assails man one fine day; child prodigies are not geniuses, and do not have a prospect of becoming one any more than any other man, whereas, on the other hand, a genius does not cease to be one once he has become one; even depravity and madness remain full of genius in the genius. For the aesthetic theory which has to do only with the personality and the Self, the becoming of the originator has ever since been presented such that a whole of pre-existing man, and as it were man prior to being a genius—precisely the personality, as we know—places outside itself the complex of the qualities of genius—that is to say the Self, as we know—and peels it out and makes it free to become the originator of the work.

In the originator himself, within the framework of “genius”—and as we shall have to explain in the subsequent Books, likewise in the work and in the spectator—it is the entire trajectory of life that is traversed. Genius is not much of anything if it is only genius; it has to grow and be completed by itself. The fact that he is a genius, that the capacity for being the originator of the work is woven into man, is itself only a beginning, the beginning of another beginning. Coming out of the enclosure of this possibility residing in him of being an originator, he must become a real creator—this is the first step—“poet” in the original sense of the word, “poet” in the sense that this word has assumed today as opposed to “artist,” for example the sense it assumed for Balzac in relation to Flaubert or for Lagerlöf in relation to Huch (although in truth no poet exists who would not also be an artist). The capacity to become an originator must free in him an inner diversity, a world of creatures, of sudden intuitions, of thoughts, a combination which is nevertheless gathered into a totality by the artist’s own inner style. All the thoughts, intuitions and creations of Beethoven, Goethe and Rembrandt, do they not, in the vast diversity of works, form a kind of “family”? Their “family” likeness links them together, without consider-

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ARTIST**

ation of the fact that externally they are not shaped to constitute the unity of the same work. The creative capacity of the genius is that innerly “he holds a profusion of figures.” It is the original ground of all his reality. He who is not a creator, he who is not struck by an inexhaustible quantity of ideas and does not hold these ideas together, despite of their inexhaustible quantity, in the bond of that “family resemblance,” will never be anything but an “frustrated” genius.

**THE WORD  
OF GOD**

**I**N order to extend this image of creation that the work of art offers us and to draw to its conclusion this first series of the basic concepts inherent in the aesthetic theory, we would have to anticipate and explain ahead of time concepts that will only become clear in the next Book. For, the aesthetic theory is totally systematic, according to the image of a genealogical tree—and suddenly, we see appearing once again the difference from the linguistic theory. Precisely from this, we clearly see that the work of art cannot be an organon, that contrary to language it is a “thing said.” All further elaboration of a particular concept must be able to take place according to the model of the genealogical tree—and art, like a singular part of man, is nothing other than such a concept. The linguistic theory can at most assume the form of a chart; and even this form only after the fact brings an order that does not correspond to the initial emergence of the categories. For this emergence takes place altogether originally, it is very nearly identical to the real process that these categories describe, that is to say, under the circumstances, at Creation. In the subsequent processes, the series of the categories will be different each time and will correspond to the form belonging to each singular process—it really co-responds—although every category has its sister within the other processes: only they are not in the same place. So it is easy to extract the chart, but only by bringing a formal arrangement into the material; this does not appear as its own linguistic science of a lower order, but as the original symbolism of reality itself: so it appears in a close contact of “identity” with this reality. Language is not a content proper that would have to develop according to an internal system, but the description of the course that will bring about the universal day of our star alongside the celestial canopy of universal time, accordingly a description of that path whose elements appeared for us in algebraic symbols. We are describing the path that we

believe in with the words we trust. To believe in the path is a difficult thing, for we never see anything but the single point where we are living; but language is the truly “higher” mathematics, which reveals to us, ever since the singular point of the lived miracle, the entire course of the believed miracle; and to trust it is easy, for it is in us and around us, and when it comes to us from the “outside,” nothing other than it echoes from our “inside” toward the “outside.” The spoken word is the same, whether it is listened to or said. The ways of God and the ways of man are different, but the word of God and the word of man are the very same. What man feels in his heart as his own human language is the word that has come from the mouth of God. The word of Creation which resounds in us and expresses itself outside of us, ever since the root word which echoes directly outside of the silence of the original word, up until the fully objectifying narrative form of the past tense: all this, too, is the word that God pronounced and which we find written in the Book of the Beginning.

One sentence runs through the whole chapter which relates the work in the beginning. A sentence that occurs six times and consists in a single word preceded only by a colon. This sentence is: Good!?: it was and it is and it will be—“good.” Creation resides in this divine Yes to the existence of the creature. This “good” is the word of the end pronounced aloud for each day of Creation, because it is nothing other than the silent original word of their beginning.

What is “good”? What is this divine Yes of approval pronounced six times? The daily work of each day of Creation. The thing not as an ordinary thing, but as work, as effected thing, existence as already-being-there. Existence is affirmed at the moment where God says “good” to his own work: it is he who made it; it is good. He created—this narrative form runs through the whole chapter: he created, he said, he separated, he saw, and so on. Past tense and the form of “he”—a doubly concrete feature. No subject besides the one divine subject always the same; and this subject does not enter like every other subject as a particular reality into its predicate, which would be universal: in this case, the predicate would take a subjective and personalized sense, and it would therefore lose its objective sense; by contrast, the divine subject remains in its pure, untouchable beyond, and leaves the predicate to its freedom, outside of it, in an untroubled ob-

**GRAMMATI-  
CAL ANALYSIS  
OF GENESIS I**

jectivity. When two persons do the same thing, it is not the same thing, but when the One, who can only be one, does the same thing, it is always the same thing: the divine subject is the only one that does not personally color its predicate. To protect this pure objectivity of the “he created,” the Creator must not even have a name: he is only “God,” quite simply.

God created. And the world, that which was created? It “was”; this word, too, ceaselessly resounds. As the Psalm sums it up: “He spoke and it was.” For God, the Creation is having been made, but for the world, it is to have become. What was? This same that God created: things. God created the heaven and the earth. The nouns of this chapter, due to the fact that God alone takes the place of the active subject, are objects in the accusative, objects created by God; or again, as things become, in the passive nominative case: “the” heavens and “the” earth: the other nouns appear with the indefinite article, whereas this first proposition, which anticipates Creation in its entirety—“in the beginning, when God created the heaven and the earth,” as the ancient Jewish commentators translate it—this first proposition confers at one go upon that which was created in its entirety the form which is appropriate to it, just as it gives in advance to what was created the clear and active form of the past tense, and accordingly, its reality as time to the Creation; every singular thing acquires its determined nature only by means of the detour of its belonging to the genus, expressed by the indefinite article: now this determination, the entirety of things—heaven and earth—possesses it right away, and this entirety, moreover, is no longer subsumed under any genus; the definite article here confers the form of space upon the objectivity of things in general, before any particular determination; exactly like the first determined and personal “he created,” which fixes for that which is to come the temporal form of objectivity, precedes the first “was,” whereas every singular and personalized event, consequently every act, only becomes possible through the particular determination of time: this latter relates to the act only by passing through the detour of the pure event joined with the copula, and accordingly, it comes only after the “was.”

“The” heaven and “the” earth: the whole of Creation is, for itself, its only Only, the only thing which does not establish its individuality only through the indirect means of multiplicity; cre-

ated things thereafter appear in the plural; even the things which force themselves upon man in such a unique way in their genus and which present themselves precisely to be individualized as divine persons, become like the sun and the moon, “luminaries”: their individuality is mercilessly brought back to a plural genus, and without consideration for the person, they are driven back into the universe of created things.

“In the beginning, when God created the heaven and the earth, the earth was waste and void, and darkness over the abyss and the Spirit of God brooding over the water.” A double “was.” It is as waste and as void, in the adjectival form, that the first statement about the world of things appears, connected to the copula of being and of already-past, a copula which survives in the original text as expressed word, in contradistinction to linguistic usage; under an adjectival form in general, there is darkness where all attributes still display only the one gray color of waste-and-void, until the moment where God makes resound his “Let there be light!” Light, not a thing any more than is the darkness: rather, an attribute itself, the equivalent, for knowledge, of the “good!” for the will, that is to say of the judgment which quite simply indicated his approval; and here he “separates” the chaos of the attributes, and when the separation is complete and the beginning of creation is accomplished, in the visibility of the diverse attributes, then there resounds for the first time that which, in the light, had already become visible, as a reverberating sonority, as word, the “good.”

But in the same proposition where we see emerging from out of the primeval mass of attributes still waste and void, the diverse created things, the first creative singular act also comes into the world: the word indicating action arising from the word indicating event, in the adjectival form of the participles; the beginning of the creative acts of God is that his spirit is “brooding”; it is not “God”—although this is already a depersonalization—but “the Spirit of God,” even more impersonal; in the original text, the depersonalization is even more pronounced, because God, as “Spirit,” wears the train of feminine attire; and “brooding”—the most obscure of all activities of which the comparison of Creation in the human world, the new creation of the individuals in the species, consists, not to mention that here it concerns an activity of the feminine tribe. There, the darkness of the waste-and-void, here the obscurity of brooding;

both thing and act appear in the form of attributes, and of attributes situated at the lowest limit, where thing and act constantly emerge out of that which is not yet in any manner thing nor in any manner act.

This, then, is the treasury of verbal forms in Creation. But let us not forget the word in the face of numerous words. For, doesn't the Creation take place in the word? Didn't God say? Were we entitled to count the word he pronounced simply in the same series as his creative acts—as we did? We were not so entitled. Certainly, at least in the beginning, Creation was inwardly vaster than Revelation; there is much prediction in it that is a long way from being revealed; no one knows how long it will be until the day when every creature will have opened its mouth and will be understood as prediction of the miracle. Only a first glimmer of Revelation flashes from the first moment of the Creation, or at least from the second moment; for is not the first moment that of the intransitive “it was,” that of the obscure and silent attributes affecting both things and action? But at the second moment, the word that creates the whole of Creation irrupts, as the first action word of Creation, the “God said.” And as the first visible word in Creation, even if it is a matter of a word of attribution, the light. And in the sentence that God pronounces, there appears for the first time, amid all the instances of the past tense, the present tense; amid all the untroubled indicatives, the suddenness of the imperative: “Let there be.” Yet this present and this suddenness are still bound in the form of the “it” of pure event. God speaks, but his word is still as if something in him were speaking, and not himself. His word is like a prediction of his future word; but he does not yet speak himself, not yet as Self. Essentially, these are the words of Creation that are freed from his essence, that is to say an “it” emerging from an “it.”

Until he opens his mouth for the last act of Creation and says: “Let us make a man.” “Let us”—for the first time the yoke of objectivity is broken, for the first time there comes, out of the one mouth that till now has spoken in Creation, instead of an “it,” an “I,” and more than an “I”: with the “I” at the same time a “You,” a “You” which the “I” addresses to itself: “Let us.” Therefore something new has come into view. New? Isn't it the same one who has been speaking up till now? And isn't he saying the same thing that was told of him previously? A doing that emerges personally from the Self, as affirmed

exactly with regard to the “he created” and so on? It was affirmed, of course; but until now, when he tried to make himself heard, the sound was lost in the “it”; now it remains personal, now it is saying “I”. Really “I”? Here we are close to the limit which warns us that even on the sixth day we are still in Creation, and not yet in Revelation.

As long as God is still engaged in creating, God does not say “I,” he says “We,” and an absolute We, including everything, not having any “I” in sight outside of itself, the plural of absolute majesty. An I which has the “You” immediately in itself, as the German translation very nicely shows; an “I” that speaks only to itself and can only speak to itself. Hence an impersonal “I,” an I that still remains in itself, that does not come out of itself in the “You” and does not reveal itself, that, quite on the contrary, is alive only in itself, like the metaphysical God of the primordial world. The Creator reveals himself in the act of creating; the word of the Creator, that of the final Creation, is not a word of the Revealer that reveals him, but, in the last resort, here too, it is a matter only of an act of Creation of the Creator.

And man, the last to be created among the creatures? Let us make a man—a man: the proper name Adam resounds simultaneously in the original text, it becomes the first proper name where there are only generic creatures, creatures only created “according to their kind.” And he is really “created in the image of God”—and hence prominent among the other creatures and, with or without proper name, invested with that which the Creator denied even to the heavenly lights: the likeness to God, a personality not mediated by the universality of the genus nor needing any multiplicity, a Self. Therefore something new has come into view. But it is also more than a Self—a soul? The breath of life has been breathed into man: but this breath, is he also going to exhale it? Does he speak? He was created mute. And once again, we are up against the wall that separates the premonitory sign from the sign, the prediction from the miracle.

But there is a prediction here. One last time, God gazes upon what he has created. And this time: look—“Very good!” The root word of the Creation springs from itself. It remains adjective, it remains within the framework of its essence; but it ceases to designate the simple, singular quality without a point of com-

**THE  
PREDICTION  
OF THE  
MIRACLE**

parison; it is raised to the superlative, it compares. Within the framework of the universal Yes of Creation which carries all the singular on its broad back, a domain is delimited which receives a different Yes, a Yes qualified by “very,” different from everything else, something that, while in the Creation points beyond Creation. This “very” which announces a trans-creation right within Creation, within the world, a beyond of the world, something other than life while belonging to life and only to life, created at the same time as life, as its ending point, and yet allowing life to have an inkling of a fulfillment beyond it: this is death. The created death of the creature is at the same time the sign that announces the Revelation of life which transcends that of the simple creature. Death, which is for each created thing the fulfillment of his total thingliness, imperceptibly pushes the Creation back into the past and so transforms it into a silent and permanent prediction of the miracle of its renewal. That is why, concerning the sixth day of Creation, it is not said that it was “good,” but “Look, very good!” “Very good,” our men of old teach us, very good—this is death.

## BOOK TWO

# REVELATION OR THE EVER RENEWED BIRTH OF THE SOUL

LOVE is as strong as death. As strong as death? Against whom is it that death shows its strength? Against the one whom it seizes. And love—certainly, it seizes both, the lover as well as the beloved. But the beloved differently from the lover. It is in the lover that it originates. The beloved is seized; her love is already a response to the being-seized, it is Anteros the younger brother of Eros. It is true first for the beloved that love is as strong as death. Moreover, nature has given only the woman, and not the man, the capacity to die of love. What has been said of the twofold encounter of the man with his Self applies strictly and universally only to the masculine. Thanatos can approach her, too, in the sweet name of Eros, and most often the most feminine woman. Therefore, because of the absence of this opposition, her life is simpler than that of the man. Her heart has already become firm in the tremors of love; it no longer needs the tremor of death. A young woman can reach her maturity for eternity, whereas a man can reach it only when Thanatos crosses his threshold. No man dies the death of Alcestes.<sup>1</sup> Once touched by love, a woman is what a man will only be at the centenary age of Faust: ready for the final encounter as strong as death.

Like all human love, this is only a simile. As keystone of Creation, death imprints everything created with the indelible stamp of its condition of creature, with the words “has been.” But love declares war on it. Love knows only the present, it lives only out of the present, aspires only to the present. The keystone of the dark vault of Creation becomes the foundation stone of the bright house of Revelation. For the soul, Revelation is the lived experience of a present that, though resting on the existence of the past, does not dwell in it; on the contrary, this present walks in the light of the divine countenance.

<sup>1</sup>Reference to *Alcestes* by Euripides (438 BCE). Alcestes, ready to sacrifice herself for her husband, is saved by Hercules.

*THE  
REVEALER*  
*THE HIDDEN  
ONE*

IT is to God the Living One that the pagans cry, insofar as he is not sleeping, or has gone up hill and down dale; in the powerful wisdom of his creative act, he appeared as the God of life. That limitless power, hidden in the mythical vitality of God, came forth again, but it changed from arbitrariness, a prisoner of the moment, into a wisdom resting by nature on duration. What had struggled forth out of God's "nothing" as a self-negation of this nothing, had entered into the living "something" of God and emerged from this no longer as a self-negation, but as affirmation of the world. As it were, God's vitality once again became the nothing, a nothing of a higher degree, a moment which only had been related to that which escaped from it, but in itself, this was a nothing full of character, not a nothing exactly, but a something. This vitality was a nothing only in the fact that, when it appeared on the outside, it broke apart into new figures: one of these is already familiar to us, the essential power; for these new figures do not have behind them anything nameable, or anything from which they might have emerged; if we wanted to designate as God's vitality as this sort of backdrop of the power to create which has been revealed, then we would rightly have to object that such an emergence could not occur out of the mythical vitality of the hidden God, but only out of its reversal in Revelation, but for this reversal there is no name; it is only the geometric point as it were out of which the emergence occurs.

Of course, "before" this reversal, too, it was only a geometric point, the meeting of the two segments, that of the original Yes and the original No in the divine nothing; and the reversal is only comprehensible in the reversal of the directions: in one case, their rays meet, in the other, they diverge. But the result of the meeting of two lines is only a point; yet, as a conceived point, it can be named, determined, it is a something, like the point  $x$  and  $y$  of a system of coordinates. On the other hand, the point that is uniquely determined as the starting point of directions is fixed like the starting point of a system of coordinates  $o$ , but it is not determined: it is only origin of the determination which takes place in the system of coordinates. Hence it happens that the God of paganism has a very lively and visible face and is not at all experienced as a hidden God, while faith proves very clearly that it knows absolutely nothing of a God who would not be revealed: for God in himself is a "hidden God," the same God who, before his reversal from obscurity, in order to become mani-

fest, did not appear hidden at all to unbelief. It is precisely at this different relationship to Revelation that one recognizes the anchoring-place of paganism such as we defined it very clearly throughout Part One: the difference between the original nothing as the original foundation of the something of the origin, and this something at the origin as result of that original nothing, not a manifest result of course, but veiled in itself and yet visible. Visible though not manifest, that is to say, visible for the one whose eyes are enveloped by the same darkness where that something of the origin is veiled, and so are adjusted to this darkness.

For faith, apart from Revelation—and later we shall find analogous points also as regards the two other elements of the primordial world—for faith then, God is purely and simply a hidden God, but in the framework of Revelation, he at once becomes manifest and consequently fragmented in order to form the figures of his becoming-manifest: but if he is thus manifest in them, don't we now lose what we believed was already in our hands: the elemental "factuality" of God? If God is only hidden origin of his manifestation, then where, in Revelation, has the outright tangible reality gone which God already possessed in paganism? But did he really possess it? Wasn't it broken into a hundred pieces by the omnipotence of the perhaps which remained unshaken? Certainly, the factuality does not seem directly affected by the "perhaps," but after all, a factuality such that it will not answer any questions about its "how" surely does not have much self-confidence. One may presume that, in its affirming its inability to recognize the elemental actuality of God, and in distancing this God because he is "hidden," Revelation would instead strive for its own appropriate factuality founded not on the elements but on the one path of the one reality itself which would be raised above every perhaps to the height of absolute certainty.

And so it is. God, having emerged from his nothing of the primordial world, had only become result; so, too, the hidden God, who alone gives belief a glimpse of that result of the primordial world, is only the beginning of a process of which we have seen the first act, the Creation of the world by God. For God, Creation is not merely Creation of the world, but it is also an event which takes place within himself, as the hidden one. In this sense, we had to mark Creation already as a Revelation of

**THE  
REVEALED  
ONE**

God. And indeed he does reveal himself in Creation as Creator, that is to say in the multiple works which no longer grow and which no longer increase; on the contrary, they are in the beginning and hence once and for all, and so, as far as this concerns God, they are attributes and not acts. The rest, that which emerges from the hidden God, “outside” of Creation—must God complete this infinity which is once and for all liberated, this unlimited infinity of the creative power of God, in the direction that would gather this infinity into actual unity? It would then be a matter of a reality that possesses in itself the drive gradually to traverse the entire infinity disseminated from the divine power, hence of a reality which grows in itself, capable of exceeding itself. How and where it realizes this drive, we won’t yet talk about here; but about this point we do have to be clear, that it has this drive.

**LOVE** Just as before, it was the original freedom, the unsubdued passion of the mythical God that broke into the light of the new day from out of the hidden God as divine creative power; henceforth it is the divine essence marked by destiny, the *Moirai*, which seeks a path out into the open. Without a doubt, God’s inner “nature,” the infinite oceanic silence of his being, had coalesced and consolidated as fate under the impact of the divine freedom of action inherent in God; but fate is always something that endures. The *Moirai* did not change her decree; it might well be that this is disclosed only in the course of time, but it is in force from the beginning; fate is the original law, its messengers are the oldest ones among the race of the gods; and it is not by accident that they are mostly women; for the maternal is always that which is there already, the paternal is only an addition; for man, the woman is always mother. But fate must lose this permanent and primordial trait when it now breaks into the light, outside of the obscurity of the divine hiddenness. The freedom to act in the creative power of God had become manifest as essential being, being which is attribute. Now being, tied to destiny, must reveal itself in a corresponding reversal, in order to reveal itself as a process that has arisen in the moment, as a happened event. What is this fate that breaks in eventually with the full brunt of the moment and is not destined from the very beginning, but is on the contrary precisely negation of everything valid from the very beginning, even as negation of the very moment immediately

preceding this one: in its very own narrow space, the moment which preserves the entire weight of destiny, of a destiny that is not “decreed,” but suddenly present and which, in its suddenness, is yet impossible to ward off, as if it had been decreed from all eternity—this fate and this moment—what is it? A look at the creature, created in the likeness and image of God, teaches us the only name we can and must give to this internal fate of God which has become affect. Just as God’s arbitrariness, born of the moment, had turned into lasting power, so, too, his eternal essence had turned into—love at every waking moment, always young, always first. For love alone is at the same time this fatal violence that beleaguers the heart in which it awakens, and yet so newly born, so devoid of a past—for the time being—so surrendered to the moment it fulfils, and to that moment alone. It is an intrinsic necessity, entirely “*deus fortior me*”—to use the words of the great lover<sup>2</sup> who upheld his love and whom his love upheld through hell, world and heaven;<sup>2</sup> and yet going back to what immediately precedes this, in its violence, the love is not sustained by a decree created from all eternity, which would be a perpetual “for a long time” preceding its “already-being-there”; rather, it is sustained by the ever new “in the moment” of its “having-come-precisely-in-this-moment”: *ecce deus fortior me “qui veniens dominabitur mihi”*. Love is nothing other than the decree of fate, on which the arbitrariness is broken in the mythical God himself; and yet it is as distinct from this decree as the heavens are from the earth; for that decree had emerged from the nothing as simple Yes, a simple “it is so,” “it was decreed so”; but love reversed this decree into a necessity that breaks into the revealed world, from out of the night of the hidden God, as a No, as a perpetually new self-negation, unconcerned about everything, about everything that came before and about everything that will follow, entirely birth of the immediately and presently experienced moment of life.

Here begins that supplement which is the Revelation of God, merely ushered in in the acts of Creation of which we spoke above. In order to retrieve the “factuality” of God which risked being lost in its hidden nature, we must not stay at his first Revelation in an infinity full of creative acts; there, God threatened to be lost again behind the infinity of Creation; he seemed

<sup>2</sup>The great lover: Dante.

to become mere “origin” of Creation, and hence to become again the hidden God, just what he had ceased to be in creating.

From the night of his obscurity something other has to emerge than his mere creative power, something that would keep visible the vast infinity of the creative acts of his power, such that God could no longer once again take refuge in the secret, behind these acts. The upholding of such an infinity, its vast expanse, will only be able to happen in such a way that the whole vast expanse be entirely traversed; but as infinite expanse, it will only be able to be traversed by a force of infinite breath, a force which is never exhaustible. And it goes without saying that this force also must spring up directly from the depths of the divine obscurity; for only then will it be able to realize what we expect of it: to protect Revelation which takes place in Creation from a backwards fall into the night of the secret. So, precisely for the sake of its revelatory character, the first Revelation in Creation requires the breaking in of a “second” Revelation, of a Revelation that is nothing but Revelation, of a Revelation in the stricter sense of the word, or rather in the strictest sense.

So this must be a Revelation that “does not posit” anything, that which does not create anything outside itself by setting it into the void; certainly, this last mode of manifestation was also Revelation, but only “also”; essentially and above all, it was Creation; the Revelation that we are seeking must be quite essentially Revelation, and nothing else. But that means: it can be nothing other than the self-negation of a merely mute essence by a word uttered out loud, the opening up of something locked, of a silently reposing permanence by the movement of a blink of the eye. In the illumination of such a blink of the eye there resides the force to transform the created-being that is touched by this illumination by turning the created “thing” into the testimony of a Revelation that has come to pass. Every thing represents such a testimony already because it is a created thing, and the Creation is already itself the first Revelation. But just because it is a created thing from all eternity, this fact that it is testimony of a Revelation that has already occurred remains behind it, in the darkness of a first beginning; it is only when, at some point in time, it is illuminated by the rays of a Revelation that has not taken place once and for all, but which takes place at this moment, it is only then that the circumstance that brings it about that it owes its existence to a Revelation becomes more

than a “circum-stance”: it becomes the inner core of its factuality. It is only in this way—when it is no longer a testimony of the Revelation that has occurred in general, but the externalization of a Revelation that occurs “just now” at this moment—it is only then that the thing steps out of the past of its essence and enters into its living present.

In the course of time, this “illumination” diffuses always anew from thing to thing, and in this way it frees things from their pure created-being and at the same time it rescues Creation from the fear, perpetually hanging over it, of sinking back into its origin from out of the nothing on the one hand, and from out of the hidden being of God on the other. Just in its absolute emergence from out of the moment, Revelation is the means of fortifying Creation in its formative arrangement. The Creator could still withdraw behind Creation into its obscurity of a wealth of figures, hence into a darkness itself without figures; in some way, there always remained for him the flight into the past of the “origin” where he “could modestly hide behind eternal laws”; but in his eternal presence, the Revealer can at every moment capture the origin in the brightness, in the manifest, in the non-hidden, precisely in the present; and in so doing, he lets the hidden being of God permanently sink into the past; from now on God is present, present like the moment, like every moment, and so he begins to become that which he had not yet been as Creator and which he only now begins to become: “factual,” like the pagan gods in the fortified castle of their myth.

All the demands put on the concept of the Revealer converge **THE LOVER** toward love: the love of the lover, not that of the beloved. Only the love of the lover and this giving of self once again in every moment, only this love gives itself in love; the beloved receives the gift; her receiving of it is her return gift, but in the receiving she does not remain any the less close to herself and she becomes complete serenity and a blissful soul in itself. But the lover—by sheer fighting, he uproots his love from the stem of his Self, just as the tree bursts forth its branches from out of itself, and just as each limb breaks out from the trunk, no longer remembering it, and denying it; but the tree stands there, adorned with the branches which belong to it, though they all deny it; it has not set them free, it did not make them fall to the ground like ripe fruit; each twig is the tree’s twig while being entirely a twig for itself, having broken through in its own place, and exclusively

in its own place, enduringly bound to this place. Likewise, the love of the lover is implanted in the moment of its origin, and because it is so, it must deny all other moments, it must deny all of life; in its essence, it is unfaithful, for its essence is in the moment; and so, in order to be faithful, it must renew itself every moment, and every moment must become the first glance of love. Only through this totality in every present moment can it grasp the whole of created life, but through this, it really can do it; it can do it by traversing this whole with ever new meaning and by shining its rays and its life upon now this and now that single thing—a progress that begins anew every day, and never needs to come to its end; at every moment, because it is wholly present, it thinks it has reached the height beyond which there is none higher—and yet, each new day it learns again that it has never loved as much as today the part of life which it loves; every day love loves a little more than which it loves. This constant increase is the form of permanence in love, in that and because it is the most extreme non-permanence and its fidelity is devoted solely to the present, singular moment: from the deepest infidelity, and from this alone, it can thus become permanent fidelity; for only the non-permanence of the moment renders it capable of living every moment as new and thus of carrying the flame of love through the vast nocturnal- and twilight-kingdom of created life. It increases because it does not want to cease being new; it wants always to be new in order to be able to be permanent; it can only be permanent by living entirely in the non-permanent, in the moment, and it must be permanent so that the lover may be not merely the empty bearer of an ephemeral emotion, but living soul. This, too, is the way God loves.

**PRESENT** But does he love? May we attribute love to him? Doesn't the concept of love imply a need? And could God need something? Haven't we denied that the Creator could create through love in order not to have to attribute a need to him? And now is the Revealer nonetheless supposed to reveal himself through love?

But why had we denied a need to the Creator? Because his Creation must not be arbitrariness, a sudden impulse, a necessity of the moment, but enduring attribute and essence. Whatever happens, the need must be neither a quality of God, nor his permanent essence. And indeed, this is not the case for love. It is not a quality of the lover; it is not a man who loves. The fact of

loving is precisely not a determination in the definition of a man. Love in the man is ephemeral self-transformation, a self-renunciation; he is no longer anything other than lover when he loves; the I, otherwise the bearer of the attributes, disappears entirely in the moment of love. Man dies in becoming lover and is re-born as lover. Need would be an attribute. But how would an attribute find room in the narrow space of a moment? Could it be true that love means a need? Perhaps the need precedes love? But what does the lover know of what precedes it? Its first moment is the one that awakens it; seen from the outside, it may well be that one finds a need at its origin—but what does that mean except that the point of created existence that has not yet been touched with its glance still lies in darkness, the darkness of Creation precisely? This darkness is the nothing that resides at its origin as created “foundation.” But in it itself, on the narrow plank of its momentariness, there is no room for a need; in the moment where it is, it is perfectly fulfilled; the love of the lover is always “happy”; who would go and tell him that he still needs anything other than—to love?

So love is not attribute, but event, and there is no place in it for an attribute. “God loves” does not mean that love belongs to him like an attribute, like the power to create for instance; love is not the fundamental form, the solid, immovable form of his countenance, it is not the hardened mask which the one who has molded it removes from the countenance of the dead person, but the evanescent, never exhausted change of expressions, the always new light that shines upon the eternal features. Love balks at making a portrait of the lover; the portrait would harden the living face into a dead one. “God loves”: this is purest present whether it is going to love, or even whether it has loved—what does love itself know of this? It is enough for it to know one thing; that it loves. It does not extend into the immensity of infinity, like the attribute; knowledge and power are omniscience and omnipotence; love is not all-love; Revelation does not know of any father who is universal love; God’s love is always wholly in the moment and at the point where it loves; and it is only in the infinity of time, step by step, that it reaches one point after the next and permeates the totality with soul. God’s love loves whom it loves and where it loves; no question can touch it, for each question will one day have its answer in that God loves, too, even the questioner who thinks he is forsaken by God’s love.

God always loves only whom and what he loves; but what separates his love from an “all-love” is only a “not-yet”; it is only “not yet” that God loves everything besides what he already loves. His love traverses the world from an always new impulse. It is always in the today and entirely in the today, but every dead yesterday and tomorrow are one day swallowed into this triumphant today; this love is the eternal victory over death; the Creation which death finishes and completes cannot resist it; it must surrender to it at every moment and thus also ultimately in the plenitude of all moments, in eternity.

**ISLAM: THE  
RELIGION OF  
HUMANITY**

SO apparently there is a narrowness in the concept of God’s love as faith understands it: that unlike light, this love does not shine forth in all directions as an essential attribute would do; rather, in a mysterious seizing, it seizes individuals—men, peoples, times, things—unforeseeably in this seizing except for the one certainty that the love will one day seize even that which has not yet been seized: this apparent narrowness of the heart is that alone which makes of love a true love, and it may be that, for this reason, it forgets everything else by throwing itself into every moment: it is only in this way that it can ultimately really seize everything; if it seized everything all at once, how would it differ from Creation? For Creation, too, created everything all at once, and so became the everlasting past; a love which would have seized everything to begin with would only be “to-begin-with,” only a past, and not what alone transforms love into love: present, pure unalloyed present.

Such a past determines the concept of the Revealer of Islam. Exactly as for the concept of the Creator in the previous Book, the concept of the Revealer emerged without mediation from out of the living God of myth without the reversal of the Yes and No, which we have so amply explained. Just as at that time the arbitrariness of the Creator did not consolidate to become a creative wisdom, so now Revelation remains divine attribute, a necessity of the divine essence; the moment does not affect it, the moment does not become a self-renouncing passion; it approximates Creation therefore, but not Creation according to Islam’s conception of it, that is, a free act, not a necessary act springing from divine arbitrariness, but Creation according to faith’s conception of it. It is with the same necessity, the same connection to the essence, the same charac-

ter of attribute as the Creation that Islam makes the Revelation spring from God.

Allah's essence is that "all-love," which does not boundlessly, in every moment, give itself away to love; no: it gives the Revelation to humanity like an objective gift from out of itself. The gift is not arbitrary: all that arises from the moment—and wouldn't this be arbitrariness?—remains distant from it. God is the God of Mercy, every Sura in the Koran says it: Mercy is his attribute, it shines from its essence upon all men, upon all peoples. The Koran rejects from the concept of God the idea of partisan preference, in favor of a people, for instance. To every people, and not only to the Arabs, Allah has sent a prophet; each of them taught his people the entire truth for faith; yet, today, this truth is again reduced to silence or is fragmented in the case of most peoples, and this must of course be explained; but the explanation is not hard to find: those peoples simply did not believe the prophets; it is their fault if they did not guard over the Revelation; Allah gave it to them as well as to the people of Mohammed today. But in order to establish this fiction, figures of past prophets and their fate had to be invented; the fundamental idea demands it: Allah must reveal himself; it is his essence to be "merciful," and this is how he reveals himself. "Merciful" is probably how that word in the opening verse of the Suras has to be translated; it is excised here from the living corpus of the holy language where it can be used for relationships between men or for the relationship from man to God and also for the relationship from God to man; here, however, it is restricted to the last mentioned usage, specifically theological: it no longer means love in general, but only a love which can move from God to man, and hence only mercy. And this Revelation is complete from the beginning: to Adam, and to all the prophets who followed, God ordained "Islam"! The Patriarchs, the Prophets, Jesus: all are "believers" in the full, theological and received sense of the word. Mohammed's superiority comes from his personal qualities, and not, for example, from the fact that he would have received the greatest quantity of divine love; the journey through the seven heavens is not a proof of divine grace, but a miraculous act realized by the prophet himself. The abundance of this love does not grow; simply once and for all, it has been given to the world; there is no increase in it. That is why, in its eyes, everything is "momentary," it effaces and keeps distant

from itself every “partisan position,” but also all blind force, which nonetheless permeates true love. Contrary to the God of faith, Allah could not tell his own to their face that he chose them before all others, in their sins, and was calling them to account for their sins. That the man’s shortcomings awaken the love of God more powerfully than do man’s merits is impossible for Islam to ratify, an absurd idea—and yet it is the central idea of faith; Allah has pity on human weakness, but that he likes it more than strength—this is a divine humility foreign to the God of Mohammed.

In Islam, Revelation is not a living event between God and man, a process into which God himself enters to the point of completely denying himself. In Islam, Revelation is a gift freely set down, a gift that God places into the man’s hands; one can see it like a sign in Revelation that it is here from the very beginning, that which, in faith, even for its own consciousness, is only gradual, and never completely finished: a Book. The first word of Revelation to Mohammed is: “Read!” He is shown the page of a book; it is a book that the archangel brings down to him from heaven in the night of Revelation. For Judaism, older and holier than the written word is the oral teaching, and Jesus did not leave a single written word for his followers; Islam is religion of the Book from the first moment. The Book sent down from heaven—can there be any greater distortion of the notion of God himself “descending,” giving himself to man, of surrendering to him? He is enthroned in his highest heaven and gives to man—a Book.

**THE SOUL  
DEFIANCE**

**T**O man. He is the other pole of Revelation. Upon him the divine love pours forth. How does he make himself ready receive it? For he must prepare himself. Man, whom we came to recognize as “metaethical,” is not ready; he does not hear, he does not see—how is he to receive God’s love? He must also, in his enclosedness, begin to open up in order to learn to hear God’s word, to gaze upon the light of God. Defiance and character, *hybris* and *daimon* had united in him and had made of him a mute Self, turned in on himself. Now that he emerges from himself, the forces that formed him also now unfold again. And once again, they appear in the reverse order of their entry. In its endless eruptions, the defiant pride of free will had confined the

existing character to the Self; it is now the first thing that comes outside from within the Self; and since it comes out first, since it initiates this flight, it is no longer necessarily in the shape of passionate eruptions, every one of which, in its momentariness, reaches the highest threshold, but in the form of tranquil spreading.

A pride that, instead of frothing up in defiance, would be at rest? A pride, then, that in its convulsive violence, would no longer distort the countenance of man, but which would simply be there and which, instead of transforming man till he is no longer recognizable, would, like calm water, spread around him from all sides and under him and carry him. What sort of pride is this that seems to oppose the defiant pride? It is a pride which apparently does not create a particular type of man at the moment where he goes outside; for the man of defiance is a particular type of the man; but a pride that appears as attribute, an attribute among others, of course, which man lastingly carries in himself without belonging to any external elements of a particularly characteristic physiognomy—what sort of pride is this? It would have to be a pride that would not be proud “of” this or “of” that: in this case, it would certainly be an attribute, but simply an attribute among others, and not an essential attribute where the whole man could rest. It may be that the word “pride” is overly laden in the other sense; it connotes arrogance altogether too much, the arrogance whose authentic expression is nothing but defiance. And yet, pride is exactly halfway between defiance and that reversal of the defiance that we are seeking. It can “externalize” itself; it is then that it becomes of its own accord arrogant defiance, *hybris*; but, beyond any idea of externalization, it can do nothing other than be. But this pride that is simply there, in which man is silent and by which he lets himself be carried, is therefore the exact reverse of the defiance that constantly explodes anew. It is humility.

For humility, too, is pride. Only haughtiness and humility are opposite. But the humility that is conscious of being what it is through the grace of a Higher Being is pride, to the point that that consciousness of divine grace could itself be regarded as a haughty consciousness. Humility lies in the feeling of being hidden. It knows that nothing can happen to it. And it also knows that no power can rob it of this consciousness. This consciousness carries humility wherever it might go. Humility always sur-

**HUMILITY**

rounds it. Humility alone is the sort of pride that is safe from all impetuosity and does not wish to externalize itself, and which, for the man who possesses it, means quite simply a necessary quality in which he moves, because he plainly and simply does not know how he could be otherwise. And this humility, in its obvious mixture of pride and respect in one, is yet nothing other than the defiance coming out of its mute enclosure and making its appearance. Where this defiance visibly assumed shape, as tragic *hybris*, it aroused shudders of terror in the avid crowd of spectators without itself feeling the effects; now, after its reversal, it is surrounded in its turn by tremors of respectful fear, while being carried by them: the word of the Greek theoretician of tragedy and the word that Revelation chose, once it had learned Greek, is the same: *phobos*. The respectful fear forcibly reunites those two separated beings in tragedy in the world of art and appearance: the hero and the spectator; the lifeless image is itself now filled by the life which it awakens until now only in the spectator, and so it comes alive; it can now open its mouth and speak.

**THE  
BELOVED<sup>3</sup>**

A reverence filled with humility and pride at once, a feeling of independence and of a hidden existence, of shelter in eternal arms—behold, isn't this love once again? Except that it is not the lover who rests on such a consciousness, but the beloved. It is the love of the beloved that we have just described. That which is loved knows that it is borne by the love of the lover, and hidden in it. That which, for the lover, is a moment always to be begun anew is known by that which is loved as eternal, perpetual and eternal. "Always" is the word written above its love. Love is never greater than in the moment of its awakening; it would not know how to grow further, but nor can it diminish; at most it can die: the beloved is faithful. Its being loved is the air where it lives. The love of the lover is a light always kindled within him. The moment of the illumination gives love its presentness. The love of the beloved sits peacefully at the feet of the love of the lover: that which gives love its presentness is not the singular, always new moment, but the tranquil duration; because it knows itself to be loved "always," for this alone it knows itself to be loved at every moment. Only the lover loves the beloved a little

<sup>3</sup>Rosenzweig alternates genders for the word "beloved"; sometimes it is neuter, sometimes feminine.

better every day; in her being loved, the beloved knows nothing of such a growth. Once the tremors of being-loved have come over her one day, they stay with her until the end. She is content to be loved—why run after heaven and earth? Why even question herself about the love of the lover? To begin to love over again, for her, is to let herself be loved. She does not respond to the lover's love with any recognition in herself; if the beloved shows her gratitude, her gratitude cannot be turned toward the lover, but it must seek outlets in other directions, symbolic outlets, so to speak. Love would like to offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, for that it feels that it cannot give thanks. The beloved has no other resource than to let herself be loved by the lover, nothing more. And this is how the soul receives the love of God.

Yes, it is only for the soul and for the love of God that all this is strictly true. Between the man and the woman, the taller the flowers are that the stem of love makes grow between them, the more love resembles a palm tree rising up in the sky and distancing itself from its subterranean roots, and the more the roles of the one giving love and the one receiving love go back and forth, although the roots of their sexuality always re-establish the unambiguous relationship of nature. But between God and the soul, the relationship remains always the same. God does not stop loving, and the soul never stops being loved. The soul receives the peace of God, and not God the peace of the soul; and God makes a present of himself to the soul, and not the soul to God; how could it do otherwise? For it is only in the love of God, pouring into the rock of the Self that the flower of the soul begins to grow; before this, man was turned in on himself, mute and devoid of feeling. Only now is he—beloved soul.

Beloved? The soul? Can this be? Is the love of God something from which nothing can be separated? Is it unthinkable that it might be expelled from this repose in God? Is it always near him; can he not avert his face from it? Is its being loved by God so solid a bond that the soul cannot conceive of God severing it again one day? What is it, then, that gives to this quality of the soul, seemingly purely passive—the quality being loved—what is it that gives it the strength to be a quality, an essential quality given one day as the soul's own and yet inseparable from it for all time? Yet, elsewhere, such a passivity is not a quality; it depends on the activity that an active element exercises on it. Now, isn't the activity here within the range of the moment, and yet, its

**FAITH-  
FULNESS**

effect is supposed to confer upon the passivity a lasting quality? Once again, our questions are those that, from the outset, have troubled dogmatics when it was a matter of this notion of love given by God to the soul. Isn't there an undeniable limit set to God's power when the soul loved by God claims for itself permanent divine love? Mustn't God have the freedom to withdraw from the soul? It would be easily understandable that he might have relinquished such a freedom over against a faithfulness that was holding him. But how can the soul even entertain the notion of wanting to be faithful when it is nothing but the beloved? Isn't faithfulness something reserved for the lover, and yet, can't he himself possess it as his quality, but only in the constantly renewed act of his love? Can faithfulness be, indeed did it even have the right to want to be a lasting, quiet quality? For it is in this way that the beloved wants to possess it.

The secret pre-history of the soul in the Self provides us with the answer to all these doubts. Certainly, if the soul were a thing, it could never be faithful. It is true that a thing, too, can be loved, and even that the faithfulness of constantly renewed love can be pledged to it, but it itself cannot be faithful. But the soul can be. For it is not a thing and it does not originate in the world of things. It springs from the Self of man, and in truth, it is the defiance that moves outwards in it. In perpetual eruptions, defiance affirms the character: it is this that is the secret origin of the soul; it is this that gives it the strength to hold on and to hold fast. Without the storms of defiance in the Self, the silence of the sea of faithfulness within the soul would be impossible. Defiance, this original evil that boils up in the dark depths of man is the subterranean root that permits the sap of faithfulness to flow up into the soul loved by God. Without the dark enclosure of the Self, no luminous Revelation of the soul; without defiance, no faithfulness. Not that in the beloved soul itself there would still be defiance: in it, this defiance has become intrinsic faithfulness; but the strength for holding fast, which the beloved soul puts to the test against the love with which it is loved, this strength of the faithfulness comes to it from the defiance of the Self which has settled in it. And because the soul holds him back, God lets himself be held back by it. So, the quality of faithfulness gives it the strength to live permanently in the love of God. And likewise, there emerges from the beloved a strength, not a strength of endlessly new impulses, but the silent brightness of

an immense Yes, where the love of the lover, which always denies itself, finds that which it could not find within itself: affirmation and duration. The faithful belief of the beloved acquiesces to the love of the lover, bound to the moment, and reinforces it so far as to make it a lasting love. This is the counterpart of love: the faith of the beloved in the lover. The faith of the soul testifies, in its faithfulness, to the love of God, and it gives to it permanent being. If you testify to me, then I shall be God, and otherwise not—these are the words that the Master of Kabbalah puts into the mouth of the God of love. The lover who surrenders himself in love is recreated in the faithfulness of the beloved, and from then on, it is forever. The “for eternity” that the soul feels within itself from the first tremors owing to the love of the lover is not a deception, it does not stay enclosed within itself; it turns out to be a lively and creative force by tearing the love from the lover himself in the moment and—renders it eternal. The soul is tranquil in God’s love, like a child in the arms of its mother, and now it can go to the farthest sea and to the gates of the grave—it always stays near Him.

This tranquility of the soul, in its faithfulness that arose out of the night of defiance, is the great mystery of faith, and once again, Islam turns out to be the external resumption of these notions, without understanding them; once again, it possesses all of them—except for the inner conversion, and once again it does not possess them at all. Already, that “Islam” means “submission to God” is, according to Goethe, a misleading translation. Islam does not mean to be submitted to God but to submit oneself to God, to be resigned. The simple root form of the word in the holy language designates silent peace, the peace of God who is there; in “Islam,” the antecedent syllable changes the word into a causative, a making, an initiative, an action. The “resign yourself” of Islam does not end in a “silence!”; it always, on the contrary, sinks more deeply into the resignation, which must be renewed at every moment. So the humility of man to whom Revelation happens, retains in Islam the foretelling of the defiance inherent in the Self, the No that denies it at every moment. “Islam” is not a permanent attitude of the soul, but an uninterrupted succession of duties to be performed. And not in such a way that these duties to be performed would be understood, as it were, only symbolically, just as sign and expression

**ISLAM: THE  
RELIGION OF  
ACTION**

of the state of the satisfied soul, or as a means to attain it; rather they are valued in themselves and are more or less also so rational that such a direct valuation could easily take place. It is in this way that Islam arrives explicitly at an ethics of achievement. It is in the singular moral acts that one assesses the degree of surrender to God necessary to accomplish them. The more difficult the act is, the more it is valued, for all the greater is the submission to God which was required in order to realize it.

On the other hand, for faith, the singular ethical act is itself worthless and one can at most see in it the sign of a global attitude of humble fear before God. It is the soul itself that here is the object of evaluation; it is the authenticity of its faith, the strength of its hope, not the individual act. There are no hard tasks or easy tasks. All are equally heavy or equally light, for all are only symbolic. In the evaluation it makes of the difficulty of the individual achievement, Islam thus involuntarily becomes the heir of the ethics prevalent in the last years of paganism, the heir of stoicism, while also being a precursor of the neo-pagan ethic of *virtus*, which continues to survive up till now. With Ghazali, the great reformer of Islam, there is a most characteristic debate in which this whole relationship and those historical points of comparison become strikingly obvious. To the purity of Jesus, he contrasts Mohammed's sensuality, and praises his prophet over that of the Nazarenes: it turned out here that Mohammed is the greater; for his fervor toward God would have been great enough to elevate him above the satisfaction of his drives; the prophet of the Nazarenes would have had to renounce this satisfaction, because his piety did not burn brightly enough not to expire in it. So in Islam, what is innermost, piety itself, that by which all achievement would first have to be measured, if that were humanly possible, this innermost point is shifted to the point of view of achievement and measured according to surmounted obstacles.

This is man who, in Islam, stands before God's love. He is not tranquilly receptive but presses forward to perform always new acts. But even God's love was not love in the strict sense here, but an immense streaming out of Revelation in all directions. So Islam knows a loving God just as little as it does a beloved soul. God's Revelation occurs in a quiet expansion, the reception by man takes place in stormy and anxious pressure for action. If we must speak of love here, God would be the beloved and man the

lover; but then this would nullify the meaning of Revelation, which goes from God to man. And really, in Islam, it is actually man who in the end forces Revelation, in his position of need on which God “has mercy.” But mercy is not love. Just as it confounds the Revealer and the Creator, Islam also mixes up the beloved soul and the creature in need. Here again, it remains stuck at the unchanged figures bequeathed to it by the pagan world, and thinks it can put them in motion just as they are, owing to the concept of Revelation. Mohammed was proud of having made faith easy for his followers. He made it too easy. He thought he could spare both himself and his disciples of the inner conversion. He did not know that all Revelation begins with a great No. The conversion that all concepts of the pre-world undergo when entering into the light of the real world is nothing other than this No. Just as Creation is under the sign of the Yes, Revelation is under the sign of the No. Its original word is No. But its first audible word, its “root word,” is I.

**I** IS always a No become audible. With “I,” an opposition is always set up, it is always underlined, always stressed; it is always a “but as for me.” Even if it wants to remain unknown and wraps itself in the modest cloak of obviousness—when, for instance, Luther acknowledges before the Imperial Diet his stand, his firm certainty and his firm hope, and all three as “his own”—even then the sparkling eye betrays the king in disguise, and world history draws three bold lines under that threefold I in the hour where the mask is lifted. The I, whether it wants to be or not, is always the subject in all the sentences where it appears. It can be neither the object nor passive. One might ask in all honesty, in the sentence “You are beating me” or “He beat me”—obviously not when reading it but when saying it—whether really You or He is the subject and not rather the I, as already betrayed by a conspicuous stress in intonation, a stress that is absent for a normal object. But from the original word itself, from the “not otherwise,” via which the original No accompanies every word, saying it aloud leads directly to the I. Indeed, only now do we see why we could not be content, in the manner of the scholastic model, with a *sic et non*, and why we had to assert a “so and not otherwise,” and thus replace the *non* through the double negation of a not-otherwise.

**GRAMMAR OF  
EROS (THE  
LANGUAGE OF  
LOVE)**

**ROOT WORD**

**DIALOGIC  
FORM**

The “not otherwise” is immediately beset with the question: “Not otherwise than what exactly?” It has to answer: “Not otherwise than all.” For it is quite simply against “all” that it must delimit what is designated as “so and not otherwise.” And it is “not otherwise” than all. Otherwise than all: already the so posited this conclusion; the “and not otherwise” that followed the so means precisely that, though otherwise, the so is not otherwise than all, that is to say that it is capable of relationship with all. In this sense, what is it then that is “not otherwise,” that is to say simultaneously “otherwise” and “not otherwise” than all? Than “all,” therefore than “the All.” Only “thinking” which is identical to the “being” of the All and of every singular object, hence “thinking” which is at once identical to it and opposite to it—the I. In the “I,” a word within its own linguistic class, we have not discovered the No become audible, like in the preceding book, where the “good” was the so become audible, but in the game of questions and answers inherent in thinking, we discovered it as a singular answer to a singular question. And so let us not continue, like with Creation, to proceed from linguistic category to linguistic category, but in accordance with the entirely real linguistic expression of language where, because for us it is the central part of this whole work, we are going to stay, we shall proceed from real word to real word. Only reflectively—it is only through reflection that we shall be able—and that we shall, of course, be compelled—to recognize also in the real word the representative of its linguistic category. But as such, we do not discover a representative of a category: we discover it directly as word and answer.<sup>4</sup>

**MONOLOGUE**

To the I there answers,<sup>5</sup> in the innermost of God, a You. It is the mutual accord of I and You in the divine monologue at the time of the Creation of man. But just as the You is not an authentic You, seeing that it stays in the innermost of God, likewise the I is not an authentic I, for it has not yet encountered a You facing it. It is only when the I recognizes the You as something outside it, that is to say when it grows from monologue to genuine dialogue, that it becomes that which we have just defined as saying aloud the original No. The I of the monologue

<sup>4</sup>*Wort und Ant-wort*: “word and answer”, a play on words difficult to render in English.

<sup>5</sup>*Ant-wortet*: “answers”; see note 4.

has not yet become a “but as for me,” it is not an emphatic I, an I that obviously speaks only for itself; actually, as we already saw in connection with the “let us make (man)” in the narrative of Creation, it is not yet a manifest I, but an I still hidden in the secret of the third person. The I, strictly speaking, the I that is not obvious, the emphatic and underlined I can become audible only with the discovery of the You. But where does this autonomous You exist which stands freely facing the hidden God, and upon facing him could discover itself as I? There exists a world of objects, there is the Self that is enclosed in its closure; but where is there a You? Indeed, where is the You? This is the question that God himself asks.

“Where are you?” This is nothing else but the question about the You. Not a question about the essence of the You: for the moment it is not even within our range of vision; and we are asking only about the “Where?” Where, then, is there a You? This question about the You is the only thing that we already know about it. But the question is enough for the I to discover itself; it does not need to see the You; by asking about it, and by testifying by means of this question that it believes in the existence of the You, even when it is not within sight, it addresses itself and expresses itself as I. The I discovers itself at the moment where it affirms the existence of the You, through the question about where it is.

**THE  
QUESTION**

It discovers itself—and not the You. The question of the You remains a mere question. The man hides, he does not answer, he remains mute, he remains the Self as we know it. The answers that God finally gets to his questions are not answers; the answers to the divine question of the You are not an I, not an “It is I,” nor an “it is I who did it”; rather, instead of the I, it is a He-She-It that comes out of the answering mouth; the man objectifies himself in order to become “the male human”; the woman, for her part, totally objectified as woman who is “given” to the man, is the one who did it, and she then throws the guilt on the last It: it was the serpent. The Self needs to be charmed by a more powerful spell than the mere question about the You for it to open its mouth saying I. In the place of the indefinite You, in the place of mere allusion to which man only answers by mere allusions—the woman, the serpent—the vocative now appears, the call; and so every exit to objectification is cut off to the man; in the place of his general concept, which can take cover behind

**THE CALL**

the woman or the serpent, there appears that which cannot run away and is simply called the particular, that which has no concept and slips away from the domain which both articles, the definite and the indefinite, rule, a domain which nevertheless includes all things, even if simply as objects of a universal Providence, and not of a particular providence: the proper name. The proper name, which is not exactly a proper-name, not a name which was given arbitrarily to the man, but the name that God himself took for him and which for this reason only—to be a creation of the Creation—properly belongs to him. To God’s question: “Where are you?” the man still remained a You, as a defiant, obstinate Self; when called by name twice, with the strongest fixity of purpose to which one cannot remain deaf, the man, totally open, totally unfolded, totally ready, totally—soul, now answers: “I am here.”

**LISTENING** Here is the I. The individual, human I. Still totally receptive, still only opened, still empty, without content, without essence, pure readiness, pure obedience, all ear. There falls into this obedient<sup>6</sup> listening, as first content, the commandment. The invitation to listen, the call by the proper name and the seal of the divine speaking mouth—all this is only introduction, the preliminary to every commandment, fully articulated beforehand only so that it can precede the one commandment, which is not the highest of the commandments, but is really the only one, the sense and essence of all the commandments that ever may have come out of God’s mouth. What then is this commandment of all commandments?

**THE COM-  
MANDMENT**

The answer to this question is known to everyone; millions of lips testify to it evening and morning: “You shall love the Eternal your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might.” You shall love—what a paradox in these words! Can love be commanded? Isn’t love destiny and being deeply touched, and if it is free, isn’t it a free offering? And now it is being commanded? Surely, love cannot be commanded; no third party can command it or obtain it by force. No third party can do this, but the One can. The commandment of love can only come from the mouth of the lover. Only the one who loves, but really he can say and does say: Love me. From his mouth, the commandment of love is not an strange commandment, it is nothing other

<sup>6</sup>*Gehorsam*, “obedient”; play on *Hören*, with the same root: “to hear, to listen.”

than the voice of love itself. The love of the lover has no other word to express itself than the commandment. Everything else is already no longer immediate expression, but explanation—explanation of love. The explanation of love is very deficient, and like every explanation, it always comes after the event; and therefore, since the love of the lover is in the present, it really always comes too late. If the beloved, in the eternal faithfulness of her love, did not open her arms to receive it, the explanation would fall completely into the void. But the commandment in the imperative, the immediate commandment, springing from the moment and already on the way to being said aloud at the moment of its springing up—for saying aloud and springing up are one and the same thing in the imperative to love—the “Love me” of the lover, this is the absolutely perfect expression, the perfectly pure language of love. Whereas the indicative has all the circumstances behind it that established the objectivity and whose purest form seems to be the past, the commandment is an absolutely pure present for which nothing has prepared it. And not only has nothing prepared it; it is absolutely unpremeditated. The imperative of the commandment makes no forecast for the future; it can imagine only the immediacy of obedience. If it were to think of a future or an “always,” it would be neither a commandment nor an order, but a law. The law counts on periods of time, on a future, on duration. The commandment knows only the moment: it waits for the outcome right within the moment of its growing audible, and when it possesses the spell of the genuine tone of a commandment, it will never be disappointed in this awaiting.

The commandment is thus—pure present. But, whereas every **PRESENT** other commandment, at least when considered from the outside and as it were after the event, could have been just as well law, the commandment of love alone is absolutely incapable of being law; it can only be commandment. All other commandments can pour their content into the form of the law, this one alone refuses to be decanted, its content tolerates only the form of the commandment, of the immediate presentness and unity where consciousness, expression and waiting for fulfillment are gathered together. So, as the one pure commandment, it is the highest of all commandments, and where it takes the lead as such, then all that could also be law by another route and seen from the outside also becomes a commandment. God’s first word to

the soul that is united with him is the “Love me”; so, everything that he could still reveal to it otherwise under the form of law, is transformed without further ado into words which he commands it “today”; all this becomes the setting forth of the one and first commandment, the commandment to love him. All Revelation is placed under the great sign of the today; it is “today” that God commands and it is “today” that his voice is to be heard. It is the today in which the love of the lover lives—this imperative today of the commandment.

**REVELATION** This imperative can only come from the mouth of the lover, and from this mouth can come no other imperative than this one; likewise, the I of the speaking one, the root word of the whole dialogue of Revelation, is also the seal which is set upon every word and characterizes the singular commandment as commandment of love. In the words: “I, the Eternal,”<sup>7</sup> this I is the great No of the hidden God, which negates his own hidden nature and begins and accompanies Revelation through every singular commandment. This “I the Eternal” creates, for the Revelation that takes place in the prophet, an instrument and style of his own. The prophet is not mediator between God and man, and he does not receive Revelation so that he can transmit it further; on the contrary the voice of God comes from him immediately, out of him God speaks immediately as I. In contrast to the master who committed the great plagiarism of Revelation, the true prophet lets God speak and transmits to the amazed audience the Revelation that took place in secret. Strictly speaking, it is not at all that he lets God speak, but at the moment where he opens his mouth, it is already God who is speaking; the prophet scarcely has time to start with the formula: “Thus speaks the Eternal One” or with the still briefer and quicker formula that dispenses even with the verbal form, “Word of the Eternal One,” and before God has taken possession of his lips. The I of God remains the root word resounding through Revelation like a pedal-note, it rises in protest against any translation by He, it is I and must remain so. Only an I and not a He can speak the imperative of love; it must never say anything else except: love me.

**THE RECEIVING**

But the soul, the ready, opened soul, the soul that is watchful

<sup>7</sup>Rosenzweig is using here Moses Mendelssohn’s German Bible translation for God: *Der Ewige*, The Eternal One.

in the uttermost of silence—what can it reply to the commandment of love? For there must be a response; the obedience as regards the commandment cannot remain mute; it must in its turn speak aloud, become spoken word; actually, in the world of Revelation everything becomes word, and that which cannot become so is either before or after it. The soul, then—what does it reply to the demand to love?

It is the beloved's confession of love that replies to the lover's demand of love. The lover does not confess his love—how could he, he has no time for that; before making his confession, his love would already have vanished, it would no longer be present; if he nonetheless tries to, it gives the lie hidden in the present confession. For that which was once known is already known, and hence this sinks back into the past and is no longer the present that was intended in the confession; so the confession of the lover is at once changed into a lie, and it is only right—and also a sign that shows how deeply all this is anchored in the unconscious—if faith rejects the mere confession and if the already open soul of the beloved closes again. The lover really speaks only in the form of the demand of love and not in that of the confession. It is otherwise for the beloved. For her part, recognizing his love is not a lie. Once born, her love is a love that holds, a perpetual love, and so she can hold on to it, she can confess it. Her love, too, is in the present, but not in the same way as that of the lover, it is in the present only because it is lasting and faithful. In the confession, it is recognized as this love that has duration and wants to endure. To the confession everything appears bright and shining for the future; the beloved is conscious that she wants in the future simply to be what she is: beloved. But before, in the past, is a time where she was not yet that; and that time where she was not loved, that time without love, seems to her overlaid with a deep darkness; indeed, because love becomes enduring for her only in faithfulness, that is to say only in relation to the future, that darkness pervades all the past until the exact moment of the confession. Only the confession ravishes the soul in the blissfulness of feeling loved; before this, everything is enveloped in the lack of love, and even the readiness in which this Self has been called by its name and has opened up to the soul still remains in that shadow. So the soul meets with difficulties in the confession. In the confession of the love, it lays itself bare. It is sweet to confess that one loves again and

SHAME

that in the future one wants nothing but to be loved; but it is hard to confess that one was without love in the past. And in spite of all, love would not be that which jolts, startles, enraptures, if the jolted, startled, enraptured soul was not conscious that it had not been jolted or startled until this moment. So there had to be a jolt in order for the Self to become beloved soul. And the soul is ashamed of its past Self and of not having, with its own strength, broken this spell whose captive it was. This is the shame that spreads over the beloved mouth that wants to confess; it must acknowledge its weakness both past and present, where it would like already to acknowledge its bliss both present and future. So the soul is ashamed of confessing its love to God who calls out to it his commandment of love; for it can acknowledge its love only by also acknowledging its weakness, and by replying to God's "Thou Shalt Love": I have sinned.

RECONCILIATION

I have sinned, says the soul, and gives up its shame. By speaking like this, it looks purely back into the past and purifies the present of the past weakness. I have sinned means: I was a sinner. With this confession of the past sin the soul clears the way for the confession: I am a sinner. But this second step is already the full confession of love. It casts afar the constraint of shame and fully surrenders to love. The fact that man was a sinner is washed away through the confession; for this confession he had had to overcome his shame, but it stayed by his side during the time of his confession. It is only now, when he recognizes himself, even though he has cast away his past weakness, as always a sinner, that the shame leaves him. Indeed, the fact that his confession dares to venture into the present is the sign that he has overcome his shame. As long as it stayed in the past, he did not yet have the courage to express himself fully and confidently; he could still doubt the answer he would be given; for from God's mouth the soul had till now heard only the call by his name and the commandment demanding love, it had not yet received any "explanation" or any "I love you," and, as we know, this could not be forthcoming, for the sake of love's boundedness to the moment on which authenticity of the lover's love rests, and in the confession, in the explaining always made up of sentences, it would run aground, really aground, due to "grounds"; for the lover's love in contrast to the beloved's love, which rightly has its ground in it, is groundless. So the soul, which wanted to make its confession, still hesitated, not knowing whether its confession

would be accepted. It is only when it ventures out from the confession of the past to take a risk in the confession of the present that its doubts fall away; by confessing its fallibility as always present, and not as a “sin” that took place formerly, it becomes certain of the answer, so certain that it no longer needs to hear it aloud, it hears it within itself; God does not have to purify it of its sin but in the face of his love, it purifies itself; at the same moment when the shame has left it and where it is surrendered to the free confession in the present, it is certain of God’s love, as certain as if God himself had whispered into its ear, “I forgive,” that which was so desired beforehand when it had confessed to him the sins of the past; now it no longer needs this formal absolution, it is rid of its burden at the moment when it dared to take it entirely upon its shoulders. In the same way, the beloved no longer needs the lover’s confession, a confession so very desired before she recognizes her love; when she herself risks making the confession, she is as certain of his love as if he were whispering his confession into her ear. The recognition of her still present fallibility is the only reason for which the past sin in general is confessed; this is no longer the recognition of a sin—that has also passed, as has the confessed sin itself—one does not confess the absence in the past, rather the soul declares: even now, even in this most present of moments, I am far from loving in the way I—know myself to be loved. But this confession is already its highest bliss; for it includes the certainty that God loves it. It is not from God’s mouth, but from its own, that this certainty comes to it.

So in this highest point of its own self-confession, freed of all shame, when the soul opens up completely before God, its confession is thus already more than confessing its sins, more than confessing its own fallibility; it does not just now become, it is already immediate confession—of God. Once the soul renounces its shame and dares to acknowledge its own present and so becomes certain of God’s love, it can now attest and confess this divine love that it has acknowledged. From the confession of the sin springs the confession of faith; a connection which would be incomprehensible if we did not know that the confession of sins, both in its beginnings as confession of the past and in its completion as confession of the present state of sin, is nothing other than the confession of love made by the soul when it steps out of the shackles of shame to surrender itself in full trust. The

**THE  
CONFESSION**

soul, which confesses its being in the love, attests too with the greatest certitude the being of the lover. All confession of faith has only one content: the one whom I recognized as the lover in my lived experience of being loved—is he. The God of my love is really God.

Islam's confession "God is God" is not a confession of faith, but rather a confession of unbelief; in its tautology, it confesses not the revealed God, but the hidden God; Nicholas of Cusa rightly declares that both the pagan and the atheist could confess this. In the authentic confession of faith, the unification of two things is always achieved, whether of names or of natures: it always testifies that the personal experience of love must be more than a personal experience, that the one whose love the soul experiences is not merely illusion or self-deception, but that he really lives. Just like the soul that becomes conscious of its love in the blissful confession: it cannot do otherwise, it must believe that the one it loves is a legitimate man, it can only be satisfied with the fact that he is the one who loves it; likewise, the soul that is loved gains the certitude that the God who loves it is really God, the true God.

It is only in this faith that the beloved has in the lover that the lover really becomes man—of course, in the love, the soul awakens and begins to speak, but it only gains being, a being visible to its own eyes, when it is loved; likewise, it is only now, in the testimony of the believing soul, that God for his part gains, on this side of his hidden being, the perceptible and visible reality that he had once possessed in paganism, in another manner, beyond his hidden being. When the soul confesses before the face of God and with this confesses and thus attests God's being, then only does God, too, the manifest God, acquire being: "When you confess me, then I am." But what will God answer to this beloved soul that confesses him, saying: "I am yours"?

