



PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE ABSOLUTE INDIVIDUAL

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TRADITION

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Preface to the first edition

This volume may be regarded as the second part of a complete work, the first part of which is the previously published *Theory of the Absolute Individual* and which, taken as a whole, constitutes the exposition of our doctrine in purely philosophical terms.

The delay with which – for various reasons – this volume is being published (the work, begun in the Alpine trenches, was already completed as early as 1924) must be borne in mind by those who, having followed us in the more concrete and vivid forms provided by the application of the same doctrine within the philosophy of culture and initiatory science, might be surprised by this publication; regard it almost as a step backwards; and perhaps fail to find in it what they expect. But, for our part, it was a clear duty to bring the endeavour already begun to a close, so as to establish when so-called modern ‘critical thought’ can make headway in relation to a point of view that is superior to it.

Furthermore, it must be firmly established that our ‘philosophy’, which does not end in itself – converging entirely upon a kind of postulation of action – likewise does not begin in itself. In its essential elements, what we set out is not merely the product of a modern philosopher’s subjective speculation, but rather the intellectual transposition of certain traditional, primordial doctrines which are not – in a certain sense – subject to change.

Anyone who regards rationality as the ultimate authority must, of course, take this for granted, consider us purely from a philosophical standpoint, and pay no heed to where whatever they may agree with might lead them. But we believe we also have another category of readers, for whom the study of this difficult

work will serve as a useful mental discipline, directed towards a further purpose. Such readers will therefore not find it too difficult to discern the frequent convergences between the meanings emerging through conceptual forms and dialectical transitions, and the meanings of teachings of a different order. How could they fail to notice, for example, the relationship between the two great options of transcendental freedom, which in our philosophy are known as the ‘path of the subject’ and the ‘path of the other’¹, with the two great traditions—the regal and the priestly—of action and identification, the Nordic-uranic and the telluric-southern, which already loom majestically amidst the twilight of myth and prehistory?² The doctrine of the ‘three epochs’, how could it fail to refer to the initiatory teaching concerning ‘he who stands; who stood, who will stand: who stands up there, in uncreated power; who stood down here, having been begotten from the image of the torrent of the Waters; who will stand before the blessed Power without end, perfectly resembling it’?³

Do not the tetic and autarchic moments of the dialectic perhaps encapsulate the meaning of the ‘procession’ and the ‘conversion’ of the Alexandrian tradition, of the pravṛtti-mārga and the nivṛtti-mārga of the Hindu tradition? In the transition from spontaneity to personality, is the meaning circulating in the cycle of myths concerning the ‘fall’—and, at the same time, in the Promethean myths—not revealed? In the former ‘categories’, is it not difficult to rediscover through logical deduction that which, under the heading of ‘involution’ and regression—as degenerating remnants of primordial states of consciousness—still remains in the traditions and mentality of the so-called ‘primitives’, or is ‘reified’ here and there in cosmogonic symbols? And in the latter ‘categories’, is the dialectic not, quite clearly, a subtle framework around which is organised all that has been traditionally and

uniformly taught in both the East and the West concerning the ‘transcendent’ possibilities and experiences of the spirit? These are but a few of the points that will become apparent to the discerning reader. It remains only to point out that, in our case, these are not extrinsic references: we did not start from a philosophical system, nor did we subsequently turn to mythology and mystery philosophy (as they appear to the ‘uninitiated’) to illustrate its concepts (as, for example, in the case of Schelling), but rather the opposite: we began with a certain non-philosophical body of knowledge, capable of deducing what lies hidden in traditional symbols and myths, and from this, through adaptation, reduction and negation, we have derived a philosophical ‘system’, the existence of which today has its own *raison d’être*.

Having said that, with regard to our work precisely as ‘philosophy’, we say that, *mutatis mutandis*, the present Phenomenology responds to a need similar to that which led Hegel to his work of the same title. *Mutatis mutandis*: for the premise here is not Hegelian panlogism, the universal legislation which the ‘Idea’ brings about in accordance with its own internal necessity and its own inherent force.

The premise is, rather, that reduction of every epistemological, ontological and deontological criterion to the principle of power and freedom of the real individual, which we have already carried out in our Theory of the Absolute Individual; taking idealistic immanentism to its ultimate consequences; affirming a decisive preponderance of the possible over the real, of contingency and freedom over every kind of necessity; culminating in an active realism of a transcendent and supra-rational nature.

We recall that from the premise—that an absolutely free being would not be such if, in addition to being itself, it could not also

be the negation of itself—we have deduced two ‘categories’ or primordial experiences: the subject of a ‘subjective option’ (the path of the Absolute Individual) and that of an ‘objective option’ (the path of the ‘other’).

The present Phenomenology establishes a set of possibilities consistent with this second option, or experience; whilst at the same time responding to the requirement, already formulated⁴, that the transcendental principles must not be reduced, as in the latest idealism, to empty and indeterminate forms, but must be capable of organising the elements of our real experience into a system of distinct meanings and values. The formulation of this system implies that of a specific set of fundamental forms. This does not contradict – as some might at first glance suppose – the concept of absolute freedom; inasmuch as such forms do not represent – as in Fichte, Schelling and Hegel – the continuous line of a more or less obligatory path, but rather a set of co-possibilities, of possible modes, each irreducible to the other, for experiencing the value of the Absolute Individual. One must never cease to bear in mind what, in this regard, we are about to precisely in relation the ‘category’ of the Absolute Individual⁵; and thus one must not fall into misunderstandings, which, as far as we are concerned, would have no reason to exist. Freedom, understood as the purely indeterminate, is the instinctive and passive freedom of the ‘objective option’; it is, on the other hand, when, through the experience of a quantum, that of the power to choose absolutely between distinct possibilities—each separated from the other by a radical discontinuity—and to dominate the whole through the part—it is then that, in that power of the limit, which was already associated with the idea of perfection in the Greeks, we find the manifestation of a positive freedom.

Apart from what derives from this factor of discontinuity and contingency, a fundamental point of difference from the various systems of categories in Romantic idealist speculation lies in this: that by 'category' we do not mean a logical condition of possible experience, but rather the sense of a possibility of experience,⁶ and, in a certain correspondence with the principle of the excess of possibility over reality, of freedom over necessity, within the system of experiences constituting Phenomenology, what is mere and common human experience appears only as a particular case. We regard 'humanity', in the fullest sense, as one of many possible conditions of individual existence, in no way privileged over the others. Man neither begins nor ends in man, even though modern thinkers – apart from the chimeras of faith and the 'constructions' of the intellect, which continue to form part of what is merely 'human' – may have reduced themselves to knowing nothing else. We have restored to the human condition the sense of an episode, of a possibility; two great epochs – which we term the epoch of 'spontaneity' and the 'domination' – extend in our phenomenology as the substance of possible experiences and as possible modes of being, on either side of 'man'. The view held by idealists—that the process of the spirit reaches its culmination and comes to a halt upon arriving at philosophy, religion or the ethical dimension of the absolute state— reveals, in our view, a limitation and a lack of metaphysical sense (in the literal sense: that is, a lack of meaning for that which no longer relates to bodily conditions) which is most peculiar amongst modern thinkers. Moreover, the 'modern world', far from representing, as a widespread prejudice claims, a privileged condition, is itself nothing more than an appearance, one among many 'cultures'; and the very possibility of falling into such surprising, such – why not say it? – childish illusions, paradoxically testifies to the absolute freedom of the

spirit.

One final point. Precisely because this Phenomenology encompasses a comprehensive view which, in a certain sense – as compared with a very limited understanding of the ‘immanent’ – can be described as transcendent, it is possible to indicate the ‘location’ and direction of our own most recent activity. The ideas concerning the crisis of Western civilisation; the critical challenges to the values of speculation and culture in general; the very assertions made in the political and social spheres; everything concerning ‘magical idealism’ and the valorisation and actual practice of the initiatory sciences and primordial symbolism – these various aspects of our personal activity converge in a single, precise meaning, which reveals the point at which the forms of ‘personality’ transcend themselves, and which alone justifies them.

In contrast to relativism, which holds that temporal contingency produces, by way of reflection, epiphenomenon or repercussion, a given ‘truth’ in knowledge and action, which then ‘phenomenalises’ the whole according to its form – in contrast to this, we have formulated our doctrine with regard to a specific aspect and a specific purpose, corresponding to a precise ‘moment’ of what a Hindu would call *mahāmāyā* – the ‘great play’. And grasping the rhythm of a vision that is itself, that transcends itself, and then once again seizes and reaffirms itself in this very transcendence, should be what matters most in this regard.

J.E.

Rome, 1929

1 Book I [Theory of the Absolute Individual, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 1998, pp. 67–93].

2 See *Introduction to Magic as the Science of the Self*, vol. II (1928), p. 321 ff., vol. III (1929), p. 65 ff. [On the ‘wisdom-oriented’ and the ‘heroic’, and on Western Tradition and The Dawn of the West, texts not included in the subsequent Introduction to Magic, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 1971]. See also H. Wirth, *Der Aufgang der Menschheit (Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Religion, Symbolik und Schrift of the Atlantean-Nordic race)*, Jena 1929; J.J. Bachofen, *Primitive Religion and Ancient Symbols*, Leipzig 1926.

3 Quoted in Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, VI, 17.

4 Book I, Preface, p. VI [Theory of the Absolute Individual, op. cit., pp. 1924].

5 See § 30 above

6 See, regarding the notion of ‘meaning’, Book I, Introduction (On the Concept of ‘Value’) [Theory of the Absolute Individual, op. cit., pp. 25– 29].

Introduction

In the first book of this work, we have outlined the general principles of a Theory of the Absolute Individual by adopting and integrating the positions of idealism through the reaffirmation of a concept of the Self: a) as pure freedom; b) as power and absolute immanence. In this second book, however, we wish to account for what has been termed the positive option (the choice of freedom for an order of self-sufficiency and dominion rather than dependence) according to a structured system of distinct meanings and values. Such is the Phenomenology of the Absolute Individual.

1. Insofar as they are based on freedom, both the order of the affirmative option and that of the negative option are contingent.

Therefore, dominated by the 'other', the contingency inherent in the second case leads to absolute indeterminacy: with regard to its own possible experience, the 'I' cannot be certain of anything, for it stands in an external and dependent relationship to the principle of that experience. Not so in the other case: here contingency becomes positive; that is to say, it is that of a free power to determine, which the 'I' appropriates, and thus it is possible to establish a defined, absolute, unequivocal system of forms – a system that is absolutely certain, precisely because it is the 'I' that will determine, by virtue of its dominion, its principle and structure.

A 'Phenomenology' is therefore possible within the framework of the affirmative option; it is not possible within the framework of the opposite option, by virtue of the very concept of the latter.

Let us refute some of the objections raised against the

possibility of a 'Doctrine of the Categories'. a) It is said¹: under a doctrine of the categories, the concept as reality may fall, but not the concept as concept; hence the abstraction of the former and its remaining outside immanent science, outside the universal of the concept itself. – The reply is: abstraction is, rather, the separation of the form of the concept from its concrete content (from its 'as reality') in accordance with the hypostasis of a concept of the concept which is presumed to be determinable a priori once and for all, regardless of the various articulations in which it takes concrete form. The 'concept of the concept' can, in truth, be nothing other than a particular moment of reality or of the realisation of the concept in general, taken amongst many other moments. b) Determination and 'quantity' – as others say² – fall solely within the realm of a 'thought' taken in and of itself, abstractly, and not in relation to the 'thinker', who is nothing but pure actuality and infinity. – Here we shall note: 1) That the objection stems from a doctrine which denies the act a power of which it is the very act; but then the thinker would be his own thinking, and hence his various determined thoughts: in these would lie his sole ratio cognoscendi, and the science of the thinker would consequently be identified with that of the thought-objects, that is, of the determinations in which the thinker will gradually reveal himself. Once the conceivability of a power of thinking is denied, so too is that of a 'thought taken in the abstract' (for how can one separate the thought from the act that thinks it?), and all that remains is matter qualified by an order in which the thinker and the thought are one—a possible object of a doctrine of categories. 2) That the objection concerning the determination of infinity is equally valid against a doctrine of the category (rather than of categories) or of the concept as concept (rather than of the concept as reality) – for, as 'negative theology' realised, by

determining supreme freedom as 'one' or as the 'absolute', one determines it no less than by determining it as multiplicity or as relativity – and that whoever raises this objection should, consistently, remain utterly silent, like a plant, or rather like a stone. And since they do not do so, in their objection they merely confess the presumption of a philosophy that believes itself to be 'concrete', when in fact a few generic and empty concepts suffice to exhaust it, in contrast to other philosophies which, on the other hand, feel the need to develop their principles into a coherent system. a) Moreover, it has already been stated on several occasions what one ought to think regarding the 'infinity' of the spirit from the perspective of the affirmative option. Here, the spirit is not a 'thing-in-itself' or the transcendent divinity of negative theology – it is, rather, the profound principle of the individual. Now, if one wishes to place this principle within a certain system of categories and meanings in which it assumes its 'possibility' – in full awareness of the freedom of this determination of its own – the spirit – and, to tell the truth, just like infinity itself – will be this system of categories, and nothing else. For, let us repeat, for us, the truth of the infinite does not lie in the point of the indefinite, but in that of a function of the limit which is master of itself. False indeed, expressing not perfection but rather defect, is that infinity which signifies incapacity, the impossibility of sustaining form: true infinity, on the other hand, is the positive infinity of infinite formative power, which has no fear of being contaminated in the act, but rather bears witness to itself therein and is what it wishes to be, infinitely. c) To anyone who might ask, therefore, whether it is perhaps claimed that the various degrees, which will be determined, are precisely the necessary and irreversible stages of the spirit, one would naturally reply: Yes and no. 'Yes' a posteriori, inasmuch as they express an absolute