**KNOWLEDGE** Now, God acquired being within and on the ground of Revelation, a being which he acquired therefore only as revealed God, quite independently of any being in secret: now, he can for his part reveal his identity without danger to the immediacy and pure presentness of the lived experience. For the being that he now makes known is no longer a being beyond lived experience, this is no longer a being in secret, rather a being which has fully blossomed in this lived experience, it is a being that is entirely in Revelation. He does not make himself known before revealing

himself, but there had to be a preceding Revelation for him to be able to make himself known. Before the soul has confessed him, he cannot make himself known to it. But now he must do so. For it is only so that Revelation arrives at its conclusion. In its groundless presentness, it must now lastingly find a ground, a ground that is beyond its presentness, and hence in the past, but which Revelation makes visible itself only from out of the presentness of lived experience. That often invoked reducing of Revelation to Creation is what we finally have in view here. But, as we have just said, Revelation is not explained from Creation forward; for in this case, Creation would be something independent in relation to it. Rather, it is Creation in the past that is demonstrated from living Revelation in the present. Demonstrated, that is to say shown. In the flash of light that shines from the moment of the lived miracle of Revelation, it is a past preparing for and anticipating this miracle that becomes manifest; the Creation which becomes visible in Revelation is Creation of Revelation. It is only in this place, where the characteristic of lived and present experience of Revelation is unshakably established, only here can it receive a past, and it is just here that it must do this. To the “I am yours” of the soul making its confession, God does not answer with the same simplicity: “You are mine”; on the contrary he goes back into the past and is authenticated as the originator and initiator of all dialogue between him and the soul: “I called you by your name. You are mine.”

The “I am yours” of the soul can be said groundlessly, indeed only groundlessly. The soul says it purely out of the lively exuberance of its blissful moment. But the answer, the “You are mine” of the lover, is regarded as a sentence that does not have the I for its subject; as such, it is more than the mere word of one’s own heart, and even if in the narrowest, most intimate circle it sets a relation into the world of things. This word can only be said, therefore, when it adapts itself to the form of the world. A reason must be given for it beforehand, a past as ground for its present; for this past no longer wants to be only the inner immediate present, but claims to be as present in the world. The lover who says to the beloved “You are mine” is conscious of having conceived the beloved in his love and of having given birth in pain. He knows that he is the Creator of the beloved. And with this awareness, he now embraces her and envelops her with his love in the world—“You are mine.”

**REASON'S  
GROUNDS**

But since God acts in this way, his Revelation to the soul has now entered into the world and has become a part of the world. Not that, with his Revelation, something foreign enters into the world. For, although it now remains entirely in the present, Revelation remembers its past and recognizes its past as a part of a past world; but along with this, it also gives to its present actuality the status of a reality in the world. For that which is grounded in a past is that which, in its present, is not merely internal but something visibly real. The historicity of the miracle of Revelation is not its content—this content is and remains its present actuality—but its ground and its guarantee. It is only in this its historicity, this “positivity,” that personally experienced faith finds the highest certitude available to it, after it has had the experience, from out of itself, from the highest bliss intended for it. This certitude does not precede that bliss but it must follow it. It is only in this certitude of the call to faith, this call by its name that took place long ago, that the lived faith finds its rest. Certainly, already beforehand, nothing could separate it from God, but this was only because in its absorption in the present it saw nothing outside of itself. Now it can open its eyes with full serenity and look around itself in the world of things; no thing exists that could separate it from God; for in the world of things, man perceives the objective ground of his faith, endowed with the irreducible factuality of an historical event. The soul can make its way into the world, open-eyed and without dreaming; from now on it steadfastly stays near God. The “You are mine” that is said to it draws a protective line around wherever it sets foot; it now knows that it only has to stretch out its right hand to feel God’s right hand coming to meet it. It can now repeat: “My God, my God.” Now it can pray.

**THE  
PETITION**

This is the last that is reached in Revelation, an overflowing of the soul’s supreme and perfect trust: prayer. It is not at all a question here of knowing whether the prayer will be satisfied. The prayer itself is the answer. The soul prays with the words of the Psalm: “Let not my prayer nor your love withdraw from me.”<sup>8</sup> It prays for the ability to pray, which is already given to it with the certitude of divine love. That it can pray is the greatest gift given to it in Revelation. It is only an ability to pray. Since it is the highest thing, it already goes out beyond the limits of this sphere.

<sup>8</sup>Psalm 66:20.

For with the gift of the ability to pray, an obligation to pray is imposed upon the soul. It is in the nearness to God, which belongs to the unconditional trust whose strength God granted it with his words, gounded in the past, “You are mine,” that its faith finds rest. Its life however remains uneasy; for that which it possesses in the world as ground of its faith is only a part of the world, and not the whole world. Its lived experience fills it completely; the historical reality however, which is behind the experience in Creation, is not the whole of the world, but only a part. So its ability to pray turns into an obligation to pray. God’s voice that fills its innermost fills only the tiniest part of its world; enough, to be sure, for the faith of its worldly reality, not enough to live this faith. The fundamental miracle of Revelation that took place once in the past demands its complement in a further miracle that has not yet taken place. The God who once called the soul by its name—and this “stands firm,” like everything past, but yet has not come to this Third Knowledge—He must one day do it “once again,” but then “before the eyes of all that lives.”

So the soul must pray for the coming of the Kingdom. God **THE CRY** descended once and founded his Kingdom. The soul prays for the future repetition of this miracle, for the finishing of the edifice whose foundation was once laid, and for nothing else. The soul cries out: Oh! that you would tear open the heavens and descend! With great depth, the linguistic usage of the original language of Revelation expresses such an “Oh! that you . . .” by means of the interrogative form: “Who would grant that you . . .” Revelation peaks in an unfulfilled wish, in the cry of an open question. That the soul has the courage for this wish, for this question, for this cry, for this perfection of hidden trust in God, is the work of Revelation. But to fulfill the wish, to answer the question, to hush the cry no longer lies in its power. In its own right it possesses the present; it casts into the future only the wish, the question, the cry. For the future does not appear in the present other than through these three shapes, which are only one. And so this ultimate reality of prayer, although it is its highest reality, yet only half belongs to it: it is ability to pray and obligation to pray, not—real prayer. The prayer for the coming of the Kingdom is always only a cry and a moan, only a short, fervent prayer. There is still another prayer. So the ultimate reality that belongs entirely to the Kingdom of Revelation remains

quiet faith, the soul calmed in God's "You are mine," the peace it found in his eyes. There, the dialogue of love comes to an end. For the cry that the soul moans at the moment of the supreme and immediate fulfillment overflows the limits of this dialogue; it no longer comes out of the blissful calm of the receiving of love, but on the contrary rises, in a new uneasiness, from depths of the soul still unknown to us, and, beyond the invisible but sensed nearness of the lover, keeps sobbing into the very twilight of infinity.

**THE LOGIC OF  
REVELATION**  
**GRAMMATICAL  
CLEANING**

**I**N the rapid to and fro of the discourse, it was hardly possible for us to indicate with sufficient clarity the points where the speaking language of Revelation branches off from the e-stablishing, re-counting, con-ditional language of Creation. We shall resume here and sum it up as it were with the conciseness of a diagram. Corresponding to the past tense, which founded Creation as act and brought it to its zenith in its result, we have here predominantly the present tense. Revelation is in the present, and indeed it is the present par excellence. It looks back to the past in the moment where it would like to give its present actuality the form of the statement, but it sees this past only by shining into it the light of the present; it is only in this backward glance that the past reveals itself to be the foundation and portent of the presently lived experience housed in the I. But in itself and to begin with, the statement form is absolutely inappropriate for the lived experience, as is the case for the event of Creation; on the contrary its presentness is satisfied only by the form of the commandment which is uttered, pronounced, heard and fulfilled immediately: the imperative belongs to Revelation as the indicative does to Creation; yet it does not leave the sphere of the I and the You. That which resounded before in the inclusive, lonely, monological "Let us (make man)" pronounced by God at the Creation of man, comes to its fulfillment in the I and You of the imperative of Revelation. The He-She-It of the third person has vanished. It was only the ground and soil whence the I and You could arise. Now the verb serves to express the lived experience, and no longer the event. For this reason the noun changes from object to subject; its case is henceforth nominative instead of accusative. But as subject of lived experience, the noun ceases to be a thing, and it no longer manifests the basic character of the thing, which is to be a thing among others; because it is a subject,

it is now fundamentally unique; it is in the singular. It represents something unique, or rather it is someone unique, as the Creation of man had let it be heard, the first singular, the “image of God.”

Seen in their objectivity, the I or the You are quite simply individuals and not individuals through the bias of a multiplicity; it is not “the” because it would be “a”: rather, it is individual without a genus. In place of articles, there appears the immediate determination of the proper name. With the call of the proper name, the world of Revelation enters into real dialogue; in the proper name, a breach is opened in the fixed wall of thingliness. That which has its own name can no longer be a thing or everyone’s thing; it is incapable of being entirely dissolved into the genus, for there is no genus to which it could belong; it is its own genus unto itself. It no longer has its place in the world, or its moment in the becoming; rather, it carries with it its here and its now; the place where it is a center, and the moment where it opens its mouth is a beginning.

In the interlacing of the world of things, there was absolutely no center or beginning: but the I with its proper name is in itself at once center and beginning, in accordance with its creation simultaneously as man and as “Adam”: it now brings these concepts of center and beginning into the world; for the I demands, as center of its lived experience, a center, and as beginning of its lived reality, a beginning. It aspires after an orientation, a world where things do not exist indifferently one beside the other, where they do not follow indifferently one behind the other, but a world which would guarantee to an internal order that accompanies the experience the firm support of an external order. The proper name lays claim to names beyond itself. The first act of Adam is to give names to the creatures of the world; once again, this is only a prefiguration; for Adam names the creatures in the order of their appearance in Creation, as genera and as singular creatures, and he names them himself, thus expressing only his demand for names; the demand still remains unsatisfied; for the names to which he lays claim are not names that he would himself give, but names that are revealed to him just as was his own name, they are not yet names where the proper character of the proper name would find a base and a foundation. For this, it is not yet necessary that the whole world should be full of names; there have to be at least enough names to provide a foundation

**THE PROPER  
NAME**

for his own name. Personal lived experience, which is bound to the proper name, thus demands being founded in Creation, that Creation we had already previously called Creation of Revelation, historical revelation. Because it is in the world, this foundation must be spatial and temporal, just so that it can give a foundation to the absolute certitude of its lived reality of having its own space and time. So the foundation must bring to the lived reality in the world a center and a beginning in one, the center in space, the beginning in time. These two things at least must receive a name, even if otherwise the world remains in the night of the absence of names. There must be a where, a place still visible in the world, from where Revelation radiates, and a when, a moment where it opens its mouth, a continuously re-echoing moment. At one time the two had to have been—but this is certainly not true today—one and the same thing, something as united as my present experience: for it is that which must give a foundation to my lived experience. It may be that in its after-effects that which took place in space and happened in time survives in different bearers, the former in God's community, the latter in God's word: yet, at one time, all this had to have been founded all at once. Foundation and Revelation, center and beginning all together, is the Revelation of the divine name. The constituted community and the constituted world live their life until this very day from God's revealed name, until the present moment and into one's very own experience. For really, contrary to what unbelief unceasingly maintains with empty and prideful obstinacy, the name is not sound and smoke, but word and fire. It is a matter of invoking the Name, it is this that must be confessed: I believe It.

**THEORY  
OF ART  
(CONTINUED)**

**THE NEW  
CATEGORIES**

**S**O Revelation is as necessary as Creation; for the name is as necessary as the thing, and cannot be “reduced” to the thing, even if the thing in other respects is the necessary presupposition and the mute prediction of its name. That was the colossal error of idealism, to think that the “generation” of the All really contained the All. Our breaking of the All to pieces in Part One was intended to rule out that error. Then, in the idea of Creation, we had indicated the part of truth that is contained in idealism, while showing the limits of it. In our eyes, idealism had proved to be in competition not with theology in general, but only with the theology of Creation. From Creation, we had sought

the path to Revelation and then ended at the light of a world noon, where the idealist shadow, cast by the created things through the slanting rays of the bright sun of the world morning, shrank until it vanished completely. In the realm of the night when they were asleep, those shadows had been able to cling to a semblance of life; in the realm of created things, they could not be prevented from stepping in, at least as the attendants, and dulling the rounded and colorful reality of things, by mimicking them and turning them into ghostly gray images. But entrance into the realm of revealed names is forbidden to them; there is no “in general,” no when nor where, no “on the one hand” nor “on the other hand” that passes through this gate; the “object” sees its place already occupied inside by names, and the “law” occupied by the commandment; in their confusion, they fall back from the threshold in a turmoil; they are at the end of their strength. But the strength of Revelation has only just begun. It was already effective in the concept of Creation, but only here has it come into its own domain.

So the “categories” of theology show that they exceed those of philosophy. These idealist categories can at most—try to protect the terrain of the first category, that of Creation. The attempt to extend their realm breaks down, even before it has begun. The categorical nature of the series Creation-Revelation-Redemption is shown from the breakdown of that attempt. For among the concepts, it is power and nothing but power that decides the contest for—existence. When concepts prove powerless against others, they simply lose their categorical character in relation to those others. For, having the character of a category means, for a concept, nothing other than being related immediately to existence, and mediated due to the mediation of circumstances, whatever they may be, as for example, experience. The category is “accusation,” it affirms something that is already there, and not something that first has to enter in order to be there.

When we attribute the character of category to the series Creation-Revelation-Redemption and when we deny it to the concepts of idealism, we are of course speaking the language of idealism. In reality, Creation, Revelation, Redemption are not categories; categories never form a series among themselves; they can at most lay the foundations upon which a series can be formed in reality. But Creation, Revelation, Redemption are, insofar as

they are a series Creation-Revelation-Redemption, themselves a reality; and it is a concession to the idealist way of thinking if between the three words we put commas instead of hyphens. But why did we make this concession then? If all that is real is contained in the three words as reality, the real unfolding of the world day, as we maintain, why does it still matter to us whether this real is also subject to them if they were only concepts? For insertion is infinitely more than submission, equally as much as is freedom than slavery. And inserted into the reality of Revelation, all things gain the freedom they had lost in their submission to the slavery of concepts. But then, why this concession?

**ART AND  
ARTIST**

Because all that is real is called to freedom, not the half-real, not the real of a second order, but certainly all that produces, and not that which is produced. The work, that which is made—mind you: only a work, for, from a certain perspective, man himself can be a work—that-which-is-only-work, therefore, proves to be a second-order reality just from the fact that, in the case of the work, the series where all reality of the first rank enters, moves from a real series, from a succession of surveyor's staffs, to a simple multiplicity of categories. For the half-real, this only partly real, like a fragment, the series Creation-Revelation-Redemption is not the house where it is at home, but its tribunal that has the jurisdiction to summon it and arrest it. The questions philosophy tackles in logic and in ethics are their permanent residence in the order of reality, as we have already shown for the logical problems and ethical questions assimilated to them by "intellectualization." For it is the whole of man who thinks and the whole of man who acts; he is commanded quite simply to think and to act, as is every man. But the artist is not a man, he is a non-man; this clearly follows just from the fact that not every man is commanded to be an artist. If artists are only a part of humanity, even a necessary part, and if it is not demanded of every man, except at least of the artist, to create the work of art, it no longer follows that the artist is fully man when he creates his work. The artist is permitted his human deficiencies and is conceded "poetic license" and an "artist's morals." So we concede that we do not acknowledge them as complete men; and it is no accident that so many great artists at one time have abandoned the lie of the artist's life and threw their magic wand into the sea, like Prospero, in order to end their life humanly as simple mortals in

some Stratford.<sup>9</sup> For whereas he who thinks must one day lay down his thoughts before the throne of God, and whereas he who performs his deeds will be judged in their midst, the artist knows that his works do not follow him, that he must leave them behind him on earth from whence they came, like all that does not belong to the whole of man.

Consequently for art, as for all that is empirical, the stations of reality become mere categories. In certain respects, in this domain art is the precedent and representative of all that is “empirical.” Because for all that is half or quarter real—and this is just what the empirical constitutes in its constant singularity—values that which values the empirical. Except that the characteristic of categories which is bound to the “concepts” Creation, Revelation, Redemption can be shown consistently only in art. For this is the only necessary thing within all the empirical, within all the fragmentary real. If there were no shoemakers, men would walk barefoot, but they would walk. If there were no artists, however, humanity would be crippled; it would in that case be lacking the word before the Revelation, the existence of which alone permits Revelation to enter into time one day as historical Revelation and come to be there as something existing from all eternity. If man really only learned to speak at that moment we must recognize as the historical beginning of Revelation, Revelation would be what it must not be: a miracle without the meaning of a sign. But actually, in art, man already possesses language in a time when his innermost is still inexpressible, and so art is the language of what would still be otherwise inexpressible; it is therefore since always, since Creation, that language is entirely there; and so the miracle of language, Revelation, becomes the sign of the divine Creation, and hence authentic miracle. Artists are thus really sacrificed for the humanization of the rest of humanity. Art remains imperfect work so that life can be and become a whole. And for this reason, in all the Books of this Part, as opposed to the Books of the other Parts, art is certainly only an episode, but a necessary one. If in the previous Book we expressed it such that it was matter of something said and not language, we must now add that among all said things it is this that could not remain unsaid. We shall proceed with

<sup>9</sup>“in some Stratford”: reference to Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*.

the presentation of its fundamental concepts introduced in the previous Book, but now under the “category” of Revelation added by this Book.

**REVELATION  
AS AESTHETIC  
CATEGORY**

Just as in the previous Book, we had to determine the category of Creation as to its meaning for art by reducing it immediately to its essential elements discovered in the primordial world, so now we have to do just the same with the category of Revelation. The concepts of Creation in the aesthetic theory spring up under the influence of the “mythical” on the “plastic,” thus in the emergence of the singular from out of the whole, of an aesthetically rich reality from out of a preceding pre-aesthetic that is in proportion to that reality like the Creator to the Creature: it sets it free outside itself, into complete freedom. So the concepts of Revelation spring up for the aesthetic theory under the influence of the “mythical” upon the “tragic,” hence of the whole upon the spiritual content that is to be poet-ized. This is a very different kind of influence from the preceding one. Inspiration is not created, nor set free, but wrests itself away from the totality; the pre-aesthetic whole must sacrifice itself for the sake of the aesthetic inspiration. It is no longer such that the concepts of Revelation spring from the concepts of Creation, but they are as original as the latter; they come immediately from the pre-aesthetic whole, which is related to them.

**THE WORK**

The chief conceptual relationship that we now have to examine will teach us that. The work is exactly as old as its originator. The originator himself became an originator only through becoming originator of the work. As we have explained, one is not born a genius. And at the moment when the pre-aesthetic whole of a man, his “individuality,” his “personality,” frees the genius in him for the work, the work is also there. For the bursting in of the Self upon the personality takes place at the same time as the conception of the work. A “would-be” genius does not exist; this could only be the case if the work were younger than its originator, but they are the same age; where genius awakens, the work, too, makes its appearance. So the work does not appear in the genius nor does it come out of the genius, although conceptually it presupposes the awakening of the genius in man; the work has itself its own process of emergence in man. While the emergence of the genius is the liberation of a distinctive determination not detectable beforehand, just of that genius, from

the pre-genius totality of man, the emergence of the work takes place in such a way that that human totality renounces itself in favor of a something from which it does not itself think that it could have come out of it, but which seems to it on the contrary like something standing opposite it into which it breathes life and soul by giving itself to it. Sprung from the material, from the pre-aesthetic, from the content, the work becomes that which is inspired by the loving excess of human totality which becomes its originator, poured out into it without restrictions or calculations; the material becomes work, the content substance. It is quite clear that this inspiring of the material, this transition from content to substance, does not come from the man as originator, but from the whole man, where only the originator himself could arise. The originator does not lose himself in his work, not at all; but man, as manifold whole, loses his totality and closure and is obviously immersed in the sleeping material until the marble awakens to life. Genius is already much too narrow to be able still to love in the way demanded by this process of inspiration. The work awakens to life in the love of man himself. The inspiration of the work comes from the same depths as does the originator's genius; but genius appears once and for all, omnipotent and elusive, whereas inspiration is ever-renewed opening of the human breast and surrendering of its secret.

In the originator, we had recognized as a fundamental trait the qualities of the "poet" in the original meaning of the word, the creative nature, which consists of "an inner profusion of figures," the mutuality and as it were family resemblance of sudden intuitions. It is this that emerges from the originator, without even him knowing how—the necessary presupposition for what follows. But, once again, that which must be joined to this necessary presupposition cannot be derived from it, but this comes immediately out of the character of being an originator. Being an artist, in the narrowest sense, the capability, does not spring from the realm of creative intuitions. It is not enough to have lucky finds, it still takes "hard work"; he who relies solely on lucky finds and waits for everything from them will end up finding himself in the younger Spitteler's situation, who for a full decade dared not act on the conception of his first work because he thought it, like the conception, had to come "by itself." Of course, genius "is" not diligence, but it has to become hard work and set to work. This is what is meant by the genius having to

#### THE ARTIST

surrender himself. Whereas he does not change his essence by creating—since the figures come out from him and are to be placed into the void, as artist, he is eaten away to the marrow. As creator, the genius calmly rules the figures that he has placed outside of him; as artist, he must give himself to them in passionate self-oblivion; he must renounce his totality precisely for the sake of what he wants to become: namely originator. He must be immersed in the singular aspect that faces him and fill it with the life it can acquire only through this “loving” labor that it rounds off in self-oblivious diligence. On the contrary; the singular aspect that has come alive rewards the originator for the diligent labor invested in it, a labor always new, always as if only it existed, for it makes him conscious of himself. As creator, the genius knows neither what he is doing nor what he is; as artist, in the labor, which is “without genius” and as it were manual, he awakens to consciousness. It is not the abundance of his creations but the singular figure lovingly awakened to life that attests his existence to himself. His creating is his self-creation; in this he is already a genius, but without knowing it; as artist, his self-revelation takes place for him.

**EPIC ASPECT**

Let us move on to the work and place it under the two categories we know so far. In the work, there are very general “qualities” in every work, whatever its genre. These are not those quite general qualities that alone characterize the work as a work in general, but those that more precisely define its genre, once it is there. In every work of art, we can point out all of them, but to different degrees obviously, and the originality of the work of art is based on the prominence of one or the other. The three elements of the work, that it is a whole, that it has details, and that it has soul in it, go hand in hand. When the totality of the work, what it is conceived as, is realized in the completion of the details, there appears in every work what could be designated as its epic side, “epic” without any special reference to the poetic genre; in the epos, this “epic” aspect is itself only a quality. Every work of art comprises a multitude of details; the idea of the whole in itself is as yet nothing at all, only a “hidden” work; the work only becomes manifest only when the idea places the details outside of it. As regards these details, there remains the idea hovering over them unchanged, the origin upon which alone their existence rests in aesthetic relationship. But on the other hand, it can do nothing but participate in the creative production of these

details, in relation to which the idea remains afterwards as foundation, origin, aesthetic point of unity. We well might call this quality of the work “epic,” of being a profusion freely sprung from the one thought of the whole, because it is a matter here of the broadly detailed content—it is not for nothing that we speak of “epic breadth”—“content” understood not as a content that is there before the work, but as all that is contained in the work itself. The question whether this or that turn, this or that verse, or whatever else may cross my mind, “occurs” in this or that work, is the question of the “content” of the work in the sense that we understand this word here.

The content in the other sense, namely as that which precedes the work of art, but that which is first aesthetically inspired in the work of art, is what we could call the “lyric” aspect of the work, as opposed to that “epic” aspect. For the lyrical is the self-surrender to the singular moment, the forgetting of oneself’s own totality and of the multiplicity of things. The whole of the work must be able, just as on the one hand it stands behind the profusion of details as common point of aesthetic relationship, yet also to forget on the other hand every detail. And this detail must be such that all others can be forgotten in it. This aesthetic individualization of the singular, this “singular beauty,” springs from that self-surrender of the whole through which the detail concerned at any given time itself becomes a little whole; in this way the whole depth of inspiration can open in it. Precisely this is the “lyrical” beauty of the moment that becomes possible in the whole of the work of art only due to the fact that this whole is wholly immersed in the singular moment until it gets completely lost. But by being immersed in this way, it emerges itself, in every single case from its being lost: whereas it was only a “hidden” whole opposite the profusion of details, it now becomes manifest itself in the inspiration of the detail itself; for the soul that acquires the singular of course acquires it only from the soul of the whole that is still hidden opposite the details yet is also revealed precisely from here.

In this sense, “epic” and “lyric” are qualities of every work of art, but, as noted, they are there in different combinations. Already the different arts are differentiated among themselves according to the differing occurrence of these basic qualities. The plastic arts are above all “epic” already for the simple reason that they place their works into space. For, space is the form of jux-

**LYRICAL  
ASPECT**

**VISUAL ARTS  
AND MUSICAL  
ARTS**

taposition and hence quite simply the form where the abundance of details can be aesthetically surveyed at a glance. For the same reason, music is first and foremost “lyrical,” for it places its works into the flow of time, and time is the form that always permits only one moment to enter into one’s consciousness; so the work of art here must necessarily be taken in only very tiny particles. Particular beauty nowhere plays such a role as in music. The reception of music is felt much more intensely as “enjoyment” and leads to a much more ardent, not to mention more fervent self-oblivion than viewing works of the plastic arts. For the plastic arts, a degree of objectivity in enjoyment is possible and justified; this is explained by the characteristic of the plastic arts: that which can be surveyed with one glance as an aesthetic whole, thus really “objective.” The “connoisseur” is at home here, as the “sensualist” is in music. Of course, none of these distinctions is fixed, but leaves room for crossing over from one to the other.

**PLASTIC ARTS:  
THE  
CREATIVE  
PERCEPTION**

In the individual work of the plastic arts, the basic thing is that onto which the work is constructed like on a skeleton; and yet, like a skeleton, only the mere beginning, it is only the day of the creation of the work, something which, in the absence of a set expression, we shall call the “vision.” What, then, is the beginning of the work in the plastic arts? It is that the whole of the work is there all at once, before the inner eye of the artist, as a whole developed in all its details. What he sees there has nothing to do with “nature,” even when this emergence of the whole apparently has taken place in view of nature. On the contrary: the “impression of nature” must be absolutely repressed in this creative moment to make room for the blazing up of the vision; we can say: the artist, and even the portraitist at the first sitting, looks at his “subject” so intensely only in order to get beyond the impression and impressions; basically, he looks at it only in order no longer to see it. At the moment he no longer sees it, but in its place a whole that is entirely emptied of nature, directions, relationships, intensities, and consequently of “forms” and “values,” to use the expressions of the atelier, at this moment only is the image there in the artist. It is completely there; seen from the outside, nature adds nothing more at all; in this conception of the first moment, where nature is absent and which we could almost call purely ornamental, the entire execution of the work is already anticipated. But only anticipated. More exactly: pre-

dicted. For the execution is by no means a simple mechanical execution of the image created in the vision: rather, it is a process that is just as original as that vision itself.

The execution takes place in view of nature. In rendering with it, the “form” is added to the vision, form in the sense of the atelier, in the sense Hildebrand used the word when introducing it into the theory, and where it designates the transformation of the natural form into an artistic form. The form therefore presupposes the seeing of the “vision”; for without this, the artist would not have had to come to an understanding with a natural form; but the artist is confronted by nature immediately, and as if he had forgotten the vision. The hidden totality of the work of art, which in the vision had blossomed to become a spatial multiplicity, now wherever it goes rushes headlong into visible nature. The detail, in contrast to the vision, is nevertheless formed in close contact with nature, and even immediately from it. The will toward the work always flows anew, and always fully into every detail on which the artist is working at that precise moment. This is what artists express very well themselves when they say that this or that detail is worked “with feeling.” Of course, this does not mean a sentimental feeling, which has nothing to do with art, nor a feeling with regard to the creation of the work in its entirety, a feeling that was alive in the vision but remains mute here, and rightly so; on the contrary, it is only a matter of the feeling that is absorbed in the individual natural form and by force of this absorption, changes it from the natural form that is as it were mute, only vague, only visible in a nebulous multiplicity, and thus aesthetically invisible, into a speaking artistic form that is as it were determined, unequivocal, and thus aesthetically visible. This is the second act in the emergence of the plastic work of art. To the aesthetically creative perspective devoid of nature, there appears the loving animation of the natural subject by the artistic form.

**PLASTIC ARTS:  
THE  
PROBLEM  
OF FORM**

In music, it is otherwise; to begin with, as noted above, time is the dominant feature here, and therefore the details cannot be surveyed all at once. The placing of the details outside of the whole cannot be, like in the plastic arts, the inner seen vision of the finished work of art itself, for even on the inside, a glance that surveys everything all at once is not possible here; not the vision that is still mute through its absence of nature, but is otherwise already full of all the forms and colors of the final work is

**RHYTHM**

not what comes first here, but really the mute part of art. Hans von Bülow quite rightly wrote in this regard: “In the beginning was rhythm.” The entire musical work, there in all its parts, but still mute music, is in the rhythm, and to begin with, quite simply in the kind of measure valid for the whole, but later, in the elaboration of this measure which only roughly anticipates and arrives at ever finer ramifications of the rhythmical phrase. The vision that precedes the work of the plastic art did not have a properly optical structure, but resembled a complex of directions and proportions—balance, a dominant, compression, undulation, weight—a static complex, accordingly; likewise, the rhythm does not anticipate the work any further in its musical figure, but only in its structure that is mute and dynamic at the same time. One can “beat time” to a musical work, which means: one can present its groundwork without notes, through a succession of movements. The movement is the only possibility for making objective the temporal succession that otherwise sinks down helplessly into the temporal point of the present; and music is based upon the possibility of this objectifying; it is only this possibility that makes it possible to conceive the whole work as a unity. The individual note has no rhythm, but certainly the tiniest sequence of notes does. In the rhythm, the creation of the musical work comes about in its entire length. But here again, although it anticipated everything with its “in the beginning,” Creation is only the silent prediction of the miracle which reveals itself resoundingly.

**HARMONY** Once again, this Revelation must descend in a blind and oblivious exclusivity upon the singular moment of the work. It must inspire it, and, to begin with, without regard for or attention to its neighbor, breathe resounding life into it. It can only appear after the entirety of all the moments has been created in the rhythm; but it does not care itself about the rhythmic value of the singular moment, it makes it resound in itself—for a long time or a short time, what does it matter to it? This inspiration of the detail is the work of harmony. The harmony gives to the single moment that first only shapes a mute member of the whole, sound and life together; it makes it first of all resounding and inspires it, and it gives it atmosphere, both united, exactly as Revelation confers on the mute Self language and soul united. As the single point of the work of plastic art must be “formed,” and not “seen,” as the vision sees ahead of time in order to

create the sum of all the singular aspects, so, too, the singular moment of the musical work is harmoniously inspired with all the profundity of its own atmosphere that seems to render it, as moment and for the moment, completely independent of the rhythmic whole.

We can present the world of art this far here; just because of the categorical use of the fundamental concepts and the construction in the limited form of a genealogical tree that is derived from them, including the categories of Creation and Revelation, we shall only be able to conclude this presentation in the next Book. We shall see clearly then that finally this whole aesthetic theory is still something more than a mere episode, for which it had to be taken here. From the episode, then, let us return to our main track.

**T**HE mute Self comes of age under the love of God to become speaking soul: it was here that we had recognized Revelation. If language is more than simply a comparison, if it is truly simile—and therefore more than simile—then that which we hear in our I as living word and that which meets us resoundingly alive from out of our You must be also “written” in the great historical testimony of Revelation, the necessity of which we recognized precisely from the presentness of our living experience. Once again, let us seek the word of man in the word of God.

**THE WORD OF  
GOD**

The allegory of love, as allegory, goes through the whole Revelation. It is the allegory that keeps coming up in the Prophets. But it is supposed to be more than an allegory. And it is so only when it appears without a “this means,” without any reference to that for which it is supposed to be the allegory. So it is not enough that the relationship of God to man is presented in the allegory of the lover and the beloved; God’s word must immediately hold the relationship of the lover to the beloved, without the signifier making any allusion at all to the signified. And so we find it in the Song of Songs. It is no longer possible to see in that allegory “only an allegory.” The reader seems to be confronted here with the choice either of allowing the “purely human,” purely sensuous meaning, and then of asking himself by what surprising error these pages managed to get into the word of God, or of recognizing that here, precisely in the purely sensuous

**THE SONG  
OF SONGS**

meaning, the deeper significance is hidden, immediately and not “only” in the allegorical form.

Until the beginning of the nineteenth century, it was the second path that was unanimously taken. The Song of Songs was recognized as a love song, and at the same time immediately as a “mystical” poem. One simply knew that the I and You of the inter-human language are also quite simply the I and You between God and man. One knew that in language the difference between “immanence” and “transcendence” is extinguished. It is not although, but because the Song of Songs was an “authentic,” that is to say a “worldly” love song, that it was an authentic “spiritual” love song of God’s love for man. Man loves because, and as, God loves. Man’s human soul is the soul awakened and loved by God.

It was reserved for the turn of the nineteenth century to confuse and to blur this intuitively clear view (clear because rooted in Revelation) of the relationship between the human and the divine, between the worldly and the spiritual, between the soul and Revelation. When Herder and Goethe prided themselves in seeing the Song of Songs as a collection of “worldly” love-songs, this adjective “worldly” meant nothing other than this: God—does not love. And this indeed was the general opinion. It could well be that man “loves” God as the symbol of perfection, and that he was no longer permitted at all henceforth to demand that God love him “in return.” The German Spinozists welcomed the Spinozan negation of God’s love for the individual soul; if God loved, he could at most be the “universally loving Father”; God’s authentic loving relationship with the individual soul was denied, and due to this the Song of Songs was made into a “purely human” love song. For with regard to genuine love, which is precisely not universal love, it could only be between men. God had ceased to speak the language of men; he withdrew again into his neo-pagan and Spinozan hidden being beyond the firmament of “attributes,” covered by the clouds of “methods.”

What this explanation meant as regards the language of the soul as “purely human” later became clear only subsequently. Herder and Goethe had instinctively preserved enough elements from the received tradition to regard the Song of Songs simply as a collection of love-songs and consequently left it its subjective, lyrical character of revealing the soul. But after them, this

path was taken further. If the Song of Songs had to be understood in a “purely human” sense, then one could also take the step from “purely human” to “purely worldly.” One sought very hard to remove its lyrical character. From all sides, one tried to find dramatic action and epic content in it; in addition to the shepherd, a second lover also evidently stepped on the scene, the “king,” and this bizarre obscurity in fact seemed to call for such interpretations and to give them free rein. So the nineteenth century is full of them, and no interpretation of course is like the other; in no other book of the Bible than this one has criticism undertaken such extensive rearrangements of the word order, and even of the disorder of the received text. The aim was always to change the lyrical part, the I and You of the poem, into an obvious He and She of the epic. The language of the Revelation of the soul had something disquieting in it for the spirit of that century, which modeled all according to its image in order to make it something objective and worldly. At first, the denial of the word of God had still taken place in an exuberant joy for the word of man, now qualified by “pure,” but it lost no time in taking revenge on the word of man, which, detached from its immediate, living, trustful union with the word of God, hardened into the dead objectivity of the third person.

Then the counterstroke came from science itself. The hopelessly arbitrary and venturesome character of textual criticism, with all its objectifying interpretations of the “vaudeville,” made it such that the scientific minds could accept a new vision of things. The real cross of these interpreters was indeed the enigmatic relationship between the shepherd and the king, and that of Shulamit to both of them. Was she faithful or unfaithful? To one of them? To both? And so on to the infinity of combinations where at all times the erudite and erotic flair together has been in the habit of excelling. The simple solution of the old “mystical” conception of wanting the shepherd and the king to be one and the same person, namely God, was of course long past. Suddenly, it was then discovered that Syrian peasants, even today, celebrate weddings by using the allegory of a royal wedding, with the bridegroom as the king, and the bride as the woman the king has chosen. And now suddenly the scintillating presence of the two personages side by side was cleared up; in reality, there is only one: the shepherd who during his wedding week can feel as if he were King Solomon in all his glory. So any ex-

cuse for a “dramatic” interpretation fails. Again, all is contained in the lyrical solitude of the twosome of the lover and the beloved. And above all, the allegory has now been restored to “the most original” meaning of the Songs; here already, a supra-sensuous meaning enhances a sensuous meaning: the king who, as bridegroom, he feels himself to be, enhances the shepherd. But this is just the point we want to get beyond. For it is not possible for love to be “purely human.” When it begins to speak—and this it must do, for there exists no other utterance spoken besides itself than the language of love—so when love speaks, it is already changed into something superhuman; for the sensuous character of the word is full to the brim with its divine supra-sensuous meaning; like language itself love is at once sensible and supra-sensuous. To express it in another way: the allegory is not a decorative accessory for love, but essence. It may be that all ephemeral reality is only an allegory; yet love is not “only,” but absolutely and essentially allegory. It is ephemeral only in appearance, but in truth it is eternal. That appearance is as necessary as this truth; as love, love could not be eternal if it did not seem to be transitory; but in the mirror of this appearance, truth reflects itself directly.

**GRAMMATICAL ANALYSIS  
OF THE SONG  
OF SONGS**

In its temporal figure, ephemerality is in the present, it is a moment “having flown away at the speed of an arrow”; yet in the root word I it is that which visibly or invisibly brings forth all the sentences of the Song of Songs. No book in the Bible exists where the word I recurs proportionally more often than here. And not merely the unemphatic I, but also, with the same frequency, the emphatic I, which is precisely the root word in the proper sense, the No become audible. Only Ecclesiastes, consumed as he is by the spirit that always says no, approximates as great a number of occurrences of the emphatic I. The force of that basic negation is expressed also in the fact that, alone among all the books of the Bible, the Song of Songs begins with a comparative—“better than wine”: the quality enters into a comparison here, seen from the perspective of a “point of view” that negates all others, it is not there in its pure objectivity, and existing where it is on its own. That “better” picks up the thread exactly where the “very good” which ends Creation had left it. So the word “I” is now the keynote which is integrated now in the one voice, and now, when it passes to the You, in the other

voice, and blends like a pedal-note with all the melodic and harmonic texture of the middle and high voices. In the whole of the book, there is only one brief passage where the I remains silent; and precisely, because of the absence of these fundamental lower notes, whose continuous presence almost prevents it from being heard, this passage stands out prodigiously, just as we are aware of the ticking of a clock only when it suddenly stops. These are the words of love, which is as strong as death. It is not by chance that we just used them a while back to characterize the transition from Creation to Revelation. In this essential book of Revelation, as we have seen the Song of Songs to be, this is the only passage that is not spoken, but simply told, the only moment of objectivity, the only foundation. In it, Creation visibly hastens forward into Revelation and is visibly enhanced by it. Death is the ultimate point and the fulfilled end of Creation—and love is as strong as it is. This is the only thing that can be said about love, expressed about it, re-counted about it; nothing else can “be” said “about” it, but only spoken by love itself. For love is completely active, completely personal, completely alive, completely—speaking language; all the true sentences relating to it must be words that came from its own mouth, words brought forth by the I. This one sentence alone, saying it is as strong as death, is an exception. In it, it is not it that speaks, rather it is the whole world of the Creation that is placed at its feet, conquered; death, the conquerer of all, and Orcus, who jealously holds onto all that is mortal, collapse before its strength and the violence of its ardor; the mortal cold of the frozen past as object is warmed up again by its glowing embers and its divine flames. In this triumph over the death of the living soul loved by God, all is said that can still be objectively said about it, that is to say, nothing about the soul itself, but only about its relationship to the world of Creation; about itself, a-part from the world of that which is created, only it itself can speak. The ground under it is not swallowed up but overcome. The soul hovers above it.

It hovers in the fleeting strains of the I. Scarcely has one of them echoed and already the sound is carried away into the next one. And yet, mysteriously and groundlessly, it unexpectedly re-sounds again, again to come to an end. The language of love is only present; dream and reality, sleep of the limbs and wakefulness of the heart are inextricably woven one into the other, everything is equally present, equally fleeting and equally alive—

like the deer or the young gazelle on the mountains. A shower of imperatives descends and endows with life this eternally green meadow of the present, imperatives from different horizons, but always alluding to the same thing: draw me near to you, open to me, come, rise up, hurry—it is always the same and one imperative of love. Both, the lover and the beloved, seem for moments to exchange their roles, and yet they are again clearly distinguishable afterwards. While with every new enamored glance he is unceasingly immersed in her features, she embraces him completely, with the one glance of faith in his “being chosen among thousands.” With an infinite tenderness, and the calling of her name constantly repeated in a whisper: “My sister, my betrothed,” the lover evokes the foundation of their love, situated in a primordial world of the Creation forgotten by love itself, and so he lifts his love out of the fleeting moment. To him, the beloved was once “in past times my sister, my wife.” And once again, it is the beloved who is humbled before him, and not him before her; filled with shame, she admits that the sun has darkened her skin: “Do not look at me, my mother’s children are angry with me,” but almost in the same breath, she prides herself in this “darkness” as her beauty—“I am dark yet beautiful like the tents of Kedar, like the curtains of Solomon”—forgetting all shame. For in his eyes, she has found peace. She is his, and she can say of him, too: he is mine. In this blissful “mine,” this absolute singular, what she had so anxiously and unceasingly implored of her playmates is fulfilled: not to awaken her love before she herself should awaken; her love must not be a case of love, one case in the plural of cases, which others could therefore recognize and determine; this must be her own love, not awakened from outside, only awakened within her. And so it happened. Now she is his.

But is she? At the pinnacle of love, is there not one final separation? Beyond the “You are mine” of the lover, beyond the peace that the beloved found in his eyes—this final word of her overflowing heart—is there not still one final separation? With names of endearment, the beloved man has clearly intimated his love to her by evoking the secret sub-foundation of a fraternal feeling. But is the evocation enough? Doesn’t life demand more than the evocation, more than calling by name—doesn’t it demand reality? And from the blissfully overflowing heart of the beloved, a sob rises and starts to spell out the words—words

which upset things and allude to an incompleteness that cannot be fulfilled in the immediate revelation of the love: “Oh, if only you were a brother to me!” It is not enough that, in the half-light of the allusion, he calls the betrothed by the name of sister; the name would have to be truth, heard in the bright light of the streets, not whispered into the beloved ear, in the twilight of caresses in the solitude of the twosome; it would have to be fully true in the eyes of the multitude—“Who would grant” that!

Yes, who would grant that? Love no longer grants it. Actually, this “Who would grant” is no longer addressed to the beloved man. For love always is a matter between two persons, it knows only the I and You and does not know of the street. That longing cannot be fulfilled, then, in the love that is revealed in the immediate present of lived experience, and only in the ex-perience. The sob of the beloved sobs toward a beyond of love, toward a future of its present revelation; it sighs toward an eternal love, a love such that it will never be able to spring from the eternal presentness of feelings; a becoming external of the love that no longer grows in the I and You, but demands to be grounded in view of the entire earth. The beloved implores the lover to tear open the heavens of his eternal presence, which resist her longing for an eternal love, and to come down to her so that she can set herself like a seal upon his ever-throbbing heart and like a ring that fits firmly on his never-resting arm. Marriage is not love. Marriage is infinitely more than love; marriage is the fulfillment on the outside, in it love comes out from its blissful inner completeness and stretches out its hand, in a helpless and unquenchable longing—Oh, would that you were my brother...

This fulfillment will no longer take place for the soul in its being loved. To its cry, no answer comes echoing from the mouth of the lover. The soul aspires to this realm of the brotherliness, beyond the love between I and You, where the dark portents of the impersonal communal life that the natural community of the same blood intimates had been marvelously fulfilled. This realm, this covenant of a supra-natural community, felt in a completely personal way and yet fully present in the world are no longer offered to it through the love of the lover, this love from which it had always till now awaited the cue for giving an answer. If this longing is to be fulfilled, the beloved soul must step out of love’s magic circle in which it is loved and forget the lover and itself open its mouth, no longer to answer, but to speak in its own

**THE MIRACLE  
MADE PUBLIC**

name. For in the world, it is not a matter of being loved, and he who is loved must behave as if it depended only on himself and as if he was not loved, and as if all his love was not being loved, but—loving. And when the soul emerges from the miracle of divine love to enter into the earthly world, it is only in the most secret place of its heart that it will be able to preserve the word of the ancients which gives strength and a blessing for what it still must do, through the memory of what it experienced in that magic circle: As he loves you, so shall you love.

## BOOK THREE

# REDEMPTION OR THE ETERNAL FUTURE OF THE KINGDOM

**L**OVE your neighbor. This is, Jews and Christians affirm, the embodiment of all commandments. With this commandment, the soul declared grown-up leaves the paternal home of divine love to go out and travel through the world. It is a commandment of love like the original commandment of Revelation that accompanies all the single commandments and that alone removes from them the rigidity of laws and makes them living commandments. That original commandment could command love because it came from the very mouth of the lover whom it commanded to love in return: for it was a “love me.” So if the embodiment, the place where all the commandments that arose from that original commandment end by joining, is itself a commandment of love, how is this to be reconciled with the fact that the original commandment of which we were speaking commands the only love that can be commanded? The answer to this question could be easily anticipated in a few words. But we prefer to devote the entire Book that concludes this Part to that question. For, as simple as it may be, there is contained in it everything that the two preceding Books still had to leave in abeyance.

**T**HE soul had surrendered itself before God, in an infinite Yes, pronounced once and for all. It had come out of its enclosure in the Self. Not that it had denied the Self, no: actually, it had only come out of it, out of its enclosure; and there it was, in full bloom. Open, having surrendered to One only, trusting in him only. The soul opened its eyes and ears, but there is only one figure before its eyes, and only one voice strikes its ear. It opened its mouth, but its words were intended for One only. It no longer sleeps the motionless sleep of the Self; but it is only awakened by One and for One. That is why, even now, it remains deaf and mute like the Self, that is to say, deaf and mute before everything that is not the One. There must be more to this. As long as God seemed to be only Creator, he basically had less of a visible fig-

*THE ACT  
OF LOVE*

*THE  
ENCLOSED  
ONE*

ure than in paganism, and there was always the risk of him receding and of being engulfed in the night of a hidden God; it goes the same way for the soul: as long as it is only beloved soul, it is also invisible and without a figure, and it has even less of a figure than the Self once had. For the Self had neither an outlet to the outside nor the drive for it, “not to see, not to hear,” was its only wish, like for the marble statue of Michelangelo; but at least he himself grew visible in the traits of the tragic hero, and at least he was heard in his audible silence. On the other hand, the soul is now open to see and to speak, but this is always only in connection with God; for everything else it is as closed as was the Self beforehand; furthermore, however, it is deprived of this capacity to be seen and heard, of this living configuration which the Self possessed, even if in a tragic frozenness. In the bliss of love received from God, the soul that had merely surrendered has no feeling for the world, or rather for anything outside of God. Just as the mere Creator is always in danger of sinking back again into his hidden existence, so, too, the pure bliss of the soul engulfed in God’s loving look is in danger of returning to its enclosure. It is enclosed man who, like the hidden God, stands at the frontiers of Revelation and separates it from the primordial world.

**ANCIENT  
TRAGEDY**

For, indeed, pagan man, the Self, was closed up in himself; but for all that, he was not shut in, he was visible; he found no access to come into the world, but the world found an access to him, and although he was mute, he could be called upon to answer. In ancient tragedy, what else is the chorus but this breaking in of the outer world upon the hero, this call addressed to the figure that is as mute as marble? This had to be represented on stage; it was not enough to leave it to the feeling of the spectators; it would obviously in itself be quite natural that, facing the mute hero, the spectator would feel drawn to muteness, and, facing the blind hero, he would feel himself likewise growing blind. But this is precisely what should not happen; the hero must become a visible figure, he must be in the world, even if he himself does not know it and does not want to admit it; and the feeling that things are like this is what the chorus compels the spectator to recognize; the chorus that gazes upon the hero listens to him and calls out to him to answer. So the hero was without a doubt closed up in himself but not enclosed in the eyes of the world. In spite of his muteness, the hero was present in the world. Be-

cause he was so, and solely for this reason was any sort of world in paganism actually possible, though the hero was there. For if he stood there like a block in it, he was not for all that simply shielded from its effects; the cloak that makes him invisible and Gyges' ring are so disquieting and so deadly, in short, because they sever all connections with the world.

It seems that the Self wears Gyges' ring and the cloak which render the wearer invisible<sup>1</sup> when the Self alone is considered as the blessed addressee of Revelation; just as paganism's divine figures, withdrawn in their fortresses yet fully alive and visible there, were occluded into the hidden God when considered only from the point of view of Creation. Man defined only as an object of divine love is cut off from the whole world and closed in himself. For any normal sensibility, there is in any mysticism something disquietingly and even objectively dangerous. Mysticism turns into the cloak that renders the mystic invisible. His soul is open to God, but because it is open only to God, it is invisible for the rest of the world and cut off from it. With an arrogant sense of security, the mystic turns the ring on his finger, and immediately he is with "his" God and has nothing more to say to the world. This is possible only because he wants to be absolutely nothing other than God's favorite. In order to be so, in order, that is, to see nothing other than the one track running from God to him and from him to God, he must deny the world, and since it will not let itself be denied, he must actually dis-own it; it is not by chance but rather absolutely essential for him that he treat the world, since it is very much there, as if it did not really "exist," as if it did not have being-there or already-being-there; he must treat it as if it were not—created (for that is precisely its being-there!) as if it were not a creation of God, as if it had not been placed there for him by the same God whose love he claims; it is not that he can, but that he must treat it like a world created by the devil; or, since it seems impossible to reduce this notion of Creation to an act of the devil, we should say rather that he must treat it as if it were not created, but instead put at his disposal, just to provide for needs of the immediate moment when he grants it a glance. This relationship of the pure mystic with the world, which is fundamentally an immoral rela-

THE MYSTIC

<sup>1</sup>The cloak refers to German folktales; Gyges, King of Lydia (687-652 BC) owned a ring that made him invisible.

tionship, is absolutely necessary for him, if indeed he wants to confirm and safeguard his pure mystical state. The world necessarily closes itself off to the closure of the arrogant man. And man, whom we have already seen open up, instead of coming alive as speaking figure, is swallowed up again in his enclosure.

**OPENING UP** How could this closure open up into a figure? For it must reach such an opening if we do not want to deny the deepest foundation of that opening of the soul. Was not that foundation the necessity that brought about the overturning of the secret primordial world from Creation to the miracle of Revelation? The Self had to emerge from its muteness to become speaking self. As beloved soul, it seemed by now to have been attained. But now the beloved soul had suddenly again been engulfed in the figureless state even before having really assumed a figure. This is the grave offense of the mystic, that of detaining the Self on the path toward the figure. The hero was a man, if only in the primordial world. But the mystic is not a man, he is scarcely half a man, he is only the vessel of the raptures he feels. He speaks, certainly, but what he says is only answer and not word, his life is only waiting and not walking forward. But only a man in whom the answer would give rise to the word, in whom the waiting for God would give rise to walking before God, only he would be a true man, fully a man. Only he could counterbalance the hero; for only he would be visible, only he would be as much a figure as the hero is. It is the same as for God in this case: from the figure that was “complete” in paganism, the inner reversal does not at once bring out a new figure, but at first effects only the springing up of that which still lacks a figure, a pure act of its quality, the creative act of God, the opening of the soul, something without figure that only comes to assume a figure when pulled into the trajectory of the world’s star; for it is only in this way that all the forces enclosed in that complete configuration of the primordial world again become effective. The figure that man closed in himself assumes when he is transformed into a totally open man in the waiting and the walking forward, in the lived experience of the soul, and in the inspired act, is, to say it outright, that of the saint. The saint is as much on this side of human enclosure in himself as the hero is beyond it; between them it is the same relationship as that between the revealed God of love and the God of myth, who only lives within himself: between them, to separate them, is the night of the hidden God.

MODERN  
TRAGEDY

At the moment where man opens up to become complete man, he immediately became visible and audible. For now he can forcibly ensure that he is seen and heard; he is no longer a frozen marble statue like the tragic hero of antiquity; not at all, for he speaks. It is no longer necessary to make the spectator see that the hero is visible despite his blindness, that despite his deafness and muteness, he can be addressed; he no longer needs it brought to his attention, he sees it by himself. For the hero of modern tragedy is precisely no longer a “hero” in the old sense, he no longer comes to meet the spectator “frozen as in antiquity”: rather, he is thrown into the world that comes and goes, he is thoroughly alive with impressions and desires, and he does not at all hide his terror before the open grave. This hero who is deeply human and trembles in all his limbs at knowing he is simply mortal—out of this earth his joys spring, and upon his sorrows this sun shines—it is this hero whom the spectator sees awaken to full life in the dialogue; exactly the reverse of the ancient dialogue, all is will, all is effect and counter-effect; no room at all remains for a consciousness that would be elevated above the moment. The spectator cannot do anything but; he must regard the hero as living whom he sees willing and taking action; in spirit, he himself is enraptured on stage; but it is not the hero’s feeling of Self that is awakened in him, and not, consequently, fear and pity, like in the spectator of ancient tragedy; on the contrary, the man on stage compels the man in the audience to enter into feelings of partnership; the events happening on stage do not give rise to fear and pity in him, but to contradiction and collusion. In the spectator, too, it is the will that is aroused, and not intuited knowledge of the future.

This difference is most plainly seen in the moments where the new hero is alone with himself. In the monologue, the ancient hero had still been able, here more than anywhere else, to live very much authentically his situation as hero. Here, alone with himself, he could be defiance of the will totally concentrated and submerged in him, fully Self. For the new hero, the monologues are mere moments of rest, moments where he steps out of his lively and active existence, which he lives in dialogues, in order as it were to go ashore and become a spectator again for a while. Self-observation, his own ordered existence in the world, clarification of decisions, casting away of doubts—always, this modern monologue means a pause of consciousness in the tragic

existence which for the rest of the time unconsciously runs its course in action and suffering. Of course, it is a consciousness that, even if incontestably of an exceptional clarity, always remains limited at the limits of the possible in reality. It is always the vision of the world and of one's own position taken up in it, seen only from a certain point of view, the point of view of the individual and personal I.

And there are as many of these points of view starting with the I as there are I's. And here lies the profoundest difference between modern and ancient tragedy; moreover, because of this, we are justified in contrasting the modern as tragedy of character with the ancient as tragedy of action: all the figures are different among themselves, as different as every personality is from another; every personality has at base another "individuality," another indivisible part of the world, and it goes without saying that each one means also another perspective for viewing the world. It was otherwise in ancient tragedy; here the actions were different, but as tragic hero, the hero was always the same, he was always the same Self buried in himself in his defiance. Opposing the modern hero's consciousness, which is consequently necessarily limited, is the demand to be at least essentially conscious, especially when he is alone with himself. Consciousness always demands clarity; a partial consciousness is an imperfect consciousness. So the hero would basically have to have a perfect consciousness of himself and of the world. For this reason, modern tragedy tends toward something quite foreign to ancient tragedy: the tragedy of absolute man in his relationship to the absolute object. Philosophical tragedies, those where the hero seems to be like a philosopher—a most daring idea for antiquity—seem to us to be the highest points of modern tragedy: Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Schiller's *Wallenstein*, and Goethe's *Faust*.

But even in them, we feel that we have not yet reached the main point. We are still uneasy about the fact that the hero is merely—a philosopher, a man, then, who certainly stands opposite the "Absolute," but, at base, only opposite; absolute man would have to live in the Absolute. So, upon this Ossa of a Faust, new Pelions<sup>2</sup> are piled up in titanic enterprises that are incessantly begun anew, in order to attain the degree of the truly absolute tragedy. Every tragic originator would one day like to write

<sup>2</sup>Mountains of Thessaly. To scale the heavens, the giants piled Pelion onto Ossa.

his *Faust*; basically they are all attempting to do what one of the first ones attempted: to complete *Faust* through *Don Juan*, to intensify the tragedy of the view of the world to the tragedy of life. The scarcely glimpsed goal is this: to put in place of the huge quantity of characters the one absolute character, a modern hero who is just as unique and unchanging as the hero of antiquity. This point of convergence where all the lines of every tragic character meet, this absolute man who not only knowingly stands opposite the Absolute, but who has experienced it in his life and who, from this experience, lives in it, toward which the Faustian tragedies only strive without ever attaining it, because they always stay mired in limited life, is none other than the saint.

The tragedy of the saints is the tragic originator's secret pining, a pining that maybe cannot be gratified, for it could well be that this goal resides at an inaccessible distance from tragedy and that this unity of the tragic character would make impossible a tragedy which for once would be essentially a tragedy of character; so the saint could only become the hero of a tragedy through the residue of non-saintliness that is mingled with his saintliness. But it hardly matters whether this goal is still attainable or not through the tragic poet, even if it is unattainable for tragedy as an artistic work; for the modern consciousness, it always represents the exact counterpart of the ancient hero. The saint is the perfect man, that is to say, he who lives absolutely in the Absolute, the man open to the highest things and resolute in the highest actions, in contrast to the hero who is always enclosed in the same darkness of the Self. In the place assumed by the lord of his Self in the primordial world, there appears, in the new world constantly renewed, the servant of his God.

This configuring of the beloved soul that pines away without figuration in the love of God presupposes however that, in its pure unfolding before God where it risks flying away, something else happens that pulls it back. And it must be a force capable of grasping the wholly surrendered soul at any moment, such that the soul has no more room to "pine away," no more time "to give over piously to its devotions." So a new force must rise from the depths of the soul in order to give it, in the fervor of the saint, its solidity and its configuration that it risked losing in its mystical ardor. But such an emergence only takes place if the

**GOD'S  
SERVANT**

clock of the world moves its hand forward; like before, when God was assuming a figure in moving from Creation to Revelation, the soul now likewise assumes a figure in moving from Revelation to Redemption.

So how is that gate going to break open which still closes man off from access to the world, even after he has heard God's call and has been ravished in his love? We remember that not only the defiance that had come out of the dark primordial world in order to come to the light of the world as faithfulness of the beloved soul had entered into the Self, but still something else. In contrast to the ardently boiling defiance, this was a calm water, the existing character, man's own mode of being. Since defiance constantly reaffirmed its own mode, the Self ended up being frozen, locked in itself. It was this character which, according to its dispositions and the mixture of its elements, made of the hero a tragic hero for the feeling of antiquity; for the ancient consciousness did not at all impute guilt to the hero for fuming and boiling with defiance, and firmly setting his character, but for maintaining a character that was imbalanced and without harmony, such that a particular element stood out and disrupted the beautiful proportion; *hamartêma* is only this natural guilt of disposition making the tragic end of the hero inescapable. For to be a Self is simply the duty and right of every man, whereas to become tragic is more a misfortune determined by the disposition which one day took hold of man as an ethical guilt; it is for this reason that the spectator feels drawn into tragic compassion. Consequently, the character, the daimon by which man is possessed, looks for its way to break free into the open. Once again, it must bring about an internal reversal from a once-and-for-all "affirmation" to the wrestling forth in ever new self-denial of its own origin, the Self closed on itself. But what sort of character is this that at every moment is extinguished and at every moment reappears anew? We had already seen something quite analogous in the preceding Book, with the God who reveals himself. There, it was the essence, the inner destiny for God that in that Revelation assumed the figure of a passion renewed at every moment and yet always violent by destiny. This love of God—could we have found here its human counterpart?

Yes and no! In any case, this is not its counterpart. The love of the earthly and human lover in relation to the divine love was

counterpart, indeed more than counterpart, immediate simile. But what we have just found resembles the divine love only through its connection to the moment, through its ever new presentness, so really only in that which was already determined by its emergence in the sign of the No. But what made the immediate resemblance between the divine love and the human love, beyond that presentness, was the fateful violence with which this love broke in; and in the breaking in that we are now examining, this violence is not at all operative. In the background, it is not destiny, but character. So not an essential destiny, but a daimon that is just as essential. But how was the daimon then, the character, different from the personality? The personality was an innate disposition, the character was something that suddenly falls upon man; hence, this is not a disposition with regard to the great diversity of dispositions, a rupture, or rather a direction. Man, who is one day possessed by his daimon, has received a “direction” for his entire life. His will is now determined to go in this direction that orients him once and for all; having received a direction, he is, really, already judged. For that which is subject to judgment in man, the will, the substantial will, is already once and for all established in its direction.

Established, unless there takes place that one event that could again interrupt this once-and-for-all and take away its strength for judgment and direction: the inner reversal. And it is just this that happens to man, as it happens to God and to the world when they proceed from their enclosure of the primordial world and of the underworld toward the light of Revelation; but now the will of a direction remains just that; yet it is no longer established once and for all, at every moment it dies and is renewed. This will that is always capable of renewal, and really of renewing itself, has nothing of an ephemeral arbitrariness, but in each of its particular acts, it brings into effect all the strength of the character that is implicated in it and firmly oriented: this will—what should we call it? The divine love is marked by destiny, by that which makes it such that God can do nothing other than love, even if with a love which like genuine love is immersed entirely in the moment and knows nothing immediately of a past or a future; so, this force that we have seen breaking forth from man does not at all correspond to this love. For it does not descend absolutely like a higher power marked by destiny but at every moment seems to break forth in its newness and at every

moment to come out of his own innerness with all the violence of the oriented will. What else is this force to be called that comes out of the depths of one's own soul and breaks forth in an eternal newness on the outside, without bearing the mark of destiny, but that of the will?

**LOVE FOR  
THE  
NEIGHBOR**

The answer is not difficult if we remember that this force must complete the surrender required in the commandment of love for God. This can be nothing other than the love for the neighbor. Love for the neighbor is that which at every moment surmounts and yet always presupposes that pure surrender. For without this presupposition, it could not be that which according to its essence it must be: necessary, despite—yes, despite!—its self-renewing at every moment. It would be only “freedom”; for its origin would only reside in the will alone; but man can only externalize himself in the act of love, once the soul has been awakened by God. Only the love received from God makes the act of love on the soul's part more than a mere act, namely the fulfillment of a—commandment of love.

**COMMAND-  
MENT AND  
FREEDOM**

We are returning here to the question raised at the beginning. Since God commands love toward man, love is immediately led back to love toward God, because love cannot be commanded except by the lover himself. Love for God must be externalized in love for the neighbor. So love for the neighbor can be commanded and it must be commanded. This love derived its origin from the mystery of the oriented will. Only the form of the commandment makes visible behind that origin the presupposition of love received from God, and this presupposition distinguishes it from all moral acts. Moral laws do not seek only to be rooted in freedom—as love toward the neighbor also wants it—they actually do not want to recognize any presupposition other than freedom. This is the famous requirement of “autonomy.” The natural consequence of this requirement is that the laws destined to determine this act lose all content, for any content would exert a power which would ruin the autonomy; one cannot will “something” and yet will only “in general”; now, the requirement of autonomy demands that man only wills without conditions, absolutely. And because the law does not lay hold of any content, neither does the singular act ever attain any certainty. In the moral domain, everything is uncertain; all things considered, everything can be moral, but nothing is so with any certainty. In contrast to moral law which is necessarily purely

formal, and hence not only ambivalent, but infinitely ambiguous as regards content, the commandment of love is clear and unambiguous in its content, and for this love which springs from the oriented freedom of character, it needs a presupposition that is situated beyond freedom: *fac quod jubes et jube quo vis*<sup>3</sup>—God “ordains what he wants”: but because the content of the order is to love, the divine “already done” precedes what he ordains. Only the soul loved by God can receive the commandment of neighborly love so far as to fulfill it. God must first have turned toward man before man can be converted to God’s will.

This fulfillment of God’s love in the world is not a singular act, but a whole series of acts; love of the neighbor always newly arises; it is always a new beginning; it does not let itself be deterred by any “disappointments”; much rather: it needs disappointments so as not to get rusty or freeze into a schematic and organized act, or stop welling up in its freshness. It must avoid having any past and must have in itself no will for the future, for a “goal”; it must be an act of love totally lost in the moment. For this, only the disappointment helps it, for the disappointment does not cease to un-disappoint it in the natural expectation of a success that can be expected by analogy with past successes. The disappointment keeps up love’s strength. If it were otherwise, if the act were the product of an orientation of the definitively given will out of which it would come and go freely, with a clear goal, into the infinite material of reality, if it thus appeared as infinite affirmation, it would not be an act of love, but a finalized act, and its relationship with its origin in the self-willed orientation of the character would not be the fresh emergence of the moment, but a determined and resolved obedience. In other words: it would not be faith’s act of love, but—the way of Allah.

**LOVE IN THE  
WORLD**

**T**HE concept of the way of Allah is quite a different thing from the ways of God. The ways of God are constituted by the rule of divine decrees far above human events. But to walk in the way of Allah means, in the strictest sense, to spread Islam by means of the holy war. The Muslim’s piety finds its way in the world in the obedience that traverses this path, by taking upon itself the risks involved, by following the

**ISLAM: THE  
RELIGION OF  
DUTY**

<sup>3</sup>“Do what you ordain, and ordain what you want to.” Augustine.

laws prescribed to this effect. The way of Allah is not elevated above the way of man inasmuch as the heavens are above the earth; on the contrary, the way of Allah means directly the way of his faithful.

It is a path of obedience. This is what distinguishes it, more so than its content, from neighborly love. The war of faith can and must be waged purely “humanly”; in this perspective, Mohammed’s prescriptions, as well as the right of war and of conquest formed on the basis of these precepts, go far beyond the contemporary practice of war, including the Christian; in certain respects, Islam demanded and practiced “tolerance” long before Christian Europe discovered this concept. And on the other hand, love of the neighbor could lead to consequences that were not degenerations, but legitimate developments and which yet at first sight do not at all enter into the framework of this love, like the religious war and the Inquisition. So the difference is not in the content. It resides only in the inner form, which in the way of Allah is the obedience of the will measured by the precept founded once and for all, whereas in the love of the neighbor, it is the rupture, unceasingly begun over again, of the lasting form of the character through the always unforeseen irruption of the act of love. What this act consists of in the particular case cannot be told in advance for precisely this reason; it must be unforeseen; if it could be pointed out in advance, this would not be an act of love.

Islam has before its eyes such an exact, positive image which tells how the world must be transformed by walking the way of Allah; precisely here its work in the world is proved to be pure obedience to a law imposed once and for all upon the will. God’s commandments, at least those of the “second Table,” which specify the love of the neighbor, have this form without exception: “Thou shalt not.” They are capable of wearing the clothing of the law only as prohibitions, only as markers delimiting that which is absolutely inconsistent with love of the neighbor; their positive character, their “thou shalt,” enters exclusively into the form of the one and general commandment of love. The commandments that are clothed in the coat of positive laws mainly concern laws of worship, of the gestural language where love toward God is expressed, that is to say the carrying into effect of the “First Table.” The worldly

work, and above all the highest work is a totally free and unpredictable love; in Islam, on the other hand, it is obedience to “law”<sup>4</sup> decreed once and for all. Likewise, Islamic law<sup>5</sup> seeks everywhere to go back to the declarations that came immediately from the founder, and develops, precisely for this reason, a strictly historical method, whereas Talmudic and the Canonical Law attempt to establish their sentences not by resorting to the historical ascertaining of facts, but by logical deduction. Deduction gives precedence to the present over the past; for unconsciously, deduction is determined by the point where it ends, the present, whereas, by contrast, the ascertainment of facts makes the present dependent on the past. So even in this apparently pure world of the law,<sup>6</sup> we can again recognize the difference between the commandment of love and the law of obedience. But in the exercise of obedience, which is the worldly work of Islam, its concept of man now becomes quite clear. The presupposition of worldly work in obedience is “islam,” the soul’s submission to God’s will, a submission always newly begun, always laborious and arduous. This submission is one, indeed the only act of freedom that Islam knows, and that is why it rightly takes its name from this act; but this submission is not at the origin of the worldly work—it, too, rests on the character, in the character resolute on obedience. It is not the origin of the worldly work that resides here, but its presupposition. The relationship to the world and God, from which the image of the whole of man follows, in Islam has the precursory signs that are exactly the reverse of true faith; so the result is in direct contradiction to true faith. In Islam, unconditional obedience for the worldly work proceeds from the soul’s free submission to God, which is a matter of unceasing reconquest by force of arms. In the sphere of Revelation, it is from the simultaneously humble and proud entry of the soul into the peace of the divine love, an entry that took place once and for all, that the always sudden, always unforeseen act of love proceeds. In the place of the saint and the paradoxical form of his piety which, deluding and surpassing all expectations, scoffs at all imitations, Islam thus substitutes the simply exemplary life of the pious man. Every saintly figure has its absolutely personal traits: to the figure of the saint there belongs the saint’s legend.

<sup>4</sup>Law: *Gesetz*;

<sup>5</sup>Law: *Recht*.

<sup>6</sup>Law: *Recht*.

In Islam, there are no accounts of the saints; their memory is honored, but this memory is without content, it is only the memory of piety in general. This piety that simply obeys is based on a free self-denial, laboriously re-conquered at every moment: it is noteworthy that it finds its exact counterpart in worldly piety which freely inserts itself into the general law, as, in modern times, the ethics of Kant and his followers, for example, and even the common consciousness in general tried, for their part, to develop it in opposition to the immense and unpredictable excess of the saint.

**THE  
KINGDOM**

**THE  
NEIGHBOR**

SO action is oriented toward the world; the world is the other Spole toward which the love of neighbor strives. In the idea that God creates or that he reveals himself, there was already the reference to something else he creates and to which he reveals himself; here, too, there is the reference to a something that man loves. The commandment designates this something as the neighbor, and of course, both in the holy language and in Greek, the word means the neighbor at the precise moment of love; it matters little what he was before this moment of love and what he will be afterwards, in any case, at this moment, he is only the neighbor for me. The neighbor is therefore only a representative; he is not loved for himself, he is not loved for his beautiful eyes, but only because he is just there, because he is just my neighbor. In his place—in this place that is for me the one neighboring on me—there could just as well be another person; the neighbor is the other, the *plesios* of the Septuagint, the *plesios allos* of Homer.

The neighbor is therefore, as just noted, only a place-keeper; oriented by way of substitution toward the one who is, each time in the fleeting moment of his present moment, his neighbor, love is really oriented toward the embodiment of all those—men and things—that could at any moment take this place of its neighbor, in the last resort it applies to everything, it applies to the world. How? We shall leave aside this point for the time being. To begin with, we prefer to consider that other pole, namely the world.

**THE  
UNFINISHED  
WORLD**

And here a very strange difficulty crosses our path, but it is a difficulty whose solution will illuminate the entire path we have traveled along till now. As a matter of fact, both for God and for man, the emergence of the “Yes” chronologically preceded the

emergence of the “No”: God created “first” and “then” revealed himself, man “first” received the Revelation and “then” made ready to work in the world; accordingly, each time that which had happened once and for all preceded that which was happening in the moment; but this temporal relationship is reversed for the world. The world, that is to say in Creation, makes itself into that which at every moment is renewed as a whole; it makes itself into the “creature,” and the Creator into Providence. So only the “Yes” remains for Redemption—for, Revelation does not take place for it immediately, but is an event between God and man. With God and man, what came first was the wide unfolding of their own being, which their own action only had to recapture inwardly and to unify to make it a figure; this, however, is what only comes afterwards in the world. The self-denying act in which is revealed at every moment its momentariness, its being whole in every moment, is first here, but the totality of its being in the full duration of fulfilled time is still to come. To say it paradoxically: its self-“revelation” as creature, which took place in Creation, will find its foundation of being-“created” only in Redemption. Or maybe more clearly: whereas in God and man, the essence is antecedent to the phenomenon, the world is created as phenomenon well before it has access to Redemption, which supplies it with its essence.

The reason for this particular position of the world resides in what we have already shown in the transition from Part One to Part Two: God and man already are, the world is becoming. The world is not yet complete. Laughter and tears are still in it. And the tears are not yet wiped away on all faces. This state of becoming, of incompleteness, can only be grasped by seeing the objective relationship to time from another angle. As a matter of fact, the past, the already-complete, is there from its beginning to its end, and an account can be given of it—for all counting begins from the beginning of the series; but the future can be grasped in its reality, that is to say as future, only by means of anticipation. So, if one wanted to give an account of the future, one would surely turn it into a frozen past. That which is future calls for being predicted. The future is experienced only in the waiting. Here the last must be the first in thought. In the world, insofar as it is still becoming, the natural order of its self-configuring, the path from the inside to the outside, from the essence to the phenomenon, from Creation to Revelation, changes

**THE  
BECOMING  
WORLD**

direction; the configuring must begin through the phenomenon which denies itself, and end with the essence, straightforwardly and totally confirmed. The becoming of the world is not, like that of God and the soul, a becoming from the inside to the outside, but the world is right away complete self-revelation while remaining quite inessential; like its framework, "nature," it is there in broad daylight, and yet it remains mysterious in broad daylight—mysterious because it reveals itself before its essence exists. In every inch therefore it is something that is coming, or rather: a coming. It is that which must come. It is the Kingdom.

It is only in the Kingdom that the world would be as visible a figure as the plastic world, the cosmos of paganism. It is an opposition similar to the one we recognized for God between the mythical God and the revealed God, and for man between the hero and the saint. For the creature is no longer a figure capable of holding its own against the cosmos. For the mere creature, it is like previously for the soul loved by God and for God whose power is creative, even if the analogy is not complete: it is in danger of disappearing. Of course, in conformity with its pre-sign of the No, this will be in another direction than the two others. As a matter of fact, the creative power threatened for example to withdraw "humbly," as the great freethinker Schiller put it, behind the Creation, and the fervor of the soul loved by God had constantly tried to close up proudly upon itself again; in contrast to this, the creature is not threatened with sinking back again into the world of the primordial world it left behind. For, seen retrospectively from the creature's dependence, concentrated in the moment of its existence, that plastic cosmos appears like a dreadfully fixed cosmos, resting upon itself, in need of nothing. This cosmos does not appear to be hidden like God seen retrospectively from Creation, nor closed off like man from Revelation; it is neither invisible like the hidden God, nor unapproachable like man closed upon himself, but it is ungraspable: it is an enchanted world.

**ENCHANTED  
WORLD**

Before, that world had been entirely conceivable; it was from the time where it contained all life; but here a new life has begun. The world turned back into the shadows of the primordial world and the subterranean world, as much as it was conceivable before, so much now does it seem to escape from any approach and conceptualization of the new life. Even the ancient image of the world had not been magical at all, but thoroughly self-

evident; for one was at home in this world, and only in it, and consequently one felt well in it. But after entering into the world of Revelation, this same image of the ancient world, where one felt well before, this Platonic and Aristotelian cosmos suddenly became a world where one no longer feels at home, a disquieting world. To those who know longer lived in it, the plastic cosmos appeared to be like a magic and enchanted world; just as the mythical God had become a hidden God when looked at only through the concept of the Revelation of the Creation, and as tragic man had become closed man when seen only through Revelation. It is only now that magic has really become sorcery in this enchanted world—and not before, as long as the world was still a self-evident cosmos.

For antiquity, magic and astrology had been arts that were no less strange than the arts of technology are for today's world. They only became strange when this ancient notion of the world was replaced by another concept, and we started to live in this new concept while seeking, simultaneously, to keep alive the elements of a vanished world—for this is what it had now become. Only the concept of the world as creature had driven those arts into the wan light of sin. For in any case, God's Providence did not at all tolerate any interference by means of magic, or any explorations of the unknown through artificial mediation. Of course, as the new science of the world, from the seventeenth century on, began to turn away from the ancient image of the world, the enchanted world started progressively to fade from the horizon; but now the world was unilaterally understood as existence, and only as existence, momentary existence comprehended by means of the entire space in the formula of correlation—for, correlation is the category of the new science that really establishes the view; substance and causality are only supplemental categories to elaborate the material; but in fact the pure idea of the creature was substituted for the spherical cosmos, rich in figures. And this idea of existence of course excludes a relapse into the representation of the enchanted world, but it was far from giving to the world the foundations and the stability that the ancient cosmos possessed. Existence was so disenchanted that it constantly threatened to vanish into pure representation. The disenchantment is a danger similar to the one that threatens God when he hides himself again and man when he closes himself off again. That it is a matter of dis-enchantment,

**DISENCHANT-  
MENT**

and not of an en-chantment, comes from the fact that the creature is revealed in the sign of the No, whereas the Creator and the beloved soul are revealed in the sign of the Yes. So the creature alone is, in the most proper sense, the “poor creature,” which accords to nature and modern science’s concept of the world in general, just as it ventures out from under the strong protection of divine providence and is always engulfed in the nothing, because in itself it has no essence and hence no stability. In order for it to become figure, realm and not simply being-there bound to the moment, it must acquire essence, it must confer duration on its momentariness, on its existence—but, what exactly?

**BECOMING  
ESSENCE**

There had entered into the plastic cosmos of the primordial world both the spiritual being and the plenitude of the phenomenon, and finally as well the genus and the individual. As we explained before from the concept of future which predominates here, they had been introduced in the reverse order to what would be expected according to the process between God and man, that is to say in the same order of their entry, which means precisely a reversal. In the creature, the genus, namely the universal, had seceded, but in the sign of the No, hence in a permanent self-denial from moment to moment: every moment contains all the richness of the creature, but only for this precise moment. The world has “being-there”; where it is, it is, and nowhere else. Now the other thing must appear, the profusion, the individual; and if it had entered into the plastic world as momentariness, in the boundless surprise of birth, now it must return as something lasting, something stable. But then what is a profusion that is lasting, an individuality that has in it something that does not appear, but, once there, stays there? Does there exist in the world an individuality that is so not only by defining itself in relation to other individualities and which, for this reason alone, is ephemeral, because it does not have in itself the foundation of its figure, but outside of itself, or in other words: because it does not delimit itself? Is there an individuality that sets its own limits, that determines its size and figure by itself and can only be restrained but not determined by others? Such individualities do exist somewhere in the world, but scattered, and they cannot be strictly isolated anywhere, but they do exist, and their first steps are as old as Creation itself—their name is: life.

**THE LIVING**

Organic life in nature is this present reality in one way or another from all eternity, in any case this reality cannot be deduced

from mere existence, from the mere—expressed idealistically—objectivity of the world. It is only the visible sign of a concept of life that extends its domain of intervention well beyond the limits of organic nature. Not only living essences exist, but also institutions, societies, feelings, things, works—everything, really everything can be alive. But what does this being-alive mean, then, as opposed to mere existence? Really only what we have just now already said: the figure that is its very own, forming itself and coming out from within and hence necessarily lasting. Animals and plants, and every “organism” in the wider secondary sense, are not mere products and mere results of forces, but once there, a something that seeks to affirm itself in its own form against all forces. Life offers resistance; it resists, that is to say, death. It is this that distinguishes it from mere existence, which is only object, simply there in front of me, and especially for knowledge. Through this we already see what life adds to existence. It withstands the inherent weakness of existence as creature, existence that is in itself so rich and so all-inclusive due to firm, immovable, structured essences in itself; with regard to the “phenomena” of existence, the living essences are really “essences.” Whereas knowledge of existence is knowledge of its changes, knowledge of life would be knowledge of its preservation.

But by preserving its lasting quality through resisting life shows that it does not entirely correspond to what we are seeking. For we were not seeking lasting points, or, as it were, centers of life in an otherwise lifeless world but we were seeking a world that is itself lasting. We were seeking an infinite lasting quality that could serve as a foundation or a support for existence that is always confined to the moment, thus a substance of the world under the phenomena of its existence. We were seeking an autonomous infinity, and we found all sorts of finitudes, an indefinite quantity; we found a finite that was finite precisely by virtue of its essence; for it obtained its lasting quality through its resistance against something else.

How is this contradiction to be solved? Once again, like everything that seemed to us to deviate from what we had previously dealt with: by simply thinking that what we are seeking is not provided in advance, but is something that is only coming. We are seeking an infinite life, and we are finding one that is finite. The finite life that we are finding is therefore simply the one

which-is-not-yet-infinite. The world must become fully alive. Instead of several centers of life, like raisins in a cake, the world must become fully alive. Existence must be alive through and through. That it is not yet so means simply, once again, that the world is not yet finished. And the fact that this not being finished strikes us only now, and not before, with the notion of existence, is due to the fact that existence is always only momentary and therefore beyond the question of “finished” or “not finished”; actually, the moment knows only itself; but when it searches for a lasting reality, once-and-for-all, in order finally to give a sub-foundation and stability to that being-there, we ascertain that what we are seeking—is not there yet, or more exactly; that it is there as not yet existing. Life and existence do not overlap—yet.

The profusion of the phenomenon that had begun to sparkle in the cosmos, the ineffable richness of individuality, is that which assumes duration, figure and solidity in the living. Whereas that profusion sprang up in the sign of the No, thus ephemeral in itself, the living aspires to eternity, for it had emerged in the sign of the Yes. It wants to persist in its figure. Without that disordering profusion, there is no foundation for the depth of the living richness. If this profusion were only a fixed “given,” as idealism would have it, it would not be the soil of the primordial world where the vitality of the kingdom can blossom; for every emergence into the manifest world must be an inner reversal; from that which is fixed, therefore, there could arise only that which moves, a reality in constant mutation. From the constantly renewed profusion, and from it alone, there grows the vitality that possesses tranquil duration that hands down its figure from the past to the present. It is not the generation of a dead being from a universal law derived from thought, but only the plastic cosmos in its very colorful factuality that can reverse itself to become the Kingdom. The hero’s defiance, replete with character, was the only root whence there could spring up the faithfulness of the saint surrendered to God and turned toward the world, and only the living god of myth was the native soil for the loving God of Revelation; likewise, it was solely in the world empire of Augustus Caesar that this political realization of the plastic image of the pagan world could commence the appearance of the Kingdom of God in the world.

The world is destined from the beginning to come alive. Just as in order to become sign of this destiny, the beginning of the organic is lost in the thick fog of the past, so, too, on the way leading to its end, it cannot be grasped. But that which lives in this way from all eternity are always only centers of life. So the portion of vitality must increase, and it must do so through an inner necessity; this necessity, too, is from all eternity. For, if the world is not created as a world finished from the beginning, it is so with the destiny of having to be so. The future of its being finished is created as future at the same time that it is. Or, to speak only of the portion that returns to the world, for which the task of finishing is set (for existence only has to renew itself constantly and not finish itself): the Kingdom, the vitalization of existence, comes from the beginning; it is always coming. So its growth is necessary. It is always in the future—but in the future it is always. It is just as much present as it is in the future. Once and for all, it is not yet there. It is coming eternally. Eternity is not a very long time, but a tomorrow that just as well could be today. Eternity is a future, which, without ceasing to be future, is nevertheless present. Eternity is a today that would be conscious of being more than today. And to say that the Kingdom is eternally coming means that its growth is no doubt necessary, but that the rhythm of this growth is not definite, or, more exactly: that the growth does not have any relationship to time. An existence that has once entered into the Kingdom cannot fall back outside again; it has entered under the sign of the once-and-for-all, it has become eternal.

**GROWTH OF  
THE  
KINGDOM**

But here it is seen that the necessary growth of the Kingdom is not simply homogeneous to the growth of life. For life seeks to last, certainly, but it gives battle to an uncertain result; it is certainly not a necessity that all life must die, but this is very largely the experience. So, although the growth of the Kingdom is built on the growth of life, the Kingdom still refers to something else which alone guarantees immortality to life, which it seeks for itself and which the Kingdom must demand for it. It is only when life becomes immortal that it represents a sure guarantor of the Kingdom. In order to become manifest figure, the world demands therefore, in addition to its own internal growth, to this precarious growth of life that is never sure that it will last, an influence from the outside. The effects

**IMMORTALITY**

of this operation cross through its vitality in the work of Redemption. Now we shall see how.

*ISLAM: THE  
RELIGION OF  
PROGRESS*

FOR the moment, we shall cast one last comparative glance at Islam. And once again, the concept of life that is at the base of the idea of Kingdom will bring further clarity. Islam, too, makes the world in its individuality the object of Redemption. The way of Allah leads the believer into the real peoples of the real times. But how are these peoples and times imagined? In the Kingdom they arise in a continuous growth of vitality, but unforeseeably so; it can't be said with certainty if a people, a time, an event, a man, a work, an institution, will really attain immortal life; no one knows that; but an increase of life, even if it is not eternal life, is signified in spite of all by the figure which will end by being again engulfed at the end. For the figure also remains in the works, even in the works that will end by entering one day, somewhere, into the Kingdom.

In Islam, on the other hand, all worldly individuality remains under the sign of the primordial world, under the No. It is always new; it does not grow gradually. Here every epoch is really immediately related to God and not just every epoch, but really every individuality. So, since antiquity, it is once again on the soil of Islam that the first real interest in history arises in the modern sense, an interest very properly scientific, without the background of a "philosophy of history." In the Christian world, that background prevailed, and the aspiration to make visible to man's eyes the action of God in history due to the growth of his Kingdom determined the presentation of history; and in spite of the deceptions due to the course of events which always teaches that the ways of God are impenetrable, this aspiration always does and will sustain the Christian presentation of history. In contrast to that growth of the Kingdom, which takes place by an internal necessity, Islam develops a most characteristic doctrine, the doctrine of the Imams. Every time, every "century" since Mohammed, has its "Imam," its spiritual leader; he will guide the faith of his times on the right path. The times are therefore not at all related to each other; there is no growth from one to the other, no "spirit" that goes through them all and binds them to make a unity; and outside of the recourse to the inherited doctrine still proceeding from the Prophet himself, there remains to these times, where the doctrine leaves in the lurch the demands

of the time, the refuge in the consensus of the living collectivity—in the “ijma”: “Never will my community take communion in error,” Mohammed is said to have promised. This consensus is once more something totally contemporary which cannot be compared or rather is exactly the opposite of the idea of the infallible Church: the Church is infallible only as a living guardian of the received doctrine; and it is likewise opposite to the rabbinical concept of oral teaching which attributes to the current decree, obtained by a purely logical deduction, an immediate origin in the Revelation at Sinai itself. But what clearly stands out from this doctrine of the “ijma,” as from that of the Imam, is the striking analogy to the specifically “modern” conception of “progress” in history and of the position of the “great man” in it.

In this analogy, however, the main thing is that, in relation to the growth of the Kingdom, which is necessary and yet unforeseeable because of the contribution of the “other” that we mentioned, the idea of the future is poisoned at the root. For there belongs to the future above all the anticipation, the fact that at every moment it fails to wait for the end. It is only in this way that it becomes the time of eternity. For just as times in general are distinguished from each other by their relationship to the present, so, too, the present moment, which had received from the past the gift of permanence, of duration, which at all the times had received being from the present itself, this present moment receives only here the gift of eternity. That every moment can be the last renders it eternal. And just the fact that every moment can be the last makes it the origin of the future, as a series of which every member is anticipated by the first one.

Yet, this idea of the future, this fact that the “Kingdom is among you,” that it is coming “today,” this externalization of the moment, all this is erased in both the Islamic concept and in the modern concept of the epochs of time. Here, of course, the times represent an infinite series, but infinite does not mean eternal, infinite only means “always.” In the Islamic concept of time, as it is developed in the doctrine of the Imam and in the notion of “ijma,” the sequence of times is drawn out into the endless indifference of a succession: such that, even if every single member of the succession is entirely momentary, their sum, when added up, would more closely resemble a past than a future. That every time might be in the same immediate relationship to God,

is this not also precisely the conception of the pure historian who is effaced to the point of becoming the mere instrument of the knowledge of the past? And in the idea of progress, it seems certain at first sight that at least the connection, the growth, the necessity are alive, just as in the idea of the Kingdom of God. But very quickly it betrays its inner essence through the concept of infinity; if “eternal” progress is also mentioned, the allusion is always only to “infinite” progress, a progress that incessantly progresses further and whose every moment has the assured certainty that its turn will come, that it can thus be as sure of its future advent as is a past moment of its having already been there. So nothing runs more counter for this authentic idea of progress than the possibility that the “ideal goal” could and must be realized perhaps from the moment that is coming, and even at this moment. This is almost the *shibboleth* by which one can tell the believer in the Kingdom (who uses the word “progress” only so as to speak the language of the times and in reality means the Kingdom) from the true worshipper of progress: whether he does not defend himself in the next moment against the perspective and duty of anticipating the “goal.” Without this anticipation and the inner pressure to realize it, without “the desire to make the Messiah arrive before his time” and the attempt “to do violence to the heavenly Kingdom,” the future is not a future, but only a past drawn out to an infinite length, a past projected forward. For, without this anticipation, the moment is not eternal but something that interminably crawls along the long strategic roadway of time.

**GRAMMAR OF  
PATHOS (THE  
LANGUAGE OF  
THE ACT)**

**GROWING  
AND TAKING  
ACTION**

**F**ROM two sides, therefore, there is a knock at the locked door of the future. In an obscure growth, shielded from all calculation, the life of the world shoots up. In the warm superabundance of the heart, the soul, sanctifying itself, seeks its path toward the neighbor. Both of them, the world and the soul, knock at the locked door, the world by growing, the soul by taking action. For all taking action is projected into the future, and the neighbor whom the soul seeks is always right before it and is only anticipated in the one who in this moment is there in front of it. Owing to this anticipation, growing and taking action become eternal. But what is it that they are anticipating? Nothing other than—each other. The taking action of the soul, turned consciously and actively toward the given neighbor in the mo-

ment, obviously anticipates the whole world in the will. And the growth of the Kingdom in the world, when it anticipates in hope the end for the moment that is coming—what could it expect for this moment that is coming if not the act of love? Is not this expectation of the world a way of forcing of that act? If the Kingdom grew only with mute, obscure, impulsive drives, and did so non-stop until the infinity of time, advancing interminably with an end before it, located only in infinity, then the act would be paralyzed, and since the furthest distance would be infinitely out of its sight, that which is nearest and the nearest person would be inaccessible to it. But where the Kingdom advances in the world with unforeseeable steps and where every moment must be ready to receive the plenitude of eternity, the furthest distance is that which is expected at the nearest moment, and so that which is nearest, that which is always only the placeholder of the farthest, of the highest, of the whole, becomes accessible at every moment.

This is how man and the world act indissolubly upon each other and with each other. Such is the entanglement of all action: the freedom is tied to the object it has in view, the good would only be possible in a world that is already good, the individual could not be good if all things are not good—and yet, the Good can only reign in the world thanks to good people, to use the extraordinary words of the Queen of Prussia. It is indissoluble, for man and the world are indissolubly bound. The taking action detaches the act from man, but then binds the detached act in its turn to the world. And the expectation detaches the Kingdom from the world; for if the world did not expect, it would proceed “endlessly” into infinity and the Kingdom would never come; but this expectation then binds to the action of the man that which has been detached. From this reciprocal bond they cannot themselves become detached; for in becoming detached themselves, they only bind themselves more strongly into each other and to each other. They cannot themselves come unbound from each other, they can only be together—un-bound, released by a third party who would release them one with the other, one through the other. To man and the world, only One Third Party is added, only One can become their Redeemer.

It is only here that such cooperation exists. From God to the world, from God to man—each time this was a one-way step.

God had to create the world so that like a disenchanting creature it could keep close under the wings of his providence. God had to call man by his name so that he, an opened soul, might open his mouth. Here alone the two poles are right away related to each other, and everything that happens between them happens simultaneously in each of them. The discovery of the thing took place in the series of words that goes from the root word of the thingliness up to the completed thing. The awakening of the soul happened in the dialogue, having begun in the root-I springing up from its awakener. But the Redemption of the soul by means of things, and of things owing to the soul, takes place in the duet sung in the same breath by the two, in the common sentence where the voices of the two pronounced words harmonize. In Redemption, the great And closes the arch of the universe.

So no root word springs from the And, for it was not even a root word itself, but only the bridge that connects the two root words, the And between the Yes and the No. The And before language does not reveal itself in a root word, but in a genealogical sentence, hence a sentence made up of the two root words. The And is not original, as we recall the role it played beside the three respective elements of the pre-world, there is no “something” that comes out of it; it is not, like the Yes and the No, in an immediate relationship to the Nothing, rather it is the sign of the process that makes the finished figure grow among the elements that sprang up in the Yes and the No. So it is something quite other than the idealist “synthesis”; as can best be seen in its historical origin with Kant; here it is a really creative synthesis of a merely “given,” dead “material,” so it ends by re-establishing the thesis in the course of the unfolding of the idealistic movement: practically saying that it becomes the properly creative principle of the dialectic; the antithesis becomes the mere mediation between the establishment and the re-establishment of the thesis, and in these constant rediscoveries of the thesis, the working of knowledge is carried out toward an always profounder cognition—it is an endless setting to work that is at the same time an absolutely idealist version of the fundamental idea of Plato: cognition as recognition; but in the case of its originator, this idea was still understood in an absolutely non-idealist sense, as a creation after the event, in thought, of non-created being. This conception of

the synthesis therefore implies quite essentially a mediation by the anti-thesis; the antithesis is transformed only in the transition from the thesis to the synthesis; it is not itself the original. The situation is seen at once if one thinks of Hegel's conception of the dogma of the Trinity: for him, the essential consists in recognizing God as Spirit, and the God-Man means only the "how" of this equation between God and the Spirit. Or we could also think of the crowning triple-time rhythm of his *Encyclopedia*, where nature is only the bridge between logic and the spirit, and where all the emphasis rests on this pair.

With us, however, the original character of the No is at least equivalent to that of the Yes, and the "factuality" of the Revelation is at least equivalent to that of Creation: that is our fundamental conception; accordingly, our synthesis also, the And, must receive a different meaning; precisely because thesis and antithesis must each be "creative," this synthesis is not entitled to be so itself; it can only record the result; it is really only the And, only the keystone of the edifice constructed on its own pillars. Nor can it become thesis again, for the keystone cannot again become the foundation stone, as is necessarily the case in Hegel; it doesn't end in a dialectical process; on the contrary, insofar as this unique progression of periods constituting the day of the world assumes categorical meaning, these categories have the value of categories in the old sense: they are criteria for measuring and ordering reality, and not an inner force in which this reality moves itself. In the strict and immediate sense, there exists only one fully unique and particular progression, absolutely not admitting of a universal concept: it is the progression Creation-Revelation-Redemption. The end is really end, and as such, it does not maintain any special relationship with either of the two processes that arose in the beginning; at most, it is in relation with the beginning itself; Redemption is not more intimately bound to Creation than to Revelation, nor more intimately bound to Revelation than to Creation; it maintains no closer relationship than with the one from which Creation and Revelation spring; that is to say with God. God is the Redeemer in a much stronger sense than he is Creator and Revealer. For in the Creation, he in actual fact becomes Creator, but he creates the creature, and in the Revelation he of course becomes the Revealer, but he reveals himself to the soul, whereas in Redemption, he is not only the

Redeemer: while the work of Creation and the act of Revelation are as it were behind him and while from now on they act autonomously one upon the other and as if he were not there, he receives Redemption finally, as we shall see—for himself.

**ROOT  
SENTENCE**

But we are anticipating. For the moment, we shall stop only at the appearance of the figure that assumes the And of the subterranean world by entering into the world above of language: we are stopping at the genealogical sentence. It must reunite the root words of Creation and Revelation, that-which-was-only-predicate, the “good!” with that-which-was-only-subject, the divine I. And since it must become a sentence pronounced simultaneously by each partner—in order to form a real duet—that I cannot remain I; man and the world must be able to sing it in unison, in the same breath; in the place of the divine I, which only God himself could pronounce, the divine name must come, by which man and the world too, can carry in their heart; and of him it must be said: he is good.

**CHORAL  
FORM**

This is the genealogical sentence of Redemption, the roof on the house of language, the sentence true in itself, the sentence that remains true in any sense it is taken and from any mouth that it might come. That two and two are four is what can become non-true, for example when it is taught to a parrot that begins to “say” it: for what is mathematics to a parrot? But the sentence that says that God is good, even in this most absurd case of all where language utters it, could never become a counter-truth; for the parrot too was created by God, and all things considered, his love applies to it, too. All the other linguistic forms must be capable of connecting to this sentence. But from the root word of Creation the forms proceed in the order of an objective development, in the same way that the sentences of a story and the root word of Revelation open a dialogue; but here the linguistic forms must all carry and elucidate the meaning of the one sentence. It must be exclusively a matter of forms that more firmly interpret and bring to a conclusion the connection of the two parts of the sentence. For every form must echo the fundamental base of the sentence, and the forms themselves must carry the sentence under an increasingly accentuated hymnal form. Instead of being a narrative that the narrator wants to bring to his subject, instead of being a dialogue that goes back and forth from one speaker to the other, grammar now appears as a song with intensifying stanzas. And it is an original song,

which is always a song for several voices; the individual does not sing; it is only when the song has appeared as a song for several that it begins to invest forms of the narrative that are not sung and forms of the dialogical song and becomes a ballad of the troubadour in the courts of kings and a song of love. But originally, the song for several voices is of the same tone and rhythm, and, beyond the content of the song, whatever it might be, there is the form of unanimity. Moreover, the content is itself nothing other than that which establishes this form. One does not sing together in view of a specific content, but rather one seeks a common content in order to be able to sing together. If the genealogical sentence must be the content of a song performed together, it can only appear to establish such a harmony; the "he is good" must appear as a "for he is good."

What is it that is established first? It can only be the community of the song, and this community not as a *fait accompli*, not as an indicative, but as a fact established at the moment. So the foundation of the community must precede the content of the song, as an invitation, that is, to sing together, to give thanks, to confess that "he is good"; or rather, if one considers that this song, this act of thanks, this confession, are themselves the main thing and that that which is sung, that for which thanks is given and that which one confesses is only that which founds them; it can be translated more exactly: an invitation to sing, to give thanks and to confess "because He is good." And this invitation could not be an imperative, it is not an invitation by someone inviting someone; rather the invitation itself must be placed under the sign of the community, the one who extends the invitation must himself be invited, he must invite himself at the same time: so the invitation must be in the cohortative, and it matters little whether or not this difference from the imperative is externally visible; the apparent invitation, too, the "give thanks" can only have the sense of "let us give thanks"; the one who invites includes himself in the act of thanks, he only invites in order to be able to give thanks himself; when calling to his soul and all that is in him to give praise, the one inviting calls at the same time, immediately, to the whole world, to the oceans and the rivers, and to all the pagans and those who fear God: "Praise the Lord!" Even what is in him he considers, because it "is," to be an external reality that he must first call, and in return, the farthest, the whole world, is not external for him,

INVITATION

but a fraternal reality that sings in unison with him the praise and the act of thanks.

**CONTEMPLATION**

Praise and act of thanks, the voice of the soul released for unison with the whole world and the voice of the world released for the unison of the feeling and the song with the soul—how can these two voices harmonize into one? How could the two separate realities find each other if not in the unity of that before which they sing, whom they praise, to whom they give thanks? What is it that connects the one voice of the one who invites with the whole world? He is separate from the whole world; they are two kinds of subjects, two kinds of nominatives; likewise that which he possesses and that which he sees is separate from that which the world possesses and sees; these are two kinds of objects, two kinds of accusatives. Only the one to whom he gives thanks is not object for him and therefore is not bound to him; rather, he is in relation to him and to all that can become object for him “Beyond”; he only is the very one to whom the whole world gives thanks. In the dative, which transcends all, there are hidden the voices of the hearts separated here below. The dative is that which joins, that which gathers together; he who receives, for example the act of thanks as is the case here, does not for this reason become the property of what is given to him; he remains beyond the one who gives, and because he remains beyond the singular giver, he can become the point where all can be united; the dative which truly joins can be that which truly unties every bond knotted beyond the truth, every inessential bond, can be that re-deems—let us give thanks to God.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

Every act of thanks is concentrated in the dative; the act of thanks gives thanks for the gift; when giving thanks to God, one confesses the origin of the gift in him, one recognizes in him the one who answers the prayer. The prayer of the individual, the urgent prayer was the highest point where the individual as individual could raise himself; but the answer is beyond his reach; only insofar as it took place in the soul of the individual did it represent for prayer, as possibility of praying, its own answer to the prayer. But the Kingdom, to the coming of which all prayer, including the urgent prayer of the individual, unknowingly aspires, and the visible presentation of the experience lived only in the holy of holies of the soul are not given in Revelation; so the prayer remains a sigh in the night. But now the answer to the prayer is immediately there; in the union of the soul with the

whole world, having taken place in the act of thanks, the Kingdom of God has come—for this Kingdom is nothing other than the mutual union of the soul and the world—and every prayer that was ever possible is answered. The act of thanks for every answered prayer precedes all prayer, except for an urgent prayer that arises from the nearness of the soul and God, in a solitude of two; the universally shared recognition of God's fatherly goodness is the foundation on which all communal prayer rises up. The distinctive character of this communal prayer is therefore that it is answered, in contrast to the urgent prayer arising from the depths of lonely anguish, when it wants to be expressed and when the soul succeeds in praying; the communal prayer, on the other hand, is answered even before it is prayed; it is answered beforehand in the act of thanks and praise; the act of communal thanks is already the fulfillment of all that for which the communal prayer takes place; and the coming of that which brings it about that all individual supplications can be risked before the face of God with the compelling power of the communal prayer, that is to say the coming of the Kingdom. The communal confession and praise must precede all communal prayer, for they are the answer of the prayer.

Of course, this answer only precedes; it is only anticipated. If it were possible to pray exclusively for the coming of the Kingdom, and for nothing else, then this answer that is anticipated in the act of thanks would not be anticipated; but then praise and act of thanks would not be only the first feeling, they would be the only feeling; for then—the Kingdom would already be there; the petition for it to come would not need to be introduced in the prayer, the prayer would have ended at its first word, with the praise. But it is not like this; it is not yet possible, it is not possible for the community or for man in the community to pray only for the coming of the Kingdom; this prayer is still obscured and blurred by all sorts of other supplications: the forgiveness of sins, the ripening of the crop, in short, all that the rabbis designate with great profundity the needs of a solitary man. For these are the needs of the solitary man. If the individual were already really united with the whole world as he anticipates this in the praise and thanks, then he would have renounced all his needs. They are the sign that he is only anticipating in the praise and the act of thanks, the deliverance from the bonds of need, within the bond that in general joins the soul and the world,

and therefore that Redemption remains absolutely to come, that it is a future.

**ANTICIPATION**

So here the future has the meaning that the present has for Revelation and the past has for Creation. But for Revelation, the present is a basic concept, and it appeared right at the beginning of the “dialogue”; and for Creation, the past was the final concept and therefore the goal of the entire “narrative”; but the future appears only in the lap of Redemption, without more ado and almost incidentally. Because it is critical for the future that it can and must be anticipated. This anticipation, this today, this eternity of the act of thanks for God’s love—for it “remains forever”—an eternity, as we have already explained, not “very long,” but “since today”: this is the melodic content in the proper sense of the stanza of the communal song, and in this stanza, the future has always appeared like a mere figure of accompaniment that regularly comes to adorn the melody.

**THE NEIGHBOR**

If a “not yet” is written above all redemptive union, the only result can be that, for the end, it is, at least to begin with, the present moment precisely that occurs, whereas for the universal and the highest reality, it is, at least to begin with, the neighbor who is precisely there. The bond of the complete and redemptive tie between man and the world is, at first, the neighbor, only and constantly the neighbor. So, in the song performed by all, a stanza is inserted that is sung only by two voices—my own and that of my neighbor. Instead of the plural, which contains things as singular substitutes of their kind, and instead of the singular, where the soul experiences its birth, it is the dual that prevails here, that form which does not stay permanently in language, and which the plural ends up devouring in the course of linguistic evolution; for it is understandable that it nowhere has a solid point to hook onto, except for the rare objects that turn up in pairs; otherwise, it slides from one carrier to the other, to the one that comes next, from one neighbor to the next neighbor, and it is not at rest before it has made the whole circuit of Creation. But it only apparently surrenders its power to the plural; in reality, it leaves traces of this wandering from place to place by introducing everywhere, into the plural of things, the sign of singularity; where the dual has once dwelled, where someone or something has become the neighbor of the soul, a part of the world becomes what it was not before: soul.

**THE ACT**

But the order that is kept in this transformation of the world

remains totally unspecified. It is always the nearest voice that answers the wake-up call. Which voice is it? It is not up to the one who rings; he always sees only the nearest reality, only the neighbor. Actually, he hardly notices the neighbor; he only feels in himself the overflowing desire for the act of love; the reality, and the qualities of the reality that come from the profusion of the something to offer themselves to him, hardly matter to him; for it is enough to know that each something plainly becomes for him, with its qualities and its own character, something unique, subjective, substantive, owing to the force of his act that wells up from the depths of itself. And to begin with the verb: as indeterminate copula itself, it links the sentence together and thus gives to the adjectival universality of the predicate the solidity and the unique character of the noun, and it turns the noun into a subject. As verb of action, it takes on itself a determinate content, and it has no choice but to start from the subject in addressing every object that offers itself to it; yet, in this lack of choice, it does not any the less redeem the object from its fixedness and set it in motion than it redeems the subject from its closure on itself and brings it to action.

So the indefiniteness is the sign under which the act of love turns its object into the neighbor. In Creation, the definite was created on the background of its indefiniteness, through the paired action of the two articles; in Revelation, the one called upon is fully and only definite, the proper name of the individual, who is unique of his species, with his own character belonging to him and to him alone. Here the indefinite appears, the anything as such, which does not relate, as in Creation, to something definite intended for it. Nevertheless, even for this indefinite, a connection to a definite exists. But this definite is not subordinated to it; on the contrary, it predominates. The totally indefinite character of the "anyone" is related to a definiteness that is just as strong as its indefiniteness is absolute. But it is not the singular that is absolutely definite; it is only the totality of everything definite, the universe. Out of this mutual belonging of the "anyone" and "the whole world," which is realized through the love of the "neighbor," factuality springs up for the world of Redemption; this factuality corresponds absolutely to the reality that effects the paired action of the limited universal and the limited particular in favor of Creation. An absolute factuality stands

**THE  
REALIZATION**

out in it for the world of Redemption, it is the absolute ascertainment that the neighbor who turns out to be rightly mine fully represents the world for me, and the stating of this fact is condensed in the last stanza of the song, where the voices, which at the beginning were mutually invited by each other to give thanks, are united in the powerful unison of the “We.”

**THE GOAL**

The We is always “We all”. “All of us who are gathered together here.” Precisely for this reason, a We could not be imagined without gestures. When someone says He, I know that someone is meant, and I know it even in the dark when I hear a voice say I or You. But when someone says We, I do not know who is meant, even when I see him: is it he and I, he and I and several others, he and others but not me, and finally, which ones among the others? In itself, the We always includes the widest circle imaginable, and only the gesture accompanied by words or the addition of the precise detail—we Germans; we philologists—circumscribes this greater circle, case by case, to a more restricted circumference. The We is not a plural; the plural arises in the third person singular: it is not an accident if the third person singular calls for the division into masculine and feminine genders; the sexual division introduces, as a matter of fact, the first conceptual order into the world of things, into a mythical simplicity, and it makes visible multiplicity as such. On the other hand, the We is the community of everything developed from the dual; in a manner contrary to the singularity of the I and its companion, the You, which can only be widened, this community can be neither widened nor shrunk. So the final stanza of the song of Redemption begins in the We; in the cohortative, it had begun with the summons of the individuals who came forward from the chorus, and with the responses that came from the chorus. In the dual, it proceeded in a fugato for two voices to which new instruments were always added; in the We, finally, everything is gathered in order to enter into the unanimous rhythm of the chorus whose many voices sing the final song. All the voices have become independent, each sings the words to the melody of its own soul, and yet all these melodies yield to the same rhythm and are united in one harmony.

**THE  
BOUNDARY**

Yet, they are still always words, the voices of the inspired world always agree upon a word. The word that they sing

is We. As song this would be a last and full final agreement. But as word, it is as incapable as any other word is of being the last word. The word is never last; it is not merely spoken, it is also speaking. This is the true mystery of language, its own life; the word speaks. And it is in this way that the articulated word, born of the We that is sung, speaks and says: You all. The We includes all that it can grasp and reach, and even all that it can take in with a glance. But that which it can neither reach nor perceive, it must exclude and cast away from its luminous and audible sphere, into the cold dread of the nothing, in the very name of its closure and its unity; and it does so by saying to it: You all.

Indeed, the You plural is dreadful. It is the judgment. The You plural cannot avoid passing this judgment; for it is only in this judgment that it gives the community of the We its definite content, which is not, however, a particular content and which renders nothing of its community character; for the judgment does not, as far as concerns it, remove any particular content from it—it removes no other content from it than the Nothing, so that the We assimilates as content all that is not Nothing, all reality, all that—is in actual fact. That is why the We must say You plural, and the more it believes, all the more does its mouth make the You also resound. It must say You to it, although it can only say it in anticipation, and although it must await the final confirmation from a mouth, the ultimate mouth. This is the decisive anticipation, this judgment that divides, where the Kingdom to come is actually coming and where eternity is actual reality. The saint of the Lord must anticipate God's judgment; he must see in his enemies the enemies of God. A frightful reality for himself: for by doing this, he exposes himself to God's judgment: "Lord, judge me, see: you explore me and you know me," "so test me and find out how I mean it and see if falsehood has entered my soul."

God himself must speak the last word—there cannot be any word afterwards. For, there must be an end, and no longer merely anticipation of it. And every word would still be an anticipation of the next word. For God, the We and the You are—They. But he does not say They; he completes it. He does it. It is he, the Redeemer. In his They, the We and the You are swallowed anew into a one dazzling light. All name fades away. The last judgment that anticipates for all

**THE  
DECISION**

**THE END**

eternity makes the separation disappear after having confirmed it and by confirming it, and it extinguishes the flames of hell. In the last judgment, which God himself makes in his own name, the whole universe enters into His Universality, every name enters into His Oneness without name. Redemption brings the day of the world to a close beyond Creation and Redemption, at the stroke of midnight, the same hour as in its beginning, but for this second midnight, as it is written: "In him, the night is light." In its last moment, the day of the world is revealed as that which it was in its first moment: it is the day of God, the day of the Lord.

**LOGIC OF  
REDEMPTION**  
**THE ONE  
AND THE ALL**

**S**O, in its final outcome, Redemption possesses something that conveys it beyond the comparison with Creation and Revelation: God himself. We have already said it: he is Redeemer in a much stronger sense than he is Creator and Revealer; for he is not only the one who is Redeemer, but also the one who receives his Redemption. In the Redemption, that of the world through man and that of man through the world, God gives himself his own Redemption. Man and the world fade out in Redemption, God completes himself. It is only in Redemption that God becomes that which the human spirit, in its temerity, constantly sought everywhere and affirmed everywhere, yet without ever having found it, for this was not yet: the One and the All. The All of philosophers that we had reduced to dust with full knowledge of the facts, here in the dazzling light of the midnight where Redemption is fulfilled, has finally, truly finally, come together to become the One.

**KINGDOM OF  
GOD AND  
KINGDOM OF  
THE WORLD**

It also becomes clear that the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of the world are not in competition (like faith's notion of Creation and idealism's notion of generation), although Redemption affects the world, like Creation, but in a manner contrary to Revelation, which happens only to man. But Redemption affects man as well, and so the Kingdom is not at all more worldly than human, nor more outer than inner; a comparison between the two Kingdoms is quite out of the question. They are never beside each other. The Kingdom of God is enforced in the world by forcing itself upon the world. As far as the world is concerned, like a sign to show that there can be no comparison, we perceive only a part of the Kingdom of God in general that is to come, namely the central part, the "dual" of the love of the

neighbor. For the inaugural part, the “give thanks,” the attentive ear is not open to the world, and for the end, the “We,” there is no eye that sees it in advance. So the world sees only the act of love and it compares it to its own act. And here it sees and hears, of course, but its eyes are blind and its ears deaf. Because that which happens there, the inspiring of the growing life of the world, is invisible from the world’s point of view: of course, as opposed to that which takes place with the “give thanks” and the “We,” it plainly sees here that something is happening, but it does not know what. It sees only anarchy, disorder, disturbance that affects its peacefully growing life. For in order to see the “what” as well, it would have to be able to catch sight of the beginning of this process of inspiration, the soul of man. And it cannot do this; for man in whom the soul awakes does not belong to it before becoming itself an inspired world—at Redemption.

For man’s act of love is only apparently an act. It is not said to him by God to do unto his neighbor what he would like done to himself. This practical form of the commandment of love of the neighbor, serving as a rule of conduct, really only designates the lower negative limit; the commandment forbids crossing over this limit in action, and already for this reason alone, it will be better to express it, even outwardly, in a negative form. For man must love his neighbor as himself. Like himself. Your neighbor is “like you.” Man must not deny himself. Precisely here, in this commandment of love of the neighbor, his Self is finally definitively con-firmed in its place. The world is not put before his eyes like a vast mixture, and he is not told, with a finger pointing at all this mixture: “That is what you are. This is what you are—so stop demarcating yourself from it, enter into it, disappear in it, keep on until you lose yourself in it.” No, quite the contrary: out of the infinite chaos of the world, a neighbor, his neighbor, is placed before his soul, and of him, to begin with exclusively of him, he is told: he is like you. “Like you,” hence not “you.” You remain You and you will remain You. But he will not remain a He for you and hence only a This for your You; no, he is like you, like your You, a You like you, an I—a soul.

This is how love makes the world a world inhabited by soul, not, fundamentally, through what it does, but because it does it through love. That in spite of all something happens there, a realized action without it requiring in the proper sense any tak-

**THE  
NEIGHBOR  
AND THE  
SELF**

**SOUL AND  
WORLD**

ing of action, is what benefits not man but the world, for it goes to meet man's act of love. There is a law effective in the order where things move toward man's act of love. It is only from man's point of view that this law is not visible. Every neighbor who appears unexpectedly must be an "any" thing, a substitute of every other one and of all others; he is not permitted to ask questions or to differentiate: it is his neighbor. But from the world's point of view, it is on the contrary man's act of love that is the unpredicted, the un-hoped for, the big surprise. It is in itself that the world carries the law of its growing life. But how this life that grows in it and seeks to last in every member that wants to be formed again really is going to attain permanence, and if it must be accorded immortality, this is what remains obscure for the world. The world knows only, or thinks it knows, that all life must die. And when it desires eternity, it does so by waiting for an intervention from outside that will procure immortality for life. It itself brings forth from its ancestral trunk, in regular growth, branches, twigs, leaves, flowers and fruits of life; the trunk's roots are watered daily by the eternally fresh fountain of existence. It is only when and where the members of this living organism are covered by the breath of love for the neighbor, a breath that breathes soul into them, it is only when they add to their life what life itself could not give them: a soul, eternity.

The act of love therefore only apparently is effective on the chaos of an "anything." In truth, without knowing it, it presupposes that the world, all the world with which it has anything to do, is growing life. That it has creaturely existence is not at all enough for it; it demands more of the world: permanence subject to laws, coherence, structure, growth—in short, all that it seems itself to deny in the anarchical freedom, the immediacy and momentariness of its act. Precisely because this act consciously denies it, it unconsciously presupposes it. The soul demands, as object of the soul, into which it breathes, a structured life; it is on life that it then exercises its freedom, and it breathes a soul into it in all its particular members, and everywhere in this soil of the living figure it sows the seeds that are called to give names, its own being filled with soul, seeds of immortality.

So all human relationships, absolutely all, blood relationship, brotherhood, nation, marriage, all are established in Creation; there is nothing that does not exist from all eternity through

these roots and which is not already prefigured in the animal kingdom, and yet all receive their own soul only in Redemption, owing to the rebirth of the soul in Revelation. All are rooted in the blood community, which among them is that which is closest in Creation; and invested with soul in Redemption, they all tend to look alike according to the great analogy of marriage which among them is that which is closest in the order of Redemption: mystery of the soul that has become existing figure completely in view of all eyes, structured life completely filled with soul. It is for that reason that at the pinnacle of love the soul aspired to rejoin the created blood community; it is only in the destined, or rather God-given union of the soul and the community, in marriage, that it finds its Redemption. And beyond the relationships of men among them in the same time: the Kingdom of the world, with its internal structure and specific law of its evolution, the course of universal history that keeps going along, the life of peoples and the hard armor of law and institutions that protect this life—all this constitutes Creation's foundation which Redemption uses to construct the Kingdom of God. Love, apparently in order to throw things into confusion, breaks into this structured edifice, and it soon separates a member here and there to give it its own life that threatens to explode what holds it all together. But in reality, it is not within its power to decide which member it is going to invest in this way with its power, and to un-bind from the context of life to lead it to eternity. Rather, for the Creator of the world the law of growth is as established as is the overflowing drive to love by the Revealer, and this law determines its path and its object for love, without even man knowing it. The flowering tree of life stretches out only the opened buds to the inspiring love. Redemption therefore originates from God, and man knows neither the day nor the hour. He knows only that he must love, and always that which is nearest and the neighbor; and the world—it grows in itself, apparently according to its own law; and the world and man will find each other today, or tomorrow or God knows when—the times are unforeseeable, neither man nor the world knows them; He alone knows the hour, He who at every moment brings about Redemption from today to lead it to eternity.

Redemption is therefore the end before which all that has begun turns back to be engulfed in its beginning. It is only in this way that it is complete. All that is still immediately attached

**END AND  
BEGINNING**

to its beginning is not yet effective in the full sense of the world; for the beginning whence it sprang can always draw it inside again. This is true for the thing that emerged as Yes and Not-Nothing as well as for the act that emerged as No of the Nothing. True permanence is always permanence projected into the future and upon the future. That which always was is not that which is lasting: the world was always; nor is it that which is constantly renewed: lived experience is always new; it is only that which is eternally coming: the Kingdom. It is not the thing, it is not the act, it is only the fact that is secure against falling back into the Nothing.

**THEORY OF  
ART  
(CONCLUSION)**

**T**HE power of the And, which founds the figure and establishes the fact, is very familiar to us from the meaning it had in Part One for completing the “elements.” We do not need to say it now any more explicitly than we had been able to say it then, even if we had wanted to: already an inner self-creation, a self-revelation, a self-redemption of each single element—God man world—happened in itself, and it was so to speak in the primordial world or subterranean world. What we observed for the And was the same thing that we are now stating for Redemption: it is only in it that the completion takes place. This relationship becomes still clearer if we turn again toward the world where our fundamental concepts have only categorical value, the world of art.

**REDEMPTION  
AS AESTHETIC  
CATEGORY**

In art too, the category of Redemption includes completion. The categories of Creation had indisputably laid the broad foundation by throwing the bridge that goes from an All presupposed in one way or another to a multitude of details belonging to the world of art. From the same presupposed All the categories of Revelation then threw a new bridge up to the singular detail, which by this means became substantial. From this substantial inspired singularity up to the vast totality of all singularities, the categories of Redemption now throw the third bridge, and effect a substantial inspired coherence, and through this there now comes to the light of day something that is finished and complete in the aesthetic sense.

**THE PUBLIC  
IN ART**

The work is there in its uniqueness, in its detachment from the originator, its incredibly intense life that yet does not belong to life. It really is outside of itself; it has neither house nor home; it

knows of no roof of a kind where it could seek shelter; it is there totally for itself—it is its own kind and mode; it is not related to any other thing, not even to another work of art. Even the originator no longer gives it any resting-place with him; he has turned to other works; is he not more than his works? He is the entire breadth from which works can emerge; the single work is his as long as he intends to realize it; it is done in his eyes when he is done with it. He is hardly capable any longer of enjoying his own work; he scarcely ever warms himself at his own fire; a translation may even give to the poet the distance from his own work that opens the enjoyment in it for him. Who then will throw the bridge from the work to the originator? The fact that the world of art only begins within both is what signals, in the work, that it is only a singular work, and in the originator, that he is only a possible originator. Who then will throw the bridge that will permit the work to go from its homeless solitude and move into a spacious and human home from which it will no longer be able to be uprooted and where it will find itself with many of its kind, living there together permanently? This place where the works establish a spacious, living, lasting existence in beauty, and where the inspired feeling of the single work aesthetically inspires little by little a rich totality of human life, is the spectator.

In the spectator there has grown together the mere humanity of the originator and the content-rich, soulful uncanniness of the work. Without the spectator, the work would be mute, it would be a statement, but not from speech, since the work does not “speak” to its originator and Pygmalion seeks in vain to animate the marble that he himself has sculpted; the work “speaks” only to the spectator. And without the spectator, it would have no lasting influence in reality. By bringing into view painted canvases, sculpted stones, written pages, the work does not really, as a matter of fact, enter real life. “Vandals” have always only killed that which is already dead. But to enter into reality, art must regenerate men; yet artists, these rare non-men who live alone, spread far and wide in the throngs of people, are absolutely not this type of men. This would not be because their capacity as originators, like the existence of the world, as creature, is only actual at the moment where they create the single work; besides, from this it also happens that between each singular work, this artistic nature of the artist seems as if it has been extinguished until a new work shows that it is always there. With artists, in the

Bohemian quarters of big cities, in the artists' colonies, art is therefore manifested just as little as in the collections and exhibitions of works. Art only becomes reality when it educates man to be its spectator and when it is given a lasting "public." It is not Bayreuth that testifies that Wagner and his work are alive, but the fact that the names Elsa and Eva<sup>7</sup> became fashionable names and that the idea of the woman as the one who redeems colored the form of masculine eroticism for decades in Germany. It is only once that art has a public that it cannot be driven from the world; as long as it is merely work and artist, it lives only a precarious existence from day to day.

**THE MAN IN  
THE ARTIST**

But let's go back to the originator once more. We have already seen the creator and artist in him. Once again, neither can live without the other. The force of meaning that the content of the singular moment acquires in the conscious labor of the "artist" must spread over the whole vast domain of the creative imagination of the "poet." It is only when the creator no longer resembles the fiery mountain that blindly spews it flames and whence successive images shoot forth in confusion, it is only when all his contents are in his eyes filled with a symbolic weight that he is more than a conscious artist, and more than a blind creator; only then is he—a man, even if this is always within the limits which art in fact marks out for man. Only for clarification, let us add that Shakespeare, for example, would have only been a creator in the eyes of the *Sturm und Drang*,<sup>8</sup> in the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie*<sup>9</sup> he was only an artist; but in the presentation that [Georg] Brandes makes—a living unity of imagination and conscious art, such that the former grew toward the latter in the development of the inner life, whereas the latter aspired to reverberate in the material of the former—in this presentation, Shakespeare is—a man.

**THE  
"DRAMATIC"  
IN THE WORK**

For every work we had fundamentally established the concepts of "epic" and "lyrical"; in the first, we had included the material qualities, enveloped by the unity of the form; in the second, the spiritual qualities, which shatter the unity of

<sup>7</sup>Elsa: heroine of *Lobengrin*; Eva: heroine of *Maitres Chanteurs*.

<sup>8</sup>*Sturm und Drang*: pre-romantic literary movement, in Germany (1770-1790).

<sup>9</sup>By Lessing, on the theatre, appeared in 1767.

the form. Already, this opposing relationship to the form indicates that neither of them get a footing until a third term caps them, where the joining occurs between the “epic” of the vast material plentitude and the “lyrical” of the present that immediately catches fire and spreads: for all points of the epic space are animated to acquire this immediacy. If we call this third term the “dramatic,” the word itself, which will designate indifferently the “dramatic” of a symphony, of a painting, of a tragedy or of a song, no doubt does not need any additional explanations.

Yet, in its essence, poetry is in a closer relationship to this quality of the “dramatic” than are the plastic arts and music. This holds in that the plastic arts, situated in space, would be quite naturally inserted into “breadth” and therefore leaned toward the “epic,” whereas music, situated in time, inclined toward the “lyrical” accentuation on and the felt accomplishment of the single moment; on the contrary, poetry is at home neither in time nor in space, but where time and space have their inner origin, in imagistic thinking. Poetry is not a kind of art of thought, but thinking is its element as space is that of the plastic arts and time is that of music; and from thinking, it ends also by putting at its service the world of inner and outer intuition, space and time, the extensive “epic” breadth and the intensive “lyrical” depth. It follows that it is the living art in the proper sense. To the great poet there belongs still more necessarily than to the painter and to the musician a certain human maturity, and the understanding of poetry is itself already strongly conditioned by a certain richness of lived experience. Plastic arts and music always retain something abstract; plastic arts seem as it were mute, and music blind; opposite the plastic arts, the linguistic Revelation, starting with Moses, is never without some mistrust, and likewise paganism, satisfied with form, starting with Plato, when facing music. The same mistrust is not the case with poetry; in its practice, the poet of Psalm 90 and the originator of the epigram on Aster meet. For poetry gives figure and discourse because it gives more than either: imagistic thinking, in which both are alive together. Because it is the most alive, poetry is the most indispensable art; and while it is not necessary that every man has a sense for music or painting, or dabbles in one of the two, reproductively or productively, every man who is fully man must have a sense for poetry, actually it is

**POETRY  
AMONG THE  
ARTS**

even necessary that he dabbles in it; at least that he once wrote poetry; for if one can possibly be a man without writing poetry, he will only become a man if he at one moment wrote poetry for awhile.

**THE FIGURE  
IN THE  
PLASTIC ARTS**

As concerns the plastic arts, it is obvious that neither the vision nor the form in themselves alone make the work. In the spirit of the artist, the vision is only the invisible support of the work that in the end becomes visible to the spectator, and the form is the realization always reserved exclusively for one detail only in its relationship to nature. It is only when this loving realization has covered the entire breadth of that which is mentally seen, by which alone, quite obviously, its “feeling” immersed in the detail can acquire law and direction, it is only then that the visible figure of the work is present. Where there is an excess of vision with regard to the will for form, the ornamental. On the other hand, where the will that is close to nature rules in order to give form to the detail, although the vision is weak, the figure stays bogged down in the model; the work “doesn’t gel.”

**THE MELOS  
IN MUSIC**

There is a complete analogy in music whereby, beyond the rhythmic movement that pervades the whole and beyond the harmony in which the sound fills the singular details with soul, the resonant line of the *melos* is raised. The melody is the living part of music. In a piece of music, retaining more than the “character”—most often, it is the rhythm—and more than the “tonality”—most often this is the harmony—means retaining the line of its *melos*. It is so true that the melody is what is essential that we are right to feel that reliance on foreign rhythms or the gathering of harmonies from elsewhere into a composition is not inadmissible plagiarism. We see simply a “kinship” here, whereas we immediately tend to label as theft the least borrowing of a melody.

**THE  
TONALITY OF  
THE POEM**

At the base of poetry there is something that could probably rightly be designated as meter, if this word did not have too narrow a meaning. In the theory of poetry, a distinction is lacking which is comparable to the one that music makes between rhythm and beat; where there is rhythm, there is beat, but the reverse is not true. So the meter is only an external phenomenon that is partial and measurable of what we might call, with regard to the whole, the tonality. The tonality is what presides over the poetic work as original conception that comprises the whole in its entire breadth; the tonality, insofar as it creates relationships

of rhythm and color, and therefore as well the movement that goes through the whole and the mutual relationship existing between vowel tones and consonant sounds. It is a matter here of the specific form of the single work, which barely enters pure consciousness, and precisely for this reason is truly at the base of the work; it is the totality of this form that distinguishes it from all the other works above all other determinations. To a fine ear it must be possible to distinguish, on the pure basis of the "tonality," between sentences of a completely banal content, whether they are from Schiller or from Kleist, and even whether they are in *Don Carlos* or in *Wallenstein*. Or to put it even more clearly: a good actor would have to say the sentence quite differently: "The horses are saddled," according to whether it occurs in Kleist's *Penthesilea* or in Goethe's *Die Natürliche Tochter*.

To this character of the whole, determined by the tonality, there is then added the immersion in the detail owing to the choice of words. This is what is called the individual "language" of the singular poet, something that we apparently better master as a result of our being accustomed to the written word and therefore, what has been observed for much longer than the equally individual "tonality," this "tonality" that only he hears who takes to heart the poet's admonition: "Above all, do not read, always sing!"

But for tonality alone, neither would yet be the poem. A beautiful tonality quite alone would be a pure delight to the ear; a beautiful language quite alone would be only a phrase. It is only the "idea" that gives life to the poem. The poem really has an "idea." It is solely the use of this term for music and painting that has with justification made it suspect. For of course the only "idea" of a work in the plastic arts would be the figure, the only figure in music would be its *melos*. For the idea does not represent to our eyes something hidden behind the work, on the contrary: it is that which is perceptible from an aesthetic point of view for the senses, that which is actually real and effective in the work. And for poetry, this reality is truly nothing other than the idea, because for it thinking has the same significance as the eye does for the plastic arts and the ear for music. The idea is that which "speaks" in the poem to the spectator, like the melody in the musical work and the plastic figure in the visual work. The idea is not somewhere behind the poem, it is in it. On this point, too, among the arts the poem is the one that goes

THE  
LANGUAGE  
OF THE POET

THE IDEA IN  
THE POEM

out into the market of life without having timidly to safeguard its dignity. The element in which it exists is precisely that where life itself stirs most of the time; for life, too, speaks more the prose of thinking than the elevated language of song and of the plastic gesture.

**THE ART-  
CONTENT OF  
LIFE**

Everywhere under the category of Redemption, we have observed this moving toward life in the aesthetic theory, and it is only later that it will fully unfold its meaning for us; for art, in general, takes place in the public, in the spectator. In the public, all that was hidden is once again touched and aroused, and this aroused reality in the world flows out into life. The foundation of the spectator's soul is filled up in its entire breadth by the sum of representations that the art has awakened in it. Like the creative capacity in the originator, this ground is "innerly full of figures." In turning to the single detail, he is changed into a connoisseur of it, he becomes conscious. Here again, there is developed in the spectator something that corresponds to the originator's consciousness of his artistic capacity. And just as when the creator and the artist could not go on existing for themselves alone, likewise now the imagination and consciousness. The unarranged breadth of possession of artistic representations has to be spanned entirely by consciousness in order that for the spectator art will not be a burdensome or indifferent possession of representations acquired accidentally but the precious, inner possession and treasure of the soul, collected over a lifetime and lovingly arranged. So the door of the individual realm of art comes ajar and the way into life opens up.

**SUMMARY**

For there is no exception: under the category of Creation, there has always been subsumed a so to speak natural base; under the category of Revelation, it was that which is the concern of the craft, the laborious side, that which is obtained by toil, by the sweat of his brow, the specifically "aesthetic"; and under the category of Redemption, it was the proper and visible character, that which must end by "coming out" and that for which alone all the rest had to precede. The originator, the genius must be there, it cannot be forced, and in the genius, the creative capacity and imagination can be as little commanded as the receptive imagination of the spectator, against which, if it does not want to be receptive, nothing can be done. Within the scope of the work, it is the "epic" of the material that is given; and among the arts, it is probably the plastic arts that are the oldest, both in human

history and in the evolution of the individual. Vision, rhythm and tonality are the specific contents of the moment of conception, and they are given once and for all, so that nothing in them can be changed. And on the other hand, the work is that which makes possible an immediate recognition of art from the outside. It is a distinctive sign, more than the originator and the spectator—there exist genius and a public outside of art. In both the originator and the spectator, the consciousness of his artistic capacity in the one, and of his connoisseurship capabilities in the other, is that which they do not have *a priori*, but that which they must acquire. And among the qualities of the work of art, the “lyrical” quality is the innermost; among the arts music is the one that is reputed to be the most difficult, for it possesses the most developed and surest theory, and consequently most conducive to teaching. Form, harmony and language are that which, among the arts, only the artist “by trade” masters and knows how to use, whereas the inner optical vision, the rhythmic theme, the sudden, initial inspiration for the tonality of the poem may swoop down one day, and may even swoop down on the ordinary man. And finally, how, in the spectator and in the profound course of his life, art in general ends by flowing back into life, and how it is the same for the genius in his humanity, for the work of art in general in its “dramatic quality,” for the arts in poetry, and for the artistic genres in the figure, the *melos*, the idea at the same moment where they are completed to become fully visible, to be authentically complete therefore—this is what we have already seen.