affirmation of the individual, which has no opposites to it other than as error or as moments that can be reclaimed within it, given that this is precisely what it wills as truth. No, insofar as the value of individuality inherent in the affirmation—which, according to the principles set out, alone can guarantee the absolute certainty and irreducibility of both those stages and their specific sequence—implies that, at the deepest level of the affirmation itself, there is a conviction that, whilst it is thus, it may also, as soon as one so wishes and to the extent that one so wishes, be otherwise. d) But all this – one might then say – has no ‘objective foundation’, no necessity, no ‘scientific’ value! It is a purely arbitrary matter! – We reply: hold on a moment. All this is well and good, but it does not in any way mean we are conceding the ground. Before the words mentioned above can take on any pejorative meaning, the opponent is obliged to demonstrate the hierarchical superiority of a theory of certainty and reality different from that already set out in the first book. Our explicit statement—that the constructs within which the phenomenology of the Absolute Individual unfolds are, at their deepest root, essentially arbitrary—simply expresses that nous ne sommes pas des dupes, that we do, in full awareness of our freedom and in self-sufficiency, what the ‘objective’ philosopher, ‘scientific’ philosopher does; and, generally speaking, those who may, following this declaration, consider the present system unworthy of any consideration, do so unconsciously, passively, devoid of self-awareness as if in a dream. This arbitrariness simply expresses that what has been actively established: it is not whether one considers this doctrine to be on a par with others which might, by chance, be set against it. On the contrary: for us, these others are false; we do not tolerate them in our midst but attack them, and we absorb or destroy them, and rationally demonstrate (there is no contradiction here: for us,

reason is nothing but a form of affirmation) the necessity and truth of our system in opposition to them. The character of arbitrariness therefore does not concern the relationship with other positions, in relation to which the one we posit is to be described and demonstrated as universal³, necessary, and unique; rather, it concerns the relationship of the position to the Self, the meaning of the act that posits and imposes it. Necessary in relation to the others, here it is not so in relation to its creator, who remains its master. Once again, we return to the Cartesian distinction between wishing that a certain thing be necessary and wishing it necessarily. It is well known that nothing is further removed from the present order than scepticism: the affirmed principle of contingency here does not stem from the state of one who, uncertain and powerless, is at the mercy of 'chance' and external forces, but rather from that of an absolute, self-sufficient affirmation. Truth and philosophy as power.

2. If by 'category' one were to mean an abstract logical condition of experience, the phenomenology of the absolute Individual could certainly not be called a 'doctrine of categories'. Here it is not so much a question of concepts – still less of distinct objects – but, essentially, of meanings, of qualifications of the way in which the I can experience its own activity in general, an activity which constitutes the sole object.

Transitions do not occur from one given matter to another, but concern only the various relationships of the 'I' to activity, the various functions according to which this is experienced step by step up to a form posited as supreme. Therefore, rather than an order of 'transcendental conditions of possible experience', it is rather an order of possible transcendental experiences, the material and logical determination of which must be understood in the

sense of a contingent symbol and an evocative trace: it has no end in itself, but lies in the evocation of certain values of transition peculiar to particular relations – through which evocation one progressively constructing and making manifest the meaning of what constitutes the point of the Absolute Individual.

Let us add that this very warning from the author to the reader must here be linked to a situation which, to tell the truth, must be traced and justified within phenomenology, where it must itself be de-symbolised in the ‘sense’ of a certain transition or act.

‘Value’, insofar as it is the formative principle that lies beyond formations, can only be grasped through the creative leap of an act of pure freedom. The reader will note a certain difference between the mode of exposition characteristic of the first book and also of the annotations to the individual categories, and the mode employed in the construction of the latter: where it may be said that very little is given directly and with logical rigour. Instead, the subject matter is deliberately presented, so to speak, in potential – in many places one will simply encounter gaps, almost like exercises for intuition, passages of which only the terms and the solution are given. The reader must not be disconcerted but must adopt a particularly active and integrative attitude, working creatively on what is given logically. The more capable the reader is of this, the more that which cannot be communicated will come to life within them; and, on the other hand, insofar as it is given, it may reveal to them an internal connection, justification and coherence of elements which, at first glance – especially for a feminine-intellectualist mindset – might not even have been suspected.

Of course, the idealist will regard this warning as redundant, arguing that it demands what is already presupposed in any

reading. But this principle of idealism is abstract and generic; it says nothing about the quality, manner and degree of the act. The meaning in various passages (particularly in the first and third 'epochs') lies almost as far beyond purely intellectual understanding as the latter lies beyond mere letters and words.

3. The element of becoming that will generate the various categories, in the present order, is positive, individual, concrete, free and synthetic. a) In contrast to what occurs in the other approach, in this order the act is for its own sake – it is not for its object or matter, but the reverse.

Therefore: it is not a transition of desire, demand, dependence and movement towards something else from the power that turns towards it, but rather infinity that acts upon itself and frees itself in determined and central acts of power. It should be borne in mind: it is not enough, for example, to say that, in general, the 'I' affirms itself entirely in the activity that proceeds by transcending a limit, since it remains to be seen whether this proceeding arises from law and spontaneity or not, whether the limit resolves itself or not into a position of the 'I' itself and, if so, into which one – furthermore: whether the identification of the reality of the 'I' in the concept of a freedom that overcomes a limit is itself to be understood as a given, or whether it can be reconnected to a value. b) Essentially: in every crossing, the Self will never be in what has been overcome but always in that which overcomes – the crossing is not transcendence but affirmation; it does not alter the Self, nor does it carry it beyond itself, but rather reconfirms it, individualises it, and is the act of an ever deeper possession, of an ever vaster and more intense extension and domination.

A clear contrast, therefore, with all those views which posit becoming as arising from an obscure impulse, from an inescapable

law, from an immanent contradiction which, according to the 'heterogenesis of ends', pushes the limit – the concreteness and sufficiency of an individual act – ever further away, in a cycle of surprise, expectation and disappointment.

In particular: the consciousness and intentionality of the transcendental moment from which and for which the particular qualifications of value and experience arise. It may well happen that certain positions originally transparent within the 'I' are objectified and alienated, which means they appear, to a certain degree, as relatively unconscious to the conscious principle of further positing. Such an unconscious is not rejected; rather, it is the 'unconscious in act' posited by the philosophies of Fichte, Schelling and Hartmann that is rejected: one may well acknowledge the unconscious, the unintentional and the 'given', but only as a particular aspect of the object posited by an act which, in itself, is neither unconscious, nor unintentional, nor 'given'. c) The real synthetic nature of the element of the process itself is – let us say it plainly – intertwined with arbitrariness. Can the synthesis inherent in the motion of a heavy body, which, regardless of the variety of its situations, always satisfies the same equation, which can be determined a priori? This also applies to every law of becoming. Certainly, in becoming we acknowledge a certain dialectical rhythm, but this, as well as being compatible with its opposite (for the rhythm proper to the becoming of the subjective option is opposed by that proper to the becoming of the objective option), is here simply an elementary matter, an abstract possibility – in the sense Aristotle gave to these terms with reference to universals – not a conditioning factor but a conditioned element. To convey its meaning, we shall start from the concept of dialectics as understood by Hamelin⁴.

Hamelin's demand is for a synthetic method – and a positively synthetic one at that. He rightly points out that at the heart of the Hegelian concept of dialectic lies the presupposition that the particular, as such, is not a degree of being, but rather the opposite of being, something contradictory and negative; hence dialectics, as a process towards being, can only have a destructive and abstracting character – by no means progressive – and can only have the meaning of a 'negation of the negation', of a successive erasure of the particular which, strictly speaking, ought to culminate in nirvāṇa, in the indeterminate absolute of 'negative theologies'. This time, universality – which, for a thoroughly conceived Hegelian dialectic, is the point of arrival – Hamelin instead understands as the point of departure, as the poorest degree of reality which, through a synthetic development – from the simplest to the most complex and rich, from a state of deprivation and generality to ever-increasing and original degrees of determinacy and actuality – tends to realise itself in the individual as in its perfection, in its τέλειον, which does not exclude or contradict the various orders of determination, but rather encompasses them hierarchically and dominates them in a higher synthesis. – From the first volume, it is clear to what extent this neo-Aristotelianism of Hamelin is also our own⁵.

Synthetic dialectics will therefore stand in opposition to the Hegelian dialectic for this reason: that as its thesis or starting point it will take a particular understood as something that already, albeit incompletely, is 'being', in contrast to which the antithesis will not be its contradiction and negation, but rather its completion, its integration, something of which it was lacking; so that, by transcending it, the thesis attains, through a continuity of composition, a higher degree of perfection. In the effort to realise itself, every particular determines what it lacks, in which it

therefore defines and delimits itself and with which it tends to integrate. And the synthesis will be a vaster and more complex reality than the preceding ones in which it did not yet exist – which, in our doctrine, will mean: it will be a vaster possibility of power and a vaster dominion. For it is well known that, for us, particularity signifies nothing but inconvertibility, the indifference between the possible and the real, and powerlessness; the antithesis that arises in opposition to the thesis will therefore be a certain possibility that eludes power, which is not dominated within the function established by the thesis; and the process will therefore extend simultaneously in scope and in comprehension: the burning of an ever-higher flame of individuality and self-sufficiency in correlation with the ability to reclaim, organise and dominate the ever-increasing wealth of possibilities and spontaneity unleashed by the thesis. Like a tree, which rises all the higher the vaster, deeper and more perilous the zone into which its roots descend. The meaning of dialectics will therefore be: the development of increasing degrees of possibility, of arbitrary power and of inner agility, from a certain system of rigidity and univocal determination, towards the limit of absolute indeterminacy, which coincides with that of absolute individuation. – This is the first point, after which we may move on to what we actually wished to say about syntheticity.

Let us explain this with an image. A thirsty person manages to drink. In drinking, he evidently becomes complete, integrating himself with something. But this ‘something’ is not arbitrary; it is already determined – albeit negatively, by privation – by the state of thirst as water or the like, and nothing else, such as salt. Thus, here, alongside material syntheticity, there is a formal analyticity, arising precisely from the fact that the privation is determinately given. In Hamelin’s synthetic dialectic, we have, more or less, the

same thing, and so we can go a step beyond it. If a privation can be determined a priori in the thesis, if such a privation can be said to pertain to it not relatively but essentially (by a ‘being in’ and not by a ‘being to’), then what its particularity will, in turn, call for—and into which it may integrate itself—will be necessary; the process, which is materialiter synthetic, will remain formaliter analytical, analytical precisely because of that specific empty place presupposed in the antecedent. If concept of syntheticity is to be complete, we must therefore reaffirm the principle of the relativity of privation set out above, that is to say: taken in itself, every single position may prove entirely sufficient – it incorporates a moment of privation only from the point of view of other positions, that is, contingently and conditioned by the transition to something else. Such a transition is the prius which therefore determines the two dialectical correlatives, the thesis and the antithesis, the antecedent and the consequent; it is the locus of the actuality of value—which, as we have seen, consists of distance and interval—and is to be understood as absolutely free: free with regard to whether or not it will occur in the future, or with regard to this or any other possible qualification. Therefore: a) The process is purified of any character of need, necessity or inescapable law—a character which, on the other hand, reasserts itself the moment particularities, privations and antecedence are posited as ‘in-themselves’. Only in the event that a privation does not analytically and a priori inhere in a given element, but instead only under the condition that a certain transition takes place, only in this case does the necessity for that element to relate to another in which to be completed cease to exist. We may therefore accept the two fundamental premises of Buddhist metaphysics: 1) There is no craving because there is an object; rather, it is craving that creates its own object, almost as its symbol; 2) There is no craving because there is

deprivation; rather, deprivation is generated by craving: what comes first is an act that is, at the same time, the generator of both the deprivation of being and the correlative object towards which this very deprivation is directed, in craving. b) Just as there is no necessity for the transition in general, there will be none with regard to the particular identification of the relationship in which it takes place. There is no specific void in relation to which there would be no alternative but to fill it or not to fill it. The consequence always remains original, radically contingent and unpredictable in relation to the antecedent, whilst being connectable to it according to rational continuity once the synthesis has taken place. c) And now to a third point. We have said that phenomenology deals essentially with meanings, with the ways in which the act is experienced. The elementary dialectical rhythm must therefore be understood in this order, in which it presents itself as follows.

The 'I' asserts itself by establishing a certain interval, from which the relationship between an antecedent and a consequent arises. It detaches itself from something with which it was in a relationship of identity, and posits another to delimit it, which has the value of a will as opposed to spontaneity, of a subjective as opposed to an objective.

The antecedent then assumes, as such, a character of deprivation and tends to resolve itself into the consequent in order to integrate itself into the form proper to the latter. On the other hand, if the transition causes the point of the individual to flash into view in the consequent—upon which the emphasis of the 'I' shifts—the mediation takes a form that is, in its own way, immediate. If it is will in relation to the antecedent, it is therefore spontaneity in relation to itself, that is, in relation to that new

content which is posited precisely so that there may be a material distinction from the antecedent itself. Furthermore, if the consequent in such a movement negates the antecedent – as objectivity, as privation – it is now posited only in relation to it; on the other hand, this conditioning of the consequent is also a conditioned being (it is will only in opposition to the antecedent, and materially, as something that must not be what the antecedent is), which is another aspect – that of dependence – of its immediacy. Thus the possibility of a new synthesis opens up: that through which the ‘I’ frees itself from such immediacy or elementary mediation and goes on to realise it as an objectivity, through a movement that manifests itself in that of the consequent, which assumes and transforms the antecedent into its specific form; the antecedent is thereby released from its privation, whilst the consequent, in doing so, mediates that very form of its own. For whilst, on the one hand, this movement is mediation, on the other, it culminates in a ‘being’, in an identity, insofar as it abolishes the distance between the term of will and the term of spontaneity; but such a ‘being’ exists only in relation to, and within, a further distancing or passing, through which it becomes possible to experience it precisely as such. This distancing will imply, in its tetic and material moment, a difference—that is, a new content, a new possibility—the task of a vast affirmation according to an identical rhythm.