But now we are departing from this episode to which we had to go back repeatedly in this Part only in order to show its episodic character. If we meet up with art again, it will no longer be as an episode. For it was the episode’s own last lesson that it must not remain an episode. The kingdom of the shadowy spirits of art, which had had to mystify idealism as regards the absence of its own life in its world, itself aspires to live. Pygmalion himself could not add to his work such that it possessed a life, in spite of all his efforts; it is only when he lays down the sculptor’s chisel in order to fall to his knees like a poor mere man that the goddess descends to lean over him.

PERSPECTIVE

In this Part, Creation was no longer a primordial world in our eyes, but content of Revelation; likewise Redemption was no

THE WORD  
OF GOD

longer supra-world, but analogically, we took it only as content of Revelation. As content of Revelation, Creation turned, from a world it was, into an event, an event already-having-taken-place, likewise, Redemption had turned, from a supra-world that it was, into an event, an event still-to-come. In this manner, Revelation gathers everything into its contemporaneousness, it knows not merely itself; rather: there is “all in it.” For itself, it is an immediately and present lyrical monologue between two. In its mouth, Creation becomes narrative. And Redemption? Not, as one might expect, prediction. We had described Revelation as the vast world that accompanies and surrounds the miracle and to which also Creation and Redemption belong, as marvelous contents of Revelation: the prediction is the link that ties this world in its living factuality to the pre-world and to the subterranean world of the gloomy and gashed factuality. Insofar as Redemption is a necessary content of Revelation, it is also bound to the pre-world of Creation, and it interprets the signs hidden in that pre-world; for Redemption only exposes to view from all that is living that which had happened beforehand in Revelation, properly designated as invisible experience in the soul.

THE  
LANGUAGE OF  
THE PSALMS

So it is not prophecy that is the particular form where Redemption can become the content of Revelation; rather, this must be a form belonging entirely to Redemption, which consequently expresses the event not-yet-having-taken-place and yet still-to-come-one-day. But this is the form of the communal song of the community. The community is not, is not yet, everyone; its We is still limited, it remains simultaneously bound to a You; but—yet—it claims to be everybody. This “yet” is the world of the Psalms. It makes the Psalms the songbook of the community, although they all express themselves in the form of the I. For, although it may be a completely real, singular I that is entangled in all the pains of a lonely heart, chained in all the confines of its poor soul, yet, indeed, yet, this I of the Psalms is a member, and more than a member, of the community: “And yet, God is good to Israel”: it is the motto of the Psalm and it counts for man as the most individual one. The I cannot be totally I, it cannot descend totally into the depths of its “lonelinesses”—this is what the Psalmist calls his soul—because it, as the I that it is, ventures to speak through the mouth of the community. Its enemies are God’s enemies, its misery is ours, its succour is our salvation. This generalization of the soul peculiar to the soul of

everyone alone gives to one's own soul the audacity to express its own misery—just because it is more than its own misery. In Revelation, the soul becomes silent; it sacrifices its particularity in order to be forgiven; the one who is chosen by God's love loses his own will, his friends, his house and his homeland, when he hears God's order, by taking upon his shoulders the yoke of the mission and by leaving to go toward a land that He will show to him. But in this way he leaves the magic circle of Revelation and enters into the Kingdom of Redemption, and he broadens his I renounced under the rule of Revelation to the "We all"; and it is only then that he regains his own particularity, but it is no longer his, it is no longer as his homeland, they are no longer his friends and his kin, it is now the property of the new community that God points out to him and whose miseries are his miseries, whose will is his will, whose We is his I, whose—"not-yet" is his "yet."

In the Book of Psalms, it is in the group of Psalms that say a purely "We" that the deepest meaning of the Psalm becomes fully luminous and manifest, that group from Psalm 111 to Psalm 118, the great hymn of praise whose refrain is the genealogical sentence of Redemption, as we have seen. In the holy language, moreover, the word "psalm" itself means nothing other than "song of praise," a word from the same root as the "hymn of praise" evoked here. And in the group of these Psalms, the central part is in its turn constituted by Psalm 115.

This is the only one of all the Psalms that begins and ends with a powerfully underscored We. And of these two We's, the first is in the dative, quite simply in the dative, that is to say immediately dependent on the word "to give." The coming of the Kingdom is being prayed for; for the We's place themselves and the honor, the visible glory that they implore for them, at the same rank as the honor of the divine name; they do it in the only admissible form: by explicitly denying that they are of the same rank: "Not to us, oh Lord, not to us, but to your name give honor!" So in the same breath, the We is introduced into the achieving of the immediate proximity beside the divine name, and from this ending it is called back again into the not-yet of the present—"not to us, but..." But this proximity, this being-beside God of the We, is envisaged quite objectively, in a perfect visibility: it is not only "for his love" that God must answer the prayer; in the loving intimacy of the life for two,

**GRAMMATICAL  
ANALYSIS OF  
PSALM 115**

Revelation already gave rise to such a proximity; rather, it is “for his truth”; the truth is manifest, visible to the eyes of all that lives. It is a requirement of God’s truth that one day honor be given to the We’s.

But because it cannot be given to them in time, because the We’s are not yet “We all,” they exclude the You’s from themselves. And because the Psalm anticipates that the We’s will be beside God, it sees the You’s instinctively with God’s eye, so that they become They’s. This is the only context where the Psalms take up the derision, so prevalent in the Prophets, against the idols: in them, the life of divine love rigidifies within the passivity and muteness of deaf-mutes; but the aggressive tonality which initially still dominates the opposition between the dead idols of a “just as” dead world and the living Creator of heaven and of earth, disappears at the same time as the derision in the mighty triumph of the trust. Hopeful trust is the fundamental word where the anticipation of the future takes place in order to enter into the eternity of the moment. Against the illusory trust of the You’s, there rises up in three stages the trust of the We’s in the God who is each time “succor and shield”: Israel is trustful, the community of the We’s that has rested, God’s firstborn son, under the heart of his love; the house of Aaron is trustful, this community that is conceived in a priestly role for the way leading through the world and time of the You’s; and they are trustful—it is the established name for proselytes—who fear the Eternal One, the old messianic community of humankind, of the “We all.” Out of the triumph of trust which anticipates the future fulfillment, there now arises, in an exactly corresponding structure, the prayer that the community prays, and again, it is Israel, the house of Aaron, all those who fear God—“small and great.”

And now the chorus starts to sing the We of this fulfillment: the growth of the blessing, step by step, “more and more,” from one to the other, from one generation to the next: that he may give increase, add: to you, to you and to your children. For this living growth of the blessing is well established from all eternity in the mystery of Creation: “May you be blessed of the Lord who made heaven and earth!” But facing this silent, automatic growth of Creation, the loving work of man on earth remains free; such that he may perform it as if there were no Creator, as if Creation did not come to join in with his action: “The heavens are the heavens of the Lord, but the earth he gave to the

children of men.” To the children of men and not to the community of Israel: in the received love and in the trust, it knows it is unique, but in the act of loving, it knows it is a child of men, quite simply, it knows only the “anyone,” just the other and nothing more—the neighbor.

And thus the act of love, free with regard to the world, goes beyond the world of Creation with its living growth. But since Creation, did not this life sink into death that must be its fulfillment? But how then? Never again does life that has died join its voice in the songs of praise of Redemption! Never again—that which has died. But—and in this “but” the chorus intensifies to the immense unison of the We which pulls with all the united voices all future eternity into the present “now” of the moment: It is not the dead, truly not, “but We, we praise God from now to eternity.” This triumphant “but”—“but we are eternal”—our great master<sup>10</sup> proclaimed as the final word of his wisdom, when he spoke for the last time before a crowd about the relationship of his We with his world. The We’s are eternal; before this triumphant cry of eternity, death is hurled down into the nothing. Life becomes immortal in the eternal song of praise of Redemption.

This is the eternity in the moment. The Yes in the blink of an eye. This is the beholding of the light, of which it is said: In your light we behold the light. This would be, according to the teaching of the Sages, who with great profoundness connect Creation and Revelation in the concept of Redemption, the light that God withdrew in Creation, where it is said: “God separated,” he would have withdrawn it then and set it aside for his pious faithful ones, so that they might enjoy it in the world to come. For the Sages are the only ones who dare to describe the eternal bliss of the future Kingdom; the only conception that proposes a bliss in it other than the peace constantly renewed, which the lonely soul found in God’s love: the pious ones seated, crowns upon their heads, and their eyes are turned toward the brilliance of the divinity become manifest.

**THE  
BECOMING  
ETERNAL OF  
THE MIRACLE**

<sup>10</sup>Hermann Cohen.



## THRESHOLD

THE sinking into the subterranean Kingdom, where the figures resided singly, unknown to each other, an All split in pieces, was followed by the ascent—the ascent above the arch of the visible heaven. In this ascent, the pieces of the All that fell apart in the sinking were assembled again but not again into a unity like the one philosophy had previously sought and hence presupposed, not into the unity of a sphere that everywhere returns to itself. For in its first beginnings, philosophy, with naïve candor, had claimed that it wanted to regard “being” as a sphere, or at least as a circle, and this thought dominated it till its end in Hegel. Hegel’s dialectic believes it still can and must justify itself by leading back into itself. It is into a different unity into which the pieces of the All now enter. That unity of running back into itself, into its own beginning, the in-finite in the sense that the end is immediately changed again into the beginning and therefore is never graspable and conceivable as end, that unity was therefore situated for us at the outermost boundaries of our world; only at the stroke of the two midnights, as it were only before the beginning and only after the end, the sea of the infinite unfolded; the beginning itself, the first hour, was really in the beginning; the end itself, the twelfth hour, was really at the end of days; these two, first hour and last hour, really still belonged to the day of life, as much as did life’s noon of lived experience. Indeed, diverging from this comparison, it is not the noon of life that is the most solemn time, but the last time is the “highest”; as indeed also only the midnight of the beginning is darkness, but that of the end is light.

So the world that comes together for us in the ascent does not grow together and circle into itself; it breaks forth from the infinite and plunges back into the infinite, both an infinite outside of them, in relation to which it is itself a finite reality, whereas the circumference or even the sphere had the infinite themselves, indeed was itself infinite and therefore all apparently finite reality emerged in it from their own infinitude and joined in their own. In order to make visible this infinity that did not curve back on itself, hence precisely the “bad” infinity according to the philosophical opinion, we had had to shatter therefore idealism’s infinitude that curved back on itself; since, that is to say, instead of the circumference perfectly determined by the relation of one of its own points to a relative point, we set single points against

*RETROSPECTIVE: THE ORDER OF THE PATH*

**THE NEW UNITY**

**THE NEW TOTALITY**

each other, none of which could be clearly taken as a relational point for the others, we forced the construction of the line through these three points, and through these only, without there being a law of construction that set an “absolutely mentally” valid relation between “just any” point of the line and a common relational point. Through such a relation, namely in the formula made possible through it, even the infinity that is “bad” in itself, namely the non-enclosed one, a hyperbola, say, becomes the “good” infinity, namely the one that can be formulated as closed.

**THE NEW  
RELATION-  
SHIP**

This impossibility of formulating the course of the path we are seeking is already determined by the manner in which we found the three points—as singular points with no connection between them and arbitrary in themselves, changeable, capable of coming together only in the sign of the perhaps. If a relationship existed between the singular points, obviously this could not be in the manner of a geometric relationship. And really, the three lines to which, in the three Books of this Part, we joined the three points discovered in the first Part, are not lines in the geometric sense nor the shortest connections between two points, but through an act of reversal grounded in the history of the emergence of these three points, yet in itself groundless, these lines sprang from these points—therefore real lines, and not mathematical ones. But how would we designate this reality, this factuality of the lines that join the points?

**THE NEW  
CONNECTION**

Doubtless, because it nevertheless has to be a matter of lines, only by explicitly and clearly disarranging the concept of the mathematical line that makes it the shortest distance between two points. If this process is itself to take place with a kind of mathematical clearness, it would have to take place in such a way that the line itself, although it is already sufficiently determined as a mathematical line by the two points, would still be designated by a point of its own, and certainly if those first three points correspond to the three elements—God world man—these three new points that appear for the paths Creation Revelation Redemption would have to be situated in such a way that the triangle formed by them would not be inside the preceding triangle; for then they would thereby appear to bring about a lack of relation and existence-in-itself, precisely which they do not have; on the contrary, the joining of a point to two others must itself pass through the line of the original triangle, such that the

two triangles overlap by intersecting. But really therefore a figure arises that certainly is geometrically constructed, but is itself foreign to geometry; that is to say not “geometric figure” at all—but a configuration. For configuration is differentiated from figure by the fact that certainly the configuration could be composed of mathematical figures, yet that in truth its composition did not take place according to a mathematical rule, but according to a supra-mathematical principle; here the thought furnished the principle of characterizing the connections of the elementary points as symbols of a real happening instead of only realizations of a mathematic idea.

The thus emerging star-shaped form now also transforms the geometric elements of which it is composed back into configurations. But simple geometric forms, like points and lines, can only assume configuration by being taken out of the vital element of mathematics; this vital element is universal relativity. Apart from its limit concepts, mathematics does not know absolute magnitude; for example, the reality to which a given number is applicable depends entirely on the magnitude given to the unit to which the number refers. The direction of a line and the position of a point depend on the direction of a line of reference arbitrarily adopted at the origin or from a point of departure of coordinates arbitrarily established at the beginning. If on the other hand the points and the lines of the two triangles with which we are dealing are to become de-mathematized structures, they must be given an absolute position and direction. Now, it was precisely this that we had not been able to give to them in the transition from the first Part to the second.

And this is precisely what we can now give them, or rather, what we have basically already given them. For by recognizing God as the Creator and the Revealer, the world above all as creature and man first of all as beloved soul, it is now established that beyond every perhaps God is above; and since, moreover, from the beginning God is both Creator and Revealer, it is also established that the two points designating world and man must be accessible from the point that designates God, and accessible in the same manner, but in different directions. And since between them, man and world are no further away from each other than each is from God, on the contrary, with regard to his reception of Revelation, man’s action in the world is only the other side of his emergence from himself, and the same for the growth

**THE NEW  
ORDER**

of the life of the world with regard to its creaturely status then there remains for the three points only the one triangular form: the equilateral triangle. And with the equilateral form of this first triangle of the primordial world, that of the second, the triangle of the world, is given without further ado. For its points are only symbols for the lines of the first triangle. And just as, in the triangle of the primordial world, God is necessarily above, so in the triangle of the world, Redemption must be below, and the lines running from Creation and Revelation must meet in it. For already by their firm position in space, by these concepts of above and below, which have no meaning in mathematics and which for just this reason establish configuration, each element of the primordial world as well as each part of the path in its relationship to the two others are solidly fixed: if it is above, then it is origin, if it is below, then it is result.

**RELATIONSHIP TO THE PRIMORDIAL WORLD**

Those inner “secret” pre-histories of the elements of the primordial world, those theogonies, cosmogonies, psychogonies presented in Part One only now become entirely understandable to us in their unfolding. They were inner histories of self-creation, self-revelation, self-redemption of God, of world, of man. From their origin in the nothing till their completion in the finished and closed configuration, they were already taking the same path that they took afterwards in their emergence, coming to be met by each other and with each other; the obscure paths of the primordial world are solved to become the portents of the manifest path of the world. The glowing tripod that was made known to us on our path toward the [Faustian] Mothers in Part One, and we would here be in the deepest depths of the deepest ground, it is the same one that casts its light upon us on the path back to the world above, which we took in Part Two.

**PERSPECTIVE:  
THE DAY OF  
THE GOD OF  
ETERNITY**

**THE ONE  
ETERNITY**

**A**S we have already said—this path was a path toward unity. Philosophy affirmed as evidence that the unity was the presupposition of the All—for us it is only final result, indeed result of result, a point already situated beyond the “path” like its divine origin beyond its beginning. Actually, the unity is therefore only becoming unity; it exists only in becoming. And it becomes only as unity of God; God alone is—or rather: God alone becomes the unity that completes everything.

**THE  
ETERNAL  
GOD**

But how is it with the world and with man? Is there not a unity of their own for them, which would be the entry into the Lord’s

world day? Do not Creation, Revelation, Redemption mean the same thing that it means for God? Because for God, the times of that day are his own experiences; for him, the Creation of the world is becoming the Creator; Revelation becoming manifest, Redemption becoming the Redeemer. He becomes in this way till the end. All that happens is a becoming in him. And yet, since everything that happens, happens simultaneously, and really Revelation is not later than Creation, and just for this reason even Redemption is not later than the two, therefore that becoming of God is not a self-transformation for him, nor growth, nor increase but he is from the beginning and is at every moment and is always coming; and it is only because of this simultaneousness of his everlasting-being all the time and eternally, that the whole must be designated as a becoming. Thus we are saying only that God not merely once was and now would be modestly hiding behind eternal laws, or that God is not merely in the moments where a person is blissful from the heavenly glow of feeling—we are saying only this, and certainly not that he “must first still come,”<sup>1</sup> when we say that he comes to be in eternity. Eternity makes the moment into the everlasting; it is the becoming-eternal. “God is eternal” therefore means: for him, eternity is his completion. But once again: is it also that for the world and for man?

Absolutely not. To receive an eternal life, they must of course enter into the world day of the Lord. Immortality happens for them only in God. But the ground of their completion is not situated already in the eternity of Redemption; there the plant of eternal life blossoms, but it is planted in different soil.

The plant of eternity, that is to say, is planted where the mutual ground lies, whose solidness alone permits the expression of the Yes and of the No to separate and even one after the other in time. If in spite of such entry of the elements into the form of temporality this entry itself means for them the path to eternity then the possibility of separation must be supported by the certainty of the connection, and the world day of the Lord must carry already in itself the pre-disposition for the divine day of eternity. This guarantee of eternity, despite the temporality of self-revealing resides for God in Redemption; it joins Creation and Revelation, and since it is not merely the guarantee, but also

<sup>1</sup>Reference to Goethe's *Faust*, Part I, Scene 16.

the fulfilling realization of eternity, then his day in the world becomes also for God, quite simply, his own day. This immediate identification of guarantee and fulfillment of eternity does not hold for the other two “elements,” which makes them into the “others” and God into the One. And it is the real reason for which God for us sits “above” in governance, and world and man are subject to him in an eternal order.

**THE  
ETERNAL IN  
MAN**

The eternity of man is planted in the soil of Creation. Creation would be the And that joins the two moments of the life of man, separated before God and yet united in man the being loved and the loving. The first comes to him from God, the second turns toward the world—how else could they be regarded by him as a unique love, and how else could he be conscious of loving God when he loves the neighbor, than because he knows in his core and from the start that the neighbor is God’s creature and that his love for the neighbor is love for the creatures. And how else could he know himself to be loved by God exactly as the same one whom he himself loves in the neighbor, than because God has created in his image that which is common between him and the neighbor, that which brings it about that the neighbor is “like him” and therefore that both are “men.” Being created by God and being in the image of God are the foundation set down in him by Creation, and upon this foundation he can build for himself the house of his eternal life in the temporal current of love going back and forth between God and love for the neighbor.

**THE  
BECOMING  
ETERNAL OF  
THE WORLD**

For the world, simply to be there and to grow within life are two different things. The world is only the two together; from the first aspect there comes to the world the vital plenitude of the phenomenon, from the second it draws the backbone of its permanence. For the sake of the first, the creature turns its face trustfully to divine Providence; for the sake of the other, life looks full of hope toward man; he alone is able to “confer permanence upon it.” So the world seems to turn its eyes now to one now to the other; now to seek refuge in the eternal arms of the Creator now to await everything from the earthly Lord of Creation. The world—and man himself with it, insofar as he too is a co-resident and citizen of the world. The trust in the divine Creator, the waiting for the human act, nature and culture all seem to be an eternal opposition. It seems that the world must remain in it. An eternal opposition? We know that for the world

this disappears in the eternity of the day of the Lord, in the redemptive coming of the Kingdom. Therefore, not an eternal opposition. Still, how could such a unification of human action and divine work take place unless the human act, too, itself, as act, comes from God, and unless God's work increases and is fulfilled in the awakening of man? The Revelation from God to man is therefore the assurance given to the world for its Redemption, the foundation upon which rests the certainty that the world one day will see the doubt removed—and all doubt is doubt between trust in the Creation and waiting for the act, and the world lives from the conflict of this doubt. For the world, Revelation is the guarantee of its entry into eternity.

For the world, its being-in-the-light would therefore be embedded in the space of time "between" Revelation and Redemption, but for man, it would be in the entire space between Creation and Redemption, and only God himself would live alone in Redemption in his pure light. Or in other words: God lives his pure life only in eternity, the world is at home in all time, but man was always the same. For man, there is no pre-history—and all history is only pre-history—Homer's sun shines also for us, and the miraculous gift of language was provided for him in Creation, he did not make it for himself, nor did it happen to him; when he became man, he opened his mouth; when he opened his mouth, he had become man. But for the world and therefore also of course for its citizen, man, there is history. Whereas man was created into the supra-man, the world only becomes supra-world in God's Revelation to man, and before this Revelation enters into a circle of the world, this circle is subject to the law of evolution which makes it ripe for access to the supra-worldliness. Therefore all that is worldly in all time has its history: law and State, art and science, all that is visible; and it is only at the moment when in such an It of the world there resounds the echo of the wake-up call for God's Revelation to man that a bit of temporality dies the death of the resurrection of eternity. But because language is human and not worldly, it does not die and is not of course also resurrected. In eternity there is silence.

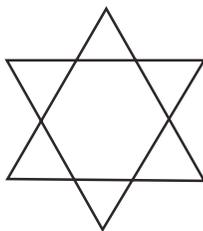
But God himself plants the sapling of his own eternity neither in the beginning nor in the middle of time, but quite simply beyond time in eternity. With him, nothing lies between sowing of the seed and ripening fruit. In his eternity, the two are united. His being redeemed is something that lies absolutely beyond the

**THE TENSES  
IN ETERNITY**

whole world, as his original-being-created was something that lay before all time. The original-being-created of man lay before Revelation happened to him, and therefore still within time, and the original-being-created of the world will only be received in the fulfilled Redemption, that is at the outermost boundary of time, but the original-being-created of God existed before he decided for the creative act. We spoke of this original-being-created of the three "elements" in Part One. And Part Two dealt with their self-revelation; hence in the Book of Creation it was more about the world, hidden in Providence and daily renewed, than about the Creator; in the Book of Revelation, it was more about God's love than about love received by man; in the Book of Redemption, the act of love of man for the neighbor more than about the growing life of the world. And if from then on, after that descent into the originally created primordial world and after that ascent through the manifest world, we are seeking to cast a glance into the upper world of Redemption, then we know which sight awaits us there. There we shall see man, born of woman, totally redeemed from all singularity and self-seeking into the created image of God; the world, the world of flesh and blood, and stone and wood, totally redeemed from all thingliness into nothing but soul; and God, redeemed from all the work of the six days of Creation and from all loving anxiety about our poor soul, as the Lord. But such a sight would be more than miracle. It would no longer need any prediction, and where it may happen to us, we would walk in the light itself. The secrets of the primordial world sink back into the night; the signs of the surrounding world lose their brilliance; the ray of the supra-world absorbs the dark shadows of the secrets and the colorful lights of the sign into itself. We step beyond the threshold of the supra-world, the threshold from the miracle to the illumination.

**PART THREE**

**THE CONFIGURATION**  
**OR**  
**THE ETERNAL SUPRA-WORLD**





## INTRODUCTION

# ON THE POSSIBILITY OF OBTAINING THE KINGDOM BY PRAYER

in tyrannos!<sup>1</sup>

*ABOUT  
TEMPTATION*

**T**HE assertion that one might be able to tempt God is perhaps the most absurd of the many absurd assertions that faith has brought into the world. God the Creator, before whom—according to the assertion of just that faith—nations are like a drop in the bucket, and man—again in the words of that faith—this maggot, the son of man, this worm, should be capable of tempting him, God! And even if by thinking this way, one were thinking less of the almighty Creator than of the Revealer, how could it be imagined that even he, if he really is the God of love, could be tempted by man? Wouldn't this God then be restricted in his love and be bound to man's actions, and not have (as, after all, faith itself asserts) unlimited freedom and follow only the impulse of his own love? Or finally, is it the Redeemer whom man can tempt? Him probably more than any other. For according to the views of faith, man does have, in relation to him, a freedom that he does not have as creature and as child of God: the freedom to act or at least the freedom to decide, to pray. But precisely in prayer, Jews and Christians incessantly repeat the petition: "Lead us not into temptation!" So here it is the reverse: there is produced before God the twofold denial of his providence and of his fatherly love. It is he who would be thought capable of permitting himself the sacrilegious game of "tempting: his creature and his child. If prayer were then really the opportunity to tempt God, this opportunity would still be severely restricted due to the ever-present fear that possibly when the one who is praying thinks he is tempting, is already himself being tempted. Or, would that possibility of tempting God rest on the fact that God tempts man? If, on the other hand, in that possibility—and it's only a possibility—the freedom is shown that man possesses at least toward the Redeemer God, (though not toward the Creator and the Revealer), for though he was created without his will, and though Revela-

<sup>1</sup>Latin: military term; command to charge against the tyrants.

tion comes to him without his merit, still, “not without him” does God want to redeem him—if, on the other hand, then, this freedom of prayer shows itself in the possibility of tempting God, wouldn’t then maybe the temptation of man by God be the necessary prerequisite of this his freedom?

So indeed it is. A rabbinic legend tells the tale of a river in a faraway land that is so pious that it stops flowing on the Sabbath. If, instead of the Main, it was this river that flowed through Frankfurt—there is no doubt that the whole Jewish community there would strictly observe the Sabbath. But God does not give such signs. Obviously, he shudders at the inevitable result: that then precisely the least free, the most fearful and the weakest would be the “most pious.” And God obviously wants only those who are free for his own. But, in order to discern between free men and slavish souls, the mere invisibility of his rule is hardly sufficient. For the fearful ones are fearful enough to prefer, when in doubt, to take the path which “in any case” does not hurt and will even possibly—with a fifty-fifty chance—be useful. Therefore, in order to separate the wheat from the chaff, God must not only not be advantageous, he must be absolutely damaging. So he has no choice: he must tempt man; not only must he hide his ruling from him, he must even deceive him about it; he must make it difficult for him and even impossible to see it, so that man may have the opportunity to believe in him and to trust in him truly, that is, in freedom. And on the other hand, man must also reckon with this possibility that God only “tempts” him, so that in every temptation he still has the impulse to keep his trust, and not listen to the immortal voice of Job’s wife, who advises him: “Curse God and die!”

And so man must know that at times he is tempted in the name of his freedom. He must learn to believe in his freedom. He must believe that, before God, it is without limits, even if it is perhaps limited everywhere else. God’s commandment itself, engraved on stone tablets, must be for him, according to an untranslatable wordplay of the ancients, “freedom on tablets.” Everything, it says there, everything is in God’s hands except one thing: the fear of God. And this freedom, where would it be more boldly shown than in the certainty of being able to tempt God? Therefore the mutual possibilities of tempting meet in prayer, that of God and that

of man; prayer is harnessed between these two possibilities; while being afraid of being tempted by God, it yet knows in itself the power of tempting God himself.

But what is it about this power of prayer? Does man really have power over God and, in prayer can he stay the Creator's outstretched arm, and impose his law upon the love of the Revealer? Hardly in an immediate way, otherwise the Creator would not be the Creator, nor would the Revealer be the Revealer. But it could be otherwise insofar as the work of the Creator and the action of the Revealer find each other in Redemption. There it might happen that man interferes violently in the sovereignty of divine power and love; for Redemption is after all not directly God's work or action; but just as God gave to Creation the power to grow in itself organically, so, too, in his love, he gave the soul freedom for the action of love.

But properly speaking it is not that freedom of the action of love could interfere with the divine action. It is after all itself desired by God; it is God's commandment to love one's neighbor. Rather, it is really only in the relationship of the action of love with that changing life of the world, and nowhere before, that the possibility for tempting God is present. And this relationship is established by prayer, by the prayer of the lonely heart out of the need of the lonely moment. For the action of love itself is still blind, it does not know what it is doing, and it is not supposed to know; it is quicker than knowledge; it does what is nearest, and what it does, it considers the nearest. But prayer is not blind, it places the moment, and the action just now performed in it and the will just determined, thus that which is the nearest past and the nearest future in this lonely moment, into the light of the divine countenance. It is a petition for illumination. Illuminate my eyes—they are blind as long as my hands are busy; the searching eye does not find out what is nearest and him who is nearest, but the groping hand discovers him standing right before it. Love acts as if not merely after all were there no God, but not even a world. For love, the neighbor represents the whole world and thus blocks the view of the eye. Yet, by asking for illumination, prayer sees—not past the nearest, but beyond the nearest, and sees, as far as it is illuminated for him, the whole world. So it frees love from the constraint of the groping hand and teaches it to seek its nearest with its eyes.

**OBTAINING  
THE KINGDOM  
BY FORCE**

**ACTION AND  
PRAYER**

That which till now inevitably seemed nearest to it will now perhaps move afar, and something quite unknown suddenly appears nearby. Prayer establishes the human world order.

**HUMAN AND  
DIVINE  
WORLD  
ORDER**

The human world order—but also the divine one? Obviously, God himself, by creating only one world but giving himself to many, laid the ground for the fact that the two orders could not, without further ado, be one. In the face of the one order of growing life, there are many orders proceeding from the “here-I-am” of the individual soul awakened by God. Already because these are multiple orders, they cannot without further ado be the same as the one divine order. For this, they would have first have to be the same among themselves. And they are not so, as long as each of the many still goes back to a lonely prayer of a lonely soul. Certainly, this prayer of the lonely man enters into the prayer of the many for the coming of the Kingdom, but on that account the lonely one remains no less in his loneliness. His own “here-I-stand” remains for him the reason for his cannot-do-otherwise, and he can only pray that God might help him; he himself does not get free from the solitariness of his standpoint, nor therefore does his prayer from the compulsion to establish its own world order.

But then what kind of danger is there in this? If prayer, by opening a window to the world for the man at his prayers, really shows the world to him in a particular order, should that be of any consequence for this one divine world order itself? Would there be a power in prayer that could tyrannically intervene in the course of the world sprung from God since Creation? If prayer is essentially nothing more than a prayer for illumination and hence illumination is also the utmost that can come to the worshipper through the power of prayer, how is prayer supposed to be able to intervene in the course of events? Illumination seems to come only to the one who is praying, his eyes are illuminated—but what does the world care?

**ACT OF  
LOVE AND  
PURPOSEFUL  
ACT**

The world of course does not have to care about illumination. Illumination does not immediately take effect. That which is simply effective is not this, but love. Love cannot do other than be effective. There is no act of love toward one’s neighbor that falls into the void. Just because the act was realized blindly, it must appear somewhere as effect. Somewhere, quite unpredictably where. If it were done open-eyed, like the purposeful act, then it could of course possibly be lost without a trace; for the pur-

purposeful act does not go widely, openly into the world, unhidden and undeliberate, but it is pointed toward a definite goal in sight; and since it also sees the road to this goal and, purposeful act as it is, must count this into its calculation; it seeks, besides pointing itself toward its goal, as well to hide its long open flanks that were formed through this pointing against any possible diverting or harassing influences that it needs to foresee on the road. So it becomes pointed, deliberate and hidden act, and if it arrives at all at its goal, then it succeeds. Its further destiny then depends on the destiny of that in which it succeeded; if that destiny dies, then the act dies with it. For because the purposeful act, the purer and the more complete it was, took its road to the goal as hidden as possible, therefore as act itself it really remained unseen, and got to its goal the more certainly, the more purely purposeful it was, without ever having exerted any unwanted effects on the way.

Quite otherwise then is the act of love. It is highly improbable that it really attains the object for which it was reaching. For it was blind, and only a groping feeling for the nearest thing informed it of its object; it does not know where it may best get at it; it does not know the way. The way in which it blindly seeks what is closest, without cover, without pointing: is it not more probable that it will lose its way? And that it—surely arrives somewhere and owing to its broad effusion at even more than a single somewhere, but will never get to see its original object for which it was intended?

Perhaps it is not too much to say that the actual effects of love are all secondary effects. And love never remains without such effects, whereas this freedom from secondary effects in the case of the purposeful act may well occur and is always striven after. For every object is connected so unbrokenly with other objects and ultimately to the infinity of objects that it is quite impossible for one act not to have an effect, at least on the road leading to its object, also on others—for it would have to prevent this directly, by aiming, as does the purposeful act, for the shortest and most hidden road. And among these objects that have felt the effects of the act, many, and even most, might pay the price of mortality, for they were not yet ripe for the inspiring effect of love, yet somehow through the unbroken connection of all objects, the effect will benefit that object that at the moment really is the “nearest,” whether it really was the one that the blindly

groping feeling must have taken as such, or whether it was another; and this one, as the truly nearest, is then ripe for the receiving of soul. This truly nearest one, for whom therefore the essential thing depends on love really finding it, for in the growing life of the world, it is carried just so far that, for it, time, its time, has come—and this nearest is also always really found. Only in one case might it not be found: when love, instead of flowing out from man as blind love guided by feeling, step by step, would seek to catch an object shown to it in a sudden illumination in one leap. For, the leap leaps over. And if there were in that which was leapt over that whose time had just come, then an act of love would indeed flow off into the void. For the road back is the road that, regard-less as it is, it cannot take. And this danger lies in prayer.

**THE NEAREST  
AND THE  
FARTHEST**

Prayer of course, when it illuminates, shows the eye the farthest goal; but since the man at his prayers stands on the definite stand-point of his personality, this farthest goal common to all appears behind a foreground of an entirely personal perspective, the perspective precisely of this standpoint. The immediacy then with which, instead of the felt nearness of the nearest, the sighted distance of the most distant is now experienced—for this distance does not appear to the eye opened wide by the desiring purposeful will, but to the eye illuminated in the receptivity of prayer—this immediacy of course makes it possible for love to be prepared immediately for this object. It is as near to the illuminated eye as is to the feeling heart its nearest near. But since in the illumination the road is simultaneously illuminated for it, namely in contrast to the generality of the goal, its personal road, so it is prepared first of all for the halting-places of the road. And it hurries as fast as possible to these sighted halting-places, fearing any delay, indeed imagining all danger in delay. What is nearest now of feeling is leapt across; the halting-place that is recognized in illumination as the first on the road to what is farthest now takes the place of that nearest one; love would like to rush to the halting-place in one bound. The second nearest takes the place of the nearest for love. The second nearest drives away the nearest from love. Love neither sees nor hears the one in order to reach the other in a forcible leaping over. And because it is love and therefore always effective, it must also succeed.

**MAGIC OF  
PRAYER**

And so prayer, which in itself has no magical powers, how-

ever, on illuminating the road for love, arrives at possibilities of magical effects. It can infringe on the divine world order. It can give to love the direction toward something that is not yet ripe for love, not yet ripe for being inspired. And when prayer evokes what is distant, it can therefore be to blame for man forgetting, indeed denying his nearest, at least insofar as it is only his nearest and not another's; and so at least for his no longer finding a road back to his nearest. Since the prayer for the coming of the Kingdom is a prayer of the individual, it is in danger of preferring the second nearest to the nearest. But such a preference is actually preference, a drawing forth of the coming future, hesitantly having drawn near, before this future has become a next present moment and as such ripe for becoming eternal. The prayer of the individual, just when it is answered and so illuminates its praying one, is therefore always in danger—of tempting God.

The possibility of tempting God therefore does not contradict the divine world order. It would be this only if man really had the power not only to love his second nearest, but also by this means to render him eternal. But it is not like that. Well might the man illuminated in prayer want forcibly to bring about the Kingdom of heaven before the destined time; but the Kingdom of heaven does not let itself be taken by force, it grows. And so, when the magic power of the individual at his prayers strays further than to the nearest, it falls into the void. The second nearest one, to whom it sought to vault, does not admit it into itself, and because it thus finds neither a foundation in him nor the road back from him, the road forward is then also denied to it; for in order to spread further forwards, it would first have to feel the ground under its feet once again. This is the misfortune of love toward what is second nearest; although it does effect an authentic act of love, it perishes in its reached goal altogether like the purposeful act; the violence of its claim takes revenge on it. The zealot, the sectarian, in short all tyrants of the Kingdom of heaven, instead of accelerating the coming of the Kingdom, sooner delay it; by leaving their nearest unloved and reaching for the second nearest, they are precluded from the multitude of the ones who, moving forward, in a broad front, piece by piece of the ground, each the one nearest to him, conquer, occupy,—inspire; and their forestalling, their personal preference for the second nearest does not render any pioneering service to those following; for it remains without effect; the ar-

**TYRANT OF  
THE KINGDOM  
OF HEAVEN**

able land, prematurely ploughed by the zealot, bears no fruit; only when its time has come—and it comes for it, too—only then does it bear fruit; but then the whole work of cultivating has to be done again afresh; the first sowing has rotted, and it certainly requires the obstinate foolishness of scholars to claim in view of the rotten remains that this is “actually” “already” the same that is later ripened into fruit. Time and hour are all the more powerful the less man knows them.

**THE RIGHT  
TIME**  
**GOD'S TIME**

**T**IME and hour—only before God are they powerless. Because for him of course Redemption is as old as Creation and Revelation, and so, just insofar as he is not only Redeemer, but also Redeemed, hence Redemption is thus Self-Redemption for him, any representation of a temporal becoming, as impudent mysticism and grandiloquent unbelief would like to impute to him, bounces off his eternity. Not he himself for himself, but he, as Redeemer of world and man, needs time, and not because he needs it, but because man and world need it. For the future is not anticipation for God; he is eternal and the only Eternal One, the Eternal One absolutely; “I am,” in his mouth, is like “I shall be” and really finds his explanation therein.

**EARTHLY  
TIME**

But for man and world, for whom originally life is not eternal, but who live in the bare moment or in a wide present, the future can only be grasped when it, that which comes drawn near hesitatingly, drawn forward into the present. Thus duration becomes of the utmost importance for them, for it is this that the future constantly aggravates, since the future is anticipated in the moment. And therefore for prayer everything amounts to whether the future of the Kingdom is hastened or delayed by it. Or, expressed more exactly: since both, hastening and delaying, carry weight only in the eyes of man and world, but not before God; and man and world do not measure time according to a measure outside or above them, but against each other, thus man against the world's growth ripening before him, the world against the profusion of love poured into its bosom: for prayer, therefore, it amounts to whether the gleam of light which it casts into the darkness of the future and which in its ultimate tendrils of light always reaches into the farthest distance, at the moment of its first appearance, thus at the nearest point that it illuminates for the man at his prayers, hurries on ahead of love, stays behind it, or keeps apace with it. Only in the last case is prayer answered;

only there does it take place in the “favorable moment,” at the “time of grace”; in this odd expression, which we are now beginning to understand, faith revives the idea which even pagan piety possessed as dead knowledge: that one may ask the gods only for what they are inclined to grant, and that thus in the event that one might ask for something “wrong,” one would have to ask, right from the start, for a non-answer.

Over this empty idea of the “right” content of prayer, faith elevates the idea of the right time. In itself, there is no wrong content of prayer. That which is apparently blatantly wrong content and which to pray for would be an abomination to the pious pagan, prayer for one’s own benefit, the egotistical prayer—is not wrong in terms of content; for God wants man to have what belongs to him, he concedes to him what he needs to live, even more: what he thinks he needs in life, even all that he can wish for. All this, God concedes to him, and because he concedes it, he therefore gives it to him, he has already given it to him even before he can ask for it; regarding content, no petition is sinful; even one as criminal as for instance for the death of another, God would have already answered the one who so prays even before he prays for it, since God created the one who is at his prayers as an individual; without any prayer it is already so: the other must die. For only others can die, only as an other, as a he, does man die. The I cannot imagine itself dead; its fear of death is the fear of becoming what it can see with its eyes in dead others: a dead he, a dead it; man is not afraid of his own death, for the I that has awakened in Revelation cannot at all be imagined in its imagination as it is, bound to the forms of Creation, but of his own corpse. The shudder that seized him, him, the living one, every time he saw a dead person, smites him as soon as he imagines himself, him, the living one, as a dead man; when yet strictly speaking the dead person can never be imagined as “oneself,” but always only as an “other.” One’s own self, one out-lives the others, all others; for the other, every other, is dead already as other, already from the beginning of the world; he was created as other, and as a created one he is finished-in-passing into the created one in death, as created one his destiny is finally decided not to out-live any other; for life is not the utmost in Creation, but his destination is to die into a beyond; death, not life, finishes the created thing into the singular, solitary thing; it confers upon life the greatest solitude of which it is capable as

**THE SINNER'S  
PRAYER**

thing among things. Prayer for the death of the other thus demands that the other remain in eternity what he already is from the beginning of the world: created thing—Other; however, one would himself like to be Self, awakened to his own life, and thus one who simply outlives, one who outlives all that is eternally “other.” An eternal wall of separation must stay standing between the I and all others. The bridge that leads from the I to the he, from Revelation to Creation, and above which it is written: Love your other, for he is not an other, not a he, but an I like you, “he is like you”—the I that prays for the death of the other refuses to walk on this bridge; he wants, just like the mystic, whose secret sin the honest sinner, the criminal, openly expresses, to stay thoroughly in Revelation and leave Creation to the “others”; thus the sinner, the candid criminal, like the mystical dealer in mysteries, denies Redemption; for what else is redemption but that the I learns to say you to the he?

This prayer that the Other might die is thus already answered before any praying; for, from the beginning of the world, man already has what belongs to him. So it is not the content of the request that is sinful; as Creation shows, it is not at all against God’s will; but that man, instead of treating this content in his prayer as already answered and thanking God therefore for his own being that is conditional upon his being-other, as human and creature, than all others, he asks for it and thus treats it as something still unanswered. For, with this, he prays at the wrong time; he would have had to have asked for it before his creation; after he has been created, he can only still give thanks for what is his own; and if he prays for it anyhow, then he misses the time of grace for obtaining by prayer what he at present needs to obtain by prayer; and in asking prays for what is “his own,” already granted to him in Creation and Revelation, he lets the moment slip where he ought to pray for what is his “nearest.” The beam of the searchlight all too closely fell upon its object, that is to say still within the circle of what is the Self’s own, instead of upon that which is no longer the Self’s own, but merely “like” its own, like himself—the nearest.

**THE  
ZEALOT’S  
PRAYER**

This is so when prayer lags behind love, that is when the sinner in us prays. The prayer of the sinner in this way delays the coming of the Kingdom by excluding itself, through staying in what is its own, from the profusion of love that the favorable moment awaits and needs. We see the opposite in the zealot’s prayer,

who in wanting to hasten the future of the Kingdom so that it might come ahead of time, seeks forcibly to seize the Kingdom at the point which the searchlight of his prayer shows to him as the nearest and which always is only a second nearest. His prayer and his love wither for him, and so he, too, inally is himself withdrawn from the moment of bountiful grace that awaited his like any other's act and has delayed the coming of the Kingdom, which he wanted to hasten. Therefore, only the prayer prayed at the right time will not delay the coming of the heavenly Kingdom. But how is this prayer prayed? And would there be only a non-delaying? Would the zealot be entirely wrong? Would it really be not at all possible not merely to delay the coming of the Kingdom, but to hasten it? Is his prayer a mere tempting of—speaking with words of Kabbalah—divine impatience, just as the sinner's prayer tempts divine patience? Is there in our hearts no one else when our lips are praying other than the sinner and the zealot? Do not still other voices pray in us?

**G**IVE, oh labor of my hands, the great happiness that I can finish it!"<sup>2</sup>—at first glance, this prayer of the young Goethe seems hardly different from that of Moses, the man of God: "Yes, you may speed the work of our hands." And it is yet different from it—as different as the two last forms of prayer that we shall now discover. The prayer of Goethe, the man of life, concerns his own happiness, he lays at his feet the daily work of his own hands and asks that he might finish it himself. This is the prayer that this great man at his prayers repeated for years and decades in new words every time, until he received great visible fulfillment. What is in this prayer of man for his own destiny? Who is this destiny before whom he humbly bows his free head and before whom his heart falls to its knees?

It would be giving an inadmissible new interpretation if one wanted for instance to see in "destiny" only a kind of embarrassed expression for the divine one who answers prayer, to whom all flesh comes. No, not all flesh comes to this destiny and lays before it the work of its hands, but only a lonely individual steps up to it, and only for a lonely individual is it the one who answers the prayer, only for him and for no one else. It is a destiny as personal as the man at his prayers himself, it is indeed exactly the

**THE LIFE OF  
GOETHE  
MAN AT HIS  
PRAYERS**

**ONE'S OWN  
DESTINY**

<sup>2</sup>From "Hoffnung," by J.W. Goethe, p.153, Vol, I of *Goethes Samtliche Werke* in Tempel Ed.

personal destiny of the man at his prayers. Would this prayer have to be answered? Would it have to be able to be said at the favorable time? Is it not a kin of the prayer that prays for what is its own and that always comes too late? Whose time of grace resides in the moment when the world became? And which will never again be answered, because it was already answered before any petition? But no—for does it pray for what is his own? Does it not rather pray within his own? Whether what is his own or what is foreign becomes the content for his life and for his love does not much worry this man at his prayers. He is concerned only that whatever comes should flow into his life, that he be permitted to offer everything, what is his own or what is foreign, what is foreign or what is his own, in the sanctuary of his own destiny. For this he prays. He by no means desires to preserve what is his own; he is quite ready to drift outward, to widen his narrow existence here to eternity, and he does this; but in this desire he feels like a servant of his own destiny, and if he is ready to lay down the walls of his own person—he does not think he can and may leave the holy domain of his own destiny. So—once more we ask—what is in one's own destiny?

**MICROCOSM**

Man is an indivisible part of the world of many parts. The world grows throughout its ages. It has its own destiny. Man's destiny is a part in this destiny. But it does not divide into it without a remainder. It is not resolved in it. It is certainly a part, but an indivisible one. Man is microcosm. And therefore his destiny is in the world's destiny, which ripens in the ages of its growth, is like a definite moment in the passage of time: he cannot be substituted, nor removed, nor dissolved in the whole of the river; he is a part of this whole, but an indissoluble, indivisible one. A moment in the ages of the world, maybe more accurately: an hour; for this destiny is full of diverse content, and the hour, the hour that has struck, is the time that man himself sets into the course of time of the heavenly signs, like a fixed thing, as a vessel of his continuous experience, the smallest element of which, still to be appropriated and not yet his own, is merely the moment, nothing else. This his own hour in the growing ages of the world, the hour that has struck for him is thus the one that man, praying for his own destiny, grasps. And because this is so, his prayer is always answered. Since it is prayed, it is woven into the destiny of the world and is never in the wrong place, never over-ripe, never unripe. Because it happens in one's own hour and

cannot happen at all at an unknown one, for it is precisely prayer to one's own destiny, and not to an unknown one, it is therefore always at the favorable time, the time of grace, and is answered such as it is prayed. It is answered from the beginning of the world; since man enters into his own destiny in it, it is at the same time man's assured entry into that which is from the beginning of the world, into Creation.

This is a great moment in the history of man, where for the first time man thus raises his arms praying to his own destiny. The man Goethe, in whom this great moment broke through, did not confront it without feeling. He knew it and, as an old man, expressed it in an overly bold utterance that yet revealingly goes straight to the bottom of things: he, so he thought, was still perhaps the only Christian in his times such as Christ wanted one to be. What is the meaning of this remark that borders close to blasphemous madness? For while he designates himself as "perhaps" the only Christian in his times, he gives himself—"though you regard me equally as a pagan"—a unique position in the history of Christianity, beyond all possibility of knowledge and understanding. To be a Christian does not mean: to have accepted any dogmas; but to live one's life under the rule of another life, the life of Christ and, once this has happened, then to live one's own life solely in the effect of the power flowing from there. If Goethe thus designates himself as perhaps the only Christian of his times, this can only mean that all the power flowing from Christ has collected "today" in him and, in its lively flowing forth is bound somehow to him and his apparent paganism. For this is the only way by which that placing of oneself under the life of Christ nevertheless for all that exacts to some degree dogmatic conclusions: the presupposition that that life is unique in the world and its effects can proceed only from him and hence, apart from unimportant, conscious certainties of individuals, only from him in their unconscious vitality in a unique, continuous river; and in this sense, the life of Christ would of course be one, or rather the dogma of Christianity; as in the classical form of the dogma, i.e., the trinitarian doctrine, the life of Christ for which the case was made, looking backwards, in its uniqueness in the created world, looking forwards, in its continuous power that stays in effect for humanity that is to be redeemed, really forms the only content. What then, considering all this, does Goethe's utterance mean with

**THE ONLY  
CHRISTIAN**

its remarkable interlacing of Goethean “paganism” with the imitation of Christ?

*IMITATION OF  
CHRIST*  
*THE ANCIENT  
WORLD*

**T**HE imitation of Christ above all had to mean, if the Christian wanted to live his life likewise unconditionally, likewise bound to the destiny of the whole world, that he once first created the outward possibility for such a life. For, when Christianity entered into the world with the will for such a life, above all it saw in this world the strikingly different law of life seated on the throne. Of course, contrary to what would have occurred several centuries earlier and again several centuries later, Christianity was not entering a world broken up into peoples, tribes or cities, a world whose every part would already lead, as part, its own existence subject to its own conditions and foreign to the world; rather, the world, at least the western world to where alone the messengers of Christianity made their way, this world was united under the scepter of Caesar. But in this unity, it only apparently and only on the surface offered favorable soil to Christianity. For its unity was not the unity of the world; the limits of the empire did not include the Oikoumenê; contrary to what it wanted to delude itself into believing, and with shameless boasting, they did not include the world inhabited by man. And the fact that they did not do so was not just due to a kind of inadequacy as regards their own intentions that were nevertheless fundamentally maintained. But into the foundation stone of this political edifice, its master builder, the Emperor Augustus, had already introduced the idea of setting limits to the acquired territories; only modifications for purposes of securing the borders were to be authorized; the eagles were borne across the borders only in order to eradicate the neighboring peoples’ taste for attack; like the great empire of the Far East, which considered itself as sovereignly equal to the rest of the world, Caesar’s Mediterranean empire secured its existence, by means of walls and moats throughout the mainland, against the rest of the earth, on which it had given up conquering.

And in this way, the whole of the empire had shrugged off its shoulders the destiny of the world; and likewise, within, destiny of the individual was bound only very superficially to the destiny of the whole. As the history of the capital city is by no means the history of the province, so, too, the life of the individual man is really scarcely touched by the life of the collectivity. It is

not by chance that in the end, due to this often secular history of the empire, a statute privy law was still extant: the Roman citizen suffered as little from the empire as he affected it; the only thing he owed to the whole was a delimitation and a protection of his private legal sphere: it was as it were a fence that delimited him in respect of all others, just as the great moat of the frontier fixed the limits of the empire in respect of the world. It is into this illusory image, into the mirror of a worldwide empire, that the Christians came to place its exact opposite: externally with its back against its organization, it survived the collapse of the empire brought about by the throng of world's peoples, kept out in vain by the moats and ramparts, and it survives into our times: the Church of Rome.

The messengers of Peter's successor crossed the *limes*<sup>3</sup>: they went out and taught all the peoples. The Church no longer sets any outer limits for itself as the empire did; it is on principle not satisfied with any border, it has no knowledge of renunciation. As it outwardly throws its protective cloak around the destiny of the whole world, so, too, within its bosom, no one may remain only for himself. It demands of everyone the immediate sacrifice of his Self, but it fully returns this to everyone in its motherly love; each is a precious and irreplaceable child, always unique in spite of all others. Hence, through it, the individual's life depends immediately on the life of the whole world. The bond that ties him, like the Mother Church itself, to the destiny of the world is love. In the missionary's love for those who still sit in darkness, the pushing back of the outer borders takes place, the enlarging of the outer, visible edifice; in the visible sacrifice of pious work, in the visible offering of the material or spiritual good deed, love which unites man with it and thus with the whole, also exists in the heart of the Church. In this way the Petrine Church creates a visible body, at first for itself and the men who are its members and inasmuch as they are its members; but, afterwards also for the world outside, which it gradually pervasively shapes and rules, in the empire's union over the kingships of the nations; in the edifice of classes and professions with regard to the individual, it finally annexes man, too, to itself, insofar as he is still outside and remains outside, and yet with this also incorporates him in it. Doesn't the condi-

#### THE PETRINE CHURCH

<sup>3</sup>*limes*: Latin, boundary, limit.

tion of the possibility for Christian life seem fulfilled there? What more is needed? In all that he can do, man is inserted into the whole of the world, the destiny of his action indissolubly knotted with the destiny of the whole world. Certainly, the destiny of his action, but not the destiny of his thought.

**THE  
MIEVEAL  
WORLD OF  
TWOFOLD  
TRUTH**

For the Roman Church of course had been able to penetrate the corporeal world of living peoples and to assert itself in a victorious counter-attack in the battle against the thronging paganism of the Crescent; here it really created for itself its own world, its new world. But against the internal, or more accurately, internalized paganism, pagan thought in the shape of memory, it had remained limited to the defensive. Only in the very beginning, until the end of Patristics, that is, just as long as pagan thought was not yet merely memory, but still living expression, the Church had overcome it by attacking. But no scholastic of the Middle Ages dares to treat the wisdom of the Greeks with such triumphant audacity as does Augustine. For combating pagan philosophers, love was efficacious; but against pagan philosophy, its weapon was blunt. The closing of philosophical schools in Athens by the authorities who had become Christian marks the end of ecclesiastical antiquity and the beginning of the ecclesiastical Middle Ages, or in other words: the end of Patristics and the beginning of Scholasticism. For, from then on, pagan antiquity became for the Church an opponent as intangible as a phantom and yet very colorfully visible and hung as it were like a painting on the wall, against which the power of action—and here, the power of love—was inadequate to win the victory. How could a picture be converted by love! For a picture does not possess life. If it is to be converted, then it must first be taken in by a fully captivated eye, seized by a fully shaken soul; therefore only the soul that has become a heretic—this can then be converted to faith. Before the picture on the wall, medieval Scholasticism had put up a curtain that it could open and close; for it was only a curtain before that most doubtful thought—precisely in the Christian sense most doubtful, because it was a hindrance to the mission—of a twofold truth, a truth of reason opposite the truth of faith. Only when the painted figures came down from the wall and mingled among the Christian people as living memories of paganism, only then did the powers of love again thrive in the Church for countering them.

**MODERN MAN**

But since these new pagans were nevertheless only neo-pa-

gans, pagans in an already Christian world, internalized pagans in an already Christian exterior, pagan souls in a christianized world-body, the power that undertook to convert them thus had to be a power that no longer, like love, was effective out of the soul only on a bodily exterior; it had to be a power that acted in the soul itself upon the soul. An inner activity therefore of the soul on itself, a self-conversion of man that turned its eyes away from the world in order to win the soul and only the soul, the lonely soul, the soul of the individual, without regard to any world.

The world was seized by this power in the form of the Pauline centuries, a form basically as invisible as the Church, and visible only as time, as epoch of universal history, as *saeculum*. These are the centuries where the world unity established by the Petrine Church seemed to shatter on all sides, where pagan configurations came to life again everywhere, where the nations sought to overturn Christianity, the States the empire, individuals the classes, and well-known people the professions. The Christian world body seemed again to disintegrate for these three centuries, in fact four centuries, counting the aftermath; this was the price of the success of the Christianization of the soul, the conversion “a posteriori” of the now awakened pagan spirit that had never quite died. When this period ended, there was no longer a twofold truth; faith had succeeded where love had to fail: the baptism of the soul that is without a world, the invisible, re-collecting. The soul now brought to God its whole memory, its whole content, as the invisible offering (like in the Petrine Church, it brought its whole presentness, the con-text of its action) and received it back from him in the invisible gift of faith. Hence the soul was now freed of all fences and walls, and it lived in the unconditional.

But it was “faith alone” that had led it into this life. It was the soul alone that lived it. As the Petrine Church had shown the weak spot of its all too corporeal essence in the evil thought of twofold truth, likewise, the German idealist movement, at the end of three centuries, openly announced the weakness of the essence of faith as its being centered too much on the soul, or better: when it is merely spiritual. Spirit thought it was so “alone” that it really could generate everything out of itself alone and out of itself alone everything. Faith had quite simply forgotten the body in the spirit. The world had slipped away from it. Of course, it had gotten rid of the doctrine of twofold truth. But in return, it dealt in a twofold reality, that is to say of the purely

**THE PAULINE  
CENTURIES**

**MODERN LIFE  
IN DIVIDED  
REALITY**

inner reality of faith and the purely outer one of an increasingly worldly world; the greater the tension between the two, the better this Protestantism felt which, in the end, raised to its principal article this reciprocal protest of faith against the world, of the world against faith. In other words: the new Church gave up that activity which really in fact had been the greatest activity of the old Church and now became so again, precisely in opposition to the new one: the mission. When, for the first time, from a direction developed in Lutheranism, the work of converting the pagans was resumed, this was the sign that here, in Pietism, something new had arisen. The hour of death of the old Protestantism was beginning to strike.

**CHRISTIAN-  
ITY OF THE  
FUTURE**

Body and soul were still separate; each owed something to the other: the body to the soul for its truth, the soul to the body for its reality. The whole man was both and more than both. And as long as the whole man was not converted, but always only part of him, just so long was Christianity still making ready and not yet doing the work itself. Man is microcosm; what is inside is outside. Above body and soul, higher than both, carried by both, stretches life's curve. Life not as life of body or soul, but as something for itself which draws body and the soul into itself, into its destiny. Life is the course of life. Man's proper essence is neither in his bodily being nor in his spiritual being, it is completed only in the full course of his life. It does not at all exist, it becomes. What belongs most to man is precisely his destiny. He has body and soul still in some way in common with others; his destiny belongs only to himself. Personal destiny is at once body and soul; it is that which one, "in one's own body—experiences." At the same time, since it unifies man in himself, it guarantees his unity with the world. He does not share his destiny with the world in the way that his body is part of the created world and his soul is co-heir of divine Revelation; but his destiny is entirely in the world; he is in the world because he has his destiny in it. He grows into the world because he grows into himself. The individual day of life gets meaning because it is inserted into the entire course of personal life. Today passes away into a tomorrow and a day after tomorrow, which yet can just as well be as early as today; life can of course end at any moment, but as personal destiny, it passes away at the moment of the end, which is, seen from the outside, fortuitous and is finished. If this relationship of the part to the whole existed only within life between the

single hour and the course of life, then this life would still be nothing other than the Self of pagan man. But this inner bond is the same one that also binds the human life as an whole to the whole of worldly life; it is precisely destiny. And since life is perceived as destiny, since personal destiny is recognized as something that is not merely experienced, but to which one can pray, is already that which is new there, and which resides beyond the reciprocal debt between body-only and soul-only. And with this a new time has begun, the completing one of Christianity.

**T**HIS time it is not the same as in the two preliminary times, where the pagan faces Christianity in person, at first the bodily external pagan, afterwards the spiritually inner pagan in memory; but the converter and the one converted are here one and the same man. Goethe is really at the same time the great pagan and the great Christian. He is the one because he is the other. In the prayer to his personal destiny, man at the same time begins to feel at home in his Self and just for this reason is also fully at home in the world. This prayer of unbelief which is yet at the same time a fully believing one, that is to say a prayer of creaturely belief, is henceforth prayed by every Christian, even if in distinction from Goethe it is not his only prayer. And henceforth, the peoples, too, and all the secular orders of Christianity say this prayer. They all know now that their life must be personal life and is inserted precisely as such into the movement of the world; they all find the justification of their existence in the vitality of their destiny. We see Christian peoples appear only now, whereas in the Pauline era there were worldly authorities, and in the Petrine era nations subject to the one Holy Empire. States and tribes needed a complement to their lives, the one finding it in the faith of the individual and the stewardship of the Word, the other in the Empire and in the visible Church; it is only thus that they could be sound fertile soil for the sowing of Christianity. Only now do the peoples have complete vitality in themselves: since then every people has known and believed it has "its day in history"; and if they still need an earthly completion beyond this, then also the purely worldly, really all too worldly concept of "society" gives it to them.

And as life in itself, or rather, in its own incompleteness, keeps growing while passing away to completion, so now, too, its offering and that which is given to it in return are no longer of two

**GOETHE AND  
THE FUTURE**

**THE PRAYER OF  
UNBELIEF**

**HOPE**

kinds. The pagan in outer appearance offered his body and got love in return; the pagan in internalized memory offered his spirit and received faith in return. But the living pagan, the great pagan, offers his life and gets only this in return: to be allowed and able to give offerings. But to be allowed and able to offer up his life is from God's point of view the gift of trust. For him who trusts and hopes there is no offering that would be a giving up of something; it is entirely natural for him to offer up sacrifices, he knows no other way. Love was very feminine, faith very masculine; only hope is always childlike; only in it does the "Become like children" begin to be realized in Christianity. And therefore Goethe is "always childlike." He trusts in his destiny. He hopes for his own future. He cannot imagine that "the gods" would not let him finish the work of his hands. He hopes, as Augustine loves, as Luther believes. And so the whole world comes under this new sign. Hope becomes now the greatest. The old powers are reconciled in hope; faith and love adapt themselves. From the children's sense of hope now they get new power, such that they become young again like the eagle. It is like a new world morning, like a great beginning anew from the beginning, thus as if there had still been nothing before. Faith that proves true in love, the love that carries faith within its bosom, they are both now carried on high on the wings of hope. For thousands and thousands of years, faith has been hoping to have been true in love, love to have carried true faith into the one and universal light of the world. Man says: I hope to believe.

**THE  
JOHANNINE  
COMPLETION**

Hope is given to man only when he has it; whereas love is given precisely to the hardened heart, and faith to the heretic, God gives hope only to the one who hopes. For that reason, hope does not found a new Church. For no new pagan emerges here, but only the living one who unites the little paganisms of body and soul with the great paganism of life; and already this union, thus the mere emergence of the pagan, signifies his conversion. The Johannine completion does not have a specific form; it is simply not a piece anymore, but only completion of the till now incomplete work. Therefore it will have to live in the old forms. Of course, in our times a third Christian Church has entered the sphere of Christianity with its peoples that is as ancient as the other two—for they only apparently follow successively, really they are equally old—the Eastern Church. It did not however come to life as a new Church for Christianity, but there

came to the old Churches a renewal of the powers of faith and love from the Russia of Alyosha Karamazov, and the Russian Church proved to be nourishing soil for an infinite power of hope only for its own people, and even for it only when it came out of its twilit space. And even the other great event in Church history besides the enlisting of the Russians into the Christian zone, the liberation and reception of the Jews in the Christian world, does not have effects in a new form, but again only in a revival of the old Churches; and here certainly, from out of God's innately childlike and eternal people of hope, there streams toward the Christian peoples, better versed in love and faith than in hope, the primary force of the new completed world, hope, and because this time, instead of the Christian having to convert a pagan, the Christian must directly convert himself, the pagan in himself, it is thus, in these times that are beginning to be completed, very likely the Jew received into the Christian world who must convert the pagan in the Christian. For it is only in Jewish blood that there lives like blood the hope that love very gladly forgets, and faith thinks it can be without. But such a conversion also takes place within the old Church. The Johannine Church itself does not assume a visible shape of its own. It is not built; it can only grow. Yet where the attempt is made to build it, like in Freemasonry and all that is related to this, entrance is blocked to the powers of faith and love still effectively active in it, which find their daily bread of life only before the altars and pulpits of the old Churches; only hope that can nourish itself by itself can enter into the Freemason's new building that was consecrated, by a significant mistake, not to the Apostle John, but to his pre-Christian namesake; yet, with no other content than itself, it fades into the boundless, empty narcissism of a drearily powerless: "I hope—always to go on hoping;" and even if it knows truth to be in God's right hand, falls meekly into his left.

In this Johannine Church, shapeless, necessarily unorganized, and hence always dependent on the organized Churches, Goethe is the first of its Fathers, although of course he had to be counted as a pagan—and he really was one. In his prayer to his own destiny, which everyone now prays after him, the revival of that which is dead dies, which is the indispensable precondition of his becoming eternal. In the prayers of the body for love—may God be merciful with me, sinner that I am!—of the soul for faith—how might I find a merciful God!—are the parts of the

part<sup>4</sup> which in their assemblage make him indivisible, have come alive each for itself.

In the prayer of the man thus become “individual,” that is to say that which is whole out of body and soul, for that which he already possesses, his own destiny, now also this whole singularity as such is revived; it makes its bed in everything and yet does not cease to be singularity. Where this prayer is said, there dawns that vitality of creaturely life, which this life immediately makes ripe for the breakthrough of eternal divine life.

**GOETHE AND  
NIETZSCHE**

For when that prayer is said, it makes a piece of life ripe for eternity. It does not make the piece already itself eternal, it only enlivens it; Goethe especially remained a pagan throughout his life, and the fact that he remained so marks its world historical dividing line which he himself unabashedly expresses in those words with which we opened. No one can imitate this without breaking his neck. Goethe’s life is really a walk on a ridge between two abysses: in every moment of his life he succeeded keeping within his depths on firmly established enduring ground. Any other whom the arms of divine love did not catch, and let him take flight into the eternal would necessarily have plunged into one of the two abysses that gape below both edges up to which everyone must henceforth climb to give vitality to his life. The piety of the prayer to one’s own destiny borders directly on the prayer of the sinner who presumes he may pray for anything, and on the prayer of the zealot, who, for the sake of the faraway one, which the moment of prayer shows him as necessary, thinks except this one, he is forbidden everything, everything nearest. Goethe did not slip down either of these slopes; he passed through—“Let someone do the same!” A little illustrated notice is set up on the ridge: following the example of Zarathustra’s decline and disappearance, it shows how one can become an immoralist who breaks all the tablets and a tyrant who does violence to his neighbor as to himself for the sake of the second nearest, or to his friend for the sake of new friends—sinner and zealot in one person. The little notice henceforth warns every traveler who has climbed up to the ridge against wanting to follow Goethe’s path a second time, with hopeful trust in his own footsteps, without the wings of faith and love, a pure son of this earth.

<sup>4</sup>Mephistopheles: “Ich bin ein Teil des Teils, der einstmal alles war.”

From this slipping into the twofold falsification of time, that of the sinner being late and that of the zealot being early, Goethe's prayer, the prayer of the unbeliever, cannot be protected. It of course seizes the exact moment of the right time, of the favorable time of grace. And only after it is prayed time begins really to be fulfilled. Only after that does the Kingdom of God come really in time. It is not by chance that now for the first time the demands of the Kingdom of God seriously began to be turned into demands of time. Only since then were all those great works of liberation undertaken, which, as little as they already constitute the Kingdom of God, are yet the necessary conditions for its coming. Liberty, equality, fraternity—changed from heartfelt words of faith into the slogans of the times and were taken into battle in the inert world with blood and tears, with hate and ardent passion, in battles that have not ended.

**REVOLUTION**

As long as the old Petrine Church was the only one, it grew only in space—"everywhere in the world." Only in the growth of space could the position of the hand of time be read. So, like Dante, when he found only a few seats empty in paradise in the assembly of saints, he thought he could conclude from this that the end of the world was now close, and did not at all imagine that perhaps the occupying of these few seats could take longer than the filling of the many till now; so the Church was used to reading the growth of the Kingdom as it were on the map of the mission. Compared with such an expansion of time into the spatial, the Pauline epoch represented the sinking of time in itself; it stopped as it were in every man who believed. For really in this way the Pauline Church simply forgot the spatial expansion of faith on which alone time could be read—for without a dial there is no clock. The Johannine Church first created in the prayer with regard to destiny really a living time, a river flowing in itself, which, instead of being drunk up in the single moment, rather carries it toward the ocean, and instead of being too liquid and trickling away in the breadth of space, rather flows through it and waters it in a thousand branches.

**MISSION**

In this river of living time, the temporality of life is completed. If life wholly evaporated its temporality in this, if the prayer with regard to destiny were therefore its greatest and entire prayer, then the coming of the Kingdom through this prayer, which of course always finds the right moment and thus can always be sure of an answer, would not merely be neither hastened nor

**GOETHE'S  
LIMITATIONS**

delayed, but—mark my words: if it were possible to say that prayer as the only one—would be directly shut down. From the brief inimitable moment where it could seem as if this creaturely prayer really could be said here for itself alone, seen from Goethe’s life, this most blissful life human life, time really does seem to stand still, and from the city of God, like from a sunken Vineta,<sup>5</sup> only a soft echo of bells that have died away comes to touch the surface of life. But temporality is not eternity. The purely temporally lived life of Goethe, the most alive of the children of men, was already in the pure temporality only a single moment, only an imitating one, dangerous to life. The temporal needs the support of the eternal. But of course: not until life has become entirely temporal, or, put differently, time has an entirely living, an entirely real river flowing through the vast space above the crags of the moment; no sooner can eternity fall upon time. Life, and all life, must be entirely temporal, entirely living before it can become eternal life. To exact temporality of pure life, which is always found exactly at the right point of time, always comes just at the right moment, neither early nor late, there must be joined a hastening force.

**TODAY** Eternity, that is to say, must be hastened, it must always be capable of coming as early as “today”; only through it is it eternity. If there is no such force, no such prayer that can hasten the coming of the Kingdom, then it does not come eternally, but—eternally does not come. Which prayer, then, hastens the coming of the Kingdom truly and not for instance merely with the impotent prayer of the zealot that is tyrannically violent yet brings about just the opposite of one’s own wish? How, where and when will someone’s prayer be said to which the gods may remain silent, but to which God must give an answer: the prayer of the person who complements the devotions of the unbeliever before pure life with a request for eternal life—the prayer of the believer?

**THE RIGHT  
PRAYER**

**THE RIGHT  
TIME**

**T**HIS positive hastening, according to all we now know, can thus take place only in one way: the Kingdom must be anticipated, in fact not merely in personal illumination in which eternity certainly does become visible, but does not come tangibly near; in the illumination of the zealot, any station of his per-

<sup>5</sup>Vineta: City sunk in the Baltic Sea, Germanic symbol of the Kingdom of Ys.

sonal road toward the eternal was shone upon nearby, as the nearest thing, and by putting all his magic powers of love into reaching this apparently nearest, in truth the second nearest, he squandered his powers into the void and, from a powerful hastener, turned into a delayer of the future. Such a personal tyrannizing over the Kingdom of heaven is in direct contrast with what we are seeking here. It is impossible for the believer's prayer to be stuck simply in good will. As it is complement to the prayer of the unbeliever that is already presupposed by him, that always comes in good time, because it always comes at the favorable time of the Creator, and as it is effective only as such a complement, then the least that can be demanded of it is that it come neither early nor late.

But more is to be demanded of it, namely that it really attain what the prayer of the unbeliever does not want to attain and what that of the zealot cannot attain: to hasten the future, to make eternity into the very nearest thing, into the today. Such an anticipation of the future in the moment would have to be a true turning of eternity into a today. What would such a today be like? Above all, it could not perish; for even if we know nothing else about eternity, this is certain: that it is the imperishable. So the today that is brought into eternity must first of all correspond to this destiny through an infinite now. An imperishable today—but has it not, like all moments, flown away with the speed of an arrow? And now it is to be imperishable? There is only one way out: the moment we are seeking must, since it has flown away, begin again already at the same moment, in the sinking away it must already begin again; its perishing must be at the same time a beginning again.

#### THE ETERNAL MOMENT

For this, it is not enough that it begins ever anew. It must not come anew; it must come again. It must really be the same moment. The mere inexhaustibility of begetting changes nothing in the perishability of the world, indeed even increases it. So this moment must have more as its content than the mere moment. The moment shows something always new to the eye every time it opens. The new thing that we are seeking must be a *nunc stans*, not a moment that flies away, but a "fixed" moment. Such a fixed "now," as differentiated from the moment, is called: hour. Because it is fixed, the hour can already have in itself the diversity of old and new, the wealth of moments; its end can flow again into its beginning, because it has a middle, or rather many mo-

#### THE HOUR

ments of the middle between its beginning and its end. With beginning, middle and end, it can become what the mere sequence of single ever new moments can never become: a circle that flows back in itself. It can be abounding in moments in itself and yet the same again and again. When an hour is over, not merely “a new” hour begins, as a new moment replaces the old one, but there begins “again an” hour. This beginning again would however be impossible for the hour if it were merely a succession of moments, as it really is in its middle, but only because it has beginning and end. Only the stroke of the clock, not the ticking of the pendulum, makes the hour. For the hour is of entirely human making. The Creation knows nothing of it; only in the world of Redemption do clocks begin to strike. Only there too does the word for hour begin to disengage itself from the words for time, period of time, with which beforehand it was one.

**THE CYCLE  
OF TIMES**

In the hour, the moment is therefore turned into that which, when it should have perished, always newly begins again and thus into the imperishable, the *nunc stans*, eternity. And according to the image of the self-made hour in which man frees himself from the perishability of the moment, he now changes the times that Creation had set for his life. Day and year too, week and month too, from solar and lunar times turn into hours of human life. They, too, receive their beginning and their end, and an end that immediately becomes the beginning again. It is not the circles which the two lights, the big one and the little one, describe in the heavens that make them time indicators for man; the circle alone, without the fixed point of beginning and end, would still be nothing other than the mere succession of moments; only through the fixing of that point, the holiday, does the repetition that takes place in traversing this circular path become noticeable. It is not the heavenly cycle, but the earthly repetition that makes these times into hours, into guarantors of eternity in time. That which God promised to the father of the new humankind, when he laid the first and most universal foundation of his covenant with this humanity—that the alternation of sowing and harvesting, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night should never cease—this only, the always new repetition, makes the heavenly times into “hours”: the smallest one we can read from the heavens, through waking and sleeping; the greatest one, through sowing and harvesting. For the times that are greater

still than the solar year are no longer times that perceptibly determine the ever repeated alternation of working the earth and human life. In the daily and yearly, ever repeated service of the earth, man perceives his earthly eternity in the community of men; in the community—not as individual; as individual he perceives it more considerably in the alternation of the ages and in the cycle of the species and of birth.

The week is placed between day and year, founded in heaven **THE WEEK** through the lunar cycle, yet has long been freed from it even where the moon's phases still determine the measurement of time, and thus has become a purely human time belonging to man. And purely human, without basis in the Creation of the World, such as he pro-posed in the case of the day in the alteration of waking and sleeping, in the case of the year in the alternation of sowing and harvesting, and explained therefore by Scripture only as metaphor of the work of Creation itself, purely human is the alternation which makes the week into a *nunc stans* for man, fixed as alternation between work day and day of rest, labor and contemplation. Therefore the week, with its day of rest, is the fitting sign of human freedom, as Scripture also explains the sign, where it says not foundation, but purpose. It is the true "hour" among the times of human life lived in common, set for man alone, freed from the world cycle of the earth, and yet absolutely law for the earth and the alternating times of its service. It must rhythmically regulate the service of the earth, the labor of "cultivation" and thus depict it in miniature, in the ever-repeated present, the eternal, wherein beginning and end meet, the imperishable in the today. In the week, as the law of the cultivation of the earth, freely established by man and for man, the eternal is merely depicted, merely as earthly eternity. But not for nothing is the word for cultivation and worship, for the service of the earth and the service of God, cultivation of a field and cultivation of the Kingdom, one and the same word in the holy language. The week is more than what it is as humanly established law of cultivation: it is an earthly simile of the eternal; as divinely established law of worship, it draws the eternal into the today not only symbolically but in reality. It can be the germ cell of ritual because it is the first ripe fruit of the cultivation. Because it is the purely human-earthly fortification of the fleeting moment, therefore all divinely-supra-terrestrial immortalization of the moment proceeds from

it. From out of it, the day, too, and the year as well become temporal dwellings into which the eternal is invited. In the daily-weekly-yearly repetition of the cycles of prayers of worship, faith makes the moment into the “hour” and time ready to receive eternity; and eternity, by finding a reception in time, itself becomes—like time.

**WORSHIP**

But how does this power reside in prayer such that it forces eternity to accept the invitation? Is not worship more than merely a preparation of food and drink, a setting of the table, a sending of a messenger to tell the guest to come? We understand well enough that eternity can become time in ritual, but that it must become so, that it is obliged to become so with magic power—how are we to understand that? Even worship seems only to build the house where God may accept a dwelling, but can it force the valued guest to move in? Yes, it can do so. For the time that it prepares for the visit of eternity is not the individual’s time, not my, your, his secret time; it is everyone’s time. Day, week, year belong to everyone in common, are founded in the world course of the earth that patiently bears all and in the law of the labor in it that is common to all. The striking of the hours reaches every ear. The times that ritual prepares are particular to no one apart from all others. The prayer of the believer takes place within the believing community. It is in gatherings that he praises the Lord. The illumination—it can be none other here than that which can also happen to all others. In the illumination therefore, since it is to be common to all, the same thing must be illuminated for all. This that is common to all, beyond all individual standpoints and the diversity of perspectives conditional upon the difference of these standpoints, however, can only be one thing: the end of all things, the last things. All that lies on the path would appear different to everyone, according to the place where he is standing, and every day has different content for everyone, according to the day that he is living; only the end of days is common to all. The searchlight of the prayer lights up for everyone only what it lights up for everyone only what it illuminates for all: only the farthest, the Kingdom.

**THE  
NEARNESS OF  
THE  
KINGDOM**

All that is beforehand remains in darkness; the Kingdom of God is the nearest. Since the Star that otherwise shines out in the distance of eternity thus becomes visible as that which is nearest, the whole power of love turns toward it and draws in its light, with magical force through the night of the future into the

day of the praying community. The ritual prayer which sets everything on the one request for the coming of the Kingdom, and for which all other closer requests are only included in the prayer incidentally for the sake of this one, achieves the redemptive coming of the eternal within time by showing to love that what is nearest is the eternal one, and thus releases upon it the irresistible power of love for the neighbor. God cannot do otherwise; he must accept the invitation. Because the prayer of the believer takes place in the gathering of believers, it complements the prayer of the unbeliever, which must always be a prayer of the individual.

The unbeliever could ask only for the favorableness of his own destiny, only that he might be permitted to finish the daily work of his hands. Only that which is more-than-nearest, that which is his own, was illuminated to his love through his prayer; the searchlight cast its light into the circle of what was his own, whose borders of course, in contrast to the case of the sinner where they remain narrow and fixed, extended from the narrow “here” to eternity. The man at his prayers, praying thus, learned to love the one who is more-that-nearest, his Self; not his Self as a closed, rigid Self, but as the personality whose own destiny is woven into the destiny of the world. If he did not pray for this permission to finish the daily work of his hands—what he asks would probably be fulfilled, for he is asking only for what is ripe to be fulfilled for him, and likewise for anyone else his own would be fulfilled; but the eternal fulfillment would not grow out of all these individual fulfillments; the eternal life would not grow out of any individual life; it has been seen to it that in all growth through time the tree of life should not grow into heaven. But the prayer of the community, not to its own destiny, but immediately to the Eternal One, that He might further the work not of my or your or his hands but of “our” hands, so that He, not so that I might finish it—this prayer which gazes beyond everything individual at that which is common to all and only at this, with a strong grip pulls the Eternal into the moment and presents the individual piece of life, which has become wholly alive in this moment in the unbelieving prayer, with the intercepted spark of the eternal light, that remains in it as seed of eternal life.

**THE UNITED  
PRAYER**

The prayer for the coming of the Kingdom therefore mediates between Revelation and Redemption, or more correctly be-

**LITURGY AND  
GESTURE**

tween Creation and Revelation on the one hand and Redemption on the other, just like the miraculous sign between Creation and Revelation. And just as this relationship within the world of Revelation moved at the same time also the relationship of the primevally created primordial world to the manifest world, so now, too, that of the manifest world on the one hand, inclusive of the primeval world that entered into it precisely through the miracle, to the redeemed supra-world of Redemption. Prayer is the power that reaches over the threshold, from out of the mystery, created as silent, of life's own growth, and from out of the miracle of love, endowed with speech, up to the silent illumination of the wholly fulfilling end. For this third Part, therefore, liturgy will assume a similar rank as a system of logic, that is to say an organon of mathematics in the first Part, of grammar for the second. The relationship, though, between the means of reasoning and the being to be understood by virtue of it will here have to be a different one than it was for mathematics and grammar, as of course these two were already in a different relationship to that which is to be understood by them.

The mathematical symbols were really only symbols; they were the mystery in the mystery, silent keys that were kept in a secret drawer right inside of this shrine of the primordial world itself; they were pushed far in and behind things and considered this primordial world itself as something bygone, an "a priori" heirloom of a pre-creation. The grammatical forms on the contrary express the miracle immediately, they are no longer hiding in some mysterious background of the world belonging to them, but are entirely one with it; within the miracle, they are themselves again the miracle, manifest signs of a manifest world. They are exactly contemporary with their world; where the world is, there, too, is language; the world is never without the word, and it exists only in the word, and without the word, it would itself also not exist. The liturgical forms however do not possess this contemporaneousness with that which is to be understood in them; they anticipate; it is a future that they make into a today. So they are neither keys nor mouth of their world, but a substitute. They substitute for the redeemed world in terms of knowledge; knowledge knows only them; it does not see beyond them; the eternal hides behind them. They are the light in which we behold the light, calm anticipation of a world shining in the silence of the future.

The primordial world contains only the silent elements out of which the path of the star was constructed; the path itself was a reality but was at no moment visible to the eye; for the star that travels the path does not stand still for a moment. Only that which lasts for more than a moment can be seen with the eye; only the moment that has shut down through its becoming-eternal permits the eye to see the configuration in it. The configuration, therefore, more than that which is elemental, more than what is real, is the directly perceptual. As long as we know only elements of the path and laws of the path of a star, our eyes have not yet seen it; it is only a material point that moves in space. Only when a telescope and spectroscope draw it near to us do we know it as we know a tool we use or a picture in our room: with familiar visual perception. Just in the perceptual is factuality brought to its end; then nothing more is heard of thing or of act.

That which can be looked at is relieved of language, put into relief above it. Light does not talk; but shines. It is not at all turned in on itself; it radiates not inward but outward. Yet its radiating is also not a surrendering of itself, as language is; light does not give itself away, dispose of itself as does language when expressing itself, but it is visible while abiding entirely by itself, it does not exactly radiate outward, it only goes on radiating; it does not radiate like a fountain, but like a face, like an eye radiates, an eye that becomes eloquent without needing to open its lips. There is a silence here that is unlike the speechlessness of the primordial world that has no words yet, but a silence that no longer needs words. It is the silence of perfect understanding. Here, a glance says everything. Nothing teaches more clearly that the world is not yet redeemed than the multiplicity of languages. Between men who speak a common language, a glance very likely suffices to make themselves understood; just because they have a common language, they are relieved of language. But between different languages only the stammered word mediates, and the gesture ceases to be immediate understanding, as it was in the silent glance of the eye, and is reduced to the stammering of gestural language, this poor temporary bridge for understanding. Hence it turns out that the height of liturgy is not the common word, but the common gesture. Liturgy frees the gesture from the chains of being the clumsy maidservant of language and turns it into

something more than language. Only in the liturgical gesture is the “purified lip” anticipated that is promised for “that day” to peoples always linguistically divided. In it, the arid silence of the unbelieving members becomes eloquent, the overflowing talkativeness of the believing heart grows quiet. Unbelief and belief join their prayer.

**TRUTH** They join it in the silence of the liturgical gesture—but do they never join it in the secular word? Is there no living work—be it even only a single work, only a testimony of common belonging—where the two prayers, that of the man of life and that of the man of God are reconciled in complete agreement? Let us recall what we said in the Introduction of the previous Part about theology and philosophy. They seemed to us to be mutually dependent on each other. That was a need for exchange between two sciences. Is it not more? He who engages in science is indeed more than that in which he is engaged. The philosopher must be more than philosophy. We have heard: he has to be a man, flesh and blood. But it is not enough that he is merely that. As flesh and blood that he is, he must pray the prayer of creatures, the prayer to his own destiny where precisely the creature unknowingly acknowledges himself as creature. The wisdom that dwells in him, in his flesh and blood—God makes it innate in him; now it hangs like a ripe fruit on the tree of life. And the theologian must be more than theology. We have heard: he must be truthful; he must love God. And it is not enough that he does so for himself in his little room. As lonely lover that he is, he must say the prayer of the children of God, the prayer of the God-fearing community, where he knowingly acknowledges himself as a member of its immortal body. The wisdom that dwells in him, in his reverential heart—God has awakened it in him through the Revelation of his love; like a kindled spark from the eternal light, it now comes out of his mouth, which is ready to praise God in gatherings.

Divine truth hides from the one who reaches for it with one hand only, regardless whether this reaching hand is that of philosopher’s realism, which imagines itself as having no presuppositions, soaring above things, or the theologian’s blindness that, proud of its experience, shuts itself off from the world. It wants to be implored with both hands. To the one who calls to it with the double prayer of the believer and of the unbeliever, it will not be denied. God gives of his wisdom to

the one as to the other, to belief as to unbelief, but to both only when their prayer comes jointly before him. It is the same man who yet comes with his twofold petition, and unbelieving child of the world and believing child of God in one, must step before Him with twofold thanks, Him who makes a present of his wisdom to flesh and blood just as to those who fear him.



## BOOK ONE

# THE FIRE OR ETERNAL LIFE

**P**RAISED be he who has planted eternal life in our midst. The fire burns in the heart of the Star. It is only out of the fire of the center that the rays shine forth and flow outwards irresistibly. The heart of the fire must burn without ever stopping. Its flame must eternally nourish itself. It does not want nourishment from anywhere else. Time must roll past it without power. The fire must beget its own time. It must beget itself eternally. It must make its life eternal in the succession of generations, each of which begets the following one, as it itself again will bear witness to the preceding one. The bearing witness takes place in the begetting. In this connection with the double meaning and single effect of begetting and bearing witness,<sup>1</sup> eternal life becomes real. Past and future, otherwise strangers to each other, the one drawing back when the other's turn comes—here they grow into one: the begetting of the future is a direct bearing witness to the past. The son is begotten so that he might bear witness to the past father of his begetter. The grandson renews the grandfather's name. The patriarchs call the last offspring by his name, which is also theirs. Above the darkness of the future there burns the starry heaven of the promise: so shall be your seed.

*THE PROMISE  
OF ETERNITY*

**T**HERE is only one community in which such a relationship of eternal life reaches from the grandfather to the grandson, only one that cannot express the "We" of its unity without hearing as well within its core "are eternal" as its complement. It must be a community of the same blood, for only the blood gives to hope for the future a guarantee in the present. Every other one, every community can be propagated differently than by blood if it wants to establish its We for eternity, and it can do so only by safeguarding a place for itself in the future; all bloodless eternity is founded on the will and on hope. The community of the same blood alone feels even today the guarantee of its eternity running warmly through its veins. For it alone time is

*THE ETER-  
NAL PEOPLE:  
JEWISH  
DESTINY*

*BLOOD AND  
SPIRIT*

<sup>1</sup>Bearing witness, *Bezeugen*; begetting, *Erzeugen*.

not an enemy to be restrained, over which perhaps, perhaps even not—but it hopes that—it will be triumphant, but child and grandchild. That which for other communities is future and therefore in any case that which is still on the other side the present—is for it alone already present; for it alone, that which is future is nothing foreign, but something that is its own, something that it carries in its womb, and it can give birth to it every day. Whereas every other community that lays claim to eternity must make arrangements in order to pass the torch of the present on to the future, only the community of the same blood does not have need of making such arrangements for the tradition; it does not need to trouble its mind; in the natural propagation of the body it has the guarantee of its eternity.

**THE PEOPLES  
AND THE  
LAND OF  
THEIR  
HOMELAND**

That which is held by a people in general to be the union of families of the same blood in the face of all communities of the spirit is held by our people in a quite particular way. Among the peoples of the earth, is, the Jewish people is, as on every Sabbath, that high point of its life, it calls itself: the one people. The peoples of the world cannot be satisfied with a community made up of the same blood; they put forth their roots into the night of the earth, itself dead yet life-bestowing, and appropriate from its permanence a guarantee of their own permanence. Their will to eternity clings to the soil and to the soil's dominion, the territory. The blood of their sons flows round the earth of the homeland; for they do not have confidence in the living community of blood, which would not be anchored in the solid ground of the earth. We alone have put our trust in the blood and parted with the land; in this way we saved the precious life fluid that offered us a guarantee of our own eternity and alone among all peoples of the earth we have awakened out of every community our living with the dead. For the earth nourishes, but it also binds; and when a people loves the soil of the homeland more than its own life, then the danger hangs over it—and it hangs over all peoples of the world—that nine times that love may save the soil of the homeland against the enemy and also with the soil the life of the people; but a tenth time the soil remains as that which is loved more and the very life of the people pours out on it. Ultimately the people, too, belong to him who conquers the land; it cannot be otherwise when people are more attached to the land than to their own life as a people. In this way the earth betrays the people that entrusts to the permanence

of the earth its own permanence; the earth itself persists, but the people on it perish.

For this reason, the tribal legend of the eternal people begins otherwise than with indigenoussness. Only the father of humanity, and even he only as regards the body, is sprouted from the earth; Israel's ancestor, however, immigrated; his story begins, as the Holy Books recount it, with the divine command to go out of the land of his birth and to go into a land that God will show him. And the people becomes the people, as in the dawn of its earliest times so later again in the bright light of history, in an exile, the Egyptian one as later the one in Babylon. And the homeland in which the life of a people begins to feel at home and ploughed in until it nearly has forgotten that being a people means still something other than remaining in a land—for the eternal people the homeland never becomes its own in that sense; it is not permitted to sleep at home; it always remembers the lack of constraints on a traveler and is a knight truer to his land when he lingers in his travels and adventures and longs for the homeland it has left than in the times when he is at home. The land is in the deepest sense its own only as land of longing, as—holy land. And this is why for it, even when it is at home, again differently from all peoples of the earth, this full proprietorship of the homeland is disputed; it is itself only a stranger and tenant in its land. "The land is mine," says God to the people; the holiness of the land removes the land from its natural hold as long as it could take hold of it; the holiness infinitely increases its longing for the lost land and henceforward no longer lets it feel entirely at home in any other land; it forces it to gather the full weight of its will to be a people into that one point which for the peoples of the world is only one among others, into the real and pure vital point, into the community of blood; the will to be a people cannot cling here to any dead means; this can be realized only by means of the people itself; the people is a people only through the people.

But is one's own land, the territory, the only thing other than blood upon which a people founds its community? Under which-ever skies their children betake themselves, do the peoples not carry with them a more vital mark of belonging together, their own language? The language of the peoples of the world does not seem to be bound to anything dead, to anything external; it lives together with man, with the whole man, with the inseparable unity, as long as he lives, of his bodily-spiritual life. Lan-

**THE HOLY  
LAND**

**THE PEOPLES  
AND THE  
LANGUAGE OF  
THEIR SPIRIT**

guage would therefore certainly not be bound to any external reality. But would language for this reason be less perishable? If language is bound immediately to the life of the people, then what happens to it when this life dies? Nothing other than what happens to it also as long as the people lives: language, too, lives this last of the people's life with it, it dies with it. The language of the peoples follows with utmost subtlety the vital changing of destinies of the peoples, but this following of the living also pulls language into the destiny of the living, to die. Language is alive because it—can even die. Eternity would be a bad gift for it; only because language is not eternal, only because it faithfully mirrors the changing times of the people growing through its ages and its destinies among the peoples does language deserve to be called that which is most alive of the people, indeed its life itself. The peoples are therefore quite right to fight for their own language; but they should know that with this they are not fighting for their eternity, but that it is always something other than eternity that they win in such a battle: time.

**THE HOLY  
LANGUAGE**

And so it happens that the eternal people lost its own language and everywhere speaks the language of its external destinies, the language of the people with whom it perchance dwells as a guest; and when it is not claiming the right of hospitality, but lives on its own in a closed settlement, it speaks the language of the people from which, in leaving it, it received the strength to carry out this settling; it never possesses this language in its own right, it never possesses it on the basis of its belonging to the same blood, but always as the language of immigrants who came from all over: “Judeo-Spanish” in the Balkans, and “Yiddish” in Eastern Europe are only the best known cases today. Whereas all other peoples are consequently identified with their own language and whereas the language withers in their mouth the day they cease to be a people, the Jewish people never identifies itself entirely with the language it speaks; even where it speaks the language of the host that receives it, its own vocabulary or at least a specific selection from the common vocabulary, its own word order, its own feeling for what is beautiful or ugly in the language in question, all this betrays that this language—is not its own.

Since time immemorial, its own language has no longer been the language of daily life, and yet, as its constant intervention in the language of daily life shows, it is anything but a dead language. It is not dead but, according to the expression of the

people itself, it is a “holy language.” The holiness of its own language has the same effect as the holiness of its own land: it deflects the ultimate of feeling from the everyday; it prevents the eternal people from ever living entirely at one with the times; in fact, just by that fencing of the ultimate, supreme life, prayer, into a holy linguistic domain, it prevents it altogether from ever living entirely freely and openly. For all freedom and openness of life rest on man being able to say everything he thinks and on his knowing that he can; where he loses this, where he perhaps thinks he must be silent in his torment, because it is given only to the “poet” to say what he is suffering, there not only the linguistic capacity of a people is broken, but also its openness is hopelessly troubled.<sup>2</sup>

Precisely this last and most obvious openness of life is denied to the Jew, because he speaks a different language with God than with his brother. With his brother he therefore cannot speak at all; with him the glance informs him better than the word, and there is nothing more deeply Jewish than a final suspicion of the power of the word and a heart-felt confidence in the power of silence. The holiness of the holy language, in which alone he can only pray, does not allow his life to take root in the soil of a language of his own; evidence for the fact that his linguistic life always senses itself faraway and knows its real linguistic homeland is elsewhere, in the domain of the holy language that is inaccessible to everyday speech, lies in the remarkable circumstance that the language of the everyday, at least in the mute vowel signs of Scripture, seeks to preserve contact with the old holy language long ago lost to the everyday; quite otherwise than among the peoples of the world, where the language sooner survives a lost script than vice versa, the script surviving a language vanished from the everyday: precisely in the silence and in the silent signs of speech that the Jew senses that his everyday language is also still at home in the holy language of his festive hours.

Therefore language, otherwise bearer of and herald to the peoples of temporal, transforming and changing and hence certainly also perishable life, precisely forces back the eternal people on to its most own life that itself revolves beyond external life,

**THE PEOPLES  
AND THE LAW  
OF THEIR  
LIFE**

<sup>2</sup>Und wo der Mensch in seiner Qual verstummt,/Gab mir ein Gott, zu sagen, wie ich leide. From Goethe's *Torquato Tasso*, Act 5, Scene 5.

that is to say only in the veins of its bodily life and hence imperishable. If its own soil and its own language are blocked to it, so much still more will there be denied to it the visible life that the peoples of the world live in their own customs and in their own law. For in these two, in custom and law, in what is transmitted from yesterday by force of habit and what is fixed for tomorrow, a people lives its day. The day stands between the one of yesterday and that of tomorrow, and all life preserves its vitality in the fact that it does not stand still as regards the day but pushes it daily into the yesterday and lets the day of tomorrow enter into its place, and so on and on. Therefore, the peoples are alive when they continuously change their today into new customs, a new eternal-of-yesterday and at the same time set new law from their today for the tomorrow. The today thus becomes in the life of the peoples the moment that flies away at the speed of an arrow. And so long as this arrow flies, just so long do new customs continuously submit to the old, new law overtakes the old, as long as the river of life goes on actively flowing in a people; just so long the moment cannot solidify but remains solely the ever moved forward boundary between the ever accumulated past and the overtaking future that is ferried across. Just so long do the peoples live in time. Just so long is time for them the share in the inheritance and the ploughed land. In the accumulated customs and the renewed law, they earn for their own soil and their own language the last and strongest guarantee of their own life: their own time. As long as a people calculates its own time—and it calculates it according to the age of property still living in custom and memory and according to the constant renewal of its legislative powers, its chiefs and kings—just so long is it master over time, just so long has it not died.

**THE HOLY  
LAW**

And again the eternal people purchases its eternity at the price of temporal life. For it, time is not its time, not a field it cultivates and a share in its inheritance. For it, the moment is solidified and remains fixed between an augmentable past and motionless future, so the moment ceases to fly away. Custom and law, past and future, become two unchangeable measures; and in so becoming they cease to be past and future and, thus solidified, become likewise an unchangeable present. Custom and law, having become non-augmentable and unchangeable, flow into the one basin of that which is valid now and forever; a unique form of life that unites custom and law fills the moment and makes it eternal. But

in this way the moment is certainly released from the river of time, and since life is kept holy, it is no longer alive. Whereas the myth of peoples is continuously changing, parts of the past are continuously forgotten, and others are memorialized into myth, here the myth becomes eternal and does not change any longer; and whereas the peoples live in revolutions in which the law continuously sheds its skin, here reigns the law that no revolution could repeal, and that can probably be evaded but not changed.

Since teaching of the Holy Law—for the appellation Torah comprises the two, teaching and law in one—therefore lifts the people out of all temporality and historical relevance of life, it also removes its power over time. The Jewish people does not calculate the years of its own chronology. Neither the memory of its history nor the official times of its lawgivers can become its measure of time; for historical memory is a fixed point in the past that becomes more past every year by one year, but a memory always equally near, really not at all past, but eternally present; every individual is supposed to regard the Exodus out of Egypt as if he himself had also gone out, and there are no lawgivers here who renewed the law in the living course of time; even that which is perhaps a change according to the case must yet always appear as if it were already written in the eternal law and had been revealed in its Revelation. The people's chronology thus cannot be here the calculation of its own time; for it is valid at all times, it is without time. But it must calculate the years according to the years of the world. And once more, for the third time, we see in the relationship to its own history, as before in the relationship to language and to land, how temporal life is denied to this people for the sake of eternal life; again it cannot fully and creatively also live the historical life of the peoples of the world, it is always somehow between a worldly and a holy life, separated from each by the other at any given time and so finally it does not live like the peoples of the world in a national life placed visibly in the world, in a popular language that expresses its soul resoundingly, in a territory of the people's own firmly grounded and bounded upon the earth, but uniquely and only in that which ensures the continuance of the people across time, the immortality of its life: in the creating of its own eternity out of the obscure sources of blood.

But because it places its trust only in the eternity that it creates itself and in nothing else in the world, this people really does

believe in its eternity, whereas all the peoples of the world must, in spite of all, like every individual, reckon on their own death at some moment in time, however far off. This is why, in their case, their love for their nation is full of this sweetness that brings the presentiment of death. It is only to that which is mortal that love shows an absolute sweetness, it is only in the bitterness of death that the secret of this ultimate sweetness dwells. So the peoples of the world see a time coming where their land will still certainly stretch out its mountains and its rivers under the sun, but where other men will inhabit it; their language will then be buried in books, their customs and their laws will have lost their living force. We alone cannot imagine this sort of time; for everything in which the existence of peoples takes root, has long ago been taken away from us; land language custom and law long ago departed from the sphere of the living and for us is raised from the living to the holy; but we, we are still living and live eternally. Our life is no longer interwoven with anything external, we have taken root in ourselves, without roots in the earth, eternal wanderers therefore, yet deeply rooted in ourselves, in our own body and blood. And this rooting in ourselves and only in ourselves guarantees our eternity for us.

**THE ONE  
PEOPLE:  
JEWISH  
ESSENCE**  
**PARTICU-  
LARITY AND  
UNIVER-  
SALITY**

**B**UT what does that mean—rooting in ourselves? What does it mean that here an individual or a people seeks the guarantee of its survival in nothing external, and precisely here, precisely in its absence of relationship, wants to be what is eternal? It means no more and no less than the claim that it is that which is singular yet everything. For that which is singular in itself is not eternal for all that, because the whole is outside of it and can only affirm itself in its individuality by fitting in the whole somehow as part. An individuality therefore that wanted to be eternal as well would have to have the universe<sup>3</sup> entirely in itself. And that would mean that the Jewish people gathers in its own bosom the elements God world man of which of course the universe consists. The God, the man, the world of a people are a people's God man world only by the fact that they are just as differentiated and separated from other Gods, men, worlds, as the people itself. Precisely in this self-separating

<sup>3</sup>*Das All*, translated throughout mainly as “the All,” following Schelling’s meaning and usage, however sometimes warrants the usual meaning of “the universe.”

of the singular people from other singular peoples it is connected with them. Every border has two sides. When something sets off a border, it borders on something else. But this is not so when a people refuses to be a singular people and wants to be "the one people" It can then no longer enclose itself within borders, but it must include the borders within itself, which owing to their two-sidedness would make it into a singular people among other peoples. And hence precisely its God, its man, its world. They, too, must not be differentiated from others, but it must draw their difference into its own borders. God, man, world must have in themselves the difference through which they become God, man, world of the one people, for this one people must be a unique people. They must conceal the polar oppositions in themselves in order to be able to be singular, definite, something particular, a God, a human, a world, and yet simultaneously everything, God, man, the whole world.

Within himself, God separates himself into the Creator and Revealer, the God of omnipotent justice and into the God of merciful love. Man separates himself into the soul loved by God and the lover who loves in the love of the neighbor. The world comprises at the same time the existence of the creature that longs for the Creation by God and its own growth of life toward and into the Kingdom. Until now, all these separations had not appeared to us like separations, but like a successive onslaught of voices entering into the great fugue of the day of God. It is not the separation, but on the contrary the reunion, their accord in one harmony, that was for us the essential thing till now. Now for the first time, when we are setting about to see eternity not as the twelfth stroke of the world clock, but as that which coincides with the present of every hour, those successive onslaughts become contrasts for us. For in the pure present that returns hourly, they no longer have the possibility of pushing themselves over against one another and into one another in contrapuntal movement, but opposed to each other do or die.

Our Lord God is considered by his people as the God of retribution and the God of love together; he is invoked in the same breath as "our Father" and "our King." He wants to be served with "trembling," and is gladdened when his children have overcome their fear of his miraculous signs. Where Scripture talks of his "loftiness," the next verse at once talks of his "humility." He demands the visible signs of sacrifices and prayers offered up to

**POLARITY**

**THE JEWISH  
GOD**

his name and of penance before him; and in the same breath he almost scorns both and wants only to be honored by anonymous works of neighborly love and justice which no one notices as taking place for his sake, and by the secret glowing of the heart. He has chosen his people, but in order to punish it for all its sins. He wants every knee to bend before him, and yet is enthroned upon Israel's songs of praise. Israel intercedes before Him for the sins of the peoples, and it is smitten with sickness so that they find healing—they both stand before God, his servant Israel and the kings of the nations, and the knot of suffering and guilt, of love and judgment, of sin and atonement is tangled inextricably for human hands.

**THE JEWISH  
MAN**

Man, the one created in the imaged of God, he, too, as he approaches his God is a harbor of contradictions. As God's well-beloved, as Israel, he knows he is chosen by God and may well forget that he is not alone with God, that God knows others as well, whether or not the man knows them too, and that God says as well to Egypt and Assyria: "my people." He knows that he is loved—what does the world matter to him? In a blissful solitude of two with God, he may identify himself only with man and look around with surprise when the world seeks to remind him that not everyone experiences the same feeling of being immediately a child of God. And yet on the other hand, no one knows more exactly than he does that to be God's well-beloved means only a beginning and that man is still unredeemed as long as only this beginning is realized. Opposite Israel, the eternally beloved of God, the eternally faithful one and eternally complete one, there stands the one who eternally comes, eternally waits, eternally wanders, eternally thrives, the Messiah. Opposite the man of the beginning, Adam the son of man, there stands the man of the end, the son of David the King; opposite him who was created out of the stuff of the earth and the breath of the divine mouth stands the offshoot from the anointed royal line; opposite the patriarch stands the last offspring; opposite the first man who is wrapped in the cloak of divine love, there stands the Last Man, from whom salvation goes to the ends of the earth; opposite the first miracles there stand the last ones, of which it is said they would be greater than those first ones.

**THE JEWISH  
WORLD**

The world, the Jewish one, entirely deprived of substance and entirely inspired under the power of the endlessly branched blessing said over each thing, is yet also a twofold relationship, once

to “this” world and then to the world “to come.” This togetherness of the two worlds, this one and that one, determines everything; the thing that is inspired in the benediction has a double determination; in “this” world, it serves the common usage, hardly different than if it had remained unblessed, but at the same time it has now become one of the stones upon which the world “to come” is built. The blessing divides the world in order to unite it again in the future, but for now only the division is visible. This division permeates all of life, as contrast between holy and usual, Sabbath and workday, “Torah and way of the world,” life in the spirit and matters of business. It splits up, like the day of life of Israel into holy and ordinary, so too the entire globe again into Israel and the peoples. But again it is not simply such that the holy would leave the ordinary outside, but the contrast is taken completely into the inside, and just as the blessing seizes all the ordinary and lets nothing remain ordinary any longer; but keeps everything holy, so likewise suddenly the pious and wise men of the nations partake of the life of the world to come, which just now still seemed reserved for Israel alone, and those blessed themselves become a blessing.

Such a confusion of contradictions arises when one tries to look at the elements of Jewish life as static elements. The question of essence can be answered only through such exhibiting of that which contradicts, so really not at all. But living life does not ask about the essence. It lives. And in living, it answers for itself all questions even before it can pose them. What seems to be a confusion of contradictions in the examination of the essence is regulated in the yearly cycle of life into a transparent round-dance; the cycle of human life that turns back on itself becomes the vivid image for the eye of that which in the heaven of the universe in the one-time unrepeatable expiration of the day of God which exceeds every measurement of the eye, the voices joining in one after the other, will resound in the ear hearkening to the great ringing of the spheres.

**THE  
QUESTION  
OF ESSENCE**

**B**ECAUSE in eternity the word ceases to exist in the silence of the harmonious gathering—for we are united only in silence; the word unites, but those who are united grow silent—therefore the burning mirror that collects the sunbeams of eternity in the tiny cycle of the year, the liturgy, must introduce man into this silence. In the liturgy too of course the mutual silence

**THE HOLY  
PEOPLE: THE  
JEWISH YEAR**

can only be that which is last, and all that precedes is only the preparatory school for this that comes last. In such an education, the word still rules. The word itself must guide man in so that he may learn to grow mutually silent. The beginning of this education is that he may learn to listen.

**SOCIOLOGY  
OF THE  
CROWD:  
LISTENING**

Nothing seems to be simpler than that. But another listening than dialogical is necessary here. In dialogue, the one who strictly listens, and not only when he strictly speaks, is also speaking, certainly not even mostly when he actually speaks, but equally as much when he raises the word onto his lips through his lively listening, through the attuned or questioning glance of his eye at the one who is directly now speaking. It is not this listening of the eyes that is meant here, but really the listening of the ears. It is a listening therefore that does not encourage the speaker to speak that is learned here, but a listening without contradiction. Many are supposed to listen. So the one who speaks cannot be the speaker of his own words, for where would he take his "own" words except from the speaking glance of his listeners? Even the speaker before many is, as long as he is really a live speaker, only a conversant; moreover, the people listening to him, that monster of many heads, gives the public speaker his cue, as well at the moment, also by consent and displeasure, with interruption and disturbance and its assortment of moods in which it forces him to take a side. If the public speaker wants to make himself independent of the listeners, then, instead of the straightforward talking he might do, he must, at the risk of them falling asleep on him, "hold" the prepared speech learned by heart. Straightforward talk, the more straightforward it is, awakens all the more certainly two sides among the listeners, therefore just opposite of the mutual listening of all those present. It is the essence of the "speech program," that it is "held," not spoken; at whatever price, here an assembly is supposed to be brought into unanimous accord; the speaker must necessarily turn himself into the mere lecturer of a prepared program. The mutual listening that would be nothing but listening, the listening where a crowd becomes "all ears," does not result from the speaker, but only through the drawing back of the actively speaking man behind the mere lecturer, really not even behind the lecturing man, but behind the words read out. The fact that the sermon must be by way of a "text" has its basis here; only the connection to the text secures for it the "devoted" listening of everyone; the straight-

forward words of the preacher would not at all venture to want to produce such a devotion; they would have to plunge like a force of separation in the listeners; but the text that is considered to be the word of its God by the gathered community produces for him who is reading it out the mutual listening of all those gathered; when he has given everything that he has to say as explication of that text, he keeps that mutual listening alive during his whole sermon. For a sermon which would give rise to interruptions, or during which the listeners would refrain from interrupting only with difficulty, a sermon in which the silence of the listeners could still break out otherwise than in the mutual song would be a sermon just as lacking as it would be for instance a good political address; and on the other hand, it would be a bad political speech that had no interruptions at all, no "hear! hear!", no applause, no merriment and noise. The sermon like the text read aloud is itself there to produce the mutual silence of the gathered community. And its essence is therefore not that it is a speech but exegesis; the reading out of the written word is the main thing; in it alone the mutuality of the listening and hence the firm ground of all the mutuality of those gathered is produced.

Produced only, only founded. But as such a foundation, it becomes the holiday's liturgical focal point, the recurrence in its recurrence, the Sabbath, in which the spiritual year is founded. In the course of the weekly portions, which travels through the whole of Torah once a year, the spiritual year is paced out in long strides, and the paces of this course are the Sabbaths. Every Sabbath is by and large like every other, but the change of the scriptural portion distinguishes each from the other, and in this that differentiates them lets them know that they are not a last link but only the single links of a higher order, of the year; for only in the year does that which differentiates the single links again close into a whole. The Sabbath grants existence to the year. This existence must be created anew every week. The spiritual year is always completely partial in the weekly portion to the now current week; it knows only so to speak what "occurs" in this weekly portion, but yet only first turns into the year by being only a passing moment each week; only in the expiring sequence of Sabbaths is the year made round into a wreath. Precisely the regularity in the sequence of Sabbaths, just this fact that, up to the weekly portion, one Sabbath is essentially like the other, makes

#### THE SABBATH

them into the foundation stones of the year; the year in spiritual guise is first and foremost created through them: they precede everything that is perchance still to come; they even go their steady gait uninterruptedly alongside all these holidays, amid all the abundance of them; amidst the surging up of joy and pain, of suffering and bliss that comes and goes with the holidays, the steady flow of the Sabbaths goes along, and its steady flowing first makes possible those whirlpools of the soul. In the Sabbath the Creation of the year takes place, and thus it is itself already in itself in its place inside the liturgy that which is also first of all ascribed to it as its meaning: the holiday of remembering the Creation.

**THE HOLIDAY  
OF THE  
CREATION**

For God created heaven and earth in six days and on the seventh he rested. Therefore the seventh day as “day of rest,” as “Sabbath,” becomes celebration of the “remembering of the work of the beginning,” more exactly the completion of that work—“and heaven and earth were completed and all their host.” The Sabbath reflects the Creation of the world into the year. Just as the world is always there and is entirely there before any even enters it, so too the ordering of the Sabbaths precedes all holidays that represent any one even and uninterruptedly runs its course through those. And just as the Creation is not exhausted in the fact that the world was created once long ago, but is first completely fulfilled in its renewal of every morning, so the Sabbath as the holiday of the Creation cannot be a holiday of once a year, but must be renewed through the entire cycle every week as the same holiday and yet as a different one every week by means of the weekly portion. And just as Creation is already entirely complete and thus Revelation brings nothing to it that does not already lie hidden in it as a prediction, so too the holiday of the Creation must already have in itself the whole content of the holidays of Revelation; in its own inner expiring from evening until evening it must be entirely prediction.

**FRIDAY  
NIGHT**

The great prayer repeated three times a day contains on the Sabbath, as distinguished from the work days, poetic interludes which from the simple repetition render an unbroken continuous expiration. The prayer of the eve is linked by means of its addition to the establishment of the Sabbath in the Creation of the world. The final word of the story of Creation—“and they were finished”—is spoken here; and it is therefore also said after the return home from the public divine service in the holy halo of the home before the divine creating of the earthly is attested

amidst the light of the Sabbath candles, in the blessing over bread and wine as the divine gifts of the earth and with this the entire day from its beginning is consecrated to the holiday of the Creation. Bread and wine are of course extremely perfect products of man and can no longer be surpassed and yet are not to be compared to other products in which his inventive mind artificially assembles the gifts of nature and in the assembly continually surpasses himself to a superior artificiality, but they are nothing other than enriched gifts of the earth; the one is the created ground of all life force, the other of all joy in life; both are finished from the beginning of the world and from man upon it, and neither ever grows old; every mouthful of bread and every sip of wine tastes as marvelous to us as the first one tasted to us, and certainly no less marvelous than they tasted to men since time out of mind who harvested bread from the earth for the first time and picked the fruit of the vine.

If the eve became particularly the celebration of the Creation, so now the morning becomes the celebration of Revelation. The interlude to the great prayer here sings Moses' joy for the divine gift of the Sabbath. And following the exultation of the great recipient of Revelation, with whom God spoke face to face as a man speaks with his friend, and whom God knew like no prophet in Israel since him, there is now in the order of the day the reading out of the weekly portion before the community by the delegated ones of the community. On the eve it was the knowing about the createdness of everything earthly that shaped the text of the consecration; in the morning it is the awareness of the chosenness of the people through the gift of the Torah and planting that took place in this gift of eternal life in its midst. With the former, the awareness of chosenness, the one called up from out of the community goes up to the Book of Revelation; with the latter, awareness of eternal life—he turns his back on it and disappears again in the community. With this awareness of eternal life, however, he climbs even within the Sabbath over the threshold that still separates Creation like Revelation from Redemption. The afternoon prayer becomes the prayer of Redemption.

In the interlude of this prayer Israel is more than the chosen people, for here it is the "one," the "only" people, the people of the One. Any fervor that forces the Kingdom hither with which this holy word "one" is filled in the mouth of the praying Jew

**SABBATH  
MORNING**

**SABBATH  
AFTERNOON**

here comes alive. Twice a day, morning and night, the community is created, first in the summons to the “listening”; afterwards in the addressing of God as “our God,” his immediate presence is testified to, God’s “oneness” is called out as his eternal Name beyond all name, beyond all the present; and we know that this calling out is more than a fleeting word, that in it, since the individual “takes upon his shoulders the yoke of the Kingdom of heaven,” the eternal unification of God with his people, of his people with humankind, takes place. All this rings, too, in the Sabbath afternoon prayer in the hymn on the one people of the One. And the songs of the “third meal,” for which in the twilight of the sinking day gray-haired ones and children are united around the table set long ago, are completely drunk by the transport of the future of the Messiah, which is surely drawing near.

**THE CLOSE  
OF THE  
SABBATH**

But this whole traversed path of the day of God is included in the daily cycle of the single Sabbath only as a preview that can only be further fulfilled in its specific holiday. The fulfillment does not yet take place in this Sabbath itself. It remains a holiday of resting and of closely reflecting. It remains the resting groundwork of the year into which, apart from the succession of the weekly portions, the cycle of the holidays is first set into motion. Like ornaments only, there seem to be carved into this frame already the pre-explanations for those meanings of Revelation that are destined to be fixed into the frame as images one after the other. The Sabbath itself is not at all exclusively a holiday, but at least as much a mere day of the week. It is set in relief in a different way than the actual holidays against the year, which is in fact on the contrary built up from it; but against the week. And therefore it also plunges back again into the week. Just as the community greeted it rejoicing—the groom greeting the bride—when it entered into the house of God, so it disappears again like a dream into the everyday. The smallest cycle set by man, the workweek, begins again. A child holds the fire-brand that an old man kindles, awakening with the last goblet emptied with closed eyes, from the dream of perfection that the holiday of the seventh day had woven. Outside of the sanctuary it is a matter of again finding the road into the everyday. Upon the alternation of holy and ordinary, of seventh day and first, of fulfillment and beginning, of old man and child, the year is built, life is built.

The Sabbath is the dream of perfection, but only a dream. And only because it is both of these, it really becomes the foundation stone for life, and precisely as holiday of the perfection is always renewed Creation.

For this is what is last: in conformity with its institution, the Sabbath was above all remembrance of the work of the beginning and as such lasting, solid ground of the spiritual year; on the other hand its installation however within Creation was already the first sign of Revelation—yet in the words of its being instituted, there appears for the first time in Scripture, veiled, the revealed name of God; but finally it consists of being two things, both sign of Creation and first Revelation, and as well and even above all anticipation of Redemption. For what else would Redemption be than this, that Revelation and Creation are reconciled! And what else would the first indispensable precondition of such reconciliation be than man's rest after work performed in the world! For six days he has worked and arranged all his affairs, but on the seventh he rests; for six days he has spoken many useful and un-useful words, as the weekday called upon him to do, but on the seventh he follows the bidding of the prophet to rest his tongue from the everyday chit-chat and learns silence and listening. And this sanctification of the day of rest through the silent hearing of God's voice must be mutual for his whole house; it must not be disturbed by the noise of orders; even servant and maid must rest, indeed precisely for the sake of their rest, it is written, the day of rest is instituted; for if rest has reached them also, then in truth the whole house will be freed for its rest from the noisy chatter of the workdays.

Redemption should mean rest, not the composure for new work. Work is always a beginning again; the first workday is the first day of the week, but the day of rest is the seventh. The holiday of the Creation is the holiday of completion. Whilst we celebrated the holiday, in Creation we step beyond Creation and Revelation. In the great prayer on the Sabbath, those entire intermediate petitions for the "needs of the individual" are cancelled, not only the petitions of the creature like the one for a good year and a successful crop, for health, one's own sound reason and a good government, but also those of the child of God for the forgiveness of his sins and for his final redemption; and besides the petition for the coming of the Kingdom and for peace there are still the petitions of the individual as there are

those of the community, just praise and thanks. For on the Sabbath the community feels, as far as it can in any such anticipation, as if redeemed—already today. The Sabbath is the holiday of the Creation, but of a Creation that took place for the sake of Redemption. The Sabbath is revealed at the end of Creation and as the meaning and goal of Creation. For that reason we celebrate the holiday of the very first work not on the first day of Creation, but on its last—on the seventh day.

**SOCIOLOGY  
OF THE  
COMMUNITY:  
THE MEAL**

**T**he silent listening was only the beginning of the mutual participation. It was founded in it, and as always here, too, the original foundation was that which had to be fallen back upon constantly in order to create again and again through such a trumpet call to assembly new power out of the depths of the origin. But the spirited vitality of the community cannot as yet be included in this its origin, in the silent listening. This life is born first in a renewal that is nothing more than renewal, not mere repetition of the once created beginning, but essentially renewal, not mere new creation, but creation in another way of the out-datedness in the momentary act. The mutual life that is thus born is to be a silent life, living silence; so we can only wait to find it in bodily life. The creation in another way, the exchanging of the out-dated material takes place in the meal. For the individual, eating and drinking are already the new birth of the bodily man. For the community, the meal together is also the treatment in which it is born again to conscious life.

The silent mutuality of listening and obeying already finds the smallest of communities, that of the home; the fact that one gives ear to what the father of a family says is the ground upon which the home stands. But the mutual life of the home does not live in the mutual obeying, but in the meal for which all the members of the house meet around the table; here each is equal to the other; each, while living for himself, is yet reconciled with all the others; the table conversation is not the reason for this unity, as on the contrary in the country it is frequently not at all the practice and in fact impolite; in any case it is not the reason for the unity, but is at most its expression. Speaking can be done in the street and marketplace with chance meetings; in comparison, a meal together always means a real, realized and active community; in this wordless mutuality in itself of the meal is taken mutually,

the mutuality is presented as a real mutual participation animated in life.

Where a meal is taken together, there such mutual participation exists. It is so in the home, but so too in monasteries, lodges, casinos, associations. And where mutual participation is lacking, as in classrooms or even in just university lectures, or even seminar practices, it does not exist, although the foundation of mutual participation, the mutual listening, is indeed by all means here; only collective events like school trips or seminar evenings build upon this simple foundation the real life of mutual participation. That modesty which in the case of primitive peoples is contrasted to this idea of eating together, like that craziness of wanting to eat alone and how this takes up much room in restaurants, mainly with the one who reads "his newspaper" while eating, are both signs of a humanity either still green and sour or already overripe and half-rotten. The sweet fully ripe fruit of humanity wants, precisely in the renewal of bodily life, mutuality of man with man; otherwise there may well still be the cultivation of mutual obeying, as the savage during his warily lonely mealtime wants as little to break away from his tribal laws as does the hardened bachelor in the restaurant from the punctuality of his profession; but what it does not give is the feeling of freedom that only a mutual life conjures up before the never dwindling background of this mutual cultivation. Such a mutual life as it is presented in the meal together is also not yet that which is last, as little as is the listening together. But on the road of education toward this last, the mutual silence, this is the second halting-place, while the listening is the first one. In the Sabbath, as in all holidays, the meal taken together is an essential part. But as the real soil of the holiday, for us it is met with only in the first of the holidays that in their sequence together in the solid framework of the year let appear the image of the wandering of the people's eternal walking in the world.

The three pilgrimage festivals, for which everyone from the country once came to the Temple, the Festival of the Liberation from Egypt, or Passover; the Festival of the Revelation of the Decalogue, or Shavuot; the Festival of Booths in the desert, or Succot, together form an image of the people's destiny as the bearer of Revelation. In Revelation, also revealed are Creation and Redemption, the former because it took place for the sake of Revelation and hence in the strict sense is directly Creation of

**THE FESTIVALS  
OF  
REVELATION**

Revelation, the latter because Revelation teaches how to wait for it; so in the course of the destiny of the people chosen for Revelation, the long periods of the festivals are also round about the moment and day of the actual receiving of the Revelation, in which the people becomes conscious of its destiny as receiver of Revelation; this destiny unfolds in the three stages of its creation to be a people, of its gift with the revealed word, of its wandering through the desert of the world with the received Torah. Round about the two days of the Festival of Weeks, or Shavuot, come the two times of solemn meditation, each lasting eight days, the Festival of the Liberation from Egypt, or Passover, and the Festival of Booths, or Succot; in these three, the stride of eternal history steps higher than the as it were naturally eternal soil of the year with its Sabbaths. For they are only apparently holidays of remembrance; in truth, the historical in them is a fully compact present, and it applies to all of them what is said to every participant in the first one: he must celebrate the holiday as if it were he who himself had been liberated from Egypt. Beginning middle and end of this national history, institution, magnitude and eternity of the people—with each new generation, or rather with each new current year and with each New Year of olden ones, they are born anew.

**THE HOLIDAY  
OF  
LIBERATION,  
PASSOVER**

The creation of a people into a people takes place in its liberation. Therefore the holiday of the beginning of national history is a holiday of liberation. Hence, even the Sabbath could rightly act as a reminder of the Exodus from Egypt. The freedom of the slave and maidservant among the people, however, which the Sabbath announces, was stipulated through the liberation of the people as people from the house of bondage in Egypt, and the divine law in every commandment to respect the freedom even of the slave, even of the stranger among the people, however renews the consciousness of this connection of the divinely willed freedom among the people, with the divinely effected liberation of the people from the Egyptian bondage. Even the Creation of the people, like the Creation in general, already carries in itself the last goal, the last purpose, for the sake of which Creation took place. And for the feeling of the people this holiday has become the most lively among the three; it carries in itself the meaning of the two others.

The evening meal in which the father of the family unites his own is, among the many meals of the spiritual year, strictly speak-

ing the meal absolutely; this is the only one that, from beginning to end portrays a deed of divine service and so from beginning to end is regulated liturgically—in truth, we call it a Seder, “order of service.” The word of freedom shines upon it right from the beginning. The freedom of the meal, where all are equally free, is shown in that which in another meal still “makes this night different from all other nights”: the sitting that is “leaned”; it is shown, still more vividly than in this reminder of the guests reclining at the table during the Symposium, in the fact that precisely the youngest child has the right to speak and that the table-talk of the father of the family is guided by him according to his manner and his maturity; this is the sign of genuine free conviviality in contrast to all instruction, which is conceived always as belonging to a lord and master, and never cooperative, that just the one who stands relatively still on the outermost edge of the circle commands the level of the conversation; it must still draw him in; no one who is bodily present may remain spiritually excluded; the freedom of cooperative society is always the freedom of all who belong to it. So this meal becomes a sign of the people’s call to freedom. That this call is only a beginning, only the creation of the people, is shown again in the other side of this prominence of the youngest child: the whole now however assumes the form of instruction through the youngest alone acquiring his own voice; the father of the family speaks, and the household listens and acquires only in the course of the evening increasingly mutual independence, until, in the hymns of praise and the table songs of the second part of the Seder that hover midway between divine mystery and tipsy jesting, all the lordly and masterly order that was still first there among the meal companions has completely melted in the mutuality.

From the foundation of the people the view opens on to its farther destinies, yet only as a view. They all seem to be prepared in that origin. Not only today have there been rebellions against us to annihilate us, but in each generation back to that first one that migrated from Egypt—and in each generation God has saved us. And what he brought about for us in Egypt at that time, the liberation from the house of bondage, would have been enough for us; but for him, from whom only he himself is enough, for him it was not enough: he led us to Sinai and further to the resting place in his sanctuary. Only the last days of the holiday disclose in the texts read aloud from Scripture the view from the

origin upon that which the origin, the creation of the people, already hid in itself: Revelation and the final Redemption. The reading out of the Song of Songs points to Revelation; the distant view of Redemption is made accessible by the prophecy of Isaiah on the sprouting of the root of Jesse, who will strike the earth with the staff of his mouth on the day when wolf and lamb will dwell together and the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord like the waters cover the sea; but the root will rise, a banner for the peoples, and pagans will follow it. And this is the most profound meaning of the parting words that the partakers of the evening meal of liberated men say: "Next year in Jerusalem." For the prophet Elijah, the harbinger of that shoot from the root of Jesse who always turns the heart of the fathers to the children and of the children to the fathers so that the flow of blood may roll on ever-flowing through the long night of the times to the future morning, there is in every house where the meal is celebrated a filled cup standing ready.

**THE FESTIVAL  
OF  
REVELATION,  
OR SHAVUOT**

Among the three holidays of the people of Revelation, the holiday of Revelation in the strict sense lasts but two short days. Revelation therefore stands as the moment of the present between the long everlasting was of the past and the eternal coming of the future. And just as Revelation is most closely connected with Creation, such that it is entirely contained in Creation, which for its part on the other hand points like the prediction to Revelation as its fulfillment, so, too, the holiday of Revelation in the people follows that of the foundation of the people in direct joining. From the second day of the holiday of liberation there begins both in the house of God and at home, a counting of the days until the festival of Revelation. The holiday itself is absorbed quite exclusively in the one moment of the twofold miracle at Sinai: the descent of God to his people and the proclamation of the Ten Commandments. In contrast to the holiday of the national origin that carries everything within it, it knows almost nothing of anything outside of it; the before and the after of Revelation remain in shadow; the people is completely engulfed in its solitude of two with its God. Even the read-out passages of the Prophets offer no retrospect or view, but lead the eye that is turned inward only still more deeply inwards: Ezekiel's mysteriously shaped vision of the divine chariot and Habbakuk's stormy song of God's thundering into the world, the one a hint of the inner secrets of being, and the other a

portrayal of the overwhelming occurrence, but both times staying entirely within the circle of the one great moment of Revelation. And so the more recent prayers of the holiday are at a loss in doing enough in the ever new poetic descriptions of the one great content of Revelation, the Ten Commandments.

But the people may not linger under the protective shadow of Sinai with which God covered it so that it might be alone with Him. It must leave its clandestine solitude of a twosome with its God and go into the world; it must begin the wandering in the desert, at the end of which the living generation, the one that stood under Sinai, will no longer be alive; only a generation born afterwards, when the wandering through the desert is over, will find rest in the divine sanctuary of the homeland. Succot is at the same time the festival of wandering and rest; for the memory of the erstwhile long wandering which finally led to the rest there, the inhabitants of the house do not join together for the meal in the usual rooms of the house, but under a light quickly built roof that allows the sky to show through it. Here the people can remember that also the house of today's day at any given time, may it be ever so alluring for rest and as a secure dwelling, yet is only a tent that permits temporary rest during the long wandering through the desert of the centuries; for the rest makes signs only at the end of this wandering, of which the builder of the First Temple once said, as read out exactly at the time of this holiday: Praised be He who gave rest to His people.

The fact that such a twofold meaning of the sense of this holiday, the fact that it is a holiday of Redemption only within the frame of the three holidays of Revelation and therefore Redemption is here celebrated only as hope for and certainty of the future Redemption, whilst it of course, as a neighbor in the same month, borders on the holidays of Redemption prevailing in real eternity, but does not coincide with them, is on the other hand, if such a proof should still be necessary, that which the passages from the Prophets read out on Succot teach. On the first day it is the powerful last chapter in Zachary about the Day of the Lord with the prophecy that concludes the daily divine service: And God will be King over all the earth; on that day, God will be One and his name "One." Just like this supreme expression of hope is every day the last word of the assembled community, so, too, it is situated at the conclusion of the spiritual year. Joined to it on the other days of the holiday are Solomon's words during the

**THE  
FESTIVAL OF  
BOOTHES, OR  
SUCCOT**

consecration of the Temple, where the wandering sanctuary of the Ark of the Covenant finally finds rest, to which the people came already in the time of Joshua, and where the last word brings together in wonderful simultaneity the hope for the one knowledge “of all peoples of the earth that the Eternal One is God and none other” with the reminder to the one people: that your heart may be “wholly” with the Eternal One. And precisely this action-bearing inner togetherness of unity of hearts, unity of God and unity of peoples, as it shapes the innermost foundation of Judaism in the idea of the sanctification of the divine Name through the people for the peoples, has found its classical expression in several places in this holiday’s passage from Ezekiel; even the prayer that is especially the prayer of this threefold sanctification, the Kaddish, has of course its biblical source here: And I exalt myself and sanctify myself and make myself known to many peoples so that they know that I am the Eternal One.

So the Festival of Booths, as the holiday of the people’s rest, becomes at the same time the holiday of supreme hope. But still precisely so far the holiday of rest itself only as a hope. Redemption is not present in this holiday of Redemption; it is only hoped for, it is awaited in the wandering. Therefore this holiday, precisely because it does not see or let Redemption see its own Kingdom, but only from the mountain of Revelation, cannot yet be the last word. As the Sabbath leads back into the workday, so this conclusion of the spiritual year, without first needing once to enjoy life fully as a conclusion, must go back again directly into the beginning. Following directly from the last word of the Torah is the first one in the holiday of the rejoicing of the Torah, of Simchat Torah; and the old man who rules in the name of the community over this transition is not called “husband,” but for ever and ever only “bridegroom of the Torah.” Yet it is not for nothing that the book of demoralizing doubt, the Preacher, is assigned especially to Succot. The disillusionment that follows the Sabbath at the moment where its fragrance was breathed in for the last time, when the weekday announces itself in its old unbroken might—here it is taken as it were into the holiday itself through the reading out of the Book of the Preacher. Although it celebrates Redemption for rest, the Festival of Booths is yet still the holiday of the wandering in the desert. In the holidays of the mutuality of the people in the mutual meal, man has as little stopped at the inn of the mutuality of the last silence as

in the holidays of the mutual listening. Beyond the mere foundation of the mutual participation in the common word and beyond its mere effect in the mutual life, there must be something higher, and this that is higher may even be located at the outermost border of the mutual participation and be mutuality beyond the mutual life.