This rhythm, in itself, would therefore be continuous: one term is posited only in relation, which rests upon another relation, and so on: it is therefore posited only within the totality of the others just as, on the other hand, once it is posited, this totality itself is posited, through a connection analogous to that of organisms, where the part presupposes precisely the real unity, the whole that encompasses all the other elements, and the hierarchy

of their relations. The dialectical rhythm, let us say, would therefore be continuous in itself: but here 'in itself' does not exist. In the objective perspective, we know that the 'I' is dependence, that it is subject to the relationship; and thus the 'whole', as mentioned above, is not dominated, but is an infinite task. The subjective perspective, on the other hand, is that of a power which has its own limit within itself (αὐτοπερί γραπτες): its definite, sufficient, unequivocal affirmation thus provides, a priori, a ὑποκείμενον of total simplicity, through which consistency is imparted to the individual elements; by virtue of which there is not merely a process, a pure unfolding, but also a possession, a positive progressiveness, a process governed not by deprivation and desire but by affirmation. Let us therefore reiterate that, within the order of this choice, the dialectic referred to above is continuous only in potential, within the order of an abstract logical possibility: it is not a law, an a priori necessity, but a power, and as such is real only in and for the various individual, defined units through which the 'I', in affirming itself, actualises it. Its necessity and the law of its continuity remain entirely problematic: their measure and condition are the act, freedom.

Dialectics unfolds the varied transition of the opposites contained within the interval or unity of the contradictory elements proper to a given synthesis⁶: through it, one relation resolves into the other and the whole into an autarchy, into the supreme liberation of that in whom, precisely through the synthesis of contradictions, through that act of power which, in relation to the infinite, is simultaneously affirmation and negation, all the 'matter' is consumed in a pure relation of possession.

4. On the basis of the dialectic now outlined, we shall indicate,

in general terms, the moments into which the world of the affirmative option will be articulated.

Insofar as it simply presents itself, it has been seen that the subjective principle is a transgression, a heterothetic function – that is to say, it initially implies the appearance of that principle in the form of the objective. A form which, however, cannot simply be that proper to the order of the other option, where it is, in the final analysis, self-sufficient: the affirmation of the individual, if in its reality it does imply the other option, always does so as its own, as one of its own moments. That is to say: the moment of the object that bursts forth from the affirmation is subordinate to the realisation of the ‘I’ of this option. This means that the first moment will already lie within a range in which objectivity in general is complicated into a certain form in which it is related to – and, thereby, to a certain extent transformed by – positive value. Thus, initially, there is an objective formation of subjectivity, but one subsumed under the condition that its becoming is for the individual. If we establish the particular divisions through which this synthesis unfolds until it reaches perfect fulfilment – then we shall have a certain group of categories or partial degrees, sharing this common feature: that in them the ‘for itself’ is absolutely an ‘in itself’, that subjectivity, in its immediacy, materialiter appears as universality and spontaneity – and such will initially be the form for every possible position of the individual. These categories, which will constitute the first term or antecedent of the first relation insofar as the term of the relation (and thus the matter, the ‘potency’ of the individual), we shall understand under the heading of the Epoch of Spontaneity or of ‘Being’.

This objective position is, through the aforementioned

complication, in turn, and at the very same point, heterothetic; the determination of the objective as such, or the awareness of objectivity, implies a projection, a distinction, so that the point at which the principle of the first epoch perfectly realises itself is also that of the actuality of the consequent, that is, of that flash of insight into the individual as a pure interval which was already its reason. That upon which, through such a transition, value shifts to the limit of the epoch of spontaneity is the ‘other of being’, the non-entity, something purely negative in relation to the antecedent; negative but, at the same time, affirmative, since it is precisely from this that the other term receives its present significance; it is precisely from this that it is determined as being; it is precisely from this that it depends in accordance with what it now is – *ἕτερον* [the other] and no longer *αὐτόν* [the self]. Therefore. Negation and affirmation at one and the same time. To fully affirm the limit of the first epoch is thus to affirm an activity in which the unity of these two moments is taken up and brought to fruition – an activity that negates the other whilst positing it, and posits it whilst negating it in this sense: that it conditions the ‘other’s’ existence upon its being reproduced in the form of that which has transcended the state of mere spontaneity, a form which, in relation to the antecedent, has been described as negation, the non-being of that which is: subjectivity. Given such a situation, the becoming of the ‘other’, of the antecedent, is mediated by the consequent, which, through this activity, dissolves into the dependence of the immediate relation and posits it for itself – in reflection. We shall refer to this development, which will gradually reabsorb the forms of the first epoch, as the Epoch of Freedom or of ‘personality’.

The gradual positioning of the relation within the epoch, according to a series of states in which being is annulled in one

sense (as spontaneity) and posited in another (as an object of reflection); the absolute positioning, distinction and objectification of this relation at the limit. But, once again, the possibility of such an absolute distinction presupposes a further interval – that of the form in which the relation to an opposite is determined, to which the value is shifted: and this is the relation to the term of absolute unity, to the absolute ‘I’. The actual fulfilment of the reflective distinction leads to a new distinctive form, to the distinction whose terms are the distinction itself as opposed to absolute unity. The reflective distinction, in its mediation, resolves the immediate distancing (first epoch) whereby the ‘other’ is in the form of pure appearance and being; it idealises – that is, derealises – the ‘other’, for it takes it up again in the form of non-being. In short: it dissolves objectivity. The further distinction restores this objectivity.

Reflection is projected and distinguished to a deeper level. This signifies: creation, reflection that transcends itself by passing into absolute act, into realisation. It is the One that asserts itself, that possesses itself, by breaking free and liberating itself precisely through a specific act of power. Hence an Era of the Individual or of ‘power’: a series of states in which the interval is gradually bridged until the absolute synthesis of unity and distinction, in which the point of autarchy blazes, the very act of affirmative value.

A continuity dominates the three moments or epochs and brings them together, along with the internal articulations within each of them, in the individual simplicity of the absolute synthesis. This is the identical, eternal and formless substrate within which the entire process – differentiation, succession, formation – draws its possibility, lives and is consummated.

- 1 B. Croce, *Logica*, Laterza, Bari 1920, vol. I, section III, p. 149 ff.
- 2 G. Gentile, *The Reform of Hegelian Dialectic*, Messina 1913, pp. 915.
- 3 On our concept of the universal, see Book I of this work, Section VIII, § 8 [Theory of the Absolute Individual, op. cit., pp. 179–193].
- 4 O. Hamelin, *Essais sur les éléments principaux de la représentation*, Paris 1907, Part I, § 1 passim, and p. 31 ff.
- 5 Evola had devoted an extensive analysis to Octave Hamelin (1856– 1907) in his 1925 work *Essays on Magical Idealism*: Vol. IV, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 2006, pp. 127–132 (Editor’s note).
- 6 See Book I, Section VII [Theory of the Absolute Individual, op. cit., pp. 95–132].

THE ERA OF SPONTANEITY

SECTION ONE

§ 1 – QUALITY

The first epoch encompasses the objective state of subjective affirmation, that is, the aspect of it in which the moment of positing in general predominates: positing in general, in fact, is intertwined with the will to an object—that is, with the direction of the other option—so that, by right, it would unleash the becoming proper to this very option.

Such a becoming will therefore appear; but it will appear only in so far as it is already, to a certain extent, transformed and subordinated to a further instance, which is precisely that which is proper to what is not directed towards the object and which nevertheless, in its immediacy, generates—and cannot but generate—the said becoming. It is therefore a question of a synthetic nature, the aspects of which we shall now set out.

Taken in itself, objective becoming is known to have a certain meaning: it is a continuity, a uniform passing devoid of any defined limit; in extroverted spontaneity, in absolute identification and passivity with regard to the act, it flows indefinitely, all phenomenality and dependence. But here this very element is determined, fixed, distanced. It defines itself and thus has its opposite – the subjective value in general, which now, in this aspect of opposition, appears simply as the central function of the absolute limit, of the *αυτοπεριγραπτον* [self-limitation]. And the two correlatives converge in a first, immediate synthesis.

Consummated in the consequent, the series is syncopated; its continuity unfolds through absolute flashes which become its very condition. On the other hand, the consequent takes on the antecedent, denies it, absorbs it into itself; in the synthesis, this is preserved as the positive simplicity of self-affirmation, but as such

only insofar as the moment of the continuous burns within it and thus precipitates itself into pure appearance. It is value in the form of absolute experience, of self-affection, of pure self-feeling. It is the category of quality or original sensation.

We thus see the element of dependence inherent in objective becoming resolved and, as it were, contracted: it is transformed into self-dependence, taking on the character of immediate assent, of instantaneous compulsion and the wellspring from which the quality emerges – in a state of wonder. Likewise, when invested with the function of the limit, the moment of irreversibility passes into that specification of the negative moment which, as has been said, sets as a condition for what posits itself the dazzling, irreducible ‘this’ of appearance – that is, having within itself the consummation of the transition, not through mediation, but in naked immediacy. Quality in general, as regards its form, in the discontinuity it establishes within the series, implies a negation of necessity; but insofar as this is an immediate negation, it is not actually free from necessity; rather, it possesses it as an essential moment. That is to say: in the synthesis, the law of recurring dependence no longer features, but necessity passes from that form to the form proper to the immediacy of the limit, as it is given in the pure qualification of feeling itself. The ‘I’ is absolutely absent from quality – indeed: it is simply assent. It is simply its content; it is fertilised and deepened within it. At this elementary level, it makes no sense to say that the ‘I’ has sensation – it is sensation, and exists only as sensation. The formal aspect, or feeling, is one and the same as the material aspect or quality; and, in turn, the ‘I’ is one and the same with this unity. Such is the general meaning of this state: value as wonder and amazement, its original conception as the boundary between being and non-being.

In the order of reality of that which falls under this category, quality is the inderivable, the elementary substrate of every other form, that which is uniformly presupposed by them, albeit subject to the condition of the further determination in which they assert themselves.

From this first synthesis, the objective continuum is thus taken up again as the indeterminate possibility (reflecting the moment of deprivation that arises in that which, through the first dialectical transition, has become the antecedent) to which qualitative individuation opposes itself in its determined manifestations. Quality, therefore, dominates and conditions it; and the character of indeterminacy proper to the power of quality—to the division of the continuum according to this or that term, is the first blossoming beyond necessity; it is the positive conversion or individuation of the indeterminacy—governed by dependence—of the indefinite flowing and transmuting proper to objective becoming: whilst it remains clear that this power is nothing more than a power of mere appearance, nothing mediated but pure self-perception on the threshold of non-being.

The positive moment of progressiveness, achieved within this category, refers specifically to the discontinuous, which now, by right, dissolves and streamlines the series, whilst its defining element in this initial phase remains an indifference between activity and passivity; a point of passivity insofar as it is activity – since activity is present there as an instantaneous neutralisation that ends and contracts into mere appearance or sensation –; and of activity insofar as it is passivity – since passivity or appearance is consciousness, a limit, a determined assent that breaks the series, and is therefore one and the same with the position of that neutralisation. We may therefore define quality as follows: activity

that instantly blazes forth and hurls itself beyond itself – it is appearance.

Let us recall that, within the order of options, the categories of position and negation – always understood in a formal sense, that is, as moments of meaning in acts – can never be taken separately, but always in a functional connection. The most elementary form of such functionality in the world of subjective option is precisely quality, understood as the category, or state, now constructed: its synthesis is the *prius*, the concreteness presupposed by positing and negating— which are inherent in every determination in general—and encompasses them as its instrumental moments.

This, like every other determination in phenomenology, refers only to a meaning, to a state of consciousness: it is not, therefore – though it is worth noting – a question of this or that quality, but rather of quality as a category, that is, of the value of the act in general by which dependent continuity is interrupted and specified. Nor should this category be understood as the genus of quality: strictly speaking, qualities do not yet exist here – in the sense that, from the point of view of value, one cannot yet account for what might distinguish one quality from another (indeed, not even for the transition from one to the other), in the sense that, from the point of view of value, this difference is at present entirely indifferent. Whatever the matter or genus can a quality be considered, if at all, from another perspective, namely in relation to a possible interval, and the corresponding position of a consequent, which stands to the quality itself in the same relationship as that in which the quality, by asserting itself, has placed itself in relation to the objective series.

§ 2 – FEELING / ACT

Every category tends towards a determinacy or ideal objectivity – this, in correlation with the passage of the ‘I’ to a new point, to a contrary that defines and fixes it and which is identifiable as that in relation to which the antecedent exhibits a deprivation.

Now, what the quality, having become and been actualised, sets against itself and denies is the ‘not-this’, the other to that pure appearance of which it is constituted; that is, an activity not neutralised in instantaneous equilibrium but dissolved, unfolded over a specific interval. It is the element of discontinuity, the break in continuity between quality and quality, an element which the quality as such lacks but on which it simultaneously depends insofar as it is a determination, a defined limit set against mere transmuting continuity. Now, the ‘I’, passing from one qualification to another, does indeed accomplish this ‘qualitative leap’, but in so doing it also passes beyond the quality itself: it actualises the experience of such an interval, and upon this interval it shifts the value, the dazzling simplicity. It becomes consequent, and quality now stands opposed to it as the antecedent that turns towards it in order to integrate itself, to elevate the synthesis to a higher unity, to a unity sufficient for the relation by which it is limited, defined and made possible.