**I**N the mutual listening, the precondition of the mutual life was created. The mutuality was called by a mutual name, and when listening to the name, the community was there. Now it could sit together at the table of life. But the mutual meal united the mutual participation only for the hours when it was partaken of. And it united always only the mutual participation that it united. Always only those invited come to the meal. He who hears it can follow the word. Only he who is invited can come to the meal—precisely he who has heard the word. Before he comes to the meal, he does not know the other guests. He himself has of course heard the invitation, but each has heard it for himself. Only at the meal does he get to know the others. The mutual silence of the hearers of the word is still a silence of each individual. Only at the table does one get to know each other in the conversations that unfold by reason of sitting together at the table. Now if one parts, one is no longer unfamiliar. One is greeted when encountered. The greeting is the supreme sign of silence: they are silent because they know each other. In order for all men, all contemporaries, all who are already dead, all who are not yet born greet each other, it would be necessary that they would have eaten, as is very well put, a bushel of salt together. But this precondition is impossible to fulfill. And yet this greeting of all to all is first of all the supreme mutual participation, the silence that can no longer be disturbed. Into the devotion of the listening there falls from outside the voices of all those who have not heard the call; the rest of the domestic table is deemed of little value by the noise of the uninvited who pass by in the street unawares under the illuminated window. Only if everything were silent would the silence be perfect and the mutual participation all-mutual. The greeting of all to all, wherein this fully mutual silence would show itself, would have, like every greeting would have at least one's announcement and the exchange of a few words, the mutual listening and the mutual meal as the supposition. But how is this greeting of all to all supposed to happen?

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OF THE  
WHOLE: THE  
GREETING**

How can it happen? How does it happen where it does happen, as for instance in any army? Surely not in the greeting of two soldiers who encounter one another; this, when it concerns the senior officer, is simply the sign of the mutual listening—on no account merely of one-sided listening—and if it concerns the comrade, then it is a reminder of the mutuality in action and suffering, mutual hunger and mutual guard duty, mutual marching and mutual dangers; the “snappy” greeting was a matter of the regularly ruling discipline everywhere and at every moment as the basis of the whole, the greeting “as comrades” was a matter of the mutual life, which has absolutely no always and everywhere, but has its own moments when it is there, and others when it completely withdraws. In the two together, the never relaxing drill and the feeling of comradeship easy to awaken, the former that which is constant and the latter that which is the good mental spirit, an army is maintained and renewed; they are the two sources out of which it is made up, but the whole of this spirit is not yet visible in these two forms of the greeting; it remains always a mere element of the whole.

The whole, and the fact that one belongs to it, is experienced only in the inspection, in the flag salute, in the marching before the highest commander of war. Here, where the salute faces him who no longer himself has to face anyone, or one who like the flag is not able to do it at all, a mere mutual obeying on the part of the subordinate and the superior is no longer expressed, but the mutuality of all members of this army through all times; for the soldier feels that flags and other festive decorations and the royal line are older than the living and will outlive them. Nor is the mutuality of life meant here; for neither the flag nor the king dies, but rather the mutual participation in the destiny only of those, but of those now in full mutual togetherness through all time, who are here saluting. And now we know how only the greeting of all to all can happen, independently of how many so far of the living ones alone prepared for such a greeting through the past mutual participation in word and meal, and independently also of the fact that such a mutual participation of all across all time obviously can never be realized: the greeting happens when those who are prepared for it through that twofold mutual participation prostrate themselves mutually at the feet of the Lord of all times. The mutual kneeling before the Lord of

things in all the world and of the spirits in all flesh unseals the pathway for the mutual participation, and of course only for it and for the individuals only in it, into the universal mutual participation where everyone knows everyone and greets him without words—face to face.

The “Days of Awe,” the Yamim Nora’im, these holidays of their own kind, placed in the month of the holiday that among the holidays of the people’s mutual participation has as its content the coming to rest, are distinguished from all the other holidays by the fact that here and only here the Jew kneels. That which he refused the King of Persia, that which no power on earth can bully out of him, that which he however does not owe even to his God on any day of the year otherwise and in any act of his life: here he does it. In fact not in the confessor of guilt, and surely not in the prayer for the forgiveness of sins, to all of which this holiday period is yet chiefly dedicated, but only in the beholding of the immediate nearness of God, thus in a state of things that is raised above the earthly neediness of the today, similar to how on an ordinary Sabbath the main prayer omits the petition for forgiveness of sins. It is with good reason that the great Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, in which this ten-day holiday of Redemption reaches its zenith, is called the Sabbath of Sabbaths. In remembering, the community rises to the feeling of God’s nearness in the description of the erstwhile Temple service and especially of the moment where the priests pronounced with no circumscription the never pronounced, always circumscribed Name for God this on time in the year and the people gathered in the Temple fell to their knees. The community plunges directly however into that feeling in the prayer that also otherwise gets quite lost in the promise of the future moment where every knee will bend before God, where all idolatry will have disappeared from the earth, where the world is fortified in the Kingdom of God and all children of flesh invoke his Name, all impious ones of the earth turn to Him and everything takes up the yoke of His Kingdom. This formulation that otherwise daily shapes the conclusion of the divine service is surpassed by the prayer on the Days of Awe; that beseeching for the bringing about of the future is taken in here into the main prayer that on these days cries with powerful words for the day where everything created sinks to its knees and forms one single covenant to

**THE  
HOLIDAYS OF  
REDEMPTION**

do God's will with a whole heart. But the concluding prayer that already daily utters this cry silences the cry on these solemn days and already in the present, in full consciousness that its own community is not yet the One Covenant of everything created grasps the moment of eternal Redemption: and that which the community otherwise only says during the year, here it does it: it falls prostrate before the King of all kings.

**THE  
JUDGMENT**

So the Days of Awe, comprising the New Year's Day and the Day of Atonement, place the eternal Redemption into the midst of time. The Shofar that is blown at the height of the holiday makes it into the "Day of Judgment." The judgment that is otherwise set into the end of times here is placed immediately into the present moment. It therefore cannot be the world that is judged—where would it be then so far in this present! Rather, the judgment judges over the individual. Every individual's destiny is determined according to his actions. On New Year's Day the verdict for the past and coming year is inscribed regarding him and is sealed on the Day of Atonement, when the last respite of these "ten days of penitence" have elapsed. The year absolutely becomes the fully legal representative of eternity. In the yearly return of this the "latest" judgment, eternity is freed from any otherworldly distance; it is now really here, tangible and graspable for the individual and touching and grasping the individual with a strong hand. It is no longer in the eternal history of the eternal people, no longer in the eternally changing history of the world. No waiting counts, no hiding behind history. The individual is directly judged. He stands in the community. He says We. But the We's on this day are not the We's of the historical people; it is not the sin of transgressing the laws that separate this people from the peoples of the globe for which the We's implore forgiveness here. Rather on these days the individual stands directly before God in his naked individuality, in the sin of man simply; only this human sin is named in the shocking enumeration of sins "that we have sinned"—an enumeration that means more than enumeration: illuminating every hiding-place in the breast, it entices out the confession of the one sin of the ever same human heart.

**THE SIN**

And so the We's in the mutual participation of which the individual thus strikes his breast before God in his naked and mere humanity and in a confessing We of which he feels his sinful I like never in his life, cannot be a narrower community than the

one of humanity itself. As the year directly represents eternity on these days, so Israel directly represents eternity during this time. Israel is conscious of praying “with the sinners.” And that means, whatever he wants the origin of the obscure formula to be: as the whole of humanity “with” each and everyone. For everyone is a sinner. If the soul may be given by God as pure to man, it now gets torn apart in the struggle between the two inclinations of his divided heart. And if he might begin the work of the unification and purification of his divided heart in an ever newly concentrated will—on the boundary of two years, which eternity means, every resolution is nullified for him, every consecration desecrated; every vow turned to God broken; and that which His knowing child began is given away to the deluded one—forgiven.

An entirely visible sign identifies this keynote of the Days of Awe, that for their full duration move what is eternal for the individual immediately into time. The worshipper is dressed in his burial garment on this day. Certainly, already the moment of the putting on of the prayer shawl—chlamyde<sup>4</sup> and toga of ancient dress—directs the everyday to the thought of the final garb and of the eternal life where God will wrap the soul into his prayer shawl. So there falls from the everyday and from the weekly Sabbath, just as from Creation, a gleam of light upon death as the crown and the goal of Creation. But the full burial garment, namely the mantle and the skirt—chiton<sup>5</sup> and tunic—is not a garment for everyday; death is only the last of Creation, only a boundary; Creation itself does not see it. First of all Revelation knows this, and knows it as its first knowledge: that love is as strong as death. And this is why the individual already once in life wears the full burial dress: under the wedding canopy, after he has received it on his wedding day from the hands of the bride. For it is marriage first of all that makes him a full-standing member of the people; it is not for nothing that at his birth the father prays that he might be granted to raise him to the Torah, to the wedding canopy and to good works. Torah: learning and keeping it is the ever present foundation of a Jewish life; with marriage the full realization of this life begins; only here are “good works” really possible. Indeed, only the man needs the Torah as

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<sup>4</sup> Chlamyde: coat of the ancient Greeks.

<sup>5</sup> Chiton: an undergarment, tunic of the ancient Greeks.

conscious foundation; when a daughter is born, the father had only prayed to lead her under the wedding canopy and to good works; for the woman possesses this foundation of Jewish life even without the conscious renewal of “learning” necessary for the man, who is less firmly rooted in the soil of the natural; is it not the woman through whom, according to an old axiom of rights, Jewish blood is propagated? Not only the child of two Jewish parents, already the child of a Jewish mother is Jewish by birth.

So within the individual life it is therefore marriage in which the pure Jewish existence comes true with soul. The chamber of the Jewish heart is the home. And just as Revelation, when it awakens something in Creation that is as strong as death, contrasts to death, and along with it all of Creation, its new creation, the soul, the supernatural in life itself, under the wedding canopy the groom wears the burial garment as wedding garment and at the moment when he enters fully into the eternal people announces to death—as strong as it. But that which is thus a moment in the life of the individual is now also an eternal moment in the spiritual year. Here too the father of the family wears his burial garment once, not as burial but as wedding garment: during the first of the holidays of Revelation, at the evening meal of the people’s call to freedom. Here too the burial garment marks the transition from pure Creation to Revelation; it is worn on the first of the three holidays and for wine and food and the high-spirited fun of children and happy round-songs—here, too, a defiance of death.

**THE  
ATONEMENT**

But the worshipper wears it differently on the Days of Awe. Here it is not wedding garment, but it really is burial garment. And as man is one day alone on this day when it is put on him, so, too, is he in the prayer of these days. They also place him in naked loneliness immediately before God’s throne. Just as God will judge him one day, him alone, according to his own actions and according to the thoughts of his own heart, and will not ask him about the others who surrounded him, and what their blame or merit might be in connection with him, but he alone will be judged: so here he goes in perfect loneliness, a dead man in the midst of life, and member of an assembled humanity which everyone like him himself has placed already beyond the grave in

the midst of life. Everything is behind him. As early as the beginning of the last day, for which the nine past days were only preparations, in that prayer for the annulment of all vows, of all dedications and good intentions, he has captured sheer humility to approach, not as his knowing child, but only still as his deluded one, before Him who wants to forgive him, just as he forgave “the whole community of Israel and the stranger who sojourns among them, for it happened to every people under a delusion.” Now he is ready for the confession of his own guilt before God in ever-new repetitions. There is of course no longer any guilt before men. If it still weighed him down, he would have had to free himself of it beforehand in sincere admission from man to man. The Day of Atonement does not expiate such guilt; it knows nothing of it; for it all guilt, even the guilt expiated and pardoned before men, is guilt before God, sin of the lonely man, sin of the soul—for it is the soul that sins. And to such mutual-lonely imploring of a humanity in burial garb, of a humanity beyond the grave, of a humanity of souls, God inclines his countenance, the God who loves man before his sin as afterwards, the God whom man in his need can call to account as to why he abandoned him, the God who is compassionate and merciful, patiently full of unmerited clemency and full of faithfulness, who keeps his love to the two-thousandth generation and forgives wickedness and defiance and guilt and pardons him who returns. So that the man toward whom the divine countenance inclines openly rejoices in the confession: He, this God of love, he alone is God.

So deeply does everything earthly lie behind the transport of eternity of this confession that is scarcely imaginable how a way back from here into the cycle of the year may be found. It is for this reason very meaningful for the building up of Redemption with which the yearly cycle of Sabbaths finishes; but the Festival of Booths still follows them as the holiday of Redemption upon the soil of unredeemed time and of the historical people. In the universal mutuality of the one humanity the soul had been with God alone; against such a foretaste of eternity, now the reality of time is again set to its rights in that holiday; therefore the cycle of the year can begin again win which alone we are permitted to implore eternity in time.

**THE WAY  
BACK INTO  
THE YEAR**

**THE PEOPLES  
OF THE  
WORLD:  
MESSIANIC  
POLITICS**

**THE PEOPLE  
AT THE GOAL**

IT was the cycle of a people. A people was at its goal in it and knew it was at the goal. It had cancelled the conflict between Creation and Revelation in itself. It lives in its own redemption. It anticipated eternity for itself. In the cycle of its year the future is the motive power; the circular movement does not give birth as it were by push but by tug; the present elapses, not because the past shoves it forward, but because the future drags it along. The holidays of Creation and Revelation also somehow lead to Redemption. The fact that the consciousness of the still unattained Redemption again breaks through, and because of that the thought of eternity again foams over the cup of the moment into which it just now seemed decanted and gives to the year the power to begin again from the beginning and place its beginningless and endless link properly into the long chain of times. But the people still remains the eternal people. For it its temporality, this fact that the years recur, is considered only as a waiting, perhaps as a wandering, not as a growing. Growing—that would of course mean that the completion would remain still unattained for it in time, and would therefore be a disavowal of its eternity. For eternity is precisely this, that between the present moment and the completion time may no longer claim a place, but as early as in the today every future is graspable.

**THE PEOPLES  
AND THE  
WORLD**

And so the people of eternity must forget the growth of the world; it may not think about it. The world, its world, must be looked up by it as finished, only the soul may still be on the way; but it arrives at what is outermost indeed also in one bound. And if it does not arrive at it, it is just a question of waiting and wandering—“Patience, and other maps,” according to the pensive words from *Don Quixote*. Waiting and wandering are affairs of the soul; only growing falls on the side of the world. And the eternal people forgo precisely this growing. Its peoplehood is already at that place to which the peoples of the world only aspire. Its world is at the goal. The Jew finds in his people the most perfect entry into a world belonging to him, and in order to find this entry he does not need to sacrifice an ounce of his particularity. There has been a dispute among the peoples of the world, since the supra-national power of Christianity came among them; since a Siegfried has wrestled everywhere with this foreign figure of the crucified man, already suspected because of his appear-

ance, one who is blond and blue-eyed, black and gracefully limbed, brown and dark-eyed like oneself, with this foreigner who opposes every approximation, attempted always again, of their own desired image. For the Jew alone there is no division between the supreme image that is placed before his soul and the people into which his life leads him. He alone possesses the mythic unity that was lost and had to be lost to the peoples of the world through Christianity; had to be—for the myth they possessed was pagan myth that led away from God and from the neighbor by leading them into themselves. The Jew's myth leads him by leading him into his people, and at the same time under the countenance of his God who is the God also of the nations; for the Jewish people, no discrepancy applies between that which is most their own and that which is the highest, for it love for itself turns immediately into love for the neighbor.

Because the Jewish people is already beyond the opposition which shapes the actual moving power in the life of the peoples, of the opposition between particularity and world history, homeland and faith, heaven and earth, it also does not know war. War, as the ancient peoples knew it, was generally of course only one of the natural expressions of life, and basically poses no difficulty. For a people, war means staking life for the sake of life. A people that wages war risks its own death. This means little as long as the peoples still regard themselves as mortal. As long as it does not mean much that of the two just reasons for war according to the great Roman rhetorician "salus" and "fides," self-preservation and honoring of the pledged allegiance—the second in certain circumstances contradicts the first. There is after all no reason why Sagunt and his people should not disappear from the earth. But what it means becomes clear when Augustine, from whom that spiritual removal of Cicero stems, now explains: for the Church such discord between one's own welfare and the faith that is loyal to one that is higher could not arise; for it "salus" and "fides" are united. For what Augustine is saying about the Church holds true within certain limits also of the worldly mutual participation, holds true of the people and State once these have begun to see their own being under the highest point of view.

And more or less such ideas of election concerning the individual peoples, and necessarily along with them also a claim of eternity, arose precisely through Christianity. Not that such a

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AND WAR**

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PEOPLES**

claim really determined the entire life of these peoples; this cannot be; even the idea of election, which alone of course can be the reason for it, only in certain exalted moments, and most probably also in them even almost more a holiday garment than they fancy than an official attire without which they believed they could not in all seriousness be effective. There is always dormant at the base of love for its own people the presentiment that one day in a distant future it will no longer be, and gives the love a sweetly painful heaviness. But for all that, the idea of the necessary eternity of the people is there, and weak or strong, quite or half-seriously it somehow takes part. And now the waging of war by means of it certainly acquires a very different appearance. The life of the people which is put into play is something that may absolutely not come into play half-seriously. How is the world to recover if this people's essence is effaced from it? And the more seriously a people has thus realized in itself the unity of "salus" and "fides," its own existence and its own sense of the world, all the more puzzling does the possibility which war opens to it become: the possibility of destruction. And hence war moves into the center of life. The states of antiquity had at the center of their political existence the official worship, the sacrifices, holidays and the like; the war that drove the enemy from the borders certainly guarded the native altars, but it was not even sacrifice, not even cultural act, not even altar. The "war of faith," the war as a religious act, remained reserved for the Christian era, after the Jewish people had discovered it.

#### WAR OF FAITH

Belonging to the most significant passages of our ancient law is the distinction between the usual war against a "very faraway" people, which was waged according to the universal rules of martial law for which war is a usual expression of like form of the State, and the war of faith against the "seven peoples" of Canaan, by which the people of God captured the necessary living space for it. In this distinction lies the new vision of war as a necessary act for God's sake. The peoples of the Christian era can no longer uphold the distinction. In conformity with the spirit of Christianity that tolerates no borders, there are no "very faraway" peoples for them. That which Jewish law could separate as concerns its public law, war of faith and political war, is blended into one for them. Precisely because they are not real peoples of God, but only on the way to becoming so, they cannot draw those distinct borders; they cannot at all know how far

God's will is realized in the warlike destinies of their States. Somehow—the how remains puzzling; the people must become accustomed to the idea of a possible destruction; whether as a people it will be used as a stone in the edifice of the Kingdom—the consciousness of the individual decides nothing concerning this; the war alone decides, which rages on above the consciousness of the individual.

Opposite this constant life in the war of faith, the Jewish people has its war of faith behind it in a mythic past. Therefore all wars that it still experiences are purely political wars for it. And since it does possess the concept of the war of faith, it therefore cannot take them seriously, like the ancient peoples for whom this concept was foreign. Of course, the Jew is really the only man in the Christian world who cannot take war seriously, and therefore is the only genuine “pacifist.” But therefore he separates himself, precisely because he experiences perfect mutual participation in his spiritual year, from the secular chronology, even after this has ceased to be a particular one to each people and as Christian chronology has basically become common to the whole world. What he possesses already as even in the annual cycle, the immediateness of all individuals to God in perfect mutual participation of everyone with God, he no longer needs to win in the long march of a world history.

The Jewish people is in itself already at the goal toward which the peoples of the world are just setting out. It possesses the inner harmony of faith and life which Augustine may attribute to the Church as harmony between *fides* and *salus*, but which to the peoples in the Church is still only a dream. Of course, by possessing it, the Jewish people stands outside the world, which does not yet possess it; by living the eternal peace, it stands outside of a warlike temporality; by resting at the goal that it anticipates in hope, it is separated from the march of those who draw near to it in the toil of centuries. Its soul, which is satiated in the beholding of hope, withdraws from toil, action, fighting for the world. The consecration that is spread over it as a kingdom of priests makes its life unfruitful; its sanctity prevents it from surrendering its soul to the still unsanctified world of the peoples, however much it is attached to this world with the body. It must renounce full, active participation in their life with its daily solutions that resolve all contradictions. It is not permitted to acknowledge the solution of contradictions in the today, because

**WORLD PEACE**

**PEOPLE AND STATE**

through this it would become unfaithful to the hope for the ultimate solution of contradictions. To keep the image of the true mutual participation intact it must not be allowed the satisfaction that the peoples of the world have continuously in the State. For the State is the ever-changing form under which time moves to eternity step by step. In the people of God that which is eternal is already there, in the midst of time. Among the peoples of the world there is a pure temporality. But the State is the attempt, inevitably always to be renewed, to give to the peoples eternity in time. How it can undertake this we shall see. But the fact that it does undertake it and must undertake it makes it into the imitator of the in themselves eternal people that would no longer have any right to its own eternity if the State could get what it is reaching for.

**THE LAW IN  
THE STATE**

A cycle, the cycle of the year, guarantees its eternity to the eternal people. The peoples of the world are in themselves without a cycle, their life rolls downstream in a wide river. If eternity should come to them from the State, the river must be stemmed, dammed up into a lake. The State must seek to make a cycle out of the pure flow of time to which the peoples in themselves are devoted; it must transform the constant changing of their life into preservation and renewal and thus introduce a cycle that would in itself have the capacity to be eternal. Between preservation and renewal life sets an apparently irreconcilable discord. It wants only change. The law of change prohibits something that persists from changing as it prohibits something from preserving itself in the change. Life can be either only rest or only movement. And, since time cannot be denied, movement triumphs. Into the wave of the same river you do not go the second time. In uncurbed change and alteration history seems to die away. Then comes the State and hangs its law over alteration. Now something is suddenly there that persists. Of course at first glance it seems as if everything is now solidly fixed, everything persists. But soon rushing life is already again flowing onward over the solid fixed Tablets. The law is preserved only as long as the people serve it. And law and life, that which lasts and that which changes, seem to separate. Here the State unveils its true face. The law was only its first word. It cannot hold out against the changing of life. But now it speaks its second word: the word of silence.

Violence gets life brought to its law against the law. Since the State is violent and not merely lawful, it remains at life's heels. This is the meaning of all violence, that it founds new law. It is not a disavowal of the law, as one probably thinks, fascinated by its revolutionary conduct, but on the contrary its foundation. But a contradiction is hidden in the idea of a new law. Law is as regards its essence old law. Now it shows itself as what violence is: the renewer of old law. In the violent act law continuously turns into new law. And the State is therefore equally as much lawful and violent, refuge of the old law and source of the new; and in this double shape as refuge of law and source of law the State places itself above the mere flowing off of the life of the people in which custom unceasingly and non-violently multiplies and law changes. To this natural allowing of the living moment to elapse, as it is shown in the multiplying of custom and in the alteration of the law in the living people, the State opposes its violent asserting of the moment. But not like in the eternal people such that the moment became eternal as a once and for all final custom and inalterable law. Instead because it masterfully seizes the moment, and every following moment, and forms it according to its will and its ability. At every moment the State violently settles the contradiction between preservation and renewal, old and new law. It is that continuous solution of the contradiction which the life course of the people constantly only postpones of its own accord through the flowing on of time; the State takes it in hand; in fact it is nothing other than this solving, resolved every moment, of the contradiction.

Therefore war and revolution are the only reality that the State knows, and in every moment where neither one nor the other would take place—and be it only in shape of a thought of war or revolution—it would no longer be State. At no moment can it lay down the sword from its hand; for it must at every moment brandish it again in order to hew with it the Gordian knot of the people's life, the contradiction between past and future, which the people does not resolve, only pushes forward in its natural life. But by hewing it, it removes in every moment, and of course always only for this single moment, the contradiction from the world and thus in every moment dams up in stagnant water the river of the life of the world that constantly denies itself in all time until the final flowing into the ocean of eternity. But it thus turns every moment into eternity. It encircles in each the contra-

**VIOLENCE  
IN THE  
STATE**

**WAR AND  
REVOLUTION**

diction of old and new by the violent renewal of the old, conferring upon the new the lawful force of the old. The new does not follow the old, but in the daring condensation it melts down indissolubly for the moment with the old into a “new law.” The moment remains thoroughly moment; it passes. But inasmuch as it has not passed, just so long it is in itself a little eternity; as long as it has nothing in itself that aims beyond it, then that which is new, which otherwise constantly falls upon what is old, is restrained for the moment in its jurisdiction. Only the new moment breaks the violence of the old and threatens to let life flow away again like a free river; but the State at once raises its sword anew and confines the river again to stagnancy, the continuous movement to the cycle. These moments confined by the State are therefore authentic “hours” of the people’s life that of its own accord knows no hours; only the State brings standstills, small stations, crammed times, into the unceasing flowing away of this life in time. The times are the hours of world history, and only the State brings them in through its warlike sentence of confinement that makes the sun of time stand still until at any given time “the people have become master over its enemies.” With no State, then, no world history. Only the State causes those reflected images of true eternity that mould the bricks of world history as times to fall into the river of time.

**THE  
ETERNITY OF  
THE PROMISE**

**A**ND that is why the true eternity of the eternal people must remain always foreign and annoying to the State and to world history. Against the hours of eternity, which the State in the times of world history carves with a sharp sword into the bark of the growing tree of time, the eternal people every year places untroubled and intact ring upon ring round the trunk of its eternal life. Upon this silent life without any side-glances at all, the power of world history is refracted. If it nevertheless may always claim anew its newest eternity as the true one, we set against all such claims again and again the still, silent image of our existence, which to the one who wants to see, as to the one who does not want to, again and again forces the knowledge that eternity is nothing of that which is the newest. The arm of violence may force the newest with the last into a newest eternity of all. But it is not the reconciliation of the latest grandson with the oldest ancestor. And this true eternity of life, this conversion of the heart of the fathers to the children, again and again through

our existence is pushed in front of the eyes of the peoples of the world so that it might silently reprove the worldly, all too worldly illusory eternity of their lies of world historical moments drawn up into States. The course of world history reconciles, as long as the Kingdom of God is still to come, always only the Creation in itself, always only its moment nearest to the previous one. The Creation itself as a whole, however, is held together with Redemption in all time, as long as Redemption is still in its coming, only through the Eternal People placed outside all World History. In its life alone the fire burns that nourishes itself from itself and therefore has no need of the sword that would bring nourishment to its flame from the woods of the world. This fire burns in itself. Its rays that stream into the world illuminate the world; they do not need to shine for the fire itself. The fire knows nothing of them. It burns silently and eternally. The seed of eternal life has been planted; so the fire can wait until it sprouts. The seed knows nothing of the tree that grows from it, even if it overshadows the whole world. One day from the fruits of the tree there will come a seed like it. Blessed be He who has planted eternal life in our midst.



## BOOK TWO

# THE RAYS OR THE ETERNAL WAY

**N**O human power can grasp the thoughts of the Creator; for his ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts. It is with these words about God's ways at the conclusion of the great record of the entire content of oral and written Torah, which Maimonides gives to us as "repetition of the Law," that the following sentences begin about the way of the true Messiah and that great deception of worshipping another beside God, which, according to the prophecy of the Book of Daniel befell the world through "renegade sons of Your people who presume to fulfill the visions—and shall fall." Our great teacher then continues as follows: All this only cleared the way for the royal Messiah who will establish the world upon the service of God, as it is written: then I shall give to the peoples pure lips, so that they all together invoke God and serve him united. If however in the meantime the whole world has become full of the messianic idea and the words of Torah and the Commandments; if that idea and these words have spread to distant islands and among many peoples of uncircumcised heart and uncircumcised flesh; they are all now concerned with the words of Torah and with questions of their legality, some claim that those our Commandments are certainly true but no longer legally in force, and others claim that secrets are hidden in them and nothing can be understood in the plain literal sense, and that at one time the Messiah came and made manifest that which is secret. But only when the true Messiah comes and he succeeds and he will be on high and exalted, then they will all return and acknowledge what a delusion it was.

*THE  
ETERNITY OF  
REALIZATION*

**F**ROM the fiery heart of the Star there shoot out the rays. They seek their way through the long night of the times. It must be an eternal way, not a temporal one, even if it leads equally through time. It must not deny time; after all, it is supposed to lead through it. And yet time may not get power over it. And on the other hand it may not, like the eternal people that continues to beget in itself, create its own time and thereby make itself free from time. So there is only one thing left: it must become master

*THE WAY  
THROUGH  
TIME:  
CHRISTIAN  
HISTORY*

over time. But how could that happen? How could a way that traverses time, instead of being divided off by time, itself divide off time?

**EPOCH** In the very question lies the answer. Yet the rhythm of time determines all that happens in it only because time is older and younger than all that happens. If a happening confronted it that had its beginning and its end outside of time, then the pulse beat of this happening could regulate the striking of the hours of by the world clock. Such a happening would have to come from beyond time and flow into a beyond of time. In any present it would of course be in time; but because it knows that it is independent of time in its past and in its future, it therefore feels strongly against it. Its present stands between past and future; yet the moment does not stand but flies away at the speed of an arrow and as a result is never “between” its past and its future, but before it could be between anything, it has already flown away. The way of the world knows a between only in the past; only the past point of time is time-point, crammed time, halting-place. Living time knows of nothing of points; each point, when the moment begins to fly across it at the speed of an arrow, has already flown straight across. But in the past there is that fixed juxtaposition of hours; here there are packed times, halting-points in time, and they can be recognized by the fact that time precedes them, time follows them; they are between time and time.

Only as such a between however does time acquire weight such that it can no longer fly away at the speed of an arrow. The packed time no longer passes before I became aware of it, and changes before I notice it. But it means something. “Something”—therefore it possesses materiality; it is like a thing. In the past the way of the world is formed into immovable “things,” into eras, epochs, great moments. And it can do it only because in the past the fleeting moments are held fast as little stations, held between a before and an after. As between they can no longer slip away, as between they have stability, they stand like hours. Over the past which consists of nothing but between time has lost its power; it can only still add to it, but it can further alter it at most through what is added; upon its inner connection it can no longer encroach, which stands fast, each point between other points; the same rhythm that chronicles the years seems to role over the present in such a way that the impatience of humanity’s benefactor, the cry of distress of the ill-fated one waiting for his

change of destiny, rebel against it in vain—in the past, it loses its power; here events rule over time, not the reverse. Epoch is that which—stands between its before and after; little does it care how many years the chronicle assigns to it; each epoch weighs the same whether it has lasted centuries or decades or only years. Events govern time here by marking their notches in it. Event however exists only in the epoch; event stands between before and after. And there is a fixed between only in the past. If the present too should thus be elevated to the baroness of time, it too would have to be a between; the present, every present, would have to become epoch-making. And time as a whole would have to become an hour—this temporality; and as such stretched into eternity; eternity its beginning, eternity its end, and all time always only the between that is between that beginning and that end.

It is Christianity that thus made the present into the epoch. Past is still only the time before the birth of Christ. All subsequent time from Christ's life on earth until his return is now that one great present, that epoch, that standstill, that extension of times, that between over which time has lost its power. Time is now pure temporality. As such, it is to be surveyed entirely from each of its points; for to each of its points beginning and end are equally near; time has become a single way, but a way whose beginning and end lie beyond time, and hence an eternal way; although upon the ways that lead from time to time always only a next piece is to be surveyed. On the eternal way, because of course beginning and end are equally near regardless how time also moves on, each point is again a central point. Not because it is precisely at the moment the present one—absolutely not. Then it would of course only be a central point only for one moment, and no longer already in the next moment. Such vitality would be that with which time would reward a life that would make itself subject to it: a purely temporal vitality. This is the vitality of a life in the moment: that it is life in time, lets itself be carried off from the past and calls to the future. Thus live men and peoples. From this life God withheld the Jew by arching the bridge of his Law heavenwards over the river of time under whose arch it now rushes powerlessly into all eternity.

The Christian, however, takes up the contest with the river. He lays alongside it the tracks of his eternal way. He who takes this train measures the place of the river he has just seen only ac-

**THE  
CHRISTIAN  
CHRONO-  
LOGY**

ording to the distance between the station of departure and that of arrival. He himself is always only on the track and his real interest is only that he is still always on the way, still always between departure and goal. That he is so and not more is what the river of time that still always flows by outside tells him as often as he looks out the window. He who travels on the river itself always sees always only from one bend to the next. For the one who travels on the steel tracks, the river as a whole is only a sign that he is still on the way, only a sign of the between. He can never forget about the view of the river, that although the place from which he comes like the place to where he is going lie beyond the range of the river. If he wonders where he is just now at this moment, the river gives him no answer to this; but the answer that he gives to himself is always only: on the way. As long as the river of this temporality is still to flow at all, just so long is he himself at every moment right between beginning and end of his journey. Both, beginning and end, are for him at every moment equally near, because both are in that which is eternal; and only for this reason does he know himself at each moment to be central point. As central point not of a horizon that he surveys, but as central point of a track which consists of nothing but central point, indeed which is entirely center, entirely between, entirely way. Only because his way is entirely center and he knows it, only for this reason can and must he perceive each point of this way as central point; the entire track, since it consists of nothing but central points, is precisely only a single central point. These words from the Cherubinic Wanderer, "If Christ were born a thousand times in Bethlehem, and is not born also in you, then you are lost," are paradoxical for the Christian only in the bold terseness of the expression, not in the thought. Not as moment therefore does the moment become the representative of eternity for the Christian, but as central point of Christian world time; and this world time, since it does not elapse but stands, consists of nothing but such "central points"; every event stands in the center between beginning and end of the eternal way and through this central position in the temporal interval kingdom of eternity, is itself eternal.

So Christianity, by making of the moment into an epoch-making epoch, gets power over time. From Christ's birth on there is now only still the present. Time does not bounce off Christianity like off the Jewish people, but fleeting time is captured and

must now serve as an imprisoned slave. Past, present and future, which constantly slide into each other, always changing, have now become motionless configurations, paintings on walls and chapel vaults. That which is past, that which stands still once and for all time, is now everything that is before Christ's birth, sibyls and prophets. And future, that which comes drawn near hesitantly but inevitably, is the last judgment. In between stands a single hour, a single day, the Christian world time in which everything is middle, everything equally as light as day. The three tenses of time are thus split up into eternal beginning, eternal middle, eternal end of the eternal way through this temporality. The temporality itself unlearns its confidence in itself and lets this configuration be forced upon the Christian chronology. It ceases to believe that it would be older than Christianity; it counts its years from the birth of Christianity. It allows that everything before it appears as denied time, so to speak unreal time. The counting of the years by which till now it had re-counted the past now becomes the prerogative of the present, of the eternally present way. And Christianity walks along this way on which time follows it as obedient bookkeeper of its steps, walks it calmly and sure of its eternal present, always in the middle of the happening, always in the event, always in that which is current, always with the authoritative bearing of the consciousness that it is the eternal way on which they are walking.

Christianity—but are they not men, lineages, peoples, kingdoms? Men different in age, position, sex, in color, culture and mental horizon, in talents and strengths? And yet now they are supposed to be at one at every moment, gathered into a single central point, and this center in its turn a central point of all the other central points of this one big center? The question refers to the formation of mutual participation in this mutual participation of Christianity. We are not helped here by the dogmatic answer “Christ,” as little as the answer “Torah” could satisfy us in the preceding book, which a Jewish dogmatic would probably have to have given to the question about the formation of the mutual participation in Judaism. But we want to know precisely how the mutual participation that is founded on the dogmatic foundation is given reality. Still more exactly: we know it must be an eternal mutual participation; so we are asking what we already also asked in the preceding book: how mutual participation can be founded

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ITY

forever. We identified it for the mutual participation of eternal life. Now we are asking what it is for the mutual participation of the eternal way.

The difference certainly cannot lie in the fact that a central point is at each point of the way. So too the totality of life was in every moment of the life of the people. God led every individual out of Egypt—"not with you only do I conclude this Covenant, but with the one who stands here with us today as with the one who is not here with us today." This is common to both, to the eternal life as to the eternal way: they are eternal. And the fact that everything exists at each point and in each moment really means eternity. So there is no difference in this. It must no doubt be in that which is eternal, and not in the being-eternal. And so it is. Eternal life and eternal way—they are as different as the infinity of a point and of a line. The infinity of a point can only consist in the fact that it is never wiped away; therefore it is preserved in the eternal self-preservation of the blood that continuously begets. The infinity of a line however stops when it would be no longer possible to extend it; it consists in this possibility of unlimited extension. Christianity as eternal way must always spread further. Simple preservation of its continuance would mean for it the renouncing of its eternity and hence death. Christianity must be missionary. It is just as necessary to it as is to the eternal people its self-preservation in the sealing off of the pure source of blood from foreign admixture. In fact the mission for it is plainly the form of its self-preservation. It propagates itself by spreading. Eternity becomes eternity of the way by gradually making the points of the way all into central points. The bearing witness for eternity, which in the eternal people is furnished by the begetting must be furnished as real bearing witness<sup>1</sup> on the eternal way. Each point of the way must one day testify that it knows itself as the central point of the eternal way. Instead of the fleshly flowing on of the one blood which testifies to the ancestor in the begotten grandson, here the pouring out of the Spirit in the uninterrupted stream of baptismal water from one to the other must establish the mutual participation of bearing witness. At each point that this pouring out of the Spirit reaches, the whole way must be surveyable as an eternal mutual participation of bearing witness. It becomes surveyable only if the con-

<sup>1</sup>Begetting, *Erzeugung*; testimony, *Zeugnis*, testimony; the same root.

tent of the bearing witness is the way itself. In the testifying to the mutual participation the way must be testified to at the same time. The mutual participation becomes one through the testified faith. Faith is faith in the way. Everyone who is in the community knows that there is no other eternal way than the way he is taking. Belonging to Christianity, he knows his own life is on the way that leads from the coming to the coming again of Christ.

This knowledge is faith. It is faith as content of a bearing witness. It is faith in something. It is exactly the opposite to the faith of the Jew. His faith is not content of a bearing witness, but product of begetting. He who is begotten as Jew bears witness to his faith by continuing to beget the eternal people. He does not have faith in something, he is himself the having of faith; he is faithful in an immediacy that no Christian dogmatic can ever afford for itself. This having faith sets little value on its dogmatic fixing; it has existence—this is more than words. But the world is entitled to words. A faith that wants to win the world must be faith in something. Even the smallest union of a few people who are united in order to win a piece of the world needs a mutual faith, a password by which those united recognize each other. Everyone who wants to create for himself a piece of his own way in the world must believe in something. Just being faithful would never allow him to attain anything in the world. Only he who has faith in something can conquer a something, precisely that in which he has faith. And this is exactly the main point of the Christian faith. It is dogmatic in the highest sense, and must be so. It cannot renounce its words. On the contrary: it cannot have enough to do with words, it cannot invent enough words. It would really have to have a thousand tongues. It would have to speak all languages. For it must want everything to become its own. And therefore the something in which it has faith must not be a something, but everything. And precisely for this reason it is faith in the way. By having faith in the way, it opens a way into the world. So the Christian faith, with bearing witness, is the first begetter of the eternal way in the world, whereas the Jewish faith follows in the steps of the eternal life of the people as begotten produce.

**FAITH**

Christian faith therefore, the bearing witness of the eternal way, is creative in the world; it unites those who bear witness into a union in the world. It unites them as individuals; for bearing witness is always a matter of individuals. And besides the indi-

**THE CHURCH**

vidual here is supposed to bear witness about his position in relation to an individual; for the testimony refers to Christ; Christ is the mutual content of all the testimonies of faith. But faith directs those who are united as individuals to a mutual action in the world. For paving the way is the mutual task of all individuals; each individual can of course set foot on only one point, his point of the eternal way, and make it into what the whole way must become in order to be eternal way: center. And so faith establishes union of individuals as individuals for a mutual task, a union is rightly called *Ekklēsia*. For this original name of the Church is taken from the life of the ancient free States and refers to the citizens who are called together for mutual deliberation; probably the people of God referred to its holidays as “holy convocation” with a similar word, but it named itself people, community—with words that at one time referred the summons to arms, therefore that in which the people appears as a closed whole in which the individuals have arisen. In the *Ekklēsia*, however, the individual is and remains an individual, and only the resolution is mutual and becomes—*res publica*.

**CHRIST** And Christianity assumes precisely this name of *Ekklēsia*, the name of an assembly of individuals for a mutual task that is realized only however by each suitably taking action as individual, as in the assembly the mutual resolution arises only by each stating his opinion and voting as integral individual. So, the mutual participation of the Church, too, presupposes the personality and integrity—let us say it freely: the soul of its members. The Pauline image of the community as the body of Christ does not mean any sort of task of divided labor, like for instance Menenius Agrippa’s famous image of the stomach and the limbs; but intends this perfect freedom of each individual in the Church; it becomes clear through the great: “Everything is yours, but you are Christ’s.” Since Christianity, and each individual Christian in it, is on the way starting from the Crucified One, everything is subject to it; every Christian must not merely know himself to be somewhere on the way, but simply in the center of the way, which itself is totally center, totally between. But since Christianity and the individual still await the return, the free men know themselves still to be lords of all things as well as everyone’s servant; for what they do to the least of His brothers, they do Him who will return as judge of the world.

How will the *Ekklēsia* be drawn up on the basis of that free-

dom and integrity of individuals that are to be upheld? How might the bond look that joins man and man in the *Ekklēsia*? It must of course, since it binds, also leave individuals free, of course in truth first make him free. It must leave each as it finds him, the man as man, the woman as woman, the old ones old, the young ones young, the master as master, the servant as servant, the rich one rich, the poor poor, the wise one wise and the fool foolish, the Roman as Roman and the barbarian barbaric; it may not place anyone into the position of the other, and yet it must conceal the gulf between man and woman, between parents and child, between master and servant, between rich and poor, wise man and fool, Roman and barbarian and therefore make each free in that which he is, in all his natural and God-given dependencies with which he stands in the world of Creation and place him into the center of the way that leads from eternity into eternity.

This bond that thus takes men as if finds them and yet binds them beyond the differences of sex, age, class and race is the bond of brotherliness. In all the given relationships that quietly continue to exist, brotherliness joins men independently of these relationships as equals, as brothers, "in the Lord." The mutual faith in the mutual way is the content on which they turn from men into brothers. In this fraternal covenant of Christianity Christ is both beginning and end of the way, and consequently content and goal, founder and Lord of the covenant, as well center of the way and hence everywhere present where two are together in his name. Where two are together in his name, center of the way is there, there the whole way is surveyable, beginning and end equally near, because he who is beginning and end abides here in the midst of those gathered together. So in the center of the way Christ is neither founder nor Lord of his Church, but member, he himself brother of his covenant. As such he can also be with the individual; in the brotherhood with Christ even the individual—not only two who are together—knows himself to be already Christian and, although apparently with himself alone, yet, because this being-alone is being-together with Christ, to be member of the Church.

Christ is near to this individual in the configuration toward which his fraternal feelings can most easily be directed; for the individual is of course to remain what he is, the man man, the woman woman, and child child; so Christ is friend to man, spiritual bridegroom to the woman, the Christ-child to the child. And

where Christ, through binding to the historical person Jesus, denies himself this entering into the intimate configuration of the neighbor and to the brotherly loving one, there, at least in the Church, which holds its faithful most ardently on the way and makes them think less about the beginning and the end, in Peter's Church of love the saints intercede for Christ himself, and it is allowed to the man to love in Mary the pure maid, to the woman the divine sister in her, and to everyone from out of his class and his people the saint of his class and people, in fact to everyone from out of his innermost I locked in his own name his patron saint in brotherly fashion. And even before the dead God on the Cross, from which the way begins, there moves in this Church of love that is still more authentic than the other churches of the way, the configuration of the one walking alive on earth, who becomes model here than in the sister churches, who is imitated as an exemplary human brother; as on the other hand before the judge of the Last Judgment, with which the way ends, here throngs the whole host of saints who intercede for their brothers and sisters enmeshed in weakness.

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CHRISTIAN  
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The brotherliness thus weaves its bond between men of whom none is like the other; it is in no way identity between anything of that which bears human countenance, but unanimity precisely of men of most different countenance. Certainly only this one thing is needful: that men have a countenance altogether—that they see each other. The Church is the mutual participation of all those who see one another. It joins men as contemporaries, as simultaneities in places separated by a wide space. Simultaneousness is something that does not exist at all in temporality. In temporality there is only before and after; the moment someone beholds himself can only precede or follow the moment he beholds another; simultaneous beholding of oneself and another in the same moment is impossible. That is the deepest reason why in the pagan world that is of course precisely temporality, it was impossible to love one's neighbor as oneself. But in eternity there is simultaneousness. That from the shore all time is simultaneous goes without saying. But even time that, as eternal way, leads from eternity to eternity admits of simultaneousness. For only insofar as it is center between eternity and eternity is it possible for people to meet in it. He who therefore beholds himself on the way is at the same point, namely the exact central point, of time. The brotherliness is that which transposes men into

this central point. Time is already laid conquered at its feet; love only still has to fly over the separating space. And so it flies over the enmity of peoples and the cruelty of race, the envy of classes and the limitations of age; and so it brings it about that all those who are enemies, cruel, envious, limited behold each other as brother, in the one same central moment of time.

In the center of time those who are simultaneous behold each other. So, on the borders of time, the ones for whom differences of space did not mean separation first to be conquered have met each other; for these differences were conquered already there from the start in the innate mutual participation of the people; the labor of love, both of the divine toward men and of the human among each other, had to be directed here exclusively toward the preservation of this mutual participation through time, toward the advent of simultaneity of the successions of generations separated in temporality. It is the alliance between grandson and grandfather; through this alliance the people becomes the eternal people; for when grandson and grandfather behold one another, they behold in each other at the same moment the last grandson and the first grandfather. So the grandson and the grandfather, both of them, and both together are for the one who stands between them the true embodiment of the eternal people; as for the Christian the fellow creature who has become the brother embodies the Church. In old men and in children we experience our Judaism immediately. The Christian experiences his Christianity in the feeling of the moment that leads the brother to him on the summit of the eternal way; for him there the whole of Christianity is condensed; it is where he is, he where it is—in the midst of time between eternity and eternity. The moment shows us eternity otherwise: not in the brother who stands nearest us, but in those who stand farthest from us in time, in the oldest and in the youngest, in the old man who admonishes, in the child who asks questions, in the grandfather who blesses and in the grandson who receives the blessing. Thus the bridge of eternity arches for us—from the starry sky of the promise that arches over the mountain of Revelation from where the river of our eternal life sprang, up to the countless sands of the promise upon which the sea washes up into where that river empties, the sea out of which one day the Star of Redemption will rise, when like its waves the earth will foam over with knowledge of the Lord.

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ACT

CROSS AND  
STAR

Ultimately therefore that span between beginning and end pushes powerfully yet again toward the end; although as span, it arises only from the two, it yet is finally gathered into one point, precisely at the end. The child with his questions is ultimately yet still a more powerful admonisher than the old man; the old man becomes memory, and if we are also constantly nourished from the ever-flowing treasure of his impassioned life, and abide by it and become stronger on the merit of the fathers: the child alone overcomes. Only “out of the mouths of babes and children” does God found his Kingdom. And as that span finally however is entirely condensed into the end, finally upon the latest shoot, upon the Messiah whom we await, so, too, the Christian concentration in the central point does not however in the long run remain attached there. The Christian may well behold Christ in the brother, yet this finally carries him beyond the brother immediately to Christ himself. Although the center is only center between beginning and end, its main stress nevertheless moves toward the beginning. The man goes immediately under the Cross; he cannot be satisfied with beholding the Cross from the middle of the way as the judgment in eternal nearness; he does not rest until the image of the Crucified One cloaks the whole world. When he thus turns alone toward the Cross, he may forget the judgment—but he remains on the way. For of course the Cross, although still belonging to the eternal beginning of the way, yet already no longer the first beginning, is itself already on the way, so he who has come under it stands in the center and at the beginning at the same time. Therefore, the Christian consciousness, absorbed entirely in faith, pushes toward the beginning of the way, to the first Christian, to the Crucified One, as the Jewish consciousness, gathered entirely in hope, toward the man of the last days, to David’s royal shoot. Faith can be renewed eternally in its beginning just as the arms of the Cross are extended ad infinitum; the hope unites out of all diversity of time eternally in the one far and near visual point of the end, just as the star of David’s shield unites all the rays into the heart of the fire. Rooting into the deepest Self, this had been the secret of the eternity of the people. Expansion through all that is outside—this is the secret of the eternity of the Way.

Expansion into the outside, and not as far as possible, but, whether possible or impossible, expansion into everything, simply into everything outside, that therefore can also be in the actual present at most a still-outside—if this expansion is meant so unconditionally, so limitlessly, then what applied to the Jewish rooting into its own innermost also obviously applies to it; that nothing more than that which is opposite may remain outside. But here too all oppositions must somehow be drawn into its own borders. But even borders, as one's own Self that roots itself into itself probably had them, quite foreign to this expansion into the outside, in fact unthinkable—where is that which is borderless supposed to have borders, that which again and again breaks up all borders! It itself, the expansion, certainly not; but maybe that outside into which the expansion takes place has borders: the borders of the universe.<sup>2</sup> But these borders are not reached in the present and neither in a future present—for eternity can break in today and tomorrow, but not the day after tomorrow, and the future is always only the day after tomorrow.

SO the mode in which the oppositions are active here must also be a different one than in the case of the self's absorption. There they were spanned directly through the inner configurations of God, world, man; the three were active as constantly alternating currents between those poles. Here on the contrary the contrasts must already reside in the mode of the expansion; only then are they effective and fully effective at every moment. The expansion must ever take place in two kinds of separate, indeed opposing ways. Beneath Christianity's pathways into the lands of God, man, world, there must ever bloom two different sorts of flowers; of course these paths must themselves suddenly separate within time, and two configurations of Christianity must ever go each their own way through those three lands; expecting that they will surely meet again one day, but not within time. Within time they march separately, and only when they march separately are they certain of traveling across the whole universe<sup>3</sup> and yet without getting lost in it. Therefore Judaism had been able to be the one people and the eternal people

**THE TWO  
AVENUES: THE  
ESSENCE OF  
CHRISTIANITY**

<sup>2</sup>Universe, *das All*, here translated in its usual sense, instead of as "the All."

<sup>3</sup>*Das All*, see note 2.

only by carrying all the great oppositions already in itself, whereas those oppositions first appear for the peoples of the world where they are separated the one against the others. Just in this way Christianity, too, if it really wants to be all-embracing, must conceal in itself the oppositions by which other societies, already in their name and purpose each differentiate themselves against all others; only by this means does it mark itself off as the all-embracing society and yet of a unique kind in itself. God, world, man can become the Christian God, the Christian world, the Christian man, only by spinning from out of themselves the oppositions in which life moves about and by going through each on its own. Otherwise Christianity would be only an association, perhaps justified by its particular purpose and in its particular domain, but without the claim for expansion to the ends of the world. And on the other hand, if it sought to expand beyond those oppositions, then its way would surely not need to branch off, but it would also not be the way through the world, the way along the river of time, but a way into the pathless sea of the winds, where the universe to be sure is indeed without borders or oppositions, but also without content. And not to there, but into the living universe that surrounds us, the universe of life, the universe from out of God, man, world, the way of Christianity must lead.

**SON AND  
FATHER**

The way of Christianity into the land of God thus branches off into two ways—a duality that is simply incomprehensible to the Jew, but upon which the Christian life however moves. It is incomprehensible to us; because for us the opposition that we of course also know in God, the juxtaposition in him of justice and love, Creation and Revelation, precisely in incessant relationship with himself; an alternating current goes back and forth between God's attributes; it cannot be said that he is the one or the other; he is One precisely in the constant equalizing of seemingly opposite "attributes." For the Christian on the contrary the branching off of "Father" and "Son" means much more than a separation into divine sternness and divine love. The Son is of course also the Judge of the world, and the Father "so loved" the world that he even sacrificed his Son; so sternness and love are not really separate at all in the two persons of the godhead. And certainly just as little are they to be separated according to Creation and Revelation. For the Son is not uninvolved in Creation nor is the Father in Revelation. But Christian piety goes

separate ways when it is a matter of the Father and when it is a matter of the Son. Only the Son does the Christian approach with that intimacy which happens so naturally for us in the face of God that for us on the other hand it has become almost unimaginable that there should be men who do not feel confident of this trust. Only by means of the Son does the Christian dare to approach the Father: only through the Son does he believe he can come to the Father. If the Son were not man, he would be quite useless to the Christian. He cannot imagine that God himself, the holy God, could condescend to him in such a way as he wishes to unless he would himself become man. The innermost indestructible piece of paganism in every Christian breaks through here. The pagan wants to be surrounded by human gods, it is not enough for him that he is himself man: God too must be man. The vitality that the true God of course also has in common with the gods of the pagans becomes credible for the Christian only when it becomes flesh in a particular divine-human person. But by means of this God become man, he then walks with trust through life as we do and—differently from us—full of conquering power; for flesh and blood only let themselves be subjected by their like, by flesh and blood, and precisely that “paganism” of the Christian qualifies him for the conversion of the pagans.

But at the same time he goes still another way, the way immediately with the Father. As in the Son, he drew God up immediately into the brotherly nearness of his own I, so before the Father he may again get rid of all that is his own. In his nearness he stops being I. Here he knows that he is in the sphere of a truth that mocks every I. His need for God’s nearness is satisfied in the Son; in the Father he possesses the divine truth. Here he acquires the pure distance and objectivity of knowing and doing which in apparent contradiction to the inwardness of love denotes the other way of Christianity through the world. Under the sign of God the Father life is arranged in knowledge as in action in fixed arrangements. On this way too the Christian feels God’s gaze directed upon him, precisely the Father’s, not the Son’s. It is unchristian to mix together these two ways to God. It is a matter of “tact” to keep them apart and to know when it is right to take the one and when the other. These unexpected turns, quick as lightning, from the consciousness of divine love into that of divine justice and the reverse, as they essentially are for

the Jewish life—the Christian does not know them; his passage to God remains twofold, and if the constraint of this twofold way rends him, then he is sooner permitted to decide clearly on the one and to devote himself entirely to it, than to waver in the gloaming back and forth between the two. As for the equalizing, the world and the other Christians will look after it. For, to that which is manifest in God as the separation of the divine persons, there corresponds in the Christian world a doubling of its arrangement, and in the Christian man a duality of life forms.

**PRIEST AND  
SAINT**

Man as Jewish man in all indelible opposition between love from God and love for God, his Jewishness and his humanity, Patriarch and Messiah, in all these contradictions yet a man and precisely in them a living one—this man gets separated into two configurations. Surely not two configurations that necessarily shut each other out and fight. But two configurations that go separate ways, separate even still when, as can always happen, they come together in one man. And on the other hand these separate ways lead through the entire vast land of humanity in whose districts form and freedom always seem to be clashing. Precisely this opposition is what in Christianity can be lived fully and widely in the two configurations of the priest and the saint. And again it is not so simple that the priest perchance is only the man who becomes the vessel of Revelation, the saint only the one by whose ardor the fruit of Redemption ripens. The priest is of course perhaps not quite the man in whom the word of the divine mouth kisses awake the sleeping soul, but it is the man who is redeemed to his being in the image of God, who has prepared himself to become the vessel of Revelation. And the saint—based only upon the Revelation that has just and always just befallen him, only in the nearness of his Lord that befalls him ever anew delectably and visibly can he lovingly save the world. He cannot at all behave as if there were no God who puts directly into his heart what he is supposed to do; just as it would be impossible for the priest to wear the priestly garment if he could not appropriate Redemption already in the visible forms of the Church and with it, when he is officiating, the image of God for himself. A bit of the arbitrariness of heretics in that awareness of divine inspiration which the saint keeps in himself, a bit of the Grand Inquisitor's self-deification in that appropriation of the image of God in the priestly vestment. Ceremonious deification beyond the person, momentary arbitrariness—the emperor of

Byzantium whom the greatest pomp of the strictest etiquette raises far above all that is earthly and accidental, the revolutionary who flings the fire-brand of his immediate demands into thousand-year-old buildings—these are the outermost limits of form and freedom, between which stretches the vast land of the soul; the divided way of Christianity completely traverses it.

The world, which for the Jew is full of slippery transitions back and forth from “this” world into the “future” one, is divided for the Christian into the great twofold order of State and Church. It is not wrongly said of the pagan world that it knew neither the one nor the other. For its citizens, the polis was the State and the Church in one, yet completely without opposition. In the Christian world, they were separated from the beginning. The history of the Christian world has since then taken place within this separation. It is surely not such that only the Church would be Christian and not the State. The “Render to Caesar that which is Caesar’s” did not carry less weight over the centuries than did the second half of the formula. For the law to which the peoples are subjected came from the emperor. And in the universal condition of law on earth the work of divine omnipotence, the Creation, is completed. Already Caesar, to whom should be rendered what is his had ruled over a world of its own law. The Church itself conveyed the memory in it and the longing for a renewal of this condition to a later era. It was the Pope who placed the imperial head circlet upon the head of Charlemagne. For a thousand years it rested on the head of his successors; in a hard battle with the Church itself, which set up and defended its own law and prerogative against that universal claim of imperial law that it yet itself maintained. In the battle for the world between the two equally universal laws new structures expanded, “States,” which in contrast to the empire did not presume to contend for law of the world, only their own. These States had therefore arisen as rebels against the unity of the law of a world created by the one creative power, which was under the emperor’s guardianship. And at the moment when they might have thought they had found solid ground in Creation, at the moment when the State had settled down into the natural nation, the crown was at last removed from the head of the Roman emperor, and the neo-Frankish national emperor put it on himself. Others followed him as representatives of their nation; but with the name of the emperor the will to be the empire now

**STATE AND  
CHURCH**

seemed to have passed over to the peoples; the peoples themselves now became the bearers of the world-oriented will beyond the national. And if this will to be the empire has been ground down among the peoples reciprocally, then it will assume a new configuration; for in its double anchorage both in the divine Creator of the world, whose power it reflects, as well as in the longing for the Redemption of the world, which it serves, it opens the one necessary way of Christianity into the part of the All that is the world.

The other way leads through the Church. It, too, is after all in the world. So it must come into conflict with the State. It cannot forgo drawing up a legal document for itself. It is simply a visible arrangement, and not one that the State could allow, perhaps because it is confined only to a certain territory, but an arrangement that wants to be no less universal than the State is. Its law, too, not only the emperor's, at some time or other one day concerns everyone. It fetches man for the work of Redemption and shows a place in the created world for this work; stones from the mountain have to be conveyed and trees in the forest felled so that the house may spring up where man serves God. Because it is in the world, visible and with its own universal law, it is surely as little as is the imperial kingdom the Kingdom of God. In its secular history, its worldly history through the centuries, the Church, it, too, a piece of world and life, grows toward it, which is immortalized only in its inspiration through man's act of love. The history of the Church is as little history of the Kingdom of God as is the history of the empire. For in the strict sense there is no history at all of the Kingdom of God. That which is eternal does not have a history, at most a pre-history. The centuries and the millennia of the history of the Church are only the earthly configuration that changes through time, around which only the ecclesiastical year weaves the halo of eternity.

*THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE SOUL*

*THE SPIRITUAL YEAR*

**I**T is now worth traversing the cycle of the spiritual year once more. In the preceding book we had come to know it as the course of instruction of the mutual silence, from the mutual listening, through the mutual meal, to the mutual worshipping. This procedure will also be the same here. There of course, where a people and its eternity was to be reflected in the yearly cycle, it had been a matter of the mutuality, thus of the listening as of the eating and kneeling, and so there the instruction of the forms

of mutual life in general had to lay a foundation for the performance of the liturgy. Here on the contrary it is a matter of a mutual way and of its eternity, therefore not of a mutual configuration, a mutual event, a mutual existence, but of a mutual walking, mutual doing, mutual becoming. If those stations of the mutual silence are therefore to re-appear here, then here it would have to take place in the preparation of the individual soul for the matters of mutuality. Each of these matters of mutuality of course requires a definite direction of the soul; without such a direction the soul will not set out on the way. Eternal life is an overlapping in which the individual lives his life as he is born into it. To take part in the eternal way, he must himself as individual come to a decision and make ready.

Where might such a making ready of the lonely soul for the mutuality take place? Where would the soul's formation take place altogether that would unconsciously itself lend to it, in the silent little room of its loneliness, the form in which it would harmonize with others, yes really: where would the individual soul be tuned to the tone that would let it harmonize with others in harmonious tuning? Such a tuning, unconscious and yet guiding the soul on the path of the highest consciousness, of the silent agreement with others, comes to the soul from a unique power: from art. And not from the art which, such as it would like best to seclude itself along with its creator and its enjoyer, from all the world into a furthestmost apartness, but only from an art that has found, really found the road back into life from out of that kingdom apart, which that art in its kingdom apart had already of its own accord sought everywhere as its Redemption. Only the arts that are called applied arts, a name intended as a condescending devaluation but which truly ennobles them, only they, without even losing one spark of their splendor, lead man completely back into life, from which he had departed as long as he indulged in "pure" artistic treats. Of course, it is they alone that may be able to cure him of that sickness of estrangement from the world that lulled the art lover into the deceptive illusion of the best of health just when he was succumbing to the illness with no resistance. Art therefore decontaminates itself; it purifies itself and man by its own purity, it turns from a haughty mistress into an attentive wife who, through the thousand little everyday services and the taking care of the household, gives him strength for the marketplace and the great hours of public life, and moreover

herself blossoms only now into the full ripeness of her beauty in her rank as lady of the house.

**SOCIOLOGY  
OF THE  
PLASTIC ARTS:  
CHURCH  
ARCHITECTURE**

Among the arts it was the plastic arts as arts of space that have almost imitated the Creation. But their works are shut up in galleries, museums, collections, in artificial frames, on their own pedestals, in portfolios, each separate from the others yet not quite so separate that each work does not disturb the other—burial chambers of art. Then architecture comes and frees the prisoners and leads them in solemn procession into the ceremonial space of the church. Now the painter embellishes ceilings and walls and the rich shrine of the altar, the sculptor columns and pediments, pillars and cornices, the etcher the Holy Book. But it is not merely embellishment; the arts have not become maids, subservient to a design of foreign rule, but only here do they awaken from the apparent death of those burial chambers to their true life. For although they were arts of space and each work created its own space, it was therefore only its own space, which means: an “ideal” space that thus got bruised banging into real space so that it longed for those just mentioned artificial dividing walls like frames, pedestals, portfolios, precisely as barriers against contact with the real space. So the work of art seemed condemned to solitude even over against its like; for the “ideality” of its space consisted in the fact that it was this work of art’s own space, as all “idealism” is with its pretended benefit for reality truly mostly only a flight before the all-too-mutual reality into the dreamland of egoism; and so even the ideal spaces of the majority of works of art do not meet of their own accord.

Only when the works are taken from the magic charm of their ideal space into a real space do they first become fully real themselves and cease to be merely art. But there is only one sort of fully real space in the world; for the space in which the world itself lives is—surely not of aesthetic but of “transcendental” “ideality”: its reality is real only in its relationship to its being-thought, but not to the—being-created. Only the world is created, and the space, like everything logical, only as its part; the space in which the world would be, thus the space of mathematicians, is not created. Hence it happens that when one regards the world, as do mathematics and physics, in the forms of space, one necessarily removes its simple factuality that is raised above all possibilities, which it possesses as Creation, and makes it relative to the plaything of possibilities. Fully real is only the space

that architecture creates based on spatial directions and spatial relationships revealed between heaven and earth, Zion and the rest of the world, Bethlehem-Euphrates and a Judas by the thousands: only from it, from the points that the master builder fixes on the earth's surface, from the proportions and directions that he fixes within the building, a firm, immovable space, a created space where small and great, middle and ends, high and low, east and west have a value, shines even outside in the world that is by then spacious to be sure, but is itself created non-spatially, and fills it with space.

And on the other hand there is among buildings only the one kind that is simply space, that is to say not split up into spaces that serve diverse purposes, like all residential, business, government buildings, but even houses of reunion, the theatre and inns. For man stops everywhere for some special purpose which is therefore for each person his own special purpose, and thus asks for the splitting up of space into spaces; even assembly hall buildings are of one room at most by accident; in itself there is no argument against several reunion or concert halls being "accommodated" in one building, and most of the time this is the case; since men always only have to meet there for a specific purpose, there is no reason at all why other groups of men should not gather at the same time under the same roof for a different purpose. Nowhere does man linger in order simply to linger mutually with others in one room. Such space is for him quite simply only in the house of God, the only one of all with the same firm orientation everywhere and necessarily with one room. For here obviously it would be a shocking, an unimaginable thought that there would be together under the one roof several spatially separated churches of the same mutual participation. Where that does happen—and it happens precisely with us—the architecture does not have to seek anything, such as generally in *ecclesia pressa*;<sup>4</sup> it needs freedom, spaciousness, into which it can create its space. It is a sign for that necessary one room that the Church is the only building whose ground-plan is immediately and at every moment recognized and felt by every visitor, not as elsewhere merely as ground-plan of the part of the room in which one just finds oneself, but the ground-plan of the building. Churches are the only structures that really can and in fact, as the highest re-

<sup>4</sup>*Ecclesia pressa*: for a squeezed, densely-packed assembly.

quirement demands, must, in the mind of the master builder, be built from the inside to the outside.

Because architecture thus creates a united space here, a beautifully formed one and yet for a purpose, and a necessary purpose, indeed the most universal one of human life, really strictly speaking therefore applied art, now all works of the “pure” arts also participate in the reality of architectonic space that since then has incorporated all those “ideal” spaces into its great, one spatial reality and brings color with its strong pulse beat to the sickly pallor of those phantom spaces. And everything bodily that stops in it is now drawn into this space and its necessity. Here alone do things as things acquire necessity. At least the necessity which also otherwise encircles things has its source mostly here. Only objects used in worship, once formed, resist any modification of their form; they are simply no longer things like other things; they have become, as daring as the term may sound, “living things.” The Torah and the Scroll of Esther are the only ancient books preserved up till now exactly in their ancient form, but through this strictly preserved form, a Torah scroll is now also no longer an ordinary thing; more personal feelings or at least those like living ones, one might say, are associated with such a parchment scroll just as with what is written on it. So there is no garment that has been as strictly preserved as the one for worship. Here again the preservation of the ancient garb in Jewish divine service might be remembered. It is the similar for the priestly garments of the Roman and Eastern Churches. In fact clothing altogether must have its origin here. The breastplate is removed when it is no longer needed, and therefore every piece of the garb is first of all likewise only an object of use and thus not what the dress is today. For today the clothes really make people; the clothes belong to the man, he is not complete if he has not dressed appropriately for the occasion. The clothes rank him in the human community. This inspiration of the dress, however, this its becoming-necessary, takes place above all, and again under the constraint as regards the house of God to create space and to incorporate everything into the space, for the priest. The priestly activity is the first one that man can perform only with specific clothing. So in a real space the waves of effectiveness surge through everything that enters it. All that is bodily comes alive; its form acquires permanence and capacity to propagate over time; and

man gives up the freedom of appearing by chance, and accommodates himself to the place. His body relinquishes the presentation of his personality and dresses according to the law of the room that unites him with others. The bodiliness of man learns to be silent about its individuality—only a first beginning for what is still to come.

For the purpose of the one room, that which through the architecture turns into the applied art, is quite simply this: to produce the feeling of union in every individual even before this very union has been established. For it is established only in the hearing of the mutual word. In it, the union is already there. A crowd could be together in one room without the feeling of belonging together. But the mutual space yet awakens in every individual at least the wish, or better: the presentiment of the mutuality. It forces the soul of every individual onto the way that leads into the mutual silence of the hearers of the word. It tunes the soul. No further does the Muse escort man, not even here where she is not the aimless Muse of “pure” art, but the Muse of applied art who has entered into the sphere of duties of life. A different power must here, too, assume the lead: precisely the word.

The word meant in Jewish divine service more the mutual banner than the power that first founds mutual participation. The conspicuous inattentiveness of those not immediately participating, which for the most part goes along with the reading aloud of the Scripture just as much as the repulsion of the sermon from centuries show that the mutual participation is not first produced in the hearing, but that the reading aloud, whose position in the divine service yet remains central throughout, is more only symbol of the already established mutual participation, of the already planted “eternal life.” In Christianity it is otherwise. Here the word really takes the individual by the hand and guides him on the way that leads to the mutual participation. The preparation that the ecclesiastical construction began is brought to conclusion by the word. It was with good reason that Augustine gave it the meaning of a foundation of the sacraments and more recently Luther’s Church the rank of the most important sacrament that first makes the others into sacraments. For the sacraments serve “for the perfecting of the individual in that which belongs to the divine service.” And the word is the preparation

**THE SACRAMENT OF THE WORD**

for this preparation of the individual. It is with good reason on the other hand that the Roman Church did not therefore include it in the count of its seven sacraments, precisely because it is only preparation. Even it cannot and does not want to be without it and lets it be effective in all sacraments. The Protestant sermon, however, has developed into the main portion of the service, conforming to that direction of Protestantism that strongly appeals to the individual and which therefore quite naturally had to and has to place the highest value on the means that once altogether first brought the individual in.

**SUNDAY: THE  
HOLIDAY OF  
CREATION**

As holiday of the mutual listening, the weekly holiday of Creation founds the spiritual year. But the Church performed an act of a deeper meaning than it was itself aware of when, in order bluntly to distinguish itself from the synagogue, it transferred the holiday from the seventh to the first day of the week. The key that within the Sabbath most interweaves the prayers up into the close of the Sabbath, the preview of the coming six work-days prevails here entirely. On Sunday the Christian accumulates his treasure of spiritual refreshment that he will use in the course of the week. The Sabbath is the holiday of Redemption; it is even doubly so, in its two foundations both as remembering of the work of the beginning, for it celebrates the divine rest of the seventh day, and as commemoration day of the freedom from the house of slavery in Egypt, for its purpose is that servant and maid rest like their Lord. Creation and Revelation flow in it in the rest of Redemption. Sunday, which has seldom taken very stringently the precept of rest, even in the times that were otherwise legally oriented, has become entirely the holiday of the beginning. Under the allegory of the beginning of the world, it chiefly celebrates the beginning of the week. We saw with which strength the Christian consciousness hurried on from the middle of the way where it stands to the beginning. The Cross is always beginning, always starting-point of the coordinates of the world. As the Christian chronology begins there, so faith, too, always takes a new starting run from there. The Christian is eternal beginner; the completing is not his affair—all is well that begins well. It is the eternal youth of the Christian; every Christian lives his Christianity really still today as if it were the first day.

And therefore Sunday, with its power radiating its blessing over the daily work of the week, is the authentic image of this ever freshly, ever youthfully, ever newly shining power of Christianity

upon the world. And just as it is characteristic of our spiritual year that its beginning immediately links up with the conclusion of the holidays of eternal Redemption, as it were outgrows this conclusion as a new beginning again, nevertheless, since the exact time for this eternity has not yet come, so the ecclesiastical year begins, likewise most characteristically, begins with the first Sunday of Advent as a heralding of the holiday with which the Christian Revelation begins—as if the cycle of Sabbaths began before the holiday of the national liberation. As for us the greatest holiday of the holidays of Redemption, the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, not as a rule falling on a Sabbath, carries an increasingly Sabbath-like character, so for the Christian there is an increasing Sunday-like radiance over the holiday of the beginning Revelation that also and even in striking contrast to its kindred holidays, Easter and Pentecost, is not externally fixed to the Sunday.

For of course here in the Church year, too, a yearly returning celebration of Revelation, just like with us, now rises above the foundation of Creation laid in the Sundays, and likewise in a series of three holiday periods. And among the arts it is the arts of sound that are associated with Revelation. For in Revelation the ray of time refracts through the eye-opening of the moment into the broad basin of created space, and music is the art that weaves a time out of the moment. Every musical composition produces its own time. Opposite the reality of inner life, it is an ideal time; hence for its adorers music becomes the flight from agitations or as the case may be even from the crippling boredom of their real life, quite as the plastic arts open to their friends the way out from the ugliness or as the case may be from the narrowness of their surrounding world. In this way the arts spare man from the hard labor of planting freedom and form into the world, discipline and life into the soul. He finds of course all that he can want in museums and in concert halls. Here he can gratify himself and for as long as he likes delude himself that the reality around him and in him—is therefore entirely different. Of course he is in that condition, and he seeks the cause for this contradiction between ideal and life as lived and on the way home from the concert hall makes the Creator responsible for having created world and soul so misshapen, instead of shifting the responsibility solely onto the one upon whom is imposed the work

**SOCIOLOGY  
OF THE ARTS  
OF SOUND:  
CHURCH  
MUSIC**

of changing things, onto himself, onto man.

Almost more dangerous still than the self-gratification in the plastic arts is that of the “musical” person. For, the lover of the plastic arts eventually forgets only the world in his enjoyment, but the musical person forgets himself in the music. The former operates only outside of the fruitful life and yet in the end can find the way back again; the latter however corrupts his own self, weakens his own soul, and is therefore yet another full step further away than is the former from the possibility of being able to return again to life. The musical person can awaken in himself any feeling he likes and he can—worse still—discharge the feeling that is in him. The musical composition, by producing its own “ideal” time, denies the real time. It lets its listener forget the year in which he lives. It lets him forget his age. It carries him in waking body across to the dreamers of whom it is said that each of them possesses his own world. He may, rudely awakening, cry out “never better dreamed”—at the next opportunity he reaches again for the bottle and gets drunk in his Lethan oblivion of life. So he lives a foreign life, no, not even a foreign one; he lives hundreds of lives, a different one from piece of music to piece of music, and not one is his own. Truly, the dog that is infernally distressed, because his mistress played the piano, lives more authentically, indeed if this is allowed, more “humanly” than the “musical person.”

That which is sacrilegious in music are the ideal times with which it destroys the real time. If music is to be purified of this sacrilege of wanting to be pure, then it would have to let itself be led out of its next-worldliness into this world of time and incorporate its ideal time into the real. That would mean for it however the transition from the concert hall to the church. For the time in which the events of the world unfold is exactly like the space into which the world is created, also merely “ideal,” merely “for cognition,” and therefore without beginning, middle, end; for the mark of the present the standpoint of cognition incessantly shifts. Revelation first solidly fixes its mark in the center of time, and now there is “before” and “after” that does not shift, there is a chronology for all places of the world, independent of the calculator and of the place of the calculating. This real world time that gradually seizes and traverses every happening is now mirrored in the spiritual year with utmost clarity and comprehensible for men with their short lives; and here again

especially in the holidays that as holidays of Revelation, pointing to the Creation of Revelation and pointing forward to the revealed Redemption, take the unbounded eternity of the Day of God into the yearly cycle of the ecclesiastical year. Since music is inserted into these holidays and in general into the ecclesiastical year, the individual composition soars out of the artificial frame of its ideal time and becomes wholly alive, because it is grafted onto the trunk full of the sap of the real time. Whoever joins in singing a hymn, whoever hears a mass, a Christmas Oratorio or Passion, knows exactly in which time he is; he does not forget himself and does not want to forget himself; he does not want to flee from time, but on the contrary: he wants to place his soul with both feet into time, into the most real time, into the one time of the one day of the world of which all individual days of the world are only parts. To that place, music is supposed to conduct him. Again it can of course go only up to the gate. Again the sacrament must relieve it of its office and conduct man to that place where he is supposed to go. But the preparation of this preparation of the individual who has set out for the eternal way was in good hands with music.

For it is music which raises that first intimate connection that is founded in the mutual space and the mutual hearing of the word to the conscious and active intimate connection of all who are assembled. The space first created by architecture is now really filled with the sounds of music. The hymn, filling the space, sung mutually by all in mighty unison, is the real foundation of the church application of music; it still lives on in the Bach Passions, and even the Roman Church has cultivated it, even if the musical mass takes away from it. In the hymn, language, which otherwise has to speak its own and particular word from the mouth of each individual, is brought to silence. Not to that silence which simply silently listens to the read out word, but to the silence of his peculiar nature in the unanimity of the choir. So in the mutual meal mutuality of life is attested and intentional; all do the same thing in intentional mutual participation, namely eating, and yet each does it in the fully literal sense "for himself."

To this mutuality of life, as it is realized in the sacrament, the music now first tunes the souls. The souls that, in the entry into the mutual space only for the mutual participation in general, are tuned beforehand to the possibility of mutual participation are

already attuned beforehand to the real mutual participation in the mutual singing of the hymn. Even the musical mass, although only heard together and not sung together, is basically just as much as the hymn an attunement beforehand of all the individuals to the mutual participation; for hearing of music is a completely different hearing from the hearing of a text read aloud or a sermon: it does not found mutual participation, but it awakens those gathered, each for himself, to the same feelings—each for himself, as watching the audience at a concert immediately shows. So the listening to a musical mass in this connection is fully equal to the singing of the hymn. To the individual, after the mutual space has taken him in bodily, is now seized in his soul as speaking individual, and when the speech is kept in hand by rhythm and melody, the peculiar nature of the individual's own word learns the becoming-silent. He speaks, but what he says are not his words, but all the words mutually sung to the music.

The words and feelings, in short, the depth of man thus rises to the state of necessity into which the things entered with their entry into the space of the church. The word that has become the text of the singing ceases to be optional. With the melody of the song the words are preserved. In ancient times, all handing down of words takes place in the constant timbre of the singing, just like even today where the word is still handed down as spoken word. And all handing down of tradition has originally to do with worship. Worship gives necessity even to the merely thought word: reading of the breviary of the Catholic priest, silent prayer in our case, are something entirely different than reading or reflecting otherwise. The thought here has donned a festive garment in which it may move less comfortably and freely than otherwise, but the words that man thinks in this way have a necessity and validity wholly free of purpose, in fact even of thought. And just as clothes first make man valid in society, precisely because they are not “personal” like the naked body but in accordance with some custom, so man, too, is not yet really at home with himself as long as he merely freely thinks and speaks what he wants and supposes, but just when in a carefree moment he hums or whistles a little song to himself or applies an adage to himself. It is in this way, too, with breviary and silent prayer. Man may even seemingly be more intent in free reading and thinking, and yet it is more here; for the words are here raised to a uniform

level of feeling that they never reach on the outside, where they always remain the individual's own words. No longer do the words, like things, need to come alive by entering into the church. They are already living. But their vitality is transitory. When the music takes them in, they become lasting. And when the music is church music, then they enter with it into the yearly cycle and through the incorporation into the eternal day of the Lord become themselves eternal.

What the music prepares, the conducting of the individual soul onto the mutual way, is completed by the sacrament and regarded as the greatest among them is the Holy Communion. Again it is most clearly distinguished as the holiday of the way from the Jewish Seder of the Festival of Liberation, Passover, from which it originated. For there the mutual participation of the meal as real mutual life becomes visible; there on the contrary the community does not sit joined together around the Lord's Table for a meal, but each one walks there one by one, each leaves, and what is mutual is only the mutuality of the chalice, of the sameness of the food, of the word of consecration, of faith. That which in the music could enter only by halves into man's consciousness, the mutuality of the feeling come alive in the silence of his own I, comes to his full consciousness in the enjoyment of the sacrament. So the sacrament of the meal strictly speaking is really sign and bearer of Revelation, and since it becomes the essential part in the mass of all, even of the daily divine worship, it shifts Revelation into the center of divine service altogether. For as the presence of Christ savored and experienced in the sacrament of course for the Christian, as a result of his faith's dependence on middle and beginning of the way, means the same thing as for us the sure trust in the imminent future of the Messiah and his Kingdom despite all delay. Just as our entire divine worship, even where it is consecrated to the remembrance of Creation and Revelation is nevertheless pervaded by the hoping and waiting for Redemption, so the Christian service is pervaded by the thought and present feeling of Revelation.

The three holiday periods into which for the Christian, too, Revelation enters into the ecclesiastical year, begin with Christmastime, which, placed at the beginning of the liturgical year, is, like the Jewish holiday of freedom, a holiday of the beginning. This beginning, this Creation of Revelation, must here

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SACRAMENT  
OF THE MEAL**

**THE  
FESTIVALS OF  
REVELATION:  
CHRISTMAS,  
EASTER,  
PENTECOST**

be the fleshly birth, as in the case of the people it must be the becoming-free. The becoming-free of the “firstborn son of God” to form a people and the becoming-flesh of the “only-begotten one” to become a man correspond exactly as the people and the single person, world and man, can correspond. Both holidays celebrate the beginning of the visible course of Revelation on earth. In none of the Christian holidays does the reading out of Scripture stand so much at the central point of the entire celebration as here in the story of Christmas. It is precisely the *eu-angelion*<sup>5</sup> in the Evangel. Here too the case is exactly the same with our holiday of freedom; nowhere is the underlying story for the holiday treated so widely and so much at the central point of worship as here where that special little book is devoted to it, which we read at the Passover Seder in the home and which we simply call “Story”—“the” Haggada, among all the countless haggadot. With this central place of the story read out in the festival, Christmas, too, turns out to be in the capacity of the recurring holiday of the mutual listening, of the hearing of the joyful tidings, within the holidays of Revelation.

But at the same time the countenance of the holiday also already acquires the pure present traits of Revelation because it becomes the center of a holiday time of many weeks. The time of Advent beforehand renews the memory of the prophecies of the “Old” Covenant and in this way founds its own foundation of Creation for the miracle of Christmas. In the New Year holiday however and in the holiday of the Three Kings, or Epiphany, Redemption, the coming together of faith and life, rings out within the Christmas holiday time: the New Year holiday is the holiday of the Circumcision of the Child, with which, according to Jewish interpretation, the membership to the people, which rests immediately and ultimately on the mystery of the birth, publicly announced in the first observance of a commandment. Appropriately, this holiday leads the course of the ecclesiastical year out of its own loftier beginning into the cycle of the civil year; and the adoration of the Kings of the Orient perform ahead of time the future adoration by the kings and peoples of all lands; the two holidays together therefore perform for the twofold event that took place under Constantine: the placing of Christianity into the State, the conversion of the State to Christianity. And

<sup>5</sup>*Eu-angelion*, Greek for Evangel: “good news.”

therefore between its own foundation on Creation and its own anticipation of Redemption, the miracle of Christmas itself becomes the entire Revelation.

But the actual time of the holiday of Revelation within the three holidays of Revelation are however first of all the Easter holidays. Christianity considers only Golgotha and the empty tomb, and not primarily the stable in Bethlehem, to be the beginning of its way. The Cross, in any case, and nothing beforehand from the "life of Jesus" is that which, from each of the countless central points of its eternal way, visibly remains always equally near. Just as, for us, too, above all the miracle of Sinai, the gift of the Torah, and not even the Exodus from Egypt, signifies the Revelation which accompanies us constantly as present; we must first of all remember the Exodus, and it is to be as embodied as if we ourselves had been there; but we do not need to remember the Torah; it is present. So for the Christian it is not the manger, but the Cross that is always present; he holds the latter and not the former before his eyes; as is said by us of the Torah, so could be said by him of the Cross, it must be "in his heart so that his steps do not slip."

This presence makes the holiday of Easter too into the real holiday of the sacrament. As the Eucharistic meal is instituted in the connection with the events of Easter, so it is chiefly received here, too. And beyond this presence, the Church now seeks here, be it in the musical mass or in the Oratorio of the Passion, to place man immediately under the Cross physically; he must greet the head full of blood and wounds<sup>6</sup> immediately face to face. So this entire holiday time, from the fasting during Lent, through Good Friday and up till the Sunday of the Resurrection, becomes a unique representation of the great central event of Christian life: the long preparation for fasting; the silent Friday which the Roman Church lets subside and which the Protestant Church that has no fasts celebrates all the more deeply, the event itself; finally Easter as the mighty final ringing within this holiday of the Revelation of the day of Redemption.

The Redemption itself is given over to the third of these three holiday times, Pentecost. It can certainly only anticipate Redemption, just because Pentecost remains within Revelation. Pentecost must demonstrate Redemption graphically as a final act of

<sup>6</sup>The opening words of a chorale of the famous Passion.

Christ's walking on earth, just as the Holiday of Booths, Succot, could recall the ultimate rest only in the provisional one during the wandering. So the holiday of Pentecost can recall necessarily only the beginning of Redemption, not its development, let alone its end. Redemption must indicate the point where the way of Christianity turns from the narrow path of the Lord and His disciples into the wide highway of the Church. Because the ultimate Redemption, at least here, is not yet celebrated, but only its preliminary ringing out in Revelation, therefore this holiday can also not itself represent that supreme mutuality of humanity in the silent adoration, but must be satisfied to be invited to it, in an invitation that is of course mutually universal, understandable to all of humanity. Yet this universally-mutual understanding cannot be reached in silence, but still needs the means of speech which first through the miracle of language that even today is still present, leaps over the resistance of the linguistically separated today of that time. It is the first effect of the Spirit, that it translates, that it throws bridges from man to man, from tongue to tongue. The Bible is probably the first book that was translated and then in the translation regarded as equal to the original text. God speaks everywhere with the words of man. And the Spirit is this, the fact that the one who translates, the one who hears and the one who transmits knows that he is the same as the first one who spoke and received the word. The Spirit guides man in this way and gives him the confidence to stand on his own two feet. Exactly as Spirit of transmission and translation it is man's own spirit. This is the story of Pentecost: the Lord leaves his followers, he goes up to heaven, they stay behind on earth. He leaves them, but he leaves them the Spirit. They must now learn to have faith in seeing without him but with their eyes; they must learn to behave as if they had no Lord; but now they can really do it: they have the Spirit. In the miracle of Pentecost, the Church, with its command of all tongues, begins its action in the world; in the symbol of the Trinity, the holiday for which follows Pentecost, it itself raises the banner that holds its long line of emissaries together.

**HOLIDAYS OF  
REDEMPTION**

**B**UT it remains always only a preliminary glance up to Redemption. Redemption itself still with this has no place in the ecclesiastical year. A special, a third kind of holiday would have to be in accordance with Redemption, just as with us, the

Days of Awe complete the Sabbaths and the pilgrimage festivals. Up till then such holidays of the Christian calendar were in accordance with those of the Jewish one. What special kind of holiday would therefore conform to the Days of Awe?

None. The correspondence to these holidays of our calendar is lacking in the Christian year—the year, not the calendar. The only correspondence that could possibly be named would be within the cycle of the three holidays of Revelation. It was in fact striking that Christmas did not conform, as do Easter and Pentecost, to a holiday of the Jewish calendar. And it is known that it is associated with a turning point of the yearly path of the sun; the unconquered Sun God of the cult of Mithras celebrated here his annual rebirth. But it is from this foreign root that the holiday nevertheless developed and precisely among the prominent persons of Christianity and in its earliest centuries, which brought it into a certain proximity to the Jewish holidays of Redemption. Already that opening up of the house for nature's encroachment which, with the snow-covered tree in winter, is given hospitality in the warm room, and the manger in the foreign stable in which the Redeemer comes into the world, have their exact counterpart in the open air to which the roof of the tabernacle, the booth made of leaves, allows a way through, recalling the tent that granted rest to the eternal people during its wandering through the desert.

But in addition a correspondence arose with the actual holiday of Redemption, which was indicated once before. Christmas day stands among Sundays as the Day of Atonement among Sabbaths: not necessarily falling on a Sunday, it is very simply the Sunday, namely as birthday of the ecclesiastical year, what Sunday is to the week: a new beginning; exactly like the Day of Atonement, as day of entry into eternity, is that which in our year the Sabbath is for the week: completion. And so also on both days, the miraculous is completed, such that the eve grew along with the day itself of the holiday into the same meaning: the eve of the holiday of Atonement is the only one that shows the community in the holiday garment worn otherwise solely at the main morning services; just as through it the Day of Atonement becomes the "long day," so through the Holy Night and its "long night" become the Christian holiday. Only one day of night and day until complete nightfall again—that is a full day. For the day lies between two midnights; only the first of them is truly night,

the other is light. And so it means, to live such a long day with God: is to live entirely with God—it means the nothing that is placed before life, and life itself, and the star that rises beyond life, above the blackness of the night. The Christian lives such a whole long day on the day of the beginning we, on the day of the end. Both holidays have thus outgrown the meaning that they originally had. The Day of Atonement became, hardly foreshadowed by its establishment, the highest holiday on which already in the times of Philo of Alexandria, just like today, even the otherwise half-hearted ones who were rarely seen there, streamed into the house of God in crowds and found their way back again to him in prayer and fasting. And therefore Christmas has turned from a Church holiday into a popular holiday that brings even the de-Christianized, indeed the non-Christian members of the people under its spell. That day that anticipates the end has thus become a sign for our people's inner strength for self-preservation in faith; this day that renews the beginning has become a sign for Christianity's outer capacity for spreading over life.

The holiday of the beginning of Revelation is therefore the only one that in certain respects is a match in Christianity for our holiday of Redemption. A special holiday of Redemption is missing. In the Christian consciousness where everything is concentrated on the beginning and on beginning, the clear difference is blurred that for us exists between Revelation and Redemption. In Christ's earthly wandering, at least in his death on the Cross and really even in his birth, Redemption has already happened. Christ, surely not only as the one to return, no, already he who was born of the Virgin, is called Savior and Redeemer. As with us in the idea of Creation and Revelation there is an impulse to be consumed in the ideas of Redemption, for the sake of which alone, after all, everything that preceded it took place, so in Christianity the idea of Redemption is engulfed back into Creation, into Revelation. It always breaks through again as something autonomous, but it also always loses the autonomy again. The backward glance to manger and Cross, the happening of the happenings of Bethlehem and of Golgotha in his own heart become more important than the glance forward to the future of the Lord. The coming of the Kingdom becomes a concern of world and church history. But in the heart of Christianity, which propels the river of life through the orbit of the ecclesiastical year, there is no room for it.

Not in the eternally returning cycle of the ecclesiastical year, but certainly in the calendar of the world with its commemorative days changing from century to century, with which of course that cycle joins in the New Year holiday. Here there is room for all those historical commemorations in which humanity becomes conscious of its progress through time. Such anniversaries change with the changing times, and are different from place to place and from government to government; but as long as one of these days is celebrated at any given time, just so long there fills up in it man's joy in the living worldly presence and the hope for a still better, still richer—in short, a thriving life in the future. With us, the few memorial days of our people's history, because it is past, have been fixed into lasting ones; extraneous to the Torah, the day of mourning for the destruction of Jerusalem, the holiday for the commemoration of the rescue narrated in the Book of Esther, that are for the re-dedication of the violated sanctuary after the victory of the Maccabees, all three distinctly commemorative holidays with an accordingly accidental, only historically contingent "date"; and in rank—even the day of mourning for Jerusalem—not comparable to the other holidays, now return every year; although historical holidays, they have become fixed—like the history of the people. Not so the historical memorial days of the peoples. The ceremonies of their wars and victories hardly last more than half a century when they are already displaced by others; the birthdays of princes change with these too; holidays for a constitution and a liberation last as long as the form of State lasts or perhaps the State. And nevertheless they satisfy the people as sign of its permanence through the times precisely in their alteration and their temporality.

The Church also lends a hand here and joins in observing the holiday. It grows into the people and its history by going along with its memorial days with its blessing. It is a part of the mission to the pagans which it presses forward here; by casting its transfiguring light upon the branches of national life, it accomplishes a piece of the work on the road of Redemption, which of course is again and again nothing other than the sowing of eternity into the living. Where it is drawn up according to the national frontiers, it arranges, annually or for the great events of the life of the people, days of penitence and prayer. Holidays of thanksgiving for the harvest, commemorations for going to war and for victory—everywhere it must add its word. But it also has

**WORLDLY  
HOLIDAYS**

**THE CHURCH  
AND THE  
CALENDAR OF  
THE WORLD**

its own history. That too wants to be celebrated; hence the Lutheran Church celebrates its holiday of the Reformation, the Roman Church every year proclaims its unshaken opposition of the heretics in its Corpus Christi processions. And the Roman Church above all has not refused to weave its own life directly into the ecclesiastical year in a series of holidays. It does this generally in the holidays that in the course of the life of Mary mirror the existence of the Church itself. And it does this more particularly in the holidays of the saints, which, in their unlimited capacity for transformation, adaptation and growth, make possible a very intimate alliance between it and the local, collective, even personal interests of the world, and thus again and again inserts this temporal and worldly into the eternal circle that yet already for a long time no longer remains a circle through place and time in these festivals of the eternal path of Redemption that vary with time and place, but opens into a spiral.

But how are these ecclesiastic and intra-ecclesiastic, or even the worldly or supra-worldly festivals of Redemption celebrated? We have already encountered the festivals of the mutual listening and the mutual meal. These festivals of Redemption, however, cannot be festivals of mutual kneeling. Mutual kneeling had already previously found its place in Christianity. With Mary and Joseph, with the shepherds by night and the Kings of the Orient, Christianity had knelt before the manger; in the breathless silence before the transubstantiation to which only the bell softly rings, it kneels before the victim of the Cross represented anew in the offering of the Mass. Therefore it again took the ultimate silence of the redeemed ones into the celebration of the first origin and of the always renewed presence of the Lord. It forgets again the eternally coming Redemption beyond Creation and Revelation. And the holidays with which it draws Redemption itself into the ecclesiastical year, leave no room for this ultimate adoration.

But how might these festivals to be celebrated? That every knee would bend before God remains the true form in which Redemption is celebrated; but only with us is it celebrated in this true form in special holidays, because only with us can the spiritual year be closed into the complete ring in the special holidays of Redemption, for only we live a life in the eternity of Redemption and hence can celebrate it; Christianity is only on the way and celebrates the eternal Redemption only

in holidays of time and therefore not in its own form of the mutual kneeling. But what might correspond as temporal form there to this eternal form of the celebration of Redemption? How then does art prepare man for the celebration of those festivals?

The art that brought its sphere beyond the pure space and the pure time had been poetry. Man is of course more than the spatiality of the body, more too than the temporality of the soul; he is whole man. And so beyond plastic and musical arts, the poetic arts still had to behave as the arts of the whole man. The thought which, of course as representation, unites in itself the spatiality of the graphic and the temporality of feeling and makes them into one whole is the element in which poetry moves about. The world as totality and its little god, the microcosm man, is its content. And hence it is from poetry that man would have to receive the frame of mind in which he would find the road to the ultimate redeeming silence that would have to be shown to him in the worldly holidays of Redemption at least as perspective and promise.

But this road to the life of the mutual participation seems wider coming from the poetical work than it was coming from the plastic arts and from music. These latter were at least preserved and presented in public halls, in their own houses. Poetry's home, however, in which it sits out its captivity is the bookcase. The space between the two covers of a book—this is the only place where poetry is truly "pure" art; there it is in its pure world of ideas, each work in its own. As the picture in its frame creates its "pure" space for itself, as the musical composition creates its pure time, so every poetical work creates its own "ideal" world. Already when it is read aloud, it leaves this pure world of its representation and makes itself somehow in common. Even if it comes by chance to the theatre as dramatic poetical work its aesthetic "ideality" is done for; the true drama is the drama of the book; that it might be theatrical, is regarded in the mouth of the aesthete as a crime for which, with logical consistency, Shakespeare is pardoned, but with which Schiller and Wagner are seriously charged, although surely one day a time will come, as it has already come for Schiller, where one will stop upbraiding Wagner for having written theatrically for the theatre. Yet the theatre also, even the theatrical one, still remains pure art, although it cannot entirely escape the influence of the assembled crowd; and the

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hybrid effect of the theatre comes precisely from the conflict into which the ideal world of the work must necessarily enter with the real world of an assembled audience. Obviously, the poetical work would also have to be freed from the book covers of its ideal world and introduced into the real one, before it could become the leader of a crowd of men into the land of mutual reciprocal silence. Here the bodies would no longer merely be together in the same space like under the spell of the architecture that unites bodies, nor merely like under the magic baton of the conductor of souls, music, the languages made one with the choir's same word and same rhythm, but all men would be near and one in action and speech and beyond action and speech.

But for such an application, the art of poetry itself would first of all have to learn how to grow silent; for in the word it is still bound to the soul; it would have to learn how to become free of the representation of the configuration already existing in the world, and itself represent a configuration: it would have to become gesture. For the gesture alone is beyond action and speech; certainly not the gesture that wants to say something; this would be only a meager substitute for discourse, a mere stammering; and also not the gesture that wants to entice an action out of the other; this would be only a meager substitute for the particular act; but the gesture that has become entirely free, entirely creative and no longer goes out to this or that thing, to this or that person; the gesture that completes the human fully to being, to his human-ity and hence to humanity. For where a man expresses himself entirely in his gesture, there, the space that separates man from man sinks away in a "wondrously quiet" emotion; there the word evaporates that had thrown itself headfirst into the dividing space in between in order to fill it in with its own body and thus become through this heroic self-sacrifice a bridge between man and man. So the gesture that thus completes man to his full humanity must burst open the space into which the architecture had placed his body with many others, and whose spaces in between the music had filled in and bridged over. That ultimate gesture genuflection by absolutely all humanity does this in our holidays of Redemption, it bursts open every space and in this way it annuls all time. In the Talmud, among the miracles of the sanctuary in Jerusalem, this is also mentioned, that the crowd assembled in the closed forecourt pressed so near that there was not even the smallest space free; but at the moment when those

who were standing fell face down, there was still and endlessly great deal of space.

The art form in which the poetic work thus climbs out from its book covers and places itself out of the ideal world of representation into the real world of presentation is the dance and all that evolves from it, all those self-presentations in which there are no spectators or there might be permission given by rights, but only participants who might at most at some time rest and replace each other. In processions and parades, in indoor games and performances, a people gets to know itself. Also the art where it goes outdoors in monuments or accompanies the itinerant spectator to Mount Calvary, where it as speech greets a gathering, as table or hiking song brings people together, belongs here. Cologne on the Monday before Lent and the Field of Tempelhof, Olympia and Oberammergau are such places of the round dance of very many dancers. The dance of the individual remains however the first gesture and even in the dance itself the simplest one, the glance. For already in it there lies the power, which remained inaccessible to the action that loosens all rigidity, and for which the word sacrificed itself in order however to conquer it, even at this price, at most for the short span of time that elapsed until the answer. The power of the glance however does not fade away with the moment. A word is forgotten and should be forgotten, it wants to fade away in the answer. But a glance does not cease to exist. An eye that has glanced at us once beholds us as long as we live. When Aphrodite danced before the blissful gods at Amor's and Psyche's wedding, finally she was dancing only still with her eyes.

But the dance does not appear in the Church. At all events not in its simplest configurations that seizes the individual immediately and attunes him to the mutual participation. It is again such that the idea of Redemption finds in the closed space of the church as little room as in the closed circle of the ecclesiastical year: it opens the circle into a spiral, it bursts open the locked gate, and the procession goes out into the city. It is indeed proven that the Corpus Christi holiday is simply the processional holiday. With us, the gates of the house of God may remain closed; for when Israel kneels, in the previously small space, there is suddenly room for all of humanity. Only inside the house of God do the processions of the Torah

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take place, especially that great procession one during the conclusion of the holidays of Redemption on the day of the rejoicing of the Law, Simchat Torah. But here, where Redemption is celebrated directly in the closed circle of the community and of the year, the dance could be cultivated as an act of the divine service: in the dance of the Chasid<sup>7</sup> who “praises God with all his bones.”

In the divine service itself it is therefore only with us is that there is the dance in whose gesture of bursting open space, however, architecture’s power of creating space and music’s power of filling space are first achieved. The Church, which here for the sake of Redemption must carry its worship out into the world and replenish it in worldly holidays, is here in clearest fashion only just on the way. The space of the church radiates outward into the outside that it besieges; its times form the river of time that flows past it, but it must first win its world in the world outside; it does not simply put its world outside in the way that it puts the laws of its space and of its time outside, but by going out to all peoples, it only receives its own law outside, only from the work under the law of the world. It does not possess the end within its walls, it stands always only at the beginning, it sets out on the way.

For that reason even the sacramental form with which it replenishes the preparation that the descendents of the dance, all those self-presentations of the peoples, accomplish for it, can be only a consecration of the beginning. The genuflection that means and is the final Redemption remains foreign to it. But it may bless the individual to enter into the world in the capacity of entering the way of Redemption. This is the wonderful twofold meaning of baptism: it is carried out on the individual, on the newborn, at the beginning of life, and it guarantees for him, the minor of life, the fulfillment of life, Redemption. What sends Christianity out on its way is the fact that it carries out Redemption in baptism, that it lets the lack of resistance of the minor child, unconscious of itself, stand for the lack of resistance to the highest consciousness of the silent prayer. But that also makes it into master over the way. Here no one get the better of it. For this assurance of the ultimate victory, which allows the first always again single step to be regarded already each time as fully

<sup>7</sup>Chasid: Hebrew: just and pious man.

the last one, cannot be removed from his mind. Among the sacraments, all seven of which of course, except for the Eucharist, in its role of the sacrament of Revelation, seek out man in decisive hours and relationships of his natural, moral, social path through life, baptism can therefore really take the place of these five other sacraments of the way of Redemption. And in this sense when it was needed Protestantism dealt with the simplification in the right place. For since the beginning of the way is consecrated beforehand with the consecration of Redemption, all subsequent life is placed under it, and each hour that the Christian is henceforth in life still Christian only means a renewal of his baptismal covenant which received him with his first entry into the world among the ultimately redeemed ones. Baptism lets us fully recognize what we first recognized in the Christmas holiday: that for Christianity the beginning takes the place of Redemption, of the completed life of the trodden way. In every baptism, the adoration of the divine child is renewed. Christianity is entirely young. For in each individual, in each soul, it begins again from the beginning.

**C**HRISTIANITY is young—not so the Christian world. Baptism consecrated the individual for the Christian world. But this world itself is not consecrated. The circle of life, which for us rounds itself off in the people, for the Christian rounds itself off only in the particular soul. Only in baptism is it guaranteed eternal life; only in it do preservation and renewal thus eternally alternate. Eternal life is not bestowed upon the world; for it the circle of individual life breaks apart and flows into the spiral of a history in which the secular progress of the world continuously is victorious over the eternal preservation and renewal of the soul. The ecclesiastical year rounds itself off only for the individual; for him it is a home. But for the world and its years and anniversaries, the ecclesiastical year is only an inn that certainly is open for all these guests, but which each guest still leaves behind again. The eternal people already rests in the house of life; the peoples of the world remain on the way. Only the soul has already found its way home. It knows that its Redeemer lives, no less certainly than as it knows it in the eternal people. For it the circle of the year is closed.

The year is closed for it in the alternation of preservation and renewal. The Christian world and even the Christian people live

*HEAVEN IN  
THE FEEL-  
ING:  
CHRISTIAN  
AESTHETICS*

**WORLD AND  
SOUL**

**THE WORLD'S  
CHILD AND  
GOD'S CHILD**

in the spiral of world history. They know that their memorial days are the milestones of their way and change with the centuries. But the individual does not look so far away. He is satisfied if his own name's day returns every year in the calendar. For him the crossing of the two directions, the divine and worldly, in the one ecclesiastical year, that crossing, whose universal point of intersection is the New Year's Day and on whose personal point of intersection he himself stands, he himself to whom it is said all is his, but he is Christ's—to him it means precisely the rounding off of his life. He knows himself to be a whole man only in this oneness-of-two of his essence. And the guarantee of this oneness, the bond that twines round both in him, the world's child and God's child, is the ring of the year in which alone he experiences the two Kingdoms, the Kingdom of the Church and the Kingdom of the world in an ever returning oneness.

**STAGES OF  
LIFE**

His life itself becomes one life only in this. It is certainly not at all originally that. It goes through changing stages from decade to decade. Before God all stages are the same. For him man is always child. But the world makes distinctions. For it the stages of life are not all the same. Child, youth, man and old man—to each it allots different tasks, to each even it itself shows differently. For God there are no minors, but among the people certainly. For God there are no old people, but among the people certainly. If man lived only among the people, then he would have to always appear different to himself. When he is with God, he certainly knows that he remains always the same. But this unity of his life, the fact that he always stays the same because he becomes always different, this unity in him of preservation and renewal, this unity of his life in the changing of time ensures for him the year which always returns even in this changing, which winds both, the preservation and the renewal, the holidays of eternity and the holidays of time, into its round dance. Precisely because it neither veils nor has by any chance overcome the contradiction between the two, eternity and time, Church and the world, but simply presents it as it is, precisely by this means it lets man experience his own unity. In the ever-returning circle of the year, for him his never-aging relationship of a child to God again and again flows into the relationships of a child to the world as he grows from youth to old age, and back again; each preserves and renews itself in the other.

In the Christian the powers cross that seem otherwise reciprocally to cancel each other. Christianity does not grant them any shelter beyond these contradictions. It receives them all into itself and places the Christian right in the center that at the same time—for the one who is standing there—is a beginning. The Cross does not deny nor does it annul the opposition, but it takes it into the configuration. Configuration does not arise through decree, configuration is not violence, configuration wants to be formed, placed, configured. The way of the Christian is in every moment Way of the Cross. With Jewish life, which in every moment was at the goal, the State competes with its incessant settings of goals, with its war-cry cried again and again into space and time: up to here and no further; the times of the people in the world that beat time with their swords drown out in noise the eternity of the eternal people. With the Christian's Way of the Cross, there competes in the soul a different power, the only one that likewise overcomes the opposition not by denying, but by configuring: through art. It was already effective as that which prepares the soul for taking the way. It could carry out this office because even in its kingdom it knew the soul's Way of the Cross. For Prometheus was hanging on the rock for five hundred years before the Cross was raised at Golgotha.

**THE CON-  
FIGURING OF  
SUFFERING**

Art, too, overcomes suffering only by giving it figurative shape and not by denying it. The artist knows himself as the one to whom it is given to say what he is suffering. The muteness of the first man is also in him. He seeks neither to "hide it" nor to "cry it out"; he represents it. In the representation, he reconciles the contradiction that he himself is there and that yet suffering, too, is there; and he resolves the contradiction without in the least removing it. In its content, all art is "tragic," a representation of suffering; even comedy lives from this sympathy for the ever-present poverty and defectiveness of existence. In its content, art is tragic, as in its form all art is comic, and even the most horrible—it represents with a certain romantic-ironic ease. Art as representation is that which is tragic and comic in one. And the great actor is truly comedian and tragedian at the same time, as it was handled by Agathon's banquet at daybreak.<sup>8</sup> This face of Janus of art, that it at the same time heightens the suffering of life and helps man to bear it, lets it become his companion

<sup>8</sup>Agathon: Athenian poet, died 401 BCE; character in Plato's *Banquet*.

through life. It teaches him to overcome without forgetting. For man is not supposed to forget, he is to remember everything within his heart. He is to bear suffering and is supposed to be consoled. God comforts him along with all who are in need of comfort. The tears of the grieving one are wiped away from his face as they are from every face. They glisten in his eyes until the great renewal of all things. Until then, to be without comfort is comfort for him. Until then, the soul is refreshed in the enduring of the suffering. Until then the renewal happens to it in the preservation of the suffering. Until then, it gathers new strength from the remembering of its old days. Not past happiness, only past sorrows are the bliss of the soul in each present. It renews itself in itself. And art forges for it this ring of life.

**ART AND  
CROSS**

It seems really to substitute most perfectly for the Cross. Why should the soul still need it if it finds preservation and renewal in itself? Of course, it wears in itself the cirlet of life that art rounded off for it, but it wears it as a hard metal band around its heart. The band must burst so that the tender heart might now learn again to beat in the same rhythm of all hearts. The Cross, which art taught men to wear, was only for each his own cross. Even he who has not drunk misanthropy from the fullness of love,<sup>9</sup> even him art taught to see however only with amazement the thousand sources beside the thirsty one in the desert. It did not let him behold the thousand thirsty ones with him in the same desert. It did not teach him the unity of the whole Cross. The lonely soul of pagan stock, for which the ultimate unity of the We does not circulate in the blood, only discovers this unity facing the Cross of Golgotha. Only under this Cross does the soul know itself to be one with all souls. Here the artificial cirlet around its heart, which lay always in great suffering, breaks; for something of love always sat for him enchanted in the well. And when therefore in the place of one's own suffering and each person's own suffering, there appears the one suffering without compare, the band now winds from soul to soul. The soul that stood under the Cross and got its eternal refreshment in the eternal suffering forgot that it has learned to seek the cycle of preservation and renewal only in its own breast where art makes its pulse beat. In its own heart, it now suffers along with the

<sup>9</sup>From a line in Goethe's poem, "Harzreise im Winter," a portion of which Brahms set to music for his "Alto Rhapsody."

cycle of eternal suffering and eternal joy, which the heart that suffered for many and for it, too, on the Cross, drives on.

Hence the soul on the way experiences its eternity, unconcerned that the world is not yet at the goal. If the spiral of the world may always open the circle again and again and drive on further, the circle of eternity has already closed for the soul. Eternity is promised also to the peoples of the world. But a bigger circle twines round them. Since they are always again brought forth out of souls, the peoples can feel the refreshment of the circulation of the blood that runs from the Cross into their veins, but the blood does not circulate in the veins themselves, rather it flows downwards in a non-retrogradable slope through the landscape of time into the ocean of history. Redemption again and again bursts open the ring of the ecclesiastical year. There must be a circle on which the peoples as a whole again recognize their own will for their own preservation and renewal as an eternal destiny; otherwise they might not learn that an eternal will is active in their own destiny. This great circle of Redemption closes in the year of the eternal people. On it, that always unknown bearer of that prophecy to the peoples which they had to believe was already fulfilled in the vicarious suffering of the individual for individuals, they live to see the enclosed eternity toward which they themselves helplessly extend. For their streams all run into the sea, and the eternal circle of the waters beneath heaven is not completed in the riverbed alone. Only one single water on earth stays eternally circling within itself, is to say with no earthly inflow or outflow—a miracle and an impropriety for all those who see it; for it escapes the duty of all waters to run into the sea. The brooks do not suspect that there is set for them in its eternal circling an image of their universal future. But they hurry all the more swiftly on their own way that advances them toward this future. For that which pushes them forward on this their eternal way, what else is it but the longing for eternal life? Does the tree know that it wants nothing but to bring forth fruit that conceals the likeness of its seed long past?

**SOUL AND  
WORLD**

**T**H**ERE** is a parable used by the great singer of our exile, to which we have already alluded at the conclusion of the previous book. Here let it be written in Yehuda Halevi's own words: God has his secret plan for us, a plan that is like his plan

**THE REALIZA-  
TION OF  
ETERNITY**

for a seed-kernel that falls into the earth and seemingly changes into earth, water and manure, and nothing remains of it by which an eye might recognize it; and it is yet, on the contrary, precisely it that changes earth and water into its own essence and gradually decomposes their elements and transforms and assimilates them to its own matter, and so it forces forth bark and leaves; and when its inner core is made ready, so that the developing likeness of its former seed may enter into a new corporeality, then the tree brings forth the fruit like the one out of which its seed once came: in this way the instruction of Moses attracts each who comes later, truly transforming him in accordance with himself, although seemingly each rejects it. And those peoples are preparation and being made ready for the Messiah, for whom we are waiting, who will then be the fruit, and all will become his fruit and confess him, and the tree will be one. Then they praise and they venerate the root that they once despised, of which Isaiah speaks.

The parable from the *Book of the Kuzari*<sup>10</sup> goes as far as this. It describes, connected with the chapter of Isaiah about the vicarious suffering of the unknown servant of God for the peoples of the world walking in the bright light of history, the greatest return, the recognition of the seed in the fruit. This is the homecoming of ex-perience, the establishing of the truth as true. The truth lies behind the way. The way is at the end where the homeland is reached. For the way is indeed eternal, since its end is in eternity, but yet finite, for eternity is its end. Where everything is aflame, there are no longer any rays. There everything is one light. There the earth will be full of knowledge of the Eternal One, as waters cover the sea. In this sea of light, every way sinks like an illusion. But you, God, are Truth.

<sup>10</sup>Philosophical work by the medieval poet, Yehuda Halevi.

## BOOK THREE

# THE STAR OR ETERNAL TRUTH

**G**OD is truth. Truth is his seal by which he is known, even if one day everything by which he made known his eternity in time, all eternal life, all eternal way, found its end where the eternal also finds its end: in eternity. For not only does the way end here, life does, too. Eternal life only lasts as long as life altogether lasts. Only in contrast to the always temporary life of the pavers of the eternal way is there eternal life. The desire for eternity, as it groans out of the tree trunks of this temporality, certainly assumes the configuration of a longing for eternal life, but only because it is itself temporal life. Truly, in the truth, even life disappears. It does not turn into an illusion like the way turned into the illusion that the sea of light engulfed in its waves, but it opens on to light. It is transformed: if it has transformed, however, then that which was transformed no longer exists. Life has risen into the light. The mute darkness of the primordial world has acquired language in death. Death was seized with a stronger power, with love. Love had decided on life. And just as the primordial world had found its word in death, so life now is concentrated in the silence of the supra-world and is changed into light. God is not life, God is light. He is the Lord of life, but he is as little alive as he is dead; and to state one or the other about him, as the ancient man states, that “he lives,” and as the modern man states, that he “is dead,” betrays equal pagan partiality. Only that neither-nor of dead and alive, only that fine point where life and death touch and melt into one does not forbid the typical terminology. God neither lives nor is dead, but he gives life to what is dead, he—loves. He is the God of the living as of the dead, just because he himself is neither living nor dead; we experience his existence immediately only in the fact that he loves us, and awakens our dead Self into the beloved soul that loves in return. The Revelation of the divine love is the heart of the All.

*THE  
ETERNITY  
OF TRUTH*

**W**HAT we experience is that God loves, not that God is love. In the love, he draws too near to us for us still to say: he is this or that. In his love, we experience only that he is God,

*GOD  
(THEOLOGIC)  
THE REVEALED  
ONE*

but not what he is. The what, the essence, remains hidden. It hides precisely by revealing itself. The essence of a God who does not reveal himself could not in the long run shut himself off from us; for what is hidden from the surrounding experience, from the grasping conception, from the perceiving reason of man? But just because he pours forth upon us in Revelation, and turns from that which is stagnant in us into something active, he puts our free reason, irresistible to all that is stagnant, into the chains of love, and, bound by such a bond, summoned by such a calling by name, we move in the circle in which we found ourselves, and on the path upon which we are placed, and grasp beyond only still with the feeble grasps of empty notions.

**THE HIDDEN  
ONE**

When, therefore, the revealed aspect of God dawns in us, his hidden aspect remains all the more hidden with him. Certainly, we know him even by that which is dead and by that which is alive in him as the perpetrator who creates and recreates that which is dead until he finds the time to let it be given life, and as him who again severs from himself and redeems that which is alive that has heard from him the call of life. But we know Creator and Redeemer therefore only according to their connection in Revelation. Only from the God of love do we behold the Creator and Redeemer. Only as far as the shimmer of that moment of the divine love gives light, only so far do we behold what is before and what is afterwards. The pure before, the originally created primordial world, is too dark for us yet to know the Creator's hand in it. And the pure afterwards, the redeemed supra-world, is too bright for us yet to behold the countenance of the Redeemer in it; he is enthroned above the yearly returning songs of prayer of the redeemed ones. Only in the immediate surrounding of that heart of the All, of the Revelation of the divine love, does as much of the Creator and Redeemer become manifest to us as may become manifest to us; Revelation teaches us to trust in the Creator, to await the Redeemer. In this way it lets us recognize even Creator and Redeemer only as the one who loves.

**THE FIRST  
ONE**

The one who loves is therefore the only one we immediately behold. As the loving one only God is not the Lord. Here he is active. He is not above his act. He is in it. He is one with it. He loves. Only as the Lord is he in a that-side of that of which he is Lord. The Lord of life and death is himself beyond life and

death. What he may be as Lord of death, his essence before Creation, shuns all thought. Revelation reaches only up to the Creator. Its first word is: "In the beginning," its second: "created." What might be before the beginning, that vitality of God in itself that grew out of divine self-creation, self-revelation, self-redemption, we could only describe by comparison, only as a metaphor, of course, of the authentic Creation, Revelation, Redemption, because we allowed God himself to experience in himself that which comes from him. The fact that the pagans knew a God who has become such certainly gave us a hint that this would have to be more than a metaphor. But no word sprang from this hint. That vitality hidden in it hid this God, too, from us. The one who had become became the one who is hidden. To the question as to what he might be, we would honestly have had to answer: Nothing. For vitality in the non-created, in the Kingdom of what is dead, is nothing. The pagan God is not dead, but Lord of what is dead and certainly only of what is dead, only of the Nothing. Only in the Kingdom of the Dead does this company of gods exercise its rule. Otherwise, they do not rule, but they live. But as Lords only of the Nothing, they themselves become—nothings. The gods of the pagans are nothings, cries the Psalmist. They are not dead on any account; the faith of their worshippers testifies to the contrary. The gods in whom a living world believes cannot be less alive than this world itself. But in their vitality they are just as tottering, just as spectral, just as subject to the almighty "perhaps" as this world and these their worshippers. They lack the skeleton of reality, the clear direction, the solid place, the knowledge of right and left, of up and down, which enters the world only with Revelation. Therefore, in all their vitality, they are "nothings"—for "like them are their makers, everyone who puts his hope in them"—and the Psalmist directly contrasts their created nature, their hidden life in a safe city of heaven, with that which distinguishes his God from those nothings: He has made heaven.

What God, the real God, would have been before Creation therefore eludes all thought. Not however what he would be after Redemption. Although even here our living knowledge reveals to us nothing of God's essence beyond the Redeemer. That he is the Redeemer is the last that we experience on our own body; we know that he lives and that our eyes will behold him. But even within this knowledge that is obvious to us, God's re-

THE LAST  
ONE

demptive character occupied a special position: differently from his creative power and his revelatory profusion, both of which poured upon an other, an objectivity, a vis-à-vis, it takes effect on the other only indirectly: it redeems man in the world, the world through man. Redemption happens directly, however, only to God himself. For him it is the eternal act in which he frees himself from contrasting with something that he himself is not. Redemption frees him from the work in the Creation as from the no end of trouble for the soul. Redemption is his day of rest, his great Sabbath, to which the Sabbath of Creation only points beforehand, the day where, redeemed from everything outside him that is again and again compared to the Incomparable One, he will be One and his name will be: One. Redemption redeems God because it frees him from his revealed Name. In the Name and his Revelation, the confinement of Revelation that began in Creation comes to an end. All that happens henceforth happens “in the Name.” The sanctification like profanation of the Name—there is no act since Revelation that did not bring about one or the other; the progress of Redemption in the world happens in the Name and for the sake of the Name. But the end is nameless, above all name. The sanctification of the Name itself happens so that the Name one day may become silent. Beyond the word—and what is the name other than the completely concentrated word?—beyond the word the silence gives light. Where other names no longer throw themselves opposite the one Name, where the one Name is al-one and everything created knows and confesses it and only it, there the work of the sanctification has come to rest. For holiness matters only as long as there is still what is unholy. Where all is holy, the holy itself is no longer holy; it is simply there. Such a simple presence of the Highest One, such an unimpaired all-prevailing and solely prevailing reality, beyond all sorrow and joy of the realization, this is truth. For truth is not, as the Scholastics think, recognized in the error; truth attests itself; it is one with all the real; it does not separate in it.

**THE ONE** And such a truth is the one that announces as God’s seal that he is One at the time when even the eternal people of the One foundered and dwindled. The one name “One” outlives the people that confesses it, outlives even the revealed Name by which is known that Name of the future that outlives and lives beyond. For the sake of this outliving that belongs to the One in time to

come, the manifest Name must become silent even now for the present and for every present. Precisely we, we who know him, we upon whom he is named and who are named after him, precisely we who know and confess him, are not permitted to name him. For the sake of our eternity, we must anticipate the silence into which he one day, and we with him, will sink and plant in the place of the Name itself that which he is as long as he is named as Name against other names, as Creator of a world of being, as Revealer of a language of souls: Lord. Instead of his Name, we name him Lord. The Name itself is silent on our lips and even under the mutely reading eye, as it one day will be silent in the whole world, when he is al-one—One.

Here the last silence grows silent in us. This is the true abyss of the godhead. God himself is redeemed here from his own word. He grows silent. The God of the primordial world had certainly not been himself dead, but as Lord of that which is dead, he had been, like this deadness, nothing. As we learned from Creation the meaning of the primordial world, precisely death, so we learn from Redemption the meaning of the supra-world as life. The Lord of the supra-world is Lord of life. As such, he is not living, not on any account. But just as the Lord of what is dead is certainly not himself dead, but like what is dead and therefore nothing, more exactly a nothing, one of many nothings, so the Lord of the supra-world is not himself living, but like that which is living. Even to him the metaphor of the Psalm applies: Like him are those who trust in him. Because that which believes in him is that which lives, then he himself must be like that which lives. But what is this essence of that which is living? With which word can we grasp it? For we are well aware that here we have leapt over the world of words, as in the primordial world we had stood before its gate. Before that gate there lay the Kingdom of the dead, and there we had known its Lord as a nothing. For what else could the essence of a something before the world be than just the nothing? And the Lord of what is dead is certainly not part of what is dead, but identical to it and therefore, like it, a nothing. But what would be the essence of the living, which, from the other side, would be just as much beyond the world of words as beforehand the dead? The place of the nothing would already be occupied; it is before words. But with which word would that which is beyond words be grasped? It could as little find a place among words themselves

**THE LORD**

as could the nothing. The something is at home in the world of words. But above this world, just as much not at home in it as the nothing, lies the All. And certainly the true All, the All that does not split into pieces as in the world of the nothing, but the one All, the All and One.

This is the essence of the living. It is like death in the Creation, therefore in Redemption it is the last word. The last word and hence, like death, pointing into a beyond of words. It designates that which is redeemed, as death designates the not-created. And God, as the Lord of life, would be identical to this essence. He would be the Lord of the All and One. That, however, this glory above the All and One, is opined in the sentence: God is truth.

*TRUTH*  
*(COSMOLOGIC)*  
GOD AND  
TRUTH

**F**OR as only nothings can rule over the splintered nothing, so only a One who still has room beside, still above him, can rule over the one All. But what still has room beside the one All as the com-plete reality except—truth? For truth is that alone which is entirely one with reality and no longer separating in it, yet still separates from it as a whole. Truth is enthroned above reality. And so therefore would the truth be— —God?

No. Here we are setting foot on the mountaintop whence there lies at our feet the entire path we have traveled. Truth is not God. God is truth. In order to link up first of all with what was last said: Not truth itself is enthroned above reality, but God, because he is truth. Because truth is his seal, he can be One above the All and One of reality. Truth is the scepter of his reign. In the All and One, life is complete; it is entirely living. Insofar as truth is one with the absolutely living reality, it is its essence; but insofar as it can nevertheless separate from it—without breaking the bond in the least—it is the essence of God.

REALITY AND  
TRUTH

If God is therefore truth, then reality, too, is no less so. Its ultimate essence also is truth. Beside the sentence “God is truth” is written the other one that is entitled to the same rights: “Reality is truth.” And just because truth is therefore essence both of God and of reality, as we knew it as such in the concept of the All at the end of the path of reality, the inversion of the sentence would be impossible. One cannot say that truth is God, because it would then have to be reality just as well. And then God would be reality, supra-world and world of one kind, and everything would grow hazy into a fog. Therefore God must be

“more” than truth, as every subject is more than its predicate, each thing is more than its concept. And even if truth really is the last and only thing that could be stated about God as regards his essence, there nevertheless remains in God still a surplus beyond his essence. But how could he be in proportion to his essence? The sentence “God is truth” of course differs from other sentences of that kind, inclusive of even the sentence “Reality is truth,” since the predicate here is not a universal concept under which the subject is classified. But what would truth be then? What is truth?

The School teaches that truth would be the only thing that could be neither denied nor doubted. This is the fundamental idea of idealism, that truth vouches for itself, since any doubt about it would yet already presuppose its indubitableness. The sentence “There is truth” would be the only indubitable sentence. If this were true, then obviously a sentence like the one that God is truth, would be inadmissible, since here truth would still be bound to something else, whereas it is really bound only to itself. It would form only subject, and not predicate of sentences. Even the question “What is truth,” would be treason. The sentence we challenged previously would be valid: that truth is God. But of what consequence is this for that self-authenticating of truth?

**TRUTH'S  
QUESTION TO  
TRUTH**

First of all: to be granted is the fact that the validity of truth cannot be doubted. It won't in fact do to say: there is no truth: at least the fact that there is no truth would then have to—be true. It in fact doesn't work. But then what more is to be granted with that than—a fact? And on what would respect for this fact be based? Which yet is so undeniable that the School has no mental reservations in basing the certainty of this undeniability upon this simply factual undeniability of truth. Would therefore the factuality still be more venerable than—truth? But woe then to “idealism” if it were so. For, it set out to put truth on its own two feet. And now it is to end up anchoring it in a—belief in a factuality?

**THE FACT OF  
TRUTH**

But would it really be expected otherwise? Can something stand without having anything to stand on? And if it stands by itself, wouldn't “itself” then be the ground upon which it stands? For therefore it would certainly not in fact be standing upon its own standing, but upon “itself.” Only if it stood upon its own standing would it then of course be without a “whereupon.” But the

**TRUST IN  
TRUTH**

fact of the undeniable validity of truth is simply not such a standing on its own standing. For this fact of the undeniability is not trusted as a factual thing in general. If it were like this, then indeed the fact of the truth would stand on its own standing. But it is not like that. Because for what reason would just this fact be trusted otherwise? Precisely this one and none other? It is not denied that error exists. The error is just as undeniable as the truth. In granting the fact that the existence of truth cannot be denied, there is also granted the fact that there is also untruth. The undeniability of truth and the undeniability of untruth are inseparable as facts. Why is just the former undeniability trusted, and the undeniability of untruth is forced down to a second-rate fact? Because that undeniability of truth seems to us to be a—true fact, and the undeniability of error as an—untrue one. The mark of truth is directly connected with this fact. So directly that it seems to us itself to be a fact. The undeniability of truth is a true fact, but a fact.

We do not therefore at all trust the fact but its trustworthiness. The fact in itself, the standing upon itself of truth would purport little to us if it were merely a standing upon its own standing. But it is really a standing on its very self: the undeniability of truth is itself true. The fact of the undeniability does not as yet demand faith, but first the truth of this fact.

All confidence in the truth rests on an ultimate therefore in the soundness of the ground on which the truth places itself on its own feet. Truth is itself the last presupposition of truth and this is not as truth that would stand on its own feet, but as fact that is trusted. Truth itself is fact even before the fact of its undeniability. The fact of its undeniability would be for it alone still only a fact. But through the factuality of truth, which is sealed by the trusting Truly of faith that precedes it, the fact of the undeniability of truth really stands firmly. The self-confidence of reason that the Scholastics foster is entirely justified. But it is only justified because it rests on a confidence of the whole man, whose reason is only a part; and this confidence is not self-confidence.

TRUTH AND  
GOD

So the factuality of truth would be the last thing that truth itself has to say to us about itself. This last thing is that it demands trust in it as a fact. And hence it confesses just this: that it is not God. It is not it that is God. But God is truth. And for its truth, truth must cite this—not that it is truth, much less that it

is God, but that God is truth. Truth is from God. God is its origin. If it is itself the illumination, then he is the light from which its illumination originates. That by which we had to designate God's essence, the last thing that we know of him as the Lord of what is last, of the one life perfected in supra-worldly fashion in the All: that he is truth—this last conception of the essence slips through our fingers. For if God is truth—what is said with this about his “essence”? Nothing more than this, that he is the original ground of truth, and all truth is truth only through this, it comes from him. So truth becomes entirely different from the universal concept by which we nearly let God's essence be clarified, like the essence of any one thing is clarified by the general concepts under which it is classified. On the contrary, he is himself the clear light by which truth is clarified. That which becomes clear and is illuminated as true receives its clarity and its illumination from him. The sentence “God is truth” stands all alone among all sentences that want to clarify his essence. This divine essentiality is really nothing more than the divine self-revealing. Even the “last thing” that we know about God is nothing other than the intrinsic nature that we know about him: that he reveals himself to us. God is truth—this sentence with which we thought we had risen to the utmost of knowledge—if we see more closely what truth really is, then we find that that sentence brings back to us in different words only what is most intimately familiar of our experience; the apparent knowledge about the essence turns into the near, immediate experience of his action; that he is truth tells us finally nothing however other than that he—loves.

And when we recognize the last knowledge about God's essence, just as we grasp it in the light of the supra-world as being the same experience that we his creatures and children could effect even everyday in the world, then we could venture back once again taking along this last knowledge of his essence into that first non-knowledge, into the knowledge of his nothing, which was our starting point. Paganism had found immediately in this nothing an All, the All of its gods, the stronghold in which they hid their life from the world's gaze. It had been rested content with these gods and it longs for nothing more. But Revelation taught us to recognize in these gods the hidden God, the hidden one who is nothing other than the not yet manifest one. Paganism had really found an All in that nothing. We, since we

**AT THE GATE  
OF TRUTH**

recognized it as nothing, could only hope to find the All in it. The pagan world became the primordial world for us, the life of the pagan gods became God's hidden primordial life. The nothing of our knowledge about him thus became for us a meaningful nothing, the mysterious prediction of what we have been experiencing in the revealing. That obscurity of the nothing loses its self-supporting power that it could have beforehand. That God is nothing becomes just as much a figurative sentence as the other one, that he is truth. But truth was unveiled as only completion of that which we experience in God's love in an enjoyable and visible presence, his Revelation, and therefore the nothing must want to be nothing other than the preliminary reference to this Revelation. Also, that God is "nothing" just in the manner that he is "truth" does not stand firm against the question about the essence, the question "what is?"

**THE  
EXPERIENCE  
OF TRUTH**

What is nothing? Already in this very question the single answer that would let the nothing remain nothing is forbidden, the answer: nothing. For nothing can never designate the essence, never be predicate. "Nothing" is in fact not a concept. It has neither size nor content. The sentence with which Schopenhauer's principal work concludes, "The world is—nothing," is already an absurdity just conceptually. At least it does not explain the world. About the world it says really—nothing. It is quite otherwise with the sentence about the nothing which Schopenhauer had in mind here, the idea of Buddhism: this could probably be formulated: The nothing is God. This sentence is as little an absurdity as the sentence of idealism that truth is God; it is simply, like the former one—false. Exactly like truth, the nothing is of course not at all finally a self-supporting subject; it is merely a fact, the awaiting of a something, it is not anything yet. A fact, therefore, that only seeks its ground on which it stands. As the truth is only truth because it is from God, so the nothing is only nothing because it is for God. Of God alone can it be said that he is the nothing; it would be a first, indeed the first knowledge of his essence. For here, nothing can be predicate, just because God is not at all known in his essence; the question "what is God" is impossible. Precisely the impossibility of this question is especially denoted in the true sentence: God is the nothing; alongside the other sentence, "God is truth," it is the only admissible answer to that question. As the answer "God is the truth" leads the mystical question about his supra-worldly essence, this

last question, back into the living experience of his actions, so the answer “he is nothing” leads the abstract question about his primordial worldly essence, this first question—towards—the same experience. All that we might thus ask gathers in this experience from both sides. Beginning and end rise there out of their hiddenness into the manifest. We find ourselves in this center, and Him, the “First and Last,” with us, right nearby, as a man finds his friend. In this way, that which is hidden becomes manifest. And the factuality, the nearness, the immediacy, seen from here, now fills all ends of the world, it sleeps in all fragments of the primordial world, it dwells on all stars of the supra world. God’s essence, whether it might be truth or nothing, as dissolved in his incorporeal, completely real, completely near act, in his love. And this, his completely manifest loving, now attracts all faraway places into the spaces redeemed from the rigidity of essence and fills them all. That which is manifest becomes that which is hidden.