Now the qualitative ‘this’—the instantaneous, precise apprehension and affectation in sensation, resolved into the form of the consequent— is the point that is a point insofar as it is explained as a determined interval; it is simplicity that is the simplicity of a defined act; it is an immediate that is such only in the absence of an elementary dynamic release. ‘This’, that is to say, is ‘this’ insofar as it is its other as ‘this’ – just as, on the other hand, the other – the interval, the mediating element – is such only in

the form of quality, that is to say: in the new synthesis, actuality remains a natural spontaneity, a determined immediate manifestation, of a force rather than a state – that is to say, this force. The absolute assent contracted within quality is now unfolded, yet in no way removed from its original character. We call this category or state an ‘act’.

From a more particular perspective. Essential to quality as a terminus or limit is the negation that precisely makes it a terminus, that is to say: a potential for a position beyond the particular limit is negated, restrained within the position itself. The ‘I’ is absolutely the quality, but always as the ‘I’, that is, as something that would profoundly contradict the form proper to the quality: hence it exists in sensation only insofar as it is simultaneously present to it as an intimate constraint, as an impulse which is, however, halted and held in check. This means that quality is also feeling and that without feeling there is no real quality.

Now, in the quality that transcends, the point of equilibrium—where position and negation are fused together, specifically expressed by feeling—dissolves and is altered; the ‘I’, as has been said, is immediately present in the sense of an interval, which becomes the dialectical correlate of quality—that from which it is distanced, determined and rendered objective. The objective limit of the preceding category is conditioned by such a movement – upon which the synthesis is immediately reaffirmed, the bursting forth of the form of feeling into that of the determined act, in which the static unity proper to quality becomes actual simplicity, in which the irreversibility of the continuum—contracted as the immediacy of sensation within quality— unfolds anew, becoming the absolute self-repulsion that governs this original detachment, which is the act understood as the simplest of mediations.

To use an image, one might say that the uncontrollable, indefinite, chaotic objective flow has instantly contracted and been consumed upon contact with the value of its opposite, only to be resumed, but subject to a certain differential whereby, as if taken up again in a *List der Vernunft* [cunning of reason] through the various categories, it serves solely the manifestation of positive value. The present category represents the first element of this development: the element of a becoming that is no longer the objective one, whose interval no longer signifies a movement driven by insufficiency, as if drawn by a magnet, but instead already possesses something positive and determinate by virtue precisely of the qualitative unity that the interval now implies. We should also note that one can speak of an 'element' of becoming in a real sense only here – within the realm of the objective option there is no place for it: there, every particular act is insubstantial – having its value outside itself, it is taken up and absorbed into a series, the limit of which is deferred into an indefinite task. It is not real in itself as it is here, where the interval, as a dynamically integrated and mediated quality, is something closed, possessing its limit within itself.

Feeling, or rather, quality as feeling, is the medium between quality and act; it is the moment in which value is about to disidentify itself from quality, thereby making it an objectivity, which, as such, requires a further relation in which to be completed. We may call feeling an act (in the sense given to the term here) in its nascent state, and the act an integrated feeling.

The 'I' was sensation. Now we see it re-affirming itself in a broader sphere which, with the now-conquered interval of passing, possesses the very possibility of taking up and assuming what might be the 'other' of a limiting factor or a cause of sensation.

For and within pure sensation, this 'other' does not exist in any way; therefore, the category of the act implies the power to posit it—that is, to deny it—since the power to posit it takes it up under the condition of the central, subjective possibility, thereby preempting and destroying the possibility of an 'other' that would posit the other.

It should therefore be noted that, just as the 'I' was previously sensation, it is now an act; it is one and the same with this, and exists only insofar as it is an act (qualitatively determined). Its form, whilst now beyond the point of wonder, of absolute inner appearance, is nevertheless entirely on this side of any sufficient causality or will. It is rather indifference, the neutrality between the two: the pure arising of a natural energy which is also the revelation of the 'I', in coalescence.

The element of the act may be contained within causal, final, and other actualities – generally, within all the forms through which the central affirmation expands, multiplies, absorbs and actualises the privative non-being of the non-entity of power – but all this is not already contained within it. It would now be unable to account for it. As meaning, it remains simply the unity of quality and interval.

§ 3 – DIFFERENCE

The synthesis inherent in the act, insofar as it is stimulated by the transition into another quality, leads to the point of duality. Duality is its dialectical consequence. It is already contained within the act, but in an implicit and dynamically resolved form, for the act is dominated by the simplicity of ‘this’: only when the act is exhausted does it burst forth in its own form, that is, as the double limit provided by the element of the continuous, by the break in continuity. As such, it is a new value no longer encompassed by the act, which traverses and determines the act but also transcends it and opposes it as something essential to it, on which it depends but of which it nevertheless suffers deprivation.

At the end of this category, the central function thus turns towards a synthesis of act and duality. In this synthesis, the simplicity of the act must be split in two and yet unified within this very splitting. That is to say: the act will be distinction, the position of a pure sense of difference, but this only as a simple form, since the power of passing is very much present – at the moment of the antecedent – from which the content of the ‘other’ is taken up, absorbed and internalised. It is therefore the pure alienation of an experience, which the ‘I’ consequently continues to feel as its own; it is an intimacy directly linked to an elusive sense of otherness; it is the state of an ‘I’ that derives its certainty from the point of appearance, of the becoming within it—almost of another life—which nevertheless confirms it, in which it finds itself and perceives itself, and outside of which it is nothing.

In this state, every element of opposition is absent: for this to occur, the ‘I’ would need to possess its own content in opposition to the ‘other’, whereas it is identical to the act of positing, which

here immediately takes the simple form of a distinction: the 'other' is simply form, meaning, in the simplicity of an apperception, whose content is directly derived from the very certainty of the 'I'. In this category, qualitative unity through the other, from its original form – that is, through the interval in which it has become integrated as a category of the act – thus becomes sufficient for that which, in general, may exist according to a principle of difference; a difference which, therefore, has nothing quantitative or spatial about it, but remains a meaning, a fact of inner experience and of feeling proper.

In this immediacy, therefore, the irreversible character that has been determined for the act persists. Here too, there is no real possibility that dominates the manifestation: the value blossoms, is stimulated by this very manifestation, expresses itself through it, and comes into being.

Thus: here it enjoys itself under the condition of the distanced form now assumed by its enjoyment; from which, through its intimacy, almost in a miraculous impulse of spiritual generation, the difference is determined.

We have on several occasions critically demonstrated the inconceivability of an 'other' that is absolutely other, for, as such, it would not tolerate any relation whatsoever – absolute exclusion itself is still a relation – and could therefore not even be called 'other'. The 'other' is never a thing-in-itself, but always a form through which the identical can be experienced – and the first moment of its possibility, its first root in the still formless intimacy of the subject, is given – and, moreover, not merely given but also exhibited in terms of value – precisely by the elementary act of positing and distinguishing pertaining to this category.

The negativity through which the 'I' in itself becomes nothing,

an empty echo-chamber, and the otherness that takes up that content which is nonetheless transparent to it, in which it nevertheless immediately recognises itself, are two interdependent moments brought about simultaneously by the passing of the individual, which synthetically determines the new category. Here one might refer to the state of the spiritual veiled by Vedāntic *māyā*, by this elusive entity which, according to Śaṅkara's saying, 'neither is, nor is not, nor is and is not at the same time'; a moment of an indefinable sense of difference that has now become inseparable from perception – as the hidden potential of that which may create a distinct inner life beyond mere subjective flickering. Similarly, one might refer to the state of intuition as identification, as the possibility of allowing a specific experience to arise within oneself; whilst this experience is grasped directly as such – and is therefore self-experience – it is nonetheless felt as distinct; provided, of course, that this distinction is spontaneous, and therefore passive in relation to itself, rather than active, not arising from a central power of projection, as in the intuition we shall consider in the third epoch.

§ 4 – CAUSALITY

Meanwhile, the distinction can be determined objectively by the 'I', insofar as it further distinguishes itself according to a new power of the function. A unity sufficient for duality implies, in fact, the form of a negation by positing (or a positing by negating) the other, and is realised insofar as, at the very same point, the emphasis of value shifts to the latter. That is to say: the 'I', in realising itself through distinction, also becomes aware of itself as the interval of a 'transformation', and *māyā* is then revealed to it as the matter or 'potency' of a further synthesis which, by completing that sufficiency at the limit—already determinative in the previous form—drives the dialectical process towards a mediated unity of the interval, as opposed to that of simple distinction. Consequently, insofar as it is realised and fixed, the latter appears as an abstract genus taken up in a relation analogous to that which drew the act from quality.

Now the consequent is no longer a mere element of the transition, just as the first term is no longer the mere limit: the value, in the form of that through which that immediate subjectivity—which dynamically developed the act from quality—affirms itself solely insofar as it implies an internal distinction, is, rather, that of an elementary self-positioning; and the new synthesis will have as its terms this point – with the element of otherness inherent in it – and the aforementioned transformative interval. Its determination may therefore be as follows: a certain state will count as self-positioning only in correlation with another. But the meaning of this correlation will be a transmutation.

That is to say, the self-positioning must take place in relation

to the transformation of another, just as the positioning of the other must take place only under the condition of a self-positioning that is itself in relation to that very same transformative interval. It is precisely this interval, understood as a synthetic prius, that would bring about the further category, which we shall call qualitative causality.

To elaborate. In the experience of distinction, there are already two terms, potentially opposed, which are therefore given as united, in simultaneity, immediacy and coalescence. When, by virtue precisely of the movement of this category, the sense of self-positioning arises, the opposition becomes explicit, and the terms, insofar as they are bound together as the antecedent dictates, cannot but find themselves in mutual tension; their actual unification is then deferred to an interval which, on the other hand, they—in the very possibility of their coexistence—fundamentally presuppose. Such is the causal interval, a medium bounded on the one hand by duality as opposition, and on the other by duality as (reduced to) unity. The duality of the two powers—the identical and the other, the Yes and the No—in this state of consciousness is nothing but an abstract moment, subsisting solely in its immanence within a dynamism, in which the negation or the other exists only insofar as the positive term must, by right, be reaffirmed or recognised within it, just as that term cannot do without this reaffirmation.

The synthesis passes through two moments: the first is that in which an element stands in an inescapable correlation with something that stands opposed to it, which is essential to it and yet, insofar as it remains opposed, serves it only as a negativity. This is desire, as a state in which the being of an antecedent implies something whose negativity it suffers, in the very same way that

this something—or consequent—in turn has a being solely in relation to the negativity of the antecedent. The second moment is desire proceeding as an interval or dynamism; it is the transmutative causality in action in which, as has been explained, the distinction remains synthetically united with self-positioning.

If one considers the form of this synthesis, one finds qualitative change: the interval, referred to above, is properly speaking simplicity—intellectually ineffable and contradictory—in which the shifting and altering of ‘this’ – a simplicity which here certainly appears only in its transcendental aspect, in that elementary point and value from which proceeds the possibility and generic meaning of the particular changes that may develop the various qualities, or the further determinations of these given by the preceding categories.

The character of irreversibility or objectivity now passes into the immediate striving of the ‘I’ to be fertilised, to be aroused through the synthesis that generates and, at the same time, struggles against the other. Synthesis, outside of which the subjective is still nothing.

Thus: distinction leads to self-assertion; *māyā* then ceases to be the elusive sense of difference immediately linked to the identical, and plunges into an opposite principle: but in this it is properly speaking only the ‘matter’ that affords the possibility for the further formation of the ‘I’. The ‘I’ can now be received from it only in the form of an interval, which is causality; and only in the synthesis relating to this can it preserve the unity proper to the preceding category. The transformer becomes only through the transformed, and the transformed only through the transformer – without, therefore, this being a matter of the efficacy of a given element that possesses certain powers separately, but rather of an

absolute synthesis, in which distinction is an internal element. The Bohemian 'No' comes into being, is aroused, and is contained by the affirmation itself; just as it is nothing but the task of the 'Yes' itself, which can only be realised by triumphing over it, by denying the 'power' of God. The God of Light and the God of Darkness are nothing outside their relationship and their conflict. This is the prius; and in it the value of interiority turns into action insofar as it gives reality to the other through its transmutation into the subjective principle.

It may seem strange to assign desire a place hierarchically subordinate to the act. This apparent strangeness ceases when one recalls what the criterion of progression is here. The act is direct, homogeneous spontaneity; desire, as we have now deduced, implies instead a restraint, a distancing, a dynamic interplay of positivity and negativity which, from a formal point of view, is already connected to a certain mediation.

On the subject of desire, we should also bear in mind a very important point which, to tell the truth, applies to every other category. In desire, there is a correlation between one element and another, whereby the former is experienced as a deprivation and subordinates the completeness of its own being to the reaffirmation of the latter. In this lies a characteristic manifestation of the rhythm peculiar to this dialectic. Now

In such a situation, one would not say that the transcendental activity, as a value, is desire; rather, that it is that which brings about desire and, furthermore, in a mediating sense: a certain transition determines the element as an antecedent, and through the privation that then inheres in it, as such, desire arises, according to the exposition set out above. This is therefore a posteriori with respect to the absolute prior of the relation; the

true 'prius' is in fact that which can be understood as the transcendent with respect to all possible determinations and therefore also to their becoming, which nevertheless proceed from it and remain within it. Thus, in the present hierarchy, the raw act, desire, dependence, passion, etc., have no end or reason in themselves; they have no priority; they are nothing original. Such elements presuppose the transcendental point of a sufficiency, which establishes certain intervals of which they are the correlative syntheses or resolutions. As such, they remain rational, i.e. constructible. It is known, from what has been said in its proper place, that the irrational in this theory is placed far higher.