So beginning, middle, end become equally immediate, that is to say equally incapable of being mediated, no longer to be mediated, because they are themselves already centers—and now the All, the once shattered, has grown together again. Revelation in its immediacy had provided the cement that mended the primeval break. The pure thinking of idealism even presumed to rhyme the unrhymable line “in the leveling machine, in the brain” with “which begins as God, man and the stars’ terrain.” The three, however, God world man, are not to be “rhymed.” But the first demand was this, that they simply be received in their unrhymed factuality. As in world history, so here, too, the authentic metaphysical-metalogical-metaethical paganism must take the lead before Revelation can open its mouth. Assimilating and equalizing, the rhyming of the un-rhymed, which idealism undertakes, only destroys the pure factuality in which the three originally stand each for itself; the sturdy configurations man, world, God melt away into the foggy images subject object ideal, I object law, or whatever other names are conceded to them. But if the elements are simply received, then they can meet, not in order to be rhymed,” but to create a path in their effect on each other. It is not God or man or the world that becomes immediately visible in Revelation; on the contrary: God man world, which were visible configurations in paganism, here lose

**AT THE GOAL  
OF TRUTH**

their visibility; God seems hidden, man locked, the world enchanted. What becomes visible, however, is their reciprocal effect on each other. God world man is not the immediacy that is experienced here, but—Creation, Revelation, Redemption. In them, we experience being creature and child and believing-unbelieving bearers of the Name through the world. But this immediacy of lived experience leads us as little as that first immediacy of cognition led us into an immediate relationship with the All. Cognition certainly had everything, but only as elements, only in its pieces. Lived experience was beyond this bungled work; it was whole within every moment; but because always within the moment, it was therefore certainly whole, but within none of its moments did it have everything. The All, which would be both everything and whole, can neither be known honestly nor experienced clearly; only the dishonest cognition of idealism, only the obscure experience of the mystic can make itself believe it has grasped it. The All must be grasped beyond cognition and experience, if it is to be immediately grasped. Precisely this grasping takes place in the illumination of prayer. We saw how the path rounded itself off here into the yearly cycle and by this means the All, when just this closure is prayed for, offers itself immediately for the beholding. In this last immediacy in which the All really comes altogether near to us, we are permitted now to restore the Name with which, in denying it, we began our work, the name of truth. We had had to reject truth, such as it took its leave of us at the beginning of wisdom as the appointed companion on the pilgrimage through the All. We denied the philosophy that rested on this belief in the immediateness of cognition to the All and of the All to cognition. Now, after we have come as far as the direct view of the configuration on our road from an immediate to the nearest, we find at the goal truth as last, which had wanted to obtrude on us as first. In the view we grasp eternal truth. But we do not behold it as philosophy sees it, as ground that on the contrary is and remains for us, too, the nothing, but as last goal. And when we behold truth there at the goal, it also becomes clear to us that it is yet itself nothing other than the divine Revelation that happened also for us, the ones hovering midway between ground and future. Our Truly, our Yes and Amen, with which we answered God's Revelation—is unveiled at the goal as the beating heart also of the eternal truth. We find ourselves

again, we ourselves, in the midst of the flaming of the furthest Star of eternal truth; not the truth in us—for the last time may the philosophical blasphemy here be fended off—no, but us in the truth.

**W**E find ourselves again. We meet with ourselves. But we must have the courage to meet ourselves in the truth, the courage to say our Truly in the midst of truth. We are permitted this. For the last truth is—it is none other than our truth. God's truth is nothing other than the love with which he loves us. The light out of which truth shines is nothing other than the word to which our Truly replies. In the first: "Let there be light" there is created both the light of this world and that other light which God separated and saved for that world of completion. Hence we say our Truly where we find ourselves. There is no mere chance. The birth to the personality is not chance, as it certainly seems to be from the metalogical standpoint of paganism, but Creation. The rebirth to the Self in the surprise attack of the daimon upon the character is not chance, as it certainly seems to be from the meta-ethical standpoint of paganism, but Revelation. As he who is born and he who is born again, man meets with himself. He may not presume to deny the one in favor of the other. He must live where he is placed; for he is placed by the hand of the Creator, he did not fall from the lap of chance. He must go where he is sent, for he has received direction from the word of the manifest one, not an obscure dispensation from the blind tottering gait of destiny. Where he stands and where he is sent—to both, such as he received them in the found place and in the decisive moment of his life as his personal here and now, he must say his Truly so that for him they become truth.

His truth must become the truth because really it is truth only as a truth of his own. We recognized the truth that originally sprang from God, as the essence of truth altogether. Therefore it must also come for man as His Truth, and as such he cannot experience it otherwise than by appropriating it as his in the Truly. For only that which one receives as gift, only this teaches one to recognize the giver. What I merely find, I consider to be an ownerless property, at best a lost item. I only come to know the gift as the property of the giver just because and since it becomes mine. So I consider truth as God's Truth because I make it mine in the Truly. But what can I make mine then? Only that which

**THE SPIRIT  
(PSYCHO-  
LOGIC)**

**IN THE  
TRUTH**

**THE  
POSSESSION  
OF TRUTH**

fell to my share in my inner here and now. Whether it is the “whole” truth, what do I care? It is enough that it fell to my “share.” It has become my portion. That God is truth in that sense in which we have now established it: origin of truth—I can only experience when I experience it because I experience that he is “my share,” “the portion of my cup on the day when I call him.”

**THE VERIFI-  
CATION OF  
TRUTH**

Truth must therefore be veri-fied, and just in the way in which it is generally denied: namely by letting the “whole” truth rest on itself and yet taking the share that we comply with for eternal truth. It must happen like this, because it is a matter here of that which is eternal. In what is eternal, the triumph over death, which is swallowed up in it, is celebrated. In the triumphal procession, death’s broken weapons are put on display. Death had wanted to reap all life so that it would not live until the eternal end. It boasted that every end is only to be achieved by dying. In the eternal people, triumphantly opposed to this is the fact that the end can also be reached by living. There the Reaper’s scythe breaks. Death had come riding on all roads and had boasted that all passage on them is only to pass away. Passage along the eternal way is not to pass away; for each step happens again from its beginning. But there the shanks of the Rider’s old mare break. Death had mocked all truth, saying that it is bound to a paltry piece of reality and by this already denies truth; and so all must become death’s property. Now the banner of one truth waves before him here which is known and confessed forever, since it is verified as one’s own, received truth, that has fallen to one’s share, a share then that verifies the whole truth instead of denying it; the mere share has become “my eternal share.” Then the grin so sure of victory on the skeleton’s countenance is dashed away and death bows before the eternal verdict.

**PLACE AND  
TIME OF  
TRUTH**

That which is one’s own is verified as eternal truth: birth and rebirth, station and mission, a here that is met up with and a decisive now of life. Where neither the one nor the other is there, where, instead of the former, chance still rules, instead of the latter, destiny, there, in paganism’s world of chance and destiny that is devoid of standpoint and mission, there it is certainly not at all in this sense a matter of verification. There, what is one’s own remains one’s own, and all verification verifies at most the truth that it is one’s own. Where Revelation took place and the bridge was thrown from earth to heaven, from what is eternal to

what is one's own, there the here and the now are both at once firmly established in one stroke; time like space are composed of Revelation. But the verification takes place in that which is most one's own, in the individual life. Individual life must be planted in the mutual soil of Revelation; a part must reach beneath the earth. And now it is only a question of which one. Both the here and the now can each dwell in mutual soil and in individual life. Precisely their inseparability guarantees for the single plant that it roots really deeply in the soil. So the possibility of verifying truth is twofold. And in this twofold possibility we now again find the opposition of the fiery core and of the radiating, which was presented in the two preceding books, this time however not simply as a juxtaposition, but now in a reciprocal entwining which certainly cannot be experienced, but can be seen. Not experienced: for this we have recognized, that the highest only falls to man's share when it becomes part. But seen.

For surely the whole can also only be seen where it has become part, and so the whole of truth, the whole truth, can only be seen when it is seen in God. This is the only thing that is seen in God. Here alone man does not experience immediately, but God is the one who experiences, and man merely looks on. He still takes his share of truth only in the immediate oneness of experience and sight. But he can himself see the whole truth also only in God, precisely because it is whole and hence can only fall to God's share, only for God can it become a part. For in life he remains man; he may well experience God in life—what else would Revelation be?—but the experience of a man, as a man experiences his friend, is also nothing more than that the one understands what the other says to him; whereas it is not possible to experience what the next man himself experiences with others; it is to this and only to this, to the direct reciprocal commerce of men with each other, that harsh adage applies, that no bridge leads from man to man.

In life, therefore, man remains man; and even if he can hear God's voice, and can experience God, then he by no means on that account as might be expected also experiences what God himself experiences. In the seeing, however, precisely because here he steps ashore from out of the fluid element of experience, he sees immediately what God experiences. He sees it in God. God experiences it himself. It is a big difference. For man it is always only truth. But for God it is more than truth. For

**THE  
EXPERI-  
ENCING  
OF TRUTH**

**HUMANITY'S  
LIMITS**

God it is experience. “God is truth” means: he carries it in himself; it is his share. Man’s Truly, with which he verifies his having a share in the truth, which as whole truth is only God’s share, is the exact counter-sign with which he confirms the original message that came from the Lord of truth for his share and duty as faithful servant of the Lord. To truth, which is God’s seal, there corresponds the Truly as man’s seal. His Truly, his Yes and Amen, he is permitted to say and he must do so. He is forbidden to say if and but. The if is a vile word in his mouth, as he is even rightly permitted to refuse to answer moral cross-questions and oblique questions that run against him with: “What would you do if...” He knows only what he has to do when any one of these ifs has turned into a so for him; that must be enough for him. The if, because word of the whole truth, is a right of reservation of the one before whom it always changes into the so. Only in God, only in this permanent change into the so, may man dare to look the if in the eye; and even then always with the awareness that it is not his concern to worry about the if. His domain remains the so, his word the Truly.

**CONFIGURATION OF HUMANITY: THE JEW**

The possibility was twofold, as truth streaming into the here and now in Revelation could join with man’s Truly. The place wherein man met with himself, the stand wherein he stood, could be in himself; he could carry around with him his behavior as something that had been created within for him in the mystery of his birth, as an inner home that he may as little get rid of as the snail its house, or to use a better metaphor: a magic circle from which he can as little escape as can his blood from circulation, just because, like and with this latter, he carries it everywhere he may ever walk or stand. If man carries his inner home, his inner position, with him, then the decisive moment, the moment of his second birth, his rebirth, must lie beyond the limits of his personality, before his own life. The rebirth of the Jew—for we are speaking about him—is not his personal one, but the re-creation of his people to freedom in God’s covenant of the Revelation. The people and he within it, not he personally as individual, experienced at that time a second birth. Abraham, the patriarch, and he the individual only in Abraham’s loins, heard God’s call and answered him with his “Here I am.” The individual is from now on born into the Jew; he does not need to become so first at any decisive moment of his individual life. The decisive moment, the

great now, the miracle of rebirth, lies before the individual life. In the individual life lies only the great here, standpoint, stand, house and circle, in short, all that is given to man in the mystery of the first birth.

It is just the reverse for the Christian. One day, in his own life, the miracle of rebirth happens to him, to him the individual; the one on account of nature born as a pagan here receives a direction to his life. *Christianus fit, non nascitur*. He carries within himself this beginning of his having become Christian, from which new beginnings originate always, a whole chain of beginnings arise. But otherwise he carries nothing in himself. He "is" never Christian, although Christianity exists. Christianity is outside of him. For the individual Jew there is for the most part lacking that personal vitality that only comes over man in the second birth, with the "surprise attack of the Self"; for as much as the people possesses the defiant-daimonic self, just this little does the individual possess it, who on the contrary is what he is as Jew from the first birth on, as it were therefore on account of his personality and not of his character. Quite analogously for the Christian in his Christian-ness, all that is "natural," all that is inborn, departs; there are Christian characters, men that is, from whose brow one reads the battles in which the Christian in them was born, but in general no Christian personalities for which there exists an artistic expression that shows the exception of the sheer "Johannine natures." That which is naturally Christian has being outside of him in worldly and ecclesiastical institutions; he does not carry it around within him. The mystery of birth that takes place precisely in the individual in the case of the Jew, lies here in the miracle of Bethlehem prior before all individuals. Here, in Revelation's origin in common to all individuals, the first birth common to all took place; they do not find the undeniable, the given, the original and lasting being of their Christianity, in themselves, but in Christ. They themselves, each for himself, had to become Christian. Being-Christian has been removed from them before they were born through Christ's birth, just as on the contrary the Jew possesses in him and carries with him his being-Jewish before his own birth, because his becoming-Jewish was removed from him in the olden times and in the revelatory history of the people.

**CONFIGURATION OF HUMANITY: THE CHRISTIAN**

**LAW OF  
HUMANITY:  
BIRTH AND  
REBIRTH**

Such a contrary relationship between here and now, birth and rebirth, determines every time however the whole wider opposition that rules between Jewish and Christian life. Christian life begins with rebirth. Birth is first of all outside of it. So it must try to lay birth as a foundation for its birth. It must transfer the birth from the stable of Bethlehem into its own heart. If Christ were born a thousand times in Bethlehem, and is not born also in you, then you are still lost.<sup>1</sup> It is a matter of drawing this entire here that is still outside, this entire world of naturalness, into the series of Christian becomings which began with the great now of rebirth. Christian life leads the Christian into the outside. The rays shine continually until all that is outside is filled with the rays. Jewish life is exactly the reverse. There, the birth, the whole natural here, the natural individuality, the indivisible participating in the world already exist; and it is a matter of leading that that is widely and fully existing into the select moment of rebirth, a leading that becomes a leading back, for the rebirth lies immemorially long before one's own and individual birth. Taking the place of the transfer of the one-time common birth into one's own re-born heart there is a re-experiencing of the one-time common rebirth, thus, taking the place of the representing of the past therefore there is a leading back of the present into the past. Every person must know that the Eternal One led him himself out of Egypt. The present here enters into the great now of the remembered experience. Hence, as the Christian way becomes expression and renunciation and filling with rays of that which is outermost, so Jewish life becomes remembrance and deepening and filling with a glow that which is innermost.

**THE CONFIGURATION OF  
THE VERIFICATION:  
ESCHATOLOGY**

**T**HE rays of the Star that refract outwardly in this way, the fire that glows inwardly—neither rest until they have arrived at the end, at the outermost, at the innermost. Both draw everything into the circle that their activity fills. Though for the rays it is by branching off in the outside, dispersing, going separate ways that unite again only beyond the fully traversed outer space of the primordial world; for the fire however it is by gathering and collecting in itself the rich diversity of existence into oppositions of inner life within the flickering play of its flame: oppositions that likewise find their unity only where the flame

<sup>1</sup>Angelus Silesius.

may be extinguished, because the tempered world does not offer it any more combustible material and the licking up life of the flame dies away in what is more than human-worldly life: the divine life of truth. For this, the truth is our concern here, no longer the splitting of the way in the visible world, no longer the inner opposition of life. Truth however always appears only at the end. The end is its place. We do not consider it as given; we consider it as result. For to us it is a whole; it falls only to God's share. For him it is not result, but given, namely given by him, gift. We however see it always only at the end. So now we must accompany that splitting like this opposition until the end and may no longer be satisfied in what happened to us previously on our voyage of experience, life and way.

The splitting of the way was threefold, according to the three configurations that the All assumed when it broke in pieces for us. God, world, man, these three that could not be rhymed to reason, were encircled by the way of Christianity that radiates separately, and since everywhere where the messengers of Christendom drew a piece of the All into Christianity, the old gods, the old world, the old Adam were nailed to the Cross, those born in paganism were reborn in Christianity to the new God, to the new world, to the new man. It was only as little writing tablets that at the tops of the three crosses there were still those obscure markings written by a pagan hand in which Christianity left its own obvious meaning: the hidden God, the locked in man, the enchanted world.

The ways of the Father and of the Son unveiled the All of the hidden God. They radiated out of the Star of Redemption, but they radiated separately and seemed to want to consist in the opposition of two persons; although before this paganism broke down in its fundamental indecision and did so repeatedly; for every new indecision got entangled again in this continually dissected either-or; the worldly-objective reasons that could lead to the creating of new gods were countered in the belief in the Father, the human-personal ones in the belief in the Son. Paganism was thus really at the end of its wisdom, but Christianity seemed to be winning the victory over it only when it adapted its own concept of God to it and thus only purchased the end of pagan wisdom at the price of the curse of having to remain constantly at the beginning of the way. So even in the concept of

**THE  
CHRISTIAN  
WAY**

**THE SPIRIT-  
UALIZED GOD**

the Spirit that proceeds from both, from Father and Son, it designated the point where the two, Father and Son, meet again beyond the way only when the world has gathered under this Cross. The worship of God in the spirit and in truth, the promise that the Spirit will guide Christianity—in this, the pagan motive power expired to which the Christian Credo had to adapt itself to win over the pagans; it expired to clear a space indeed for a new danger: for a deification of the Spirit, or rather for a spiritualization of God, which would, on account of the Spirit, forget God himself, for which in the hoped-for sight the power of God himself that actively and incalculably creates and awakens life would be lost; and which, drunk from the hope of seeing him and from the fullness of the Spirit, would lose contact with the world that grows in continual growth and with the soul that renews itself in faith. The Eastern Church which, true to its origin in John and the Greek Fathers, had taken upon itself the duty of the conversion of Wisdom; it henceforward shows the great image of that danger of the spiritualization of God, which flees from an anarchical world, from a chaotic soul, into the hope and the sight.

**THE  
DEIFIED MAN**

The All of the locked man was unlocked by the ways of the priest and the saint. They, too, although likewise proceeding from the same ray of the Star of Redemption, radiated separately and seemed to draw up the opposition that among men separated man from man. And here again, before this opposition, paganism, which separated each from each among men in a hundred-fold separation, broke down anew again and again. For all pagan separation separated according to the lasting mark of shape and color and language and rank or according to the fleeting turbulences of the moment in hate and love. But all those lasting landmarks were destroyed before the one indestructible status of the priest that separated him from the laity, and the whole storm of the turbulences of the moment broke on the saint, on his one great and ever new passion of love. Before the weight of that form, all the fullness of pagan forms became unimportant; before the greatness of that passion, all arbitrariness of pagan passions disappeared and was destroyed. But the opposition nevertheless remained, which countered and quieted the pagan frenzy over what is human; the quieted men fell to fighting further among themselves; between form and freedom, between priest and saint, peace was as little concluded in the All of

humanity as also between the one form and fullness of configurations, the one freedom and the passions. The unity beckoned here too again only where the two ways met again beyond all way in order to gather humanity again under this Cross. From there the image of Him who had said to Christianity "I am the truth" beckoned. The Son of Man, he was the only one whose high priesthood did not suffer from the status of a servant and whose humanity on the other hand was not diminished through his divinity. With regard to this image of one who is true God and true man is one image and, in his succession, there went therefore the figures of the priest and the saint in one who always remained separate in their processional conquest through the land of the soul; since the man still very much split as a pagan in that twofold status and all the separations that it still placed in the soul could thus at least shape himself into the image that longs for a unity of heart in succession and hope. But here a new danger is already threatening when again thus before the image of the Son of Man the last pagan quarrel in the soul seems settled, at least in the yearning and hope for the unity of heart: a deification of man and a humanization of God, which on account of man would forget God himself, and which on account of faithful longing for submersion into the silent fountain that is the source of the soul's manifold effluences, would be in danger of losing straightforward belief in God over man and in the joyfully active love for a world needing to assume a shape. The Northern Church which, true to its origin in Paul and the German Fathers, had taken on the duty of conversion relating to the soul, of the poet in man, shows henceforward the great image of that danger of the humanizing of God that deifies man, which, before a world left soulless and before the Lord of spirits in full flesh, flees into the quiet nook of longing and into one's own heart.

The All of the enchanted world was disenchanted by the ways of State and Church. They, too, though also proceeding from a ray of the Star, radiated separately and seemed to draw up the opposition that separated in the world order from order, and world from world. And on the other hand, before this simple opposition, paganism, which separated everything in the world from everything, State from State, people from people, position from position, and everyone from everyone, broke down over and over again. For all its separations became inessential before the one essential separation between worldly and supra-worldly

**THE  
DEIFIED  
WORLD**

order, and henceforward, if they wanted to decorate their reciprocal zeal also only with a semblance of law, had to borrow from this opposition a reflection of a higher law and try to give a spiritual content to the power. The pagan battle of all against all was thus purified into a higher battle at a higher price, but yet always into a battle; and only at the end of history is there a prospect of a Kingdom free of war and opposition, in which God will be all in all. Here the two separate ways of Christianity through the All of the world, the way of the State and the way of the Church, thus meet again and have to go side by side so that they can contain fully in them the kingdom of the pagan world, which simply would have been forbidden entry into a kingdom of priests and a holy people. The two rays must thus first unite only when the fullness of the pagans will have entered. But in this prospect of a future unified and universal world, without oppositions, of a day where God will be all in all, Christianity again confronts a danger, the last of the three great ones that are inevitable because inseparable from its greatness and its power: deification of the world or secularization of God, which, on account of the all in all would forget the One above all, and for which, on account of the lovingly active uniting of what is separated by the world in the one and universal edifice of the Kingdom, the pious trust in the inner, free, self-renewing strength of the soul, and in God's Providence that goes its own ways beyond human understanding, would disappear. The Southern Church which, true to its origin in Peter and the Latin Fathers, had taken on the duty of the conversion of the visible juridical order in the world, henceforward shows the image of that danger of secularizing God by deifying the world, which flees before the distrusted freedom of the soul, and before the inscrutably ruling God, into the world-preserving act of love and the joy in the realized real labor.

**THE  
CHRISTIAN  
DANGERS**

Threefold was the division of the way, threefold the always otherworldly reunification and threefold the danger. The fact that the Spirit presides over all ways and not God, that the Son of Man is the Truth and not God, the fact that God will be all in all and not One above all—these are the dangers. They arise in the farthest points of the way, in the next world, where the rays, which never meet in this world of God and soul and world, at last unite. So there are dangers—spiritualization of the concept of God, apotheosizing of the concept of man, pantheisizing of

the concept of the world—beyond which Christendom never comes. As little as it will ever come beyond the splitting of the churches into the Church of the truth of the Spirit, of the Son of man, of the Kingdom of God, each of which, in its sinking ever into hope, faith, love, has to neglect the other two powers in order to live all the more strongly in the one and to attend to its share in the labor of the rebirth of the primordial world that is born in paganism. Christianity radiates in three different directions. Its outermost to which it pushes forward in its progress of renunciation into the outside is not a onefold thing but, like the primordial world in which the pagan is found, threefold. Yet between those three Alls, of the primordial world, Revelation threw solid bridges and joined the three points in the immovable one order of the day of God. The three points however in which Christianity completes its renunciation into the All, and in which the rays that were dispersed on the way through time meet again, the spiritualization, the humanization, secularization of God are no longer permitted, as we shall see, to be joined with each other; they are certainly, otherwise than the three points of paganism, in a fixed order with regard to each other; the perhaps long ago became forever silent; but Christianity no longer or only incompletely offers a fluid connection that would raise also these three separate things again into a unity. Before we devote ourselves to this last knowledge about the rays that have radiated into the outside, let us return now to the viewing of the glowing embers with which the flame of the fire glows in itself.

The flame too flashed threefold. In three oppositions of its own burning life, it remembered the life of the outer All that was split into three. The Jewish God's might and humility, the Jewish man's chosenness and call to Redemption, the Jewish world's this-worldliness and next-worldliness—in these three flashings, the flame gathered symmetrically into its inside all oppositional possibilities of the All into simple oppositions. For in distinction from all flames of the earth, it glows with its warmth not merely in radiating outwards, but because it is nourished eternally from itself, it gathers the glowing embers at the same time into the core to the extreme ardent burning; and in thus gathering its glowing embers into the inside, it now melts anew the flaming-flashing oppositions ever more and more in itself again to a simple silent glowing.

**JEWISH LIFE**

**THE GOD OF  
THE PEOPLE**

The opposition between creative power and revealing love, itself still there in the original reversal from the hidden God of paganism to the manifest one of Revelation and strictly speaking Jewish only in the flashing unpredictable transitions between its two sides, this opposition melts in the inner warmth of the Jewish heart into the invoking of God as “our God and God of our fathers.” This God is indistinguishably the God of Creation and the God of Revelation. Just the fact that he is not invoked here with the revealed Name, but as God in general, and then however again as God in general becomes “our” God and this his being-ours is anchored again in its prime origin; and hence the Revelation, through which he is our God is grounded in its own creative origin in the Revelation to the Fathers—this whole very involved formation of faith is a quite simple feeling in the Jewish heart. It is not an ultimate unity, not that which the feeling can acquire just yet as an outermost, but an inside, a simple inner unity. It is not at all anything utmost, but it is the consciousness of God in the Jewish everyday. It is so little something utmost and last that it is on the contrary precisely something very “narrow.” The whole narrowness of the immediate naïve Jewish consciousness consists in this ability to forget that there is still something else in the world, in fact that there is still a world at all outside of the Jewish world and the Jews. “Our God and God of our fathers”—what does it matter to the Jew that at the moment when he thus invokes God that this God is, as he moreover knows and says repeatedly, “King of the world,” the One God of the future; in this address he feels quite alone with him, in the narrowest circle, and has lost consciousness of any wider circles; not as one might expect because he would have him only such as he is revealed to him, and for that reason his creative aspect would remain outside; no: the creative power is absolutely there as well, but the Creator narrowed himself into the Creator of the Jewish world, Revelation happened only to the Jewish heart. Paganism, which was embraced by the ways of Christianity that radiate outwards and radiate back into a unity, is left behind here, entirely outside; the glowing embers that glow inwards know nothing of the darkness that surrounds the Star from the outside. Jewish feeling has put Creation and Revelation entirely into the most intimate space between God and His people.

**THE MAN OF  
ELECTION**

Hence like God, the man also narrowed himself to the Jewish feeling when it might unify him into a single glowing from out

of the twofold consciousness, still flaming up together, of Israel and the Messiah, of revelatory grace and world redemption. From Israel to the Messiah, from the people that stood under Sinai to that day when the House in Jerusalem will be called a house of prayer for all peoples, there leads a concept that appeared in the Prophets and since then has governed our internal history: the remnant. The remnant of Israel, those who have remained faithful, the true people in the people, they are at every moment the guarantee that a bridge leads between those poles. If the Jewish consciousness may otherwise flash back and forth between those two poles of life established in the original inner reversal of the man closed upon himself in pagan fashion into the man open and resolved upon Revelation, between the pole of the most personal experience of divine love and the pole of the devoted working of love in the holiness of life, the remnant exhibits both at the same time: the taking up of the yoke of the commandment and the taking up of the yoke of the heavenly Kingdom. If the Messiah comes "today," the remnant is ready to receive him. Jewish history is, in defiance of all world history, history of this remnant, concerning which the word of the prophet is always current, that it "will remain." All worldly history is about expansion. Power is therefore the fundamental concept of history, because in Christianity Revelation has begun to spread over the world, and so all will for expansion, even the consciously and only purely worldly expansion, has become the unconscious servant of this great movement of expansion. Judaism and nothing else in the world preserves itself by subtraction, by a narrowing, by formation of new remnants always. This holds fully true quite externally just in the face of the constant external apostasy. But it also holds true within Judaism itself. It separates from itself that which is non-Jewish again and again in order to put forth new remnants again and again of what is originally Jewish. It continuously assimilates itself outwardly in order again and again to set itself apart inwardly. There is no group, no orientation, indeed scarcely an individual in Judaism who would not regard his way of giving up a secondary matter in order to keep to the remnant as only true one and hence himself as the true "remnant of Israel." And he is so. The man in Judaism is always somehow remnant. He is always somehow one who remains, an inside whose outside was seized by the river of the world and driven off, whilst he himself, that which remains of him, remains stand-

ing on the shore. There is something waiting in him. And he has something in him. He may call by different names what he is waiting for and what he has, often scarcely able to name them. But there is a feeling in him as if both, that having and that waiting, are joined most profoundly together. And this is precisely the feeling of the “Remnant” which has Revelation and awaits salvation. The strange questions that according to the tradition will one day be put to the Jewish man by the divine Judge denote these two sides of the feeling. The one, “Have you reasoned out sentence for sentence?” means: Were you actively aware that all that may happen to you, somehow even before you were born, in the gift of Revelation? And the other one, “Did you wait for salvation?” means that direction, put into our blood at birth, toward the future coming of the Kingdom. In this feeling that unites the two, therefore, man is narrowed entirely to the Jewish man. Paganism, which is embraced by the ways of Christianity that separate and finally meet again is on the other hand outside in the dark. The Jewish man is quite at home. The future, which otherwise weighs heavily on his soul, here became silent. In the feeling of being the remnant, his heart is entirely one in itself. Here, the Jew is the Jew only. The Revelation that happened to him, the Redemption to which he is called, have both flowed into the narrow space between him and his people.

**THE WORLD  
OF THE LAW**

And like man and God, so, too, the world becomes a narrow home in Jewish feeling as soon as it would like to take refuge from the disquieting flickering here and there of its flame between this world and the world to come in the unity of a worldly existence. The fact that the world, this world, is created and yet is in need of the future Redemption, the disquietude of this twofold thought, is quieted in the unity of the Law. The Law—for, regarded as world, it is law and not what it is as content of Revelation and demand on the individual: commandment—the Law, therefore, in its diversity and power that puts everything in order, the entire “outside,” namely all this-worldly life, everything that can draw up some worldly law or other, makes this world and the world to come indistinguishable. According to rabbinic legend, God himself “learns” in the Law. In the Law, everything that can be grasped in it is this-worldly, all created existence is already immediately endowed with life and soul for becoming content of the world to come. This Jewish feeling forgets that the Law is only Jewish law, that this finished and redeemed world

is only a Jewish world and that the God who governs the world has more to do besides just learning the Law, regardless whether it means the Law in the traditional sense or having filled the old concept with new life. For even in this case it considers as unfinished only this world, but the Law, which it sets about to impose upon the world so that it might pass from this world into the world to come, as finished and unchangeable. The Law stands, even when it appears so to speak very modern in the garb of some contemporary utopia, in a profound opposition to that Christian lawlessness of being able to and of wanting to be taken by surprise, which still distinguishes the Christian become politician from the Jew become utopianist and which confers upon the latter the greater power of shaking up, upon the former the greater readiness for attaining. The Jew always thinks it only means turning round from all sides his teaching of the Law; so it will be found that "everything is in it." The Law turns its back on paganism, which embraced the ways of Christianity; it knows nothing of it and wants to know nothing of it. The idea of the transition, suspended over life like a today that is to be eternally awaited, from this world to the world to come, from the messianic time—is strengthened here and is turned into the Law of everyday, in the observance of which, the more perfect it is, the seriousness of that transition wanes. For precisely the how of the transition is already fixed. Like God's life according to the legend, so, too, the pious man's life can now be consumed in more and more perfect "learning" of the Law. His feeling collects into one the entire world, the world created into existence and the one to be inspired, which grows towards Redemption, and squeezes it into the cozy domestic space between the Law and its, the Law's, people.

So, for this core of Jewish feeling, everything that is divided, that which is inwardly all-embracing of Jewish life, has become very narrow and simple. Too simple and too narrow, we would have to say and we would have to sense in this narrowness the same such dangers as in the Christian way of being in the world. If there the concept of God was threatened, then with us his world and his man seem to be in danger. Christianity, by radiating outwards, is in danger of evaporating into isolated rays far away from the divine core of truth. Judaism, by glowing inwards, is in danger of gathering its heat into its own bosom far distant from the pagan world reality. If there the dangers were spiritual-

**THE JEWISH  
DANGERS**

ization of God, humanization of God, making of God into the world, then here it was denial of the world, disdain for the world, mortification of the world. It was denial of the world when in the nearness of his God the Jew anticipated Redemption in the feeling, and forgot that God was Creator and Revealer and that as Creator he preserves the whole world, as Revealer he finally simply turns his countenance toward man. It was disdain for the world when the Jew felt himself to be a remnant and thus the true man who was originally created in the image of God and in this original purity awaits the end and meanwhile withdrew from man for whom precisely in his ungodly hardness the Revelation of the godly love took place and who now had to exercise this love in the boundless work of Redemption. Finally, it was mortification of the world when the Jew, in possession of the Law that was revealed to him and became flesh and blood in his spirit now dared to venture to regulate and even to judge existence renewed at every moment and the silent growth of things. All three of these dangers are the necessary consequences of the inwardness turned away from the world, as those dangers of Christianity are the consequences of self-renunciation turned toward the world. It is necessary for the Jew to box himself in. The boxing in is the last step of that entering into memory, of that deep rootedness into one's own self out of which he gets the strength of the eternal life, just as that evaporation is for the Christian the necessary consequence of his unrestrained proceeding and advancing on the eternal way.

**SAFETY OF  
THE  
DANGERS**

But that rooting into one's own self is however something quite different from the Christian self-renunciation. For the individual personality, certainly our boxing of ourselves in may mean the graver danger; the Christian personality, on the other hand, needs scarcely to suffer under the dangers of Christianity. But really our dangers mean for us finally no danger at all. That is to say, here it turns out that the Jew cannot descend at all into his own inside without at the same time ascending to the highest in this descending into the core. This is indeed the profoundest difference between the Jewish and the Christian man, that the Christian man, innately, or at least on account of birth—is a pagan, but the Jew is a Jew. So the way of the Christian must be a way of self-renunciation, he must always go away from himself, give himself up in order to become Christian. The Jew's life on the contrary does not permit him to go out of his Self; he

must live increasingly deeply in himself; the more he finds himself, all the more does he turn away from the paganism that he has outside and not like the Christian in his inside—all the more therefore does he become Jewish. For certainly he is born as Jew, but the “Jewishness” is something that he must first live through himself. Only in the old Jew does that which is Jewish grow fully visible in appearance and features. His type is just as characteristic for us as their type of the young man is for the Christian peoples. For Christian life de-nationalizes the Christian; Jewish life leads the Jew deeper into his Jewish type.

And just when the Jew thus enters into memory in his inside only for the sake of his highest, for God’s sake, it now turns out that those dangers may become dangerous for him perhaps as individual, therefore that he can become hard or proud or rigid, but that they are not dangers for Judaism. For those three modes of withdrawing from the outside and lodging in the inside that are exerted on God, man, world, that he brings to bear his God, his man, his world for God, man, world in general, that threefold glowing of his Jewish feeling is not itself that which is last; it does not end here. They are not, like God, world, man in paganism, three points without relation and order, but between these three final elements of feeling there circles a linking river, a path therefore, comparable to that one in which the elements of paganism entered into the relationship that led from Creation through Revelation to Redemption; and in this linking, that which is seemingly solely Jewish of this threefold feeling, that which is seemingly narrow and excluding and isolating join again into the all-illuminating one constellation of truth.

From the “God of our Fathers” to the “Law,” Jewish mysticism throws a bridge of its very own. In place of the general concept of Creation it puts that of the secret Creation, “The Story of the Chariot” as it is called in allusion to Ezekiel’s vision. The created world is itself here full of secret relationships to the Law, the Law does not stand unknown opposite this world, but only the key to those riddles of the world; in its plain wording a hidden meaning is concealed which expresses nothing other than the essence of the world; thus the fact that for the Jew the book of the Law can replace as it were the book of nature, or perhaps even the starry heaven, from which men in the past believed they could read off earthly matters in intelligible signs. This is the basic idea of countless legends with which Judaism widens the

**JEWISH LIFE  
IN THE  
MYSTERY OF  
THE MOST  
HIGH**

**THE STORY  
OF THE  
CHARIOT**

seemingly narrow world of its Law to the whole world and on the other hand even sees in this world the world to come, precisely because it finds it sketched in its Law. All methods of interpretation are used, especially of course the method of unlimited application of number-play and of reading of the letters according to their numerical value. If one wanted to give examples, where would one begin? The seventy sacrifices of the Festival of Booths, Succot, are offered for the seventy “peoples of the world”—this is the number the legend counts up, according to the genealogical table of Genesis. The number of bones in the human body is connected with the numerical value of a passage in the Book of Prayers such that the Psalm’s promise is fulfilled and all bones praise the Eternal One. In the words with which the completion of Creation is recounted, the name of the revealed God is concealed. We could go on and on without end. But the meaning of this explanation of Scripture, which seems odd to the unfamiliar observer and maybe ridiculous, is none other than that the whole of Creation is put in between the Jewish God and Jewish Law, and therefore both, God and his Law, turn out to be as all-embracing—as the Creation.

**THE  
SHEKHINA’S  
WANDERING**

Between the “God of our Fathers” and the “remnant of Israel,” mysticism throws its bridge with the teaching about the Shekhina. The Shekhina, God’s coming down to men and his dwelling among them, is explained as a separation that occurs in God himself. God himself separates from himself, he gives himself away to his people, he suffers with its suffering, he migrates with it into the misery of foreign lands, he wanders with its wanderings. And as in that idea that the Torah was created before the world and that the world on the other hand for the sake of Torah, the Law for Jewish feeling had become more than merely the Jewish Law and really could be perceived as a keystone of the world, so that even the notion of God himself learning his Law now acquired a universal meaning beyond the Jewish one, so, too, the pride of the “remnant of Israel” now reaches a more universal meaning in the notion of the Shekhina. Because the sufferings of this remnant, the constant separating and having to be eliminated, all this now becomes a suffering for God’s sake, and the remnant is the bearer of this suffering. The idea of the wandering of the Shekhina, of the being scattered into the world, of the sparks of the original divine light, throws between the Jewish God and the Jewish man the whole of Revelation and

therefore establishes both, God and the remnant, in the whole depth of—Revelation. That which took place in the mysticism of Creation through that manifold significance and manifold meaning of the Law, the widening of what is Jewish to the universal, takes place in this mysticism of Revelation through the very profound understanding that senses in God's surrender to Israel a divine suffering which strictly speaking must not be, and in Israel's self-separation into the remnant a possible dwelling being prepared for the exiled God. Precisely this divine suffering characterizes the relationship between God and Israel in a narrow sense, too narrow a one: God himself, when he—and what could be more natural for the "God of our fathers"!—"sells" himself for Israel and suffers with its destiny, makes himself in need of Redemption. The relationship between God and the remnant therefore points beyond itself in this suffering.

But Redemption—it would have to take place in the relationship of the "remnant" to the "Law." How is this relationship conceived of? What does the fulfilling of the Law mean for the Jew? What does he think of it himself? Why does he fulfill it? For the sake of the heavenly reward? Be not like the servants who serve their master for the sake of a reward. For the sake of earthly gratification? Do not say: I do not like pork; say: I would surely like it, but my Father in heaven has forbidden it to me. But the Jewish man fulfills the endless customs and precepts "for the unification of the holy God and his Shekhina." With this formula, he prepares his heart "in awe and love," he the individual, the remnant, "in the name of all Israel," to fulfil the commandment that applies to him directly. God's glory that is scattered in countless sparks in the whole world, this he will gather from the scattering and one day bring it home to Him who has been stripped of his glory. Each of his deeds, each fulfillment of a law carries out a piece of this unification. Confessing God's oneness—the Jew calls it: "unifying God." For this oneness, it is because it becomes, it is a becoming of oneness. And this becoming is placed upon man's soul and into his hands. The Jewish man and the Jewish Law—there is played out between the two no less than the process of Redemption that is inclusive of God, world and man. In the formula that unseals the fulfillment of the commandment and seals it as an act of the bringing about of Redemption, there the single elements, as they are received into this final One, ring out singly once again. The "holy God," just

THE  
UNITING  
OF GOD

as he was giving the Law, the “Shekhina” which he separated from himself for Israel’s Remnant, the “awe” with which this remnant is turned into God’s dwelling place, the “love” with which it is prepared for the fulfillment of the Law, he the Lone One, the “I” which fulfils the Law, yet he “in the name of all Israel” to which the Law was given and which was created through the Law. All that is the most narrow is widened into the whole, into the All, or rather: is redeemed into the oneness of the One. The descent into the innermost is revealed as an ascent to the uppermost. That which is solely-Jewish is transfigured into the world-redeeming truth. In the innermost narrows of the Jewish heart there shines the Star of Redemption.

THE  
CHRISTIAN  
DOCTRINE OF  
LAST THINGS

Here the Star blazes. That which is last, the innermost and the seeming narrowness and rigidity of feeling begins to flow and yields to the world-illuminating configuration, which just like in its combining of God, world, man into Creation and Revelation toward Redemption expresses the content of Judaism, now also flames up still in the core of the Jewish soul. The Star of Redemption is therefore a likeness of the essence, but it also glows still in the holy of holies of the feeling. This is quite different here than in the case of Christianity. There too, the Star of Redemption sketches the content, the inner essence from which there radiates what is real out into the world of reality. But these rays join in three separate points, real end points, aiming points of even the feeling. And these points can no longer be connected with each other. Mysticism no longer throws bridges between these outermost prospects of feeling. That God is Spirit and is all in all such that each stands unconnected side by side, and that he is the Son, the Way and the truth also is such that these stand unconnected one beside the other. The idea of Creation does not mediate between the one absence of connection, that of Revelation, nor between the other. Perhaps in mythological images, like the Spirit that broods over the waters, and the outpouring of the Spirit in the baptism of John, a certain relationship is set up that yet remains an image and does not flow together into the unity of feeling. Only between the two last ideas, the divinity of the Son and the promise that God will be all in all, does a bridge arch over. The Son, so the first theologian of the new faith teaches, will one day, when all will be subject to him, hand over his rule to the Father, and then God will be

all in all. But we see at once: this is a theologumenon. For Christian piety, it is meaningless; it describes a distant, far distant future; it deals with last things by expressly removing from them any influence over time, for still and in all time, the rule belongs to the Son, and God is not all in all; it describes a thoroughly that-worldly eternity. And so this sentence also never means anything more in the history of Christianity than precisely a—theologumenon, an idea. It was not and could not be a bridge on which the feeling would move back and forth from one shore to the other. For that purpose, the two shores were shaped too dissimilar, the former too much only temporal, the latter too much only eternal. There was, of course, an idea that the Son of man would one day give up his kingship, but that changes nothing with regard to the fact that he was deified in time. There was, of course, an idea that one day God would be all in all, but that changes nothing with regard to the fact that he is permitted very little influence over the something in the something of this temporality where his stopping-place was Lord. The feeling does not set foot upon the arch of the bridge. Here as everywhere, it stopped at the single points into which it gathered its last rapture. The rapture did not reach further than up to these aiming and rallying points. Christianity produced a spiritualistic, individualistic, pantheistic mysticism. These three did not come into contact with each other. The feeling can be satisfied in each of them. For corresponding to each of them its own shaping of the Church, none of which becomes superfluous through the other two. The feeling reaches the goal throughout. And it is permitted to. For where it thus reaches its goal, there a piece of the primeval world is renewed in dying and resurrecting. Dead the myth and resurrected in the worship in the Spirit, dead the hero and resurrected in the word of the Cross, dead the cosmos and resurrected in the one and universal All of the Kingdom. That all three would each in itself mean an evaporation of truth, more exactly: that God is Lord of the spirits, and not Spirit, dispenser of sufferings and not Crucified One, One and not all in all—he who might raise such objections against a faith that goes its way victoriously through the world and to which the gods of the peoples—national myths, national heroes, national universes—do not stand firm. Who might do this?

**THE LAW OF  
VERIFICA-  
TION:  
TELEOLOGY**

**THE MEAN-  
ING OF THE  
DISSENSION**

AND yet: the Jew does it. Not with words—what good would words be here in this region of seeing! But with his existence, his silent existence. This existence of the Jew forces upon Christianity in all times the thought that it has arrived at neither the goal nor the truth, but always—remains on the way. This is the deepest ground of Christian hatred of the Jews, which took possession for the inheritance from the pagan hatred. It is ultimately only self-hatred, aimed at the annoying silent admonisher who admonishes only through his existence—hatred against his own incompleteness, against his own not-yet. The Jew, through his inner oneness, through the fact that in the narrowest narrows of his Jewishness there yet still burns the Star of Redemption, shames, without wanting to, the Christian whom he drives out and forwards to the full radiating of the original fire into the outermost distance of feeling, of a feeling that no longer knows anything of a whole in which it would find itself united with any other feeling into a truth beyond all feeling, but which in itself has already become blissful. That which is the utmost of Christianity is this getting fully lost in the singular feeling, this sinking into the divine Spirit, the divine man, or the divine world. Between these feelings there no longer circles the circuit of action; they themselves stand already beyond all action. That evaporation of the feeling is certainly necessary, just as necessary as its narrowness is in the Jew. But this narrowness finds its resolution in Jewish life itself, in the world-redeeming sense of a life in the Law. But that evaporation no longer finds its resolution in life, because it is already itself an utmost of lived experience.

**THE JEW'S  
ETERNAL  
PROTEST  
AGAINST  
CHRIST**

If the Christian therefore did not have the Jew standing behind him, he would be lost where he was. Just as it is in the Jew that the three Churches, which are nothing other than the earthly housing of those three last feelings, experience their mutuality, and which without him they would at most know, but would not feel. The Jew forces on Christianity the knowledge that that satisfaction in the feeling still remains denied to it. Since the Jew, because he sanctified his flesh and his blood under the yoke of the Law, lives constantly in the reality of the Kingdom of heaven, the Christian learns that in the feeling he is not permitted himself to anticipate Redemption, which his always unholy flesh and blood resists. Since the Jew purchases for himself, at the price of the loss of the unredeemed world, the possession of the truth in

his anticipation of Redemption, he punishes the lies of the Christian who, in his march of conquest into the unredeemed world, must purchase each step forward with illusion.

Christianity is itself also well aware of this relationship, this necessity of the existence—and nothing more than existence—of Judaism for its own becoming. There were always the disguised enemies of Christianity, from the Gnostics up until today, who wanted to remove its “Old Testament.” A God who would be only Spirit, no longer the Creator who gave his Law to the Jews; a Christ who would be only Christ, no longer Jesus, and a world that would be only still universe whose center would no longer be the Holy Land—these would certainly no longer offer any resistance to deification and idol worship; but there would also be nothing more in them that would call the soul out from the dream of this deification back into unredeemed life; it would not only be lost, no, it would stay lost. And the mere book would not render this service to Christianity, or rather: the mere Book renders it this service only, since it is not a mere book, but because its being-more is actually attested through our life. The historical Jesus must always take back from the ideal Christ the pedestal under his feet upon which his philosophical or nationalistic worshippers would like to set him, for an “idea” unites in the end with every wisdom and every self-conceit and confers upon them their own halo. But the historical Christ, precisely Jesus the Christ in the sense of the dogma, does not stand on a pedestal; he really walks in the marketplace of life and compels life to keep still under his gaze. It is exactly the same for the “spiritual” God, in whom all easily and gladly believe who fear to believe in the one “who created the world in order to govern it.” That spiritual God, in his spirituality, is a very pleasant partner; and he leaves the world at our freest disposal, which is really not “purely spiritual” and therefore not from him and hence very probably from the Devil. And this world itself—how we would like to regard it as a universe and thus feel marvelously irresponsible in it, like “a speck of dust in the universe,” instead of being its responsible center around which all things turn or a pillar upon whose solidness it rests.

It is always the same thing. And as that ever real battle of the Gnostics shows, it is the Old Testament that enables Christianity to resist this its own danger. And the Old Testament only because it is more than mere book. The arts of allegorical interpre-

**THE TWO  
TESTAMENTS**

**THE  
CHRISTIAN'S  
ETERNAL  
HATRED OF  
THE JEW**

tation would barely and insignificantly get hold of the mere book. Just as Christ would mean the idea of man, so, too, the Jews of the Old Testament, if like Christ they had vanished from the earth, would mean the idea of the people, and Zion the idea of the center of the world. But such “idealization” is opposed to the Jewish people’s tenacious and irrefutable vitality, attested precisely in hatred against the Jews. Whether Christ is more than an idea—no Christian can know. But that Israel is more than an idea, he knows it and sees it. For we are living. We are eternal, not as an idea may be eternal, but we are so, if we are so, in full reality. And so for the Christian we are that which really cannot be doubted. The pastor argued conclusively who, asked by Frederick the Great about the proof of Christianity, replied: “Majesty, the Jews.” About us the Christians cannot be in doubt. Our existence guarantees for them their truth. Hence it is perfectly logical that, from the Christian point of view, Paul makes the Jews remain until the end—until “the fullness of peoples has come in,” just until that moment where the Son gives the kingship to the Father. The theologumenon from the origins of Christian theology states what we were explaining here: that Judaism in its eternal survival through all times, Judaism, which is attested in the “Old” Testament and attests itself through its own life, is the one core from whose glowing embers the rays are invisibly nourished, which in Christianity break forth visibly and splitting up into the night of the pagan primeval world and underworld.

**THE MEAN-  
ING OF THE  
VERIFICA-  
TION**

Before God therefore, both, Jew and Christian, are workers on the same task. He cannot dispense with either. Between the two, he set an enmity for all time, and yet he binds them together in the narrowest reciprocity. To us, he gave eternal life by igniting in our heart the fire of the Star of his truth. He placed the Christians on the eternal way by making them hasten after the rays of that Star of his truth into all time until the eternal end. We see therefore in our heart the true likeness of truth, but for that we turn away from temporal life and the life of time turns away from us. They on the contrary follow the river of time, but they have the truth only behind them; they are certainly guided by it, for they follow its rays, but they do not see it with their eyes. The truth, the whole truth, belongs therefore neither to them nor to us. For though we indeed carry it in us, yet for this reason too we must first sink our glance into our own inside if we want to see it, and there we do see the Star, but not—the rays.

And belonging to the whole truth would be that one would see not only its light, but also what is illuminated by it. They however are destined all the same for all time to see what is illuminated, not the light.

And therefore we both have only a share in the whole truth. We know, however, that the essence of truth is to be shared, and that a truth that is no one's share would not be truth; even the "whole" truth is truth only because it is God's share. So it does damage neither to the truth nor even to us that only a share falls to us. Immediate sight of the whole truth comes only to him who sees it in God. But this is a seeing beyond life. A living seeing of the truth, a seeing that is life at the same time, thrives even for us only out of the sinking into our own Jewish heart and even there only in the image and likeness. And for them, for the sake of the living effect of truth, the live seeing is denied to them altogether. So we both, they like us, and we like them, are creatures just on this account that we do not see the whole truth. Just for this reason we remain within the limits of mortality. Just for this reason—we remain. And we of course want to remain. We of course want to live. God does for us what we want as long as we want it. As long as we hang onto life, he gives us life. He gives us only as much of the truth as we can bear as living creatures, namely our share. If he gave us more, if he gave us his share, the whole truth, then he would lift us out of the bounds of humanity. But just as long as he does not do this, just so long we have no desire for it. We hang onto our creatureliness. We do not readily leave it. And our creatureliness is conditioned by our having only a share, are only a share. Life had celebrated the last triumph over death with the Truly with which life verifies its own received and now shared truth as its share in the eternal truth. In this Truly the creature clings to his share that fell to his share. In this Truly it is creature. This Truly runs like a silent secret through the whole chain of beings; in man it brings speech. And in the Star, it glows up into visible, self-illuminating existence. But it always remains within the bounds of creatureliness. Even truth itself says Truly when it steps before God. But God himself no longer says Truly. He is beyond all that may become part; he is even above the whole that in him is really only part; even above the whole he is the One.

*THE TRUTH  
OF ETERNITY*

**B**UT if the Truly therefore, and even the highest Truly, the Yes and Amen which is said together in chorus facing the Star of Redemption is still the sign of creatureliness and hence does not end the natural kingdom, not even in the configured eternity of the redeemed supra-world, then the end sinks back into the beginning. That God created, these greatly portentous first words of Scripture, do not lose their power until everything is fulfilled. Not before does God call back again into his bosom these first words that came out of him. We have already seen eternal truth sinking back into the Revelation of divine love: in all things Redemption was nothing but the eternal result of the beginning that is always set anew in the revealing love. In the love, that which was hidden had become manifest. Now this ever renewed beginning sinks back into the secret everlasting beginning of Creation. That which is manifest becomes that which is hidden. And along with Revelation, Redemption therefore also flows back into Creation. The last truth is itself only—created truth. God is truly the Lord. As such, he revealed himself in the power of his creating. If we thus call upon him in the light of eternal truth—it is the Creator from the beginning, the one who calls into being the first “Let there be light,” whom we call upon there. The midnight that glitters in eternal starry clarity before our dazzled eyes is the same one that became night in God’s bosom before all existence. He is truly the First and the Last One. Before the mountains were born and the earth writhed in labor-pains—from eternity to eternity you were God. And were from all eternity what you will be in eternity: truth.

## GATE

**T**HAT which is eternal had become configuration in the truth. And truth is nothing other than the countenance of this configuration. Truth alone is its countenance. And take much care, for the sake of your souls: “No figure have you seen, speech only have you heard,”—so it is said in the world of Revelation with and around us. But the word grows silent in the afterworld and supra-world, in the redeemed world, which the blessing said at the right time and in the right place, full of higher power, forces hither. Of it, complete and at peace, it is said: “May he let his countenance shine upon you.”

This shining of the divine face alone is truth. It is not a configuration freely moving for itself, but only God’s countenance lighting up. But for whomever he lets his face shine, toward him he also turns his face. As he turns his face toward us, so may we know him. And this knowing does indeed know in a real sense. It knows truth as it is, namely as it is in God: as his countenance and part. Truth surely does not turn into non-real truth by the fact that this countenance turned toward us, that God’s share falls to our share; for even as real and most real truth it would be nothing other than—part and countenance. In the Star of Redemption in which we saw the divine truth become configuration, nothing else lights up than the countenance that God turned shining toward us. We shall now recognize in the divine face the Star of Redemption itself as it now finally became clear for us as configuration. And only in this recognition is its cognition perfected.

For as long as we knew only its path without as yet seeing its configuration, just so long was the order of the original elements not yet fixed. Certainly the perhaps, boundlessly fluttering to and fro, sank away powerless long ago; God world man had reciprocally acquiesced in the sure order; in the path their order came to them; through the succession of the three hours of the day of God, their immovable relationship to one another was indicated for the elements of the All; so the path was recognized as a path of the star to which those elements of the path belonged. But when the Star was beheld like this, it seemed still to be able to spin around itself, hence that now world and man, within the already solidly fixed lapse of the three times of God’s Day, seemed to experience their own day that simply did not coincide with that one. Only for God was Redemption really the last. But for man, even his creation in the image of God, and for the world,

*RETROSPECTIVE: THE FACE OF THE CONFIGURATION*

**GOD’S COUNTENANCE**

**THE DAY OF GOD**

even God's descent in Revelation, meant the being-redeemed to just any possible completion. There the three hours seemed to be only hours of God's day; the day of man and the day of the world would be a different one.

In dealing with what is eternal of the supra-world, it was the whole task of Part Three to show that it is not like this. That apparent possibility of substitution was itself here riveted to the spot in configurations that received their fixed place in the eternal truth of the day of God. In eternal life, certainly Redemption was anticipated already in Revelation in which of course everything is there; in the Revelation to the one people eternal life, itself no longer changing, was planted; that eternal life will one day return in the fruit of Redemption, just as it was once planted; hence, here in the world, the visible world, really a piece of Redemption is placed, and it becomes true that, seen from the world, Revelation is actually already Redemption. And on the other side is really begun again in the eternal way with man's innate image of God in him; Redemption takes place here through the new Adam, without sin and not fallen, and is already there in him; therefore, here, man, inspired man, when he appropriates this being newly created again in God's image with the miraculous birth of the second Adam, is already heritage of Redemption, of a redeemed-ness that belongs to him from the very beginning, from Creation and only awaits the appropriation; therefore that it comes true, from man on, Creation is really already Redemption.

**GOD'S TIME** And so here, too, the relationships of the times happen most exactly. For man was created into man in Revelation, and in Redemption he could and had to reveal himself. And this simple and natural temporal relationship in which the becoming-created preceded self-revealing, now establishes the whole development of the eternal way through the world, its own chronology, the consciousness that is found in every present between past and future and on the way from the former to the latter. Whereas that strange inversion, which has already struck us again and again, of the temporal sequence for the world now gets its clear confirmation. There happens to the world indeed in its Creation the awakening to its own manifest consciousness of itself, namely to the consciousness of the creature, and in Redemption only is it really created, only there does it acquire that solid durability, that continual life instead of the ever new existence born of the

moment. This inversion of the temporal sequence, where for the world, therefore, the awakening precedes being, establishes the life of the eternal people. Its eternal life, that is to say, constantly anticipates the end and makes it therefore into the beginning. In this reversal it denies time as resolutely as possible and places itself outside of it. To live in time means to live between beginning and end. He who would want to live outside of time—and he who wants to live not that which is temporary, but an eternal life in time, must want this—he who therefore wants this must deny that “between.” Such a denial, however, would have to be active, so that there would result not merely a not-living-in-time, but a positive living-eternally. And the active denial would take place solely in the reversal. To reverse a between means to make its after into the before and its before into the after, the end into the beginning, the beginning into the end. And the eternal people does that. It already lives for itself as if it were the whole world and as if the world were finished; it celebrates in its Sabbaths the sabbatical completion of the world and makes it into the base and starting point of its existence. But that which would be temporally only a starting point, the Law, this it sets as the goal. So it does not experience the between, although it naturally, really naturally, lives in it. It experiences precisely the reversal of the between, and so it disavows the omnipotence of the between and denies time in this way, and the same time is experienced on the eternal way.

Under the signs of eternal life and eternal way, the two “views” from the “point of view” of the world or man thus solidify into visible figures themselves and appear under the one sign of eternal truth. And so the question is simple now as to which order of the three hours is required for eternal truth itself. For since eternal truth was recognized as the truth that will be at the end and that originates from God at the beginning, it therefore turns out that only the order as it presents itself from God and in which Redemption really is the last does justice to the last truth. And just in this order from God, even the apparently still possible orders beside it, from the world or from man, find their dwelling place where they may securely dwell as necessary and visible configurations under the reign of eternal truth and say their Truly. Those eternal gods of paganism in whom paganism will survive until the eternal end, the State and the arts, the former the idol of material gods, the latter the idol of personal ones, are

**THE  
ETERNAL  
GODS**

shackled by the true God. If the State might well claim the highest place in the universe for the world, and art might for man, and if the State might dam up the river of time in the eras of world history, and art try to drain it off into the endless canal system of experiences—so let them! He who sits in heaven mocks them; he contrasts to their already conflicting interaction the silent work of created nature in whose truth the deified world is limited and fashioned for eternal life, the deified man is humbled and sent onto the eternal way, and thus both, world and man together are subject to God's rule. For even the battle for time in which State and art would have to destroy each other mutually, because the State wants to stop the river of art, and art wants to carry on in the State, even this battle is settled in divinely ruled nature; in the eternity of life and the eternity of the way, world and man find room beside each other; there they are made godly without being deified.

**THE GOD OF  
GODS**

Only before the truth, therefore, does the reeling of all paganism collapse. Advancing toward its drunkenly blind wanting to see itself and only itself, as it culminates in the endless battle between State and art, there comes the surpassingly quiet power of divine truth. This truth, because it has everything lying at its feet as one single vast nature, can show his share to everyone and therefore put the universe in order. As long as both State and art, each for itself, need to be regarded as omnipotent, just so long they each also, and rightly, claim all of nature for themselves. They both know nature only as their "material." Only truth, because it circumscribed both, the State in eternal life, art in the eternal way, could free nature from this twofold slavery and make it one again, in which State and art might now receive their share, but not more. And truth—from where else would it draw its pillar of strength that bears the All of nature than from the God who gives himself configuration in it and only in it? Before the glance of truth, not only is the perhaps no longer valid—it vanished long ago—but the possible as well. The Star of Redemption, in which truth assumes configuration, does not revolve. That which stands above stands above and stays standing above. Standpoints, views of the world and of life, isms of any kind—all this no longer ventures from under this last simple glance of truth. The standpoints founder before the one steady sight. Views of the world and of life pass into the one view of God. Isms disperse before the rising star of Redemption, which, whether

one believes in it or does not, is in any case meant as a fact and not an ism. There is therefore an above and below; and it cannot be substituted and it cannot be overturned. Even the one who knows may not say if. Even over him it is so, the so-and-not-otherwise that rules. And just for that reason, because there is above and below in truth, we therefore not only may but must call it God's countenance. We are speaking in images. But the images are not arbitrary. There are necessary and contingent images. The irreversibility of truth can be expressed only in the image of one who lives. For in the living one alone there is already distinguished by nature and before any position and proposition an above and below. And in the living one again where a self-consciousness of this distinction is awake: in man. Man has above and below in his own corporeality. And as truth, which is given configuration in the Star, within the Star as whole truth is on the other hand attributed to God and not to the world or to man; so the Star too must once more be reflected in that which within the corporeality is again that which is above: the countenance. It is therefore not human folly when Scripture talks about God's countenance and even his individual parts. Truth cannot at all be expressed otherwise. Only when we see the Star as countenance are we quite beyond all possibility of possibilities and simply see.

Just as in the two superimposed triangles the Star reflects its elements and the collection of the elements into the one path, so too the organs of the countenance are divided into two levels. For the vital points of the countenance are after all these ones where it enters into contact with the surrounding world, be it receptively or actively. The ground level, the building blocks so to speak, of the face, the mask, is made up, is arranged according to the receptive organs: forehead and cheeks. The ears belong to the cheeks and the nose to the forehead. Ears and nose are the organs of pure receiving. The nose belongs to the forehead and it occurs in the holy language to mean the whole face. The fragrance of sacrifices applies to the nose as do the moving of the lips to the ears. Over this first basic triangle, as it is formed by the midpoint of the forehead as the dominant point of the whole face and the midpoints of the cheeks, there now lies a second triangle which is made from the organs whose action animates the rigid mask of the first one: eyes and mouth. The eyes do not as it were mimic each other identically, but whereas the left one

**THE HUMAN  
FACE**

sees more receptively and uniformly, the right one looks sharply focused on one point; only the right one “sparkles”—a division of labor that frequently also eventually engraves its traces in the soft area around the eye sockets of old heads, so that then that asymmetric formation of the face becomes noticeable from the front, which otherwise is generally noticeable only in the well-known difference between the two profiles. As forehead dominates the structure of the face, so its life, all that wrinkles up around the eyes and shines out from the eyes, collects finally in the mouth. The mouth is what completes and consummates all expression of which countenance is capable: both in speech and finally in the silence behind which speech fell back: in the kiss. It is in the eyes where the eternal countenance lights up for man, it is by the words of the mouth that man lives; but for our teacher Moses who while he lived was permitted only to see and not to set foot upon the land of his longing, He sealed this finished life with a kiss of His mouth. So seals God, and so seals man too.

**PERSPECTIVE:  
THE EVERY-  
DAY OF LIFE**

**THE LAST**

**I**N the innermost sanctuary of divine truth where he would expect that all the world and he himself would have to be relegated to the metaphor for that which he will behold there, man beholds nothing other than a countenance like his own. The Star of Redemption has become countenance that looks upon me and from out of which I look. Not God, but God’s truth, became the mirror for me. God, who is the Last and the First, opened the doors of the sanctuary for me that is built in the innermost center. He let himself be seen. He led me to that border of life where the sight is allowed. For no man who sees Him remains alive. So that sanctuary wherein he allowed me to see had to be a piece of the supra-world within the world itself, a life beyond life. But what he gave me to see in this beyond of life is—nothing different than what I was permitted to perceive already in the center of life; the difference is only that I see it, no longer merely hear. For the sight on the height of the redeemed supra-world shows me nothing other than what already the word of Revelation bade me in the midst of life; and to walk in the light of the divine countenance happens only to him who heeds the words of the divine mouth. For—“he has told you, oh man, what is good, and what the Eternal your God

requires of you: to do justice and to be good with all your heart and to walk humbly with your God."<sup>1</sup>

And this last is not the last, but that which is always near, the nearest; not the last then, but the first. How difficult is such a first! How difficult is every beginning! To do justice and to be good with all your heart—that still looks like a goal. Before every goal the will can still claim it has to stop for breath. But to walk humbly with your God—this is no longer goal, it is as unconditional, as free of any condition, of any not until and of any on the day after tomorrow, as entirely today and therefore as entirely eternal as life and way, and for that reason as immediately sharing in eternal truth as life and way. To walk humbly with your God—nothing more is asked for here than a wholly present trust. But trust is a great word. It is the seed from which faith, hope and love grow, and the fruit that ripens from it. It is the easiest of all and just for that reason the hardest. It dares at every moment to say Truly to Truth. To walk humbly with your God—the words are above the gate, the gate that leads out from the mysterious, wonderful illumination of the divine sanctuary where no man can remain alive. But whither do the wings of the gate open? You do not know?  
INTO LIFE.

<sup>1</sup>Rosenzweig's slight departure here from Micah 6:8 may have been deliberate.



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