In general: one must not confuse the immanent end or transcendental value with the various material and relative ends that can be determined within the process: these ends are, in reality, nothing but means to that end. The very moment of distancing is, strictly speaking, itself a phenomenon, which exists solely by virtue of the simplicity of the absolute synthesis of dominion of which it is, nevertheless, an element.

§ 5 – SUBSTANTIALITY

The value of causality which exhausts its own position thus gives rise to a privative moment and, consequently, in accordance with the now familiar rhythm, to the possibility of a new synthesis.

The principle of dynamic transmutation, essential to the category in action, proceeds at the end of this towards the reduced 'other', where its unity passes into that of a state of existence, so that it effectively encounters its own negativity. Nor is it of any use to reiterate the relationship in a new desire and a new causality: from the point of view of value, this leads to nothing new; it simply repeats the situation from which the problem arose.

For self-positioning according to causality calls upon, as a condition for its resolution and objectification, a new element: the power of a negation that is no longer struggling, but pure. And upon this consequence, the synthesis must reaffirm itself if it is to possess entirely within itself that which makes the limit of its previous experience possible. This leads to the category of substantiality.

In substance, in fact, we have the situation in which negation immediately resolves—precise and complete—the transformative interval in which, in the form of causality, the identical and the other were opposed and bound together; we have the situation that yields, in simultaneity, the unity of opposites which previously existed in the form of tension and struggle. One term is the accident, which is an appearance, an immediately self-negating positivity, since it is the appearance of substance, from which and in which it exists. But on the other hand, it remains an appearance, and as such is simultaneously a negation of the very substance

which, appearing in it, passes through it. Therefore, in the state of spontaneity that brings about the movement, the two terms simultaneously are and are not, in mutual conditionality of being and non-being. The Self, the other, and the relationship converge at a single point; they are subsumed into a unity that is no longer their indifference, but rather the simplicity and continuity of a circular, synthetic function, which is at the same time one of distinction. What leads to this unity, what dominates and folds the interval back upon itself, is precisely the negative moment that causality, within its objective limit, provokes against itself.

Here, then, negation is no longer the effort of affirmation which, in affirming itself, unleashes its 'No'—that power which is therefore merely matter, a task of value; rather, it is a transcending of a direct position; it is a position which, in coming into being, exceeds itself, becoming a sign of value as of an essentiality that transcends it. The act becomes a symbol, a 'mystical participation': a world of allusive flashes emanating from activity, from the subjective now united with itself. No longer the 'potency' of a value arising from transformative tension, the principle of the 'other' is illuminated from within and, to the identical—to which it yields without a struggle—expresses the immanence of a higher principle.

If, at this point, an act appears that is mediation, it nevertheless emerges from an immediate perception and feeling, from that spontaneity which is the elementary substratum of the entire epoch.

Substantiality is a qualification of pure experience: the principle of transcendence, which it implies, remains an episode within it. In no way is it the principle of a power of freedom presupposed in the act: it is a content, and not a power, of

experience.

It is clear that the substantiality of which we are now speaking, having its meaning in a non-sensible state or mode of consciousness, has nothing in common with substance as a concept, which is an accident internal to the possibility of that other state of consciousness, from which the category of discursive reflection will proceed; a state of which, therefore, nothing is yet known here. – For this experience beyond the struggling and torn unity of the ‘Yes’ and the ‘No’ – for this form in which activity unfolds and liberates itself into a value that is no longer one of hatred, overwhelmed and resolved, but a transcendent meaning – we might rather refer to the order of theurgical practice, to the original ‘tragedy’ of symbols, to ‘Dionysian’ exaltation and excess.

These references, therefore, are purely allusive and indicative; and here it is indeed worth taking the opportunity to reiterate what applies to every other reference, whether given or yet to be given, to phenomena having a more or less determined or determinable empirical locus. The development of categories as forms of value is not temporal or ‘historical’ (time and history are but particular moments of it), and the various hierarchical relationships may be concentrated and present at a single point or arranged in any manner within this or that series, without this in any way detracting from their internal sequence, which is purely ideal and is determined solely by the various relations of individuation contained in the original assertion. These references serve merely to suggest that categories are not abstract moments of a logical function, but are necessary forms deduced from the analysis of ‘a thought in general’; rather, they are concrete experiences, living possibilities of the individual, each of which,

moreover, whilst implying its antecedents, can nevertheless close in on itself in a self-sufficient manner and assert itself as the final instance. It is likely that the conceivability of the categories set out so far does not appear clear here independently of the system of others which the construction has not yet encountered: for example, one might ask what meaning quality, act or feeling can have when no matter, space, special organisations, etc., are presupposed.

Here one falls into the error, already pointed out several times, of rejecting at earlier stages what appears only in relation to later stages reached synthetically. Matter, space, etc., become necessary conditions and inseparable elements of quality only within a category, which is certainly not that of quality itself, and prior to which not only their necessity but even the mere possibility of their existence is an abstraction. Given that the world of quality and sensations cannot in any way be deduced from external experience without falling into a vicious circle, and that, on the other hand, external experience is formed only through that world; one ought indeed to have been led to attempt a reversal of the position, namely to regard the qualitative as the original ground of reality and to deduce from it the physical and the objective (in the common sense of the term) as a further and particular qualification thereof – just as the present theory holds. According to this theory, one must therefore not even refer, for example, to a matter possessing its own quantitative laws, initially understood *sub specie qualitatis*: since this substrate, beyond the form of its appearance in quality, is not something actual, it can only be coherently affirmed from a point of view that is not that of quality, but subsequent to it; a point of view which, however, in accordance with what has been said above, is not imposed, the ‘I’ being able to remain, if it so wishes, in a state of purely qualitative

consciousness. Hence the illegitimacy of the very recourse to considering quantitative determinations as something that already exists, if not actually, then at least potentially within quality, so that the latter, insofar as it is simply such, would be a 'deprivation'. But potentiality is potentiality only as the term of a relation; the deprivation that defines it arises solely in relation to a distancing which, let us repeat, is grounded in the unconditional; therefore, it cannot be regarded as analytically or by right—to refer to the present case—contained within the original affirmation, which may unfold in an incorporeal world, in a purely qualitative world. One might object by asking for an explanation of the congruence between with those determinable according to quantity or according to other subsequent categories? Even if this were conceded, it says nothing more than that from the primitive substance of quality more individual and complex forms can be derived, which consequently contain, as an abstract genus or elementary condition, the determinations of that substance; with which, therefore, they cannot but stand in a relationship of solidarity.

It remains to justify the very possibility of setting out these first categories.

There is no need to refer to particular forms of cognition, which could not demonstrate their validity in this context; and, on the other hand, 'transcendental reminiscence' and the automatic development of the concept according to the a priori order of an objective reason are rejected; it suffices, instead, to hold fast to the principle of the ideal nature of history in general, according to which history is real only in those assertions in which transcendental activity is posited from a standpoint which, in itself, is certainly meta-historical. The determination of the

categories then appears simply as reflection upon a certain order of possible acts of freedom.

§ 6 – OTHERNESS

From the experience of difference, the 'I' derives an initial reflection of interiority; the development of causality integrates this principle with the element of positing, which, in the relation of substantiality, by synthetically uniting with a negative moment, causes the 'I', in actualising itself according to the ultimate form, to find a mediation as the content of its immediacy or elementary spontaneity. It is then, in a certain sense, awakened to a new form of being: a power of self-positioning flashes forth as a value at the limit of the ultimate category, yet—always in pure absoluteness, unleashed manifestation—and therefore in accordance with the point of a natural self-consciousness or individuality. A point of crisis, a point of contradiction between the mediated and mediation, between form and content-matter, 'power', the imminence of a new synthesis.

And indeed, the 'I' breaks free from ambiguity: its new value is a being-for-itself and cannot tolerate the condition, the mediation: the substantiality that gave rise to it must be torn away from itself; it must be taken up and subsumed transformatively into what follows. Its mode must be placed at the service of a spontaneity that dissolves of its own accord. Thus it resolves itself into the following meaning.

According to the moment of the antecedent – that is, of what is realised by the limit, by the objective fulfilment of the substantial function – the 'I' directly posited and distinguished (or negated) itself, proceeded and returned to itself in the other. Now this form, which applies itself to itself, which takes itself as its object – is the further synthesis: position-distinction in the form of self-consciousness; an 'other' (that which was the moment of the accident) placed within the mediation, within the circular

unity proper to self-consciousness as substantiality knows it, by a self-consciousness which thereby projects its natural form, which, by distinguishing itself, transcends itself and, by transcending itself, affirms itself, thereby freeing from the state of pure experience—of absolute ‘being-bound-to-onself’ proper to tetic immediacy—an ‘other-than-self’, a principle or centre of experience.

Everything that, in general, appeared in pure internal apperception will therefore, in the new synthesis, gradually acquire a mediated form right up to the mode of subjectivity itself, where, in the exteriorised, liberated ‘a-self’, there will be precisely the liberation of the individual from its own mediation: a situation in which the very mode of substantiality appears – passing over into something which, as identical to and revealing that which passes over, in turn passes over, whilst remaining a simple, immaterial element of distinction – elevated to a higher function, subsumed under the consequent, integrated into it.

This category – which we shall call ‘otherness’ – constitutes the ultimate power, and the point of alteration, of purely natural subjectivity, of the order in which the spontaneity of an instantaneous, inner sensation was the form of every possible position. It therefore develops in tandem with the progressive incorporation, as the substance and task of the new function, of everything that was previously posited, so that it unfolds in a series of moments corresponding precisely to the categories in which the immediate position unfolded. Only at the end of this series is self-consciousness active – it affirms itself – in opposition to the totality of mediation.

A) PERCEPTION – At first, it is the very simplicity of the thesis that passes into a ‘deprivation’, corresponding to the state of the ‘I’ as ‘this’ or quality: but immediately it is reflected and detached in a form that rudimentarily and obscurely reflects the form of that self-consciousness, which instead now passes into that which is aroused precisely in the act of this detachment. The distinct remains dominated by the element of immediacy proper to the thesis and constitutes the simplest element of the mode of that which exists in itself. We call ‘perception’ the immanent function on which it depends.

Note: this is not yet a matter of spatial exteriority; this is constructed from an absolute distinction—impossible here—in which the sense of the subjective ‘other-than-self’ is as yet nothing more than an impulse linked to the function and the matter it engages with. The ‘other-than-self’ of the perceived, which reflects it, is entirely indeterminate: it is the elusive *πρωτη υλη, ασχηματιστος ουσια* [prima materia, formless substance], the simple substrate of a ‘presence’, of an objective possibility, always given qualitatively, as a state of spiritual consciousness. The ‘in-itself’ of this ‘elementarity’, of this ‘subtle nature’, is not individuated, actualised or animated except in the subsequent moments correlative to the greater individuation, energisation and sufficiency of the distinctive power.

B) AFFECTION – The distinctive energy which, in the perceived, objectifies—as a further ‘reflection’ and integration of the latter—the moment of ‘being-towards-another’ by which the perceived, as such, is conditioned, determines the category of passion; through this, what was a simple, inert substrate or possibility of matter is transformed into an elemental force, into a dynamic nature. Here, the indeterminate individuality, aroused in

perception, attains a degree of mediation analogous to that possessed by the act (§ 2) in relation to quality (§ 1).

C) RECOGNITION – Having been roused to movement, the perceived is a ‘not-self’ and a ‘for-another’, two moments which, in the previous form, still lie in extrinsic coexistence. A further attempt at mediation, however, aims to make it a concrete unity – in which case the obscure ‘potency’ must come to life, must appear as something intrinsic to itself.

Self-consciousness is thus called upon to project something of that which it itself is, if the further power of distinction is to take place: it must no longer posit the other except by recognising it; and insofar as it does not recognise it, it does not posit it (as that which must be posited).

This occurs in various degrees which, owing to their uniformity from the point of view of value, need not be elaborated. Along these stages, whilst the distinction may seem to fade from a material point of view, in reality it becomes more intimate and turns towards absolute expression: for the more the other, as such, reflects the identical, the more absolute the distinction becomes. It remains, however, that even at the limit of such forms, the interval, with respect to the terms, is immediate and extrinsic: neither the one nor the others have yet been taken up into a continuity.

The aforementioned intermediate series of recognition determines the awakening of ‘nature’ in its various hierarchies, given in qualitative formations—that is, outside space and time—in formations made up of inner experience, of ‘mind’, such as ‘archetypal’ or ‘subtle’ ones: from the limit of the indeterminate *δυνάμεις* plunged into death and the fiery darkness of the mineral

realm, the dormant forms of the plant kingdom are generated; and from these, the dreamlike and demonic life of the animal kingdom, which gradually brightens until it reaches open consciousness. The development of these forms, in which life gradually awakens, expresses nothing other than the objective moment of the very process of recognising itself in that will to distinction which governs it. In the becoming of all these forms in the face of it (this 'in the face of' therefore always remains an 'interior', something spiritual), self-consciousness gradually purifies itself and frees itself from its natural root, until, in recognising consciousness itself, it bears the principle within itself and accomplishes the distinction inherent in the end of the moment; and it is this liberation that is the immaterial prius and τέλος which generates such forms; it is the sole reason why and in which they are and come to be.

D) EXPRESSION – To take up, within the simple subjectivity which recognition has liberated from autonomy vis-à-vis the other, the very act of recognition itself, which is the contradiction of that autonomy; to liberate it, therefore, further in relation to the transcendent principle aroused by the final distinction – this is the subsequent moment of the category. But to integrate the subject with the act of its recognition – that is, to recognise it no longer in a perceptual-ideal or Apollonian manner, but in its very self-positing, in its active moment – leads to an identification: the distinction internal to the object of this identification, inasmuch as this object becomes precisely subjective activity—an activity that is distinct yet reflected and self-contained—such an internal distinction must therefore simultaneously determine a distinction according to another dimension, namely that which carries the immanent principle of the category beyond itself, which breaks

the equilibrium of recognition. The 'I', which is no longer merely in its simple self-knowledge but in its immediate self-presentation as reflection—is itself a distinction—expresses. It is the infinite sacrifice and the miracle of the Word, the miracle and the mystery of the light and beauty that gush forth from the act steeped in nature in a sense of wonder (which, in its reflection in human art, will be the sensation of genius) resonating with the act of the 'I' which alienates its own elementary power in order to stir itself and sculpt itself into a deeper interiority. In this, the contradiction inherent in 'natural self-consciousness' begins to reach its crisis, yet even now it does not resolve it: the 'I' still *Is*, and does not possess, the Logos; the Logos seizes it, and only in this does the experience of the higher value flash upon it. Here expression is in a 'free state'; it is absolute effusion, a cry in which beings themselves utter their 'Name', expressing themselves as nature and in accordance with nature. As for the level of this experience, one might refer to what Indian esotericism calls the mantra – the 'sound' and 'essential or universal name' of things, the primordial expressive power within which the very 'bodies of activity' of the 'gods' (*devâta*) flash into view in a magical apparition.

E) REVELATION and – Finally, not merely the form of the 'I', nor even its movement, but precisely that superior, ineffable principle which has been revealed to it by distinguishing all this, is distinguished by the power of the category now turning towards an absolute interval, and is placed in a position which is, simultaneously, a distinction of itself.

Such is the revelation, the appearance of the 'God', of the 'Sun', of the pure value beyond the body of activity of the *λαγοι*; of the *ουσιᾶ* [substance] at the very depths of the world of the *δυναμεις* [potentialities]. In this, the entire natural power passes

away.

Everything that the 'I' has mediated is now mediated by the 'I'. The 'I' has rendered itself entirely empty, has exhausted the ultimate sacrifice – more strictly speaking: the natural power that manifests itself as the 'I' has here attained complete self-consumption – whereby the category of otherness has reached its limit, its total realisation.

It is therefore within otherness that the decisive phase of the purely spiritual, purely and amorphously qualitative world unfolds. At the first awakening of self-consciousness relating to the consequence of substantiality, the ideal limit—the indeterminate possibility—of existence in itself arises: the *πρωτη υλη*, the 'chaos', the 'waters'—the first phenomenon of nature's original 'reflection'. As this self-reflection gains further strength, the elusive otherness becomes energised, moves, takes shape and becomes illuminated in forms in which the subject recognises and distinguishes itself ever more clearly. This brings about the experience of a hierarchy of 'types' – an experience still free from space, time and particularity. The transition from the experience of one such form to another characterised by a greater degree of perfection and internal transparency – for example, from the plant to the animal – is nothing other than the transition from one degree of the subject's spontaneous self-knowledge and self-distinction to a higher degree. At the end of the moment of recognition, a sort of equilibrium is reached: the natural subject finds the reflection of itself as the matter of experience. The point of the individual, however, which governs development, disrupts this equilibrium: it gives itself, in its supernatural essence, within experience. The Word, the articulated world of the 'Names', heralds 'divinity' and, in the experience it brings about for the 'I',

prepares the ground as the body in which that divinity may become incarnate. Finally, in the God who appears, who takes the form of another, the supreme principle itself—the ‘prius’ of the category—is distinguished. Then the world of quality passes away: beyond pure nature, the value that transcends it flashes forth; beyond experience, its very principle. A spirit hovers over the ‘waters’. The ‘dream of Brahma’¹ fades away and, through absolute distinction, everything becomes a waiting for the eruption of that order, from which physical reality will arise – the order of the eonic powers.

1 In Indian metaphysics, whilst the 'night of Brahman' alludes to the unmanifest state, the 'dream of Brahman' alludes to the order of those transcendent experiences which, whilst belonging to manifestation, lie beyond the physical order, beyond the order of existence and of the subject-object law, and constitute the so-called 'subtle world' or subtle state (sūkshma) of the world.

SECTION TWO

In the preceding categories, there is a gradual emergence of value within the objective in relation to the particular impulse from which the objective has now derived its condition; this emergence, through the category of otherness, brings about the crisis of that very thing in which it emerges, and thus attains to pure self-expression. This final point, however, is itself immediate; as such, it is inseparable from the relationship with that with which it stands in a relationship of simple negativity, so that the meaning that animates it is not truly in itself, but still in a state of ambiguity. To overcome this, one must be able to rule out the possibility of a 'nature' which, in affirming the principle of the individual, also affirms itself – and this implies that the simplicity that has emerged at the limit of the section must become the 'potency' of a further development: securing itself through a free positioning in relation to itself, that is to say: the potency to dissolve its own substance into an objectivity, and this, to tell the truth, no longer qualitatively, but rather according to a principle of real initiative.

Brought about precisely by the act of bringing about an 'other', the individual IS in bringing such a condition into objectivity – in the sense of reality, of existence. Its evident nature now coincides with this further distinction, identical to a creative act of existence. Development taken to its limit will yield an absolute, physical object, which is therefore solely the result of the pure affirmation of the value of the choice, thus bringing the task of the first epoch to a close.

§ 7 – POWERS OF EXISTENCE

At the point where the category of otherness attains its ideal objectivity, the moments which it, as an act, kept resolved in a dynamic synthesis will be found in a static state. These moments are the simplicity of a complete, circular mediation and the absolute self-exclusion of this very unity, which thus, in a certain sense, splits in two. Regarding the second moment, it is important to note that it distinguishes sharply from the various distinctions encountered in the preceding states, and even in otherness-in-act itself, because in those cases—since the form of the individual had not yet appeared—a certain complication and impurity were essential to the relationship, so that its terms always remained in some way fused together, and opposed, more than anything else, by virtue of matter. Here, however, the relation is simple; each term takes the form of the absolute point, and thus realises a perfect indifference, a pure opposition of identicals.

That is to say, on the one hand there is the element of quantity, and on the other the simple unity proper to the distinctive moment of otherness. As these two points converge statically, merging in a certain way with one another in the ideal term of the previous section, the form of the spatial relation is established therein: that is to say, the form of a simple and tranquil medium constructed from the interval of the pure exclusion of identical and indifferent terms. If one fixes the point of the element's identity in connection with the simplicity of the relationship that splits it in two, one deduces, in addition to that of homogeneity, the character of reversibility of the spatial form. If, on the other hand, one fixes the point at which identical elements are nevertheless different, one obtains the element of the pure quantum and, beyond that, a possibility of qualification within

the homogeneous itself, which is revealed, for example, in the paradox of non-superimposable symmetrical figures and which, in general, makes possible the principle of orientation or direction. Finally, the simplicity of the relation can be developed into a recurring affirmation of itself: one then obtains a progression of elements, each of which is a relation and the terminus of a relation, respectively, to the preceding and following elements; conversely, one can take the simplicity of an element as that of a relation and allow multiplicity to proceed in the opposite direction – analytically. Hence the continuity of form. The continuous, homogeneous and reversible system of the manifold is therefore the form determined by the experience of the limit of affirmation according to otherness.

On the other hand, by traversing the function of otherness, the ‘I’ comes to assert itself at a new point of absolute causality, of a principle of action. To tell the truth, this element was already present within the category (indeed, it was what specified it): yet not strictly speaking in itself or as such, but rather given in a sensation, perceived. Although the irreversible course in positing it was negated, it, in its immediacy, remained connected to this negation and, in this, in a certain sense, was still dominated by the principle of spontaneity. The point of real causality is therefore to be understood properly as a consequence that is efficient in the fulfilment of otherness, yet transcends it. The ‘I’ attains it only by passing through once more – specifically: by passing into the interval of a pure freedom that constitutes itself precisely as a distinction from that elementary appearance of its own, which at its end defines the spatial form.

Beyond this lies the synthesis: the spatial relation realised in a term which, nevertheless, is its distinction – that is, an active,

existence-determining act of representation (*vorstellen*). In representation, we shall understand that dual, inseparable distinction which, on the one hand, is the absolute passing of the instant (temporal limit), the becoming-present of a 'this' and a 'here' that distinguishes itself from the static background of indifferent spatiality; on the other hand, it is the freedom that transcends itself or its quality, according to a distinction, whereby it projects itself forward (*vorstellt*) and renders its own determination existent (*entlasst*). Hence the form of an objectivity whose determinability is, in general, spatial, and which, on the other hand, is carried beyond indifference—beyond the empty, indeterminate possibility inherent in the pure element of space itself—solely by the temporal limit: it is the instant which, in a distinction from pure spatiality, also renders the element of the latter actual at a defined point, which may now properly be called reality, existence. The spark of representation synthetically unites space and time or, more precisely, is the *prius* that is determined through the unity and distinction of space and time – and through it the elementary principle for the possibility of a physical and quantifiable world is established. The medium of this conjunction is, in any case, properly the spatial element, which on the one hand is the form of that which is distinguished, and on the other is the form of the act of distinction itself, of the instant or limit of time, inasmuch as in this the 'I' brings into being for itself, in an existence (in a relationship of identity of differences), its own element realised through the splitting inherent in otherness; an element which now becomes otherised as the spatiality of the posited object.

The 'I', as mediated freedom, implies space: it posits itself by opposing, and in so doing by positing, unfolding and actualising space; and thus transcends spontaneity, the limit of which is the

element and the freedom of space itself. Representation is a spatialised and liberated quality – repelled, emancipated.

The concept of representation implies the possibility that the variety of the represented – which, however, for the time being, are posited merely as such, without any further principle of individuation and specification – may be subsumed into the homogeneity of a space-quantitative system. It remains, however, that the foundation of relation here simply stands as the opposition to an identical opposite – alongside the simplicity of the pure representational relation, it yields nothing but an indeterminate genus. In a word, the law that is posited for the time being is simply that of spatiality or quantifiability in general.

The following points emerge from the preceding construction of the representation: 1) Space is not strictly speaking a distinct, autonomous form, but rather a moment of a category. It is not actual in itself: it becomes, it is actual, only in its distinction – in the reality that constitutes it as an irreducible moment. It is nothing outside the principle that distinguishes it, thereby giving reality to an object in general. There is no space prior to its distinctions or fillings – which is not to be understood in a nominalistic sense, but in the sense that distinction, and the abstract substrate of spatiality, are inseparable terms of the same relation. It follows from this that space is inseparable from time (strictly speaking, for the time being, from the limit of time or the instant), the latter being connected to the moment of reality. 2) Spatiality, since it is present in the synthesis of representation by way of distinction, is indifferent to the particular nature of what is represented; that is to say, the freedom of the specific positions derives no material condition from it.

Existence objectively expresses, and thus reflects, the character

proper to the pure immediacy of the individual, as it flourished in the preceding category. The outline of justification, or reason, lies here not in the matter of the represented object – which is absolutely without further foundation – but in its being causally for the ‘I’, in the principle of action associated with it: such is the advance of the present category over that of otherness.

In this regard, it cannot be said that the ‘I’ is merely a representation, as was claimed, for example, in relation to substantiality. The position of the function now implies a certain distancing from it. Representation is possible only insofar as the ‘I’ is already, to a certain extent, a principle of experience; yet, whilst it becomes possible as such to itself only through representation, the ‘I’ experiences this in a certain sense as accidental. This is the characteristic that distinguishes the categories of the second section from those of the first, in which the ‘I’, the content and the function are entirely fused together.

The phenomena of the first section have often been referred to as something purely internal: this, however, should not be taken literally.

True internality only makes sense in contrast to an externality, and this is not at issue in the preceding forms. That ‘purely internal’ refers to what Bergson calls the ‘plane of the dream’ and which, in truth, corresponds to that primordial matter in which object and subject, external and internal, are still confused together. It is, on the other hand, with space that the first element of internal experience proper arises; and, conversely, the formation of the first principle of internal experience – certainly not ex abrupto, but in a functional relationship to the preceding forms – is the foundation of the possibility of quantitative-spatial elements.

It also follows from this construction that spatial determinability implies quantitative determinability. What has been termed the temporal limit or representative instant is the actual element that resolves what is a pure quantum into the concrete simplicity of a spatial synthesis proper (which we denote by the term 'spatial distinct'). Secondly, it follows that the space-quantitative element is essentially relative, which leads to continuity and infinity. This is by no means inconceivable, provided one knows how to recognise the proper place of the elements. As Aristotle had already noted, it would, on the contrary, be the case if the abstract 'potency' (υλη) of quantifiability as such were not infinite. But this substrate, it should be remembered, is merely a moment: it exists only in relation to its distinction, that is, to the specific position which opposes itself through continuity and indifference, and is individuated in spatial fillings or syntheses and in definite numbers.

The character of homogeneity pertains to the dimension of space. It is a well-known criticism that the theory of non-homogeneous space or space with finite parameters is ultimately forced to presuppose an elementary homogeneity, since without this one would end up with a discontinuous entity, in which no measurement would be possible and no transition determinable; so that, in truth, the very concept of space would collapse and one would move to the purely qualitative. There may, however, be a relative heterogeneity, which does not exclude homogeneity but is, in a certain sense, fused with it. In addition to the aforementioned property relating to non-superimposable symmetrical figures, one might refer to a non-Euclidean world, whilst noting that here one would not so much have the aspect of pure spatiality (which strictly speaking refers only to the general

substrate of quantifiability), as that of a specific distinction or individuation of it (by which one borrows, as a particular case, Euclidean space itself, as the order of a specific reality).

A similar consideration may be made regarding the dimensions and directions of space, which, a priori, may be said to have none of its own, in the sense that it is the indeterminacy and indifference of every dimension and direction. These are determined solely by the nature of the various distinctions which, by individuating space in accordance with specific values, cause it to come into being step by step; and the question concerning them could not be resolved by a deduction from the pure concept of spatiality, that is, within the scope of the category currently under discussion. Logically, were the content of the categorical statement to require a space of any number of dimensions, such a space would undoubtedly be assumed by abstract spatiality with the same simplicity with which, in the mental order, equations are complicated by a suitable number of parameters when dealing with particular problems. It will be seen, for example, that with the category of intuition of the third epoch, a 'fourth dimension' comes to condition the form of possible experience.

Pure spatiality cannot oppose such determinations, since it is precisely in and through them – in relation to the individuation of them, which is opposed to it – does it, according to the present construction, come into being in reality.

§ 8 – POWERS OF DYNAMISM

Instantaneous actuality, by virtue of which it becomes the element of existence, is the correlate of the simplicity of the original spatial relation. But within this, according to its concept, there lies the possibility of a development by recurrence in an indefinite continuum: this corresponds to the development of the present into a temporal series, or time proper. But in the synthesis of representation, the instant is like the form of a specific and individual synthesis of reality.

This means that a full unfolding of the category will lead to a specified time, that is, to a system of determinations that are connected according to a linear exclusion. More specifically: the 'instant' again entails a point of irreversibility, even if distinct from the one that the category of otherness has overcome. Qualitative irreversibility, in fact, expressed the state of immediate spontaneity, of the absolute appearance of the 'I' in and through formations, with which it was one, from which it in no way distanced itself as their 'possibility'. Here, however, irreversibility refers not to form but to matter, and the moment of possibility¹ is presupposed and inseparably linked to it – specifically: it is a category of reality, of that which proceeds from the existential power of the 'I'. According to this new material function, irreversibility remains defined as linear progression through simple negation (a negation that unfolds from that pure exclusion of identical elements, already given through otherness). But this relationship must be synthetically linked to the spatial one; therefore, simple exclusion will only actualise itself through the becoming of spatial distinctions. That is to say, the time in question here is spatialised time – determined at every moment by the pure character of irreversibility no less than by that of its

relation to spatiality in general: it is therefore quantitatively differentiable time, certainly not in the sense of mathematical time, but in the sense of a fluid simplicity or immaterial continuity, for which spatial distinction is, at every moment, essential to its fulfilment or actuality. Beyond representation, there is no time except insofar as it is, directly or indirectly, spatialised, and thus fixed upon the canvas of quantitative determinability; just as there is no space except as individuated and distinguished in the various units of reality that successively arise within the temporal instant-of-distinction of representation.

Representation thus culminates in the form of an exclusion based on the irreversibility or progressiveness of spatially distinct elements. On the other hand, it elevates the 'I' to the status of a power that brings itself into being through the creative distinction pertaining to an existence. This value, to tell the truth, is at work within the category itself; but as that further power into which it can be integrated—so that what mediation brings into existence for the 'I' is the very dynamic moment, effective in immediacy within the act of spatial distinction—this value goes beyond the representational synthesis; rather, it is the consequence that logically brings it to an end, conditioning the point at which it becomes objectivity. With this, we move to a new interval, and thus to a new synthesis. Now, the irreversible exclusion of distinct spatial determinations, within the form of a principle that posits itself in realising, liberating, or positing for itself the dynamic relation that governs spatial synthesis in general, determines the content of any assertion in dynamism or physical causality. The cause is the antecedent which derives its determinacy from the power with which it brings about, according to irreversibility or temporal progressiveness, a determination distinct from itself—or an effect—from the indeterminate moment of spatiality; and

which is therefore such only within a relation, in the dynamic interval in which it manifests itself and of which it is a moment.

By allowing this interval—which unfolds the limit of the instantaneous position—to proceed in the order of the real, as a series of causes and effects, the ‘I’ potentiates the form of the ‘in itself’, which now reaffirms itself upon the distinctive principle from which the pure represented, or element of physical reality, had been made possible. And for this new category, any position remains bounded on two sides, since its concept requires that the individual element be fixed only insofar as it is logically opposed to an antecedent and a consequent, barring any dynamism. A principle of order or law is thus established in the abstract genus and in the discontinuous indifference of the flickering of simple distinction, in which the freedom of the preceding category has been realised.

That objective time – the time which unites the changes in external experience into an intelligible linear order – is by no means purely qualitative time (which remains confined to the potentiality that gradually unfolds in the determinations of the previous section), but rather a time that has come into contact with space according to a compromise in which the former provides simplicity and continuity, and the latter provides divisibility and quantifiable distinction – this is certainly conceded to the intuitionist doctrine.² However, this doctrine does not explain how that ‘external’ from which pure ‘duration’ is altered is possible in general;³ an external which, to tell the truth, if it is present in any way in the experience of the ‘I’, must be external only in a relative sense, and must therefore proceed from a category, the meaning of which would then have to be specified. Admittedly, according to the ‘principle of contingency’, one

concedes the possibility of adapting the totality to each category, for example to that of pure subjectivity; here one is not deluded by the illusion of connecting, according to essence, privations to points where they appear only accidentally, in relation to further forms. But given that in the doctrine in question the *de facto* existence of a space is presupposed, even if linked to a negative value judgement, such a reference is legitimate.

What is therefore not conceded in any way is that pure quality should possess a value of subjectivity and freedom as opposed to that which pertains to spatialised quality. Here, on the contrary, it is asserted that there is no real interiority when this is not mediated by an exteriority: mere spontaneity, pure *erleben* [lived experience], the fusion or indifference of the self and experience, mark not the realm of subjectivity and freedom, but rather that of nature, necessity and the objective. It is an ingrained Platonism that leads one to understand the spiritual as lying in the ‘subtle’ and the immaterial, and to see in the physical the negation of the spiritual rather than its actualisation, its affirmation and deepest expression. This serves to explain the apparent paradox, which may have been perceived by those unfamiliar with the consideration according to form or value, in the fact that the entire sphere of qualitative determinations has been found in the realm of ‘being’ or the objective.

Objective time and physical causality arise in a single birth and are bound together in an inseparable unity: it is dynamism that gradually brings time into being, or that into which time—strictly speaking, insofar as it is spatialised—gradually becomes, and thus also space insofar as it is actual in reality or filled. As Kant has already noted, one cannot form a distinct concept of objective time without being led, at the very same point, to conceive of

causality in a more or less distinct form.

However, it must be borne in mind that causality is not to be understood here as a mere concept, imposed on the mind by the logical analysis of representation; nor even as a pure fact of internal experience, as for example in Maine de Biran's conception of 'effort'⁴: here, at the very point where it is a transcendental condition of experience, it is also experience itself, that is to say, it is the formation of a real power of the subject, who in this section constructs and experiences themselves through the objective, eonic construction of the categories of reality or cosmogony.

The concept thus derived refers to specified and quantifiable causality; in it there is, first and foremost, a synthetic nature—not the synthetic nature of a term, but of a relation. That is to say, it is not the synthesis of a term in itself, which goes on to produce a certain effect, but rather the synthesis that encompasses both terms, presupposing the relation through which they are made possible and established as cause and effect. Taken in itself in its purely spatial aspect, this relation has a mechanical nature: the position of one element, which is conditioned by the distinction of the other, is the impetus of the former, which excludes the latter from its place by developing the function of position within a progressive or irreversible interval. The mechanism, however, is but a moment: it does not possess the initiative of action in itself, but receives it from the 'I'; which now has its act so constituted that it is immediately incorporated into the mechanism and appears in physical or spatial movement. And it is precisely through this manner of appearing that the 'I' realises the value of the present moment, that is to say, the liberation of the self from that function by which the individual was conditioned in representation. It follows, therefore, that here, unlike what will

occur in personal consciousness, the subject is immanent to the physical series, holds all its terms within its act, and is the conscious principle determining the individuation of the various connections within that series. A series which is development, the elementary law of motion of progressive, interrelated sequences beyond the freedom of the instant understood as the pure limit of unrelated representation or existence.

From the correlation of causality with time, and of this with spatial relation, follows the extension to causality of the observation made regarding the continuity of space itself. That is to say: causality is posited if and to the extent that it is posited. It is not a transcendent logical law that conditions what happens, but rather a posteriori with respect to the event from which it derives its condition and its limit.

Here, the abstraction of the statement that ‘everything has its cause’. A purely hypothetical statement. It would be more accurate to say that every cause has its things, in the sense that at the point where the ‘I’ actualises itself in that value—to which the form of causality corresponds—things follow; they exist only by virtue of their determination according to a causal interval; this interval is the prius, the constructor of its terms; and since here it is not reduced to a mere concept but to an actual principle of position, it is not subject to its own inevitability, nor does it succumb to an automatism that would disperse it into an indefinite series. The sequence of mechanical impulses extends as far as space is filled, but space is filled as far as this series extends, the transcendental principle of which is a function that sets its own limit. This applies to objective causality, and it also applies, as will be seen below, to causality as the principle of a conscious science of nature.

Representation establishes the general possibility of the

mathematical law; causality that of the physical law proper. Causality, as the pure form of the progressive unity of the various spatial moments, does not in itself yet offer any individuation of such a law, of which it nevertheless constitutes the elementary condition: for the time being, it is essentially indifferent to the distinctions in which it is realised, and such indeterminacy can only be overcome in further hierarchical stages. But already from this point one can proceed to a critique of the other axiom of causality, namely that ‘the same causes correspond to the same effects’. Such an axiom is abstract, for the reason that dynamism encompasses time—and therefore progressiveness and irreversibility—as an essential element.

Unfolding over time and existing solely within the actuality of individual causal intervals, what causality—as a principle of reality—postulates is, on the contrary, that no cause is ever identical a second time and, therefore, neither is the same dynamic interval nor the same effect.

This axiom, and with it the ‘principle of constancy’, makes sense only when it is referred precisely to the indifferent substrate of causality, abstracting from its individualisations, from the ‘form’ of which it is ‘matter’ (in the Aristotelian sense of these terms). The fallacy arises as soon as one attempts to include within this indeterminacy the very ‘form’ itself, within the order of which there exist only particular, qualified, and unrepeatable causalities.

§ 9 – POWERS OF SPECIFICATION

The limit of dynamism finds its objectivity in relation to the progression of value to a further point. Now, the 'I' that sets itself in opposition to this development of the representation according to causality comes to be recognised as that which is distinct in general from that which is distinguished along the progressive process, see as permanence; and the opposition of this value to mere dynamism is the 'power' of a new synthesis. More specifically: the elementary affirmation of the individual is realised in correlation with the synthesis of causality; now, the spatio-temporal development according to which this synthesis forms objective reality requires the substrate of a continuum, of a unity.

Such a unity serves as a limit to the category. One can only suffice as such a limit through a further distinction – namely, the distinction whereby one term is the dynamic interval or element of causal becoming taken in an objective sense, and the other is the unity itself, which is thus defined as permanence. From these two terms, one can trace back to a further category. What will be its determination? The principle of the consequent must return to it in its form, and command its own mediation or antecedent. Now, the resolution of causality in the value of the permanent defines a situation in which a certain form remains fixed in reality solely through a development of distincts, of which it is, however, the principle. We shall call this the function of specification: in it, the immobile is brought 'from outside' 'into the bosom' of the dynamic; in the dynamism, in the very causal becoming of physical reality, a distinct and indifferent principle is now reflected, and the distance which, in the service of individual value, had determined the previous category, passes from the immediate to the mediated. The moment of the immobile defines the genus; the

other, that of the distinct, which it gradually unfolds and liberates from itself, defines the species and the individual. Both are part of a single objective dynamic function, in which they rely on one another, according to a relationship which here is not a matter of logical-formal or classificatory nature, but rather the immanent structure of a power in action within spatiotemporal reality. The species here is not, then, an accident of a genus—which might exist in itself, separated from the $\gamma\epsilon\nu\epsilon\sigma\iota\varsigma$ [origin] of its distinction—but is essential to the genus, for the synthetic nature and difference of the species in this experience amount to that objectivity of the dynamic principle, in relation to which alone the point of unity and indifference awakens to itself.

The unity proper to dynamism dominated the mere passing of one element into another; it provided the elementary $\upsilon\pi\omicron\kappa\epsilon\iota\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu$ [object], by virtue of which the point of a radical becoming—of a pure change which, as such, could not even be called becoming or change—is avoided, everything dispersing or concentrating itself within the various actual elements that are absolutely discontinuous and unrelated.

However, in dynamism this $\upsilon\pi\omicron\kappa\epsilon\iota\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu$ is nothing more than what is sufficient to ensure that the transition, understood within a unity of consciousness, is for the agent; yet, materially, the dynamic interval retains a radical synthetic character. For the development of the distinction to appear to be governed, in its very objective formation, by distinct units; for the antecedent not to be completely dispersed but to be preserved in some way within the consequent; it is necessary that the very same higher principle, by virtue of which the dynamic interval came into existence or into the ‘for the I’, be objectified and synthetically connected to the dynamic interval itself. This leads, in a certain sense, to the

transformation of the static function of space into a function of dynamism. That certain element which now persists in and for change—that elementary principle of formal unity (in the scholastic sense) which now, through specification, encompasses the mechanical series and orders and divides them— may indeed be called the dynamic resolution of spatial unity. Upon this is based every physical law, insofar as it is determined. The order of pure quantity or indifference implicit in representation, and that of change or difference provided by dynamism, converge here, determining the generic possibility of distinct laws of occurrence.

Like causality, specification does not realise a transcendental value except insofar as it expresses itself in the order of physical existence: it is a category only as the power by which the 'I' brings about a certain situation of reality, in which the differentiation of simple dynamism is delimited and enclosed within particular zones of elementary homogeneity—more or less persistent and more or less resolvable—in the order of the internal distinctions within each, in circles further extended through an analogous relation. The concept of specification, in fact, implies that if a given group of differentiations can be subsumed under a law, a distinction or exception is in turn essential to that very law; this distinction or exception, however, can itself be subsumed, along with its development, into a further law, and so on.

It is important to bear in mind the real immanence of the genus within the species, to be understood in the sense that the ordering of the distinct does not proceed from a principle acting from the outside upon the various causes or dynamic powers, but rather from an internal configuration of these very causes, arising from the further individuation of the very relation or prius of dynamism. And just as this relation is presupposed in its terms

(cause and effect), so too is specification the very process that produces the various material determinations required as its substrate. It governs from within and internally conditions the various spatio-temporal and dynamic moments; consequently, within the order of this category, it functions as the very generic condition for the possibility of any content of representation or physical reality, whichever one prefers.

If we understand the elements of conservation and distinction as ‘substantiality’ and ‘causality’ respectively – then the relationship between the point set out here and what Kant says in the first two ‘analogies of experience’ becomes clear: substantiality and causality are indeed two conditions of experience, inextricably linked to one another. Except that here, once again, we are not dealing with mere epistemological conditions deduced from reflection, as is the case in the order of discursive consciousness (second section of the second epoch), but rather with real conditions: and their interdependence thus expresses their immanence in a single power in act, which is properly that designated as specification; which power, in the present context, is not merely an opaque thing of nature, but rather the sign of a value—specifically, the value according to which the individual encompasses in unity the purely distinctive and efficient moments of its own justification and, by objectifying them, reaffirms itself upon them.

It has been said that recurrence is possible within the concept of specification: the determinacy of a genus, which is permanence with respect to a certain series, may, with respect to another series, be a difference. However, the warning given regarding space and causality must be reiterated: one must not in any way admit a currently infinite series of specifications (according to the infinite

not of the sufficient limit but of the indefinite). Certainly, specification according to the concept is infinite: but this infinity simply expresses the indeterminacy inherent in the *δυναμις*, or possibility, of the specifying function, which, however, is real only in and through definite acts. The general principle remains that the categories exist only within and through acts of the Self; these acts are what come first in the order of real conditions.

§ 10 – POWERS OF ORGANISATION / TELEOLOGISM

From a complete affirmation according to specification arises the possibility of a further value. Indeed, the immanent, identical subsistence of a principle of reality in its unfolding is comprehensible only when a dual relationship is present; thus, whilst a certain determination generally comes into distinction by unfolding as a cause, the distinct entity that proceeds from it must nevertheless be such that it returns in a certain way – or rather, to a certain extent, in a certain part – to confirm and fix in reality that principle which had initially been altered within it. In other words: if specification is to rise to the level of complete sufficiency, the ‘I’ must assume a causal relationship which, in a certain way, doubles and becomes reversible and, through this germination, realises an internal, living unity: reciprocity between ideal totality and real parts.

The ‘I’, to whose experience an order of specification becomes an existing reality – in the sense that emerges from within the process of that reality – thus finds, at the same time, the experience of reciprocal causality. On the other hand, that in which specification may materially come to an end—that which may be projected as a dialectical antecedent by the transition—is the relation of a certain group of differences; it is an indifference (genus) that stands in opposition to a multiplicity and a becoming of distinctions. If, therefore, we turn to a synthetic conjunction of the two moments, we shall find ourselves faced with a unity that comes into being in reality through the arousal of a complex of differences, yet enclosed within a substrate of elementary, virtual homogeneity; differences which are then in mutual causality with one another, and therefore exist or consist insofar as each simultaneously refers back to all the others through that

fundamental unity or determination, which circulates within them and remains fixed in reference to itself as a simplicity or indifference, which posits them only as integral parts of a system. Such is organisation.

Within the organism, the abstract distinction of representation is taken up again and identified with itself in its own objectification; in it, therefore, the principle of space is expressed in its transparency within the power of 'for the Self' in which it is now entirely resolved – the space that becomes the light of life, the self-transparency of the real.

Here too, one must not 'reify' the moments and set the end or entelechy on one side, and the system of causes on the other.

Organisation instead emerges as a further, progressive mediation of the causal interval itself, whereby within it the terms are resolved into movement and movement into the terms, and the whole is taken up in a unity which is the full expression and transparency, within the existing, within the physical, of the very elementary process of the individual's liberation and self-construction, with which this section began. Organisation is therefore an entirely immanent principle; it is the prius by which every possible reality is now, in its very core, conditioned. It is worth reiterating the caveat that organisation, too, must not be understood as a 'natural power', in the colloquial sense of the term: it is essentially a category – that is, a value-judgement function of the 'I'; nor does it refer to a 'thing-in-itself', but rather proceeds from the assertion of a certain meaning whereby the 'I' determines its own experience, so that in the light of an 'intuitive intellect' (in the Kantian sense of the term) teleological sets and series unfold within it. In the present theory, moreover, there is no place for a physical power: for in the first epoch there are indeed powers, but

they are not physical, the 'I' being intimately immanent within them, even if according to pure spontaneity, and the physical referring only to that which proceeds from them and is made possible by them; in the second epoch there is indeed a physical nature, but not powers, rather concepts of powers, taken discursively as explanatory principles beyond the phenomena; in the third epoch there are powers once more, but physicality is even less present there than in the first, since they are immediately connected to a 'state of autarchy'. In general, in space, in time, in their specific manifestations, in the dynamic development step by step up to the beings of nature's various hierarchies – in all this, what is expressed is solely the construction and purification of representation, that is, the progressive causality of the ego's striving to free itself from the being of freedom, to possess itself in a pure, autonomous distinction. In the next category, we shall find the limit of such a process, and thus the transition to a new era.

Just as, in the order of specification, it is possible to regard the various continuities, whatever they may be, as provisional, and thus to develop them further both in the sense of unity and in that of difference, so organisation, in general, can be understood as a process, that is, as the production of various distinctions such that, whilst in each of them, according to their internal possibility, the mode of the teleological concept is reflected, on the other hand, in the individual, active entities, they become moments of a more extensive system. Life, in any case, becomes the general form of representation or of the real: at this point, the concept of position implicitly encompasses that of organisation, of vital unity. Certainly, in accordance with the general principle of the interval, there remains the possibility of a distinction between the animate and the inanimate, between the organic and the inorganic; but this distinction can only be relative: due to a re-affirmation of the

interval, what is established as inorganic at a given moment may, as has been said, prove to be organic in relation to another term, and what was organic may prove to be inorganic in relation to another term—the former being of a lower, the latter of a higher organisation, or, in general, in relation to a further individuation of the system.

From the relationship and distinction between this category and the preceding ones, it follows that every organism will entail the general laws of spatio-temporal and causal determination and, at the same time, transcend them, dominating them from a higher principle, which is properly the organic law – an original synthesis which, to tell the truth, in itself precedes, then unfolds the various series of hierarchically inferior determinisms which it nevertheless exceeds, so as to mediate and reconcile itself finally only with itself. Life at this point constitutes the condition for the reality of every purely physical-quantitative law and of specification. The interval that separates and unites these two orders of laws is, indeed, precisely that in which the power of the ‘I’ is identified in this category.

§ 11 – POWERS OF PERSONALITY

By determining the content of representation as organic life, the 'I' pushes the generic principle of representation to its limit. According to the preceding construction, in the living organism there is in fact an 'existence' that immediately reflects its own mediation, the transcendental moment from which it arises: the represented becomes the body and, at the same time, the very transparency of value, the articulation and the process of the physical, now reflecting the very transcendental interval of the transition to the physical, mediated in itself. The experience of organic life⁵ provides such a unity. Now, if one consider this unity in its ideal fulfilment, it becomes apparent that it gives rise to a duality in relation to which a further determination may conceive of it as a privation. Indeed, from the concept of the category in question, on the one hand, it follows that the 'I', in asserting itself in accordance with this, does not so much represent (*stellt sich vor*) the organism as is, rather, the organism, organising life: that is to say, the 'I' cannot represent itself as an organism as such (note: as such – an organism may very well be the object of other categories, for example otherness, scientific consciousness, etc., but then it is no longer understood in its own form or in itself, but extrinsically, by accident) than insofar as it itself becomes an organism, that is to say, the value relating to the preceding category can be posited only insofar as the elementary objectifying distinction proper to representation becomes the immanent power of objective formation, the very principle that arouses, organises and kindles the various spatio-temporal causes and determinations within a harmoniously connected whole, as has been stated.

However, the individual can still assert itself upon this incorporation of value by making it, precisely as what it is, an

objectivity once more; that is to say, it can reflect upon the power with which it actualises the category of organisation, which determines a new interval from which the ideal limit of that category would properly proceed. Now, if, as an organic power of life, the 'I' is the function of representing in general within the concrete unity of its moments given in real existence, the state from which the truth of the category may be completed must properly be defined as a self-representation of the 'I' as a representative. Organisation expresses the accomplished mediation, the completeness of the 'in itself'; now, to say that it, as such, is perfectly posited—what does this mean if not to affirm that it is not merely so, but that the very power of the 'in itself' is transparent to itself, that representation itself is itself within a representation, is itself representation and thus free from itself?

Now, how can the 'I' represent itself as a representative? The representative would have to be posited, and, to tell the truth, as a content, as objectivity (which we may denote by A): but it is evident that if such a positing (= B) could be taken up within the same act of representation considered thus far, one would have a closed circle – in any case, not the self-representation of the representative, whereby the 'in-itself' is entirely permeable to the 'in-itself', as is indeed required, but the mere positing of the function of representation in a real existence, as is proper to the preceding category. That by which representation in general can, as such, be distanced and liberated, cannot therefore itself belong to the same category as the former, but must be a further, distinct power of it. To understand its meaning, one should reflect on the nature of the term A.

In the category of representation proper (§ 7), the individual attained its first confirmation, or self-construction, by arousing,

beyond its own immediacy, the power which, by projecting or positing this for itself, generates the order of the real. But this movement continued in dynamism, proceeding from the 'I' which reaffirms the 'in-itself' through the energy or distance of representation, and, subsequently, in specification, whereby the very reference of the movement to the simple unity of value appears in the existing represented object.

Finally, in organisation, the 'I' experiences the reflected unity of its own mediation, the principle of 'for-itself' which directly assumes its moments of position and distinction and gives an account of them. It follows that that in terms of which the 'I' as organisation can become an object is the individual itself in its truth – that is, as the unconditional and pure autarchy – it is the very principle in which otherness came to an end, but which has now proved itself in creative mediation and which fulfils its guarantee therein, distancing itself from the body of this very demonstration or mediation of its own, inasmuch as it ultimately still depends on the relation to the terminus of the first section.

Consequently, in the transition of the 'I' to absolute freedom lies the meaning of B, the value within which the organisation can find its terminus and its ideal fulfilment. The consciousness or objectivity of the self as representative is the ultimate power of the mediation of freedom, which in the category of representation was simply: the transition to the point of the pure unconditional and the task of a representation of the representative are thus one and the same thing.

This would be the deduction of B.

Now bear in mind that the general characteristic of the categories in this section – and therefore also what determines the meaning of the mediation that takes place there – is their objective,

physical reality: the 'I' in such categories experiences moments of value insofar as, beyond pure qualitative interiority, it makes real existence the condition or generic substrate that incorporates the elements of its mediation.

Therefore, this order must now be transcended in its entirety: the 'I', in the distinction in which it rises to absolute freedom, will now move beyond the totality of the powers of mere representation. It follows that its act will cease to be that of an objective power of creation – transcending the completeness of being, a pure form, an image, something no longer real but ideal, abstract – almost a quality once more – it will be the principle in which the representation of the representative may be individuated. On the other hand, according to what has been said above, this abstraction is the condition for the objective order to attain full realisation. Such a liberation and distinction of a pure form from the real is what makes this form perfect, in a self-contained completeness, and thus exhausts the function inherent in it.

A wholly unconditional formal freedom is therefore what can determine B and by virtue of which the organisation is resumed within a new interval.

The concept of the 'I' as an organising force and that of the 'I' which, in formal abstraction, embodies the value of unconditional freedom must now be resolved into a single concept, which can be clarified by closely examining what arises from 'representing the representative'. The represented must be the representative: now the representative, as such, is a mediation closed in upon itself; it is not 'placed', but places itself, and this act of placing—in truth, by itself—is its very being.

According to the new requirement, however, it would be on

the verge of becoming an object, a represented entity, and therefore something that does not posit itself but is posited. Yet it cannot be posited in this way without immediately being negated as a representative. It follows from this that the requirement contained in the proposition: 'the I represents itself as a representative' – can only be satisfied by this situation: by a setting-forth in which the object of the new relation is set forth as not set forth. The representation of the representative can consist only in the act by which the determination of the object is set forth as not set forth, i.e. as given – always, however, as a given for the 'I' – and, beyond that, as taken up and resolved in the ideality of pure reflection. Only when the principle of the representative appears as a given, and as the pure content of reflection, does that conjunction cease to exist, whereby the representative itself would appear as posited and therefore no longer as the 'representant'.⁶ A positing as non-posited, correlative to the absolute freedom of reflection, is therefore what characterises the synthesis proper to the new category.

Thus, in conclusion: the mediation of the second section unfolds through a group of physically creative powers, in categories which, from the point of view of their subject matter, might be described as cosmological or eonic. In these, the 'I' mediates and demonstrates itself, but this value is only completed at the point where the 'I' itself affirms its freedom from its own mediation or demonstration, thereby tearing it away from the dependence inherent in its relation to the order of quality. With this, the form of the power of reality or objective syntheticity is transcended. The 'I', in a certain sense, exhausts the powers of being and passes into non-being; and this exceeding of being, this going beyond itself, is the transition from value to the principle of the 'image' or of pure reflection. The slow distinction of the 'I'

from ‘being’—the process of the qualitative unity splitting in two, whereby an interiority takes shape in contrast to and in relation to the becoming of an external experience and a physical reality—reaches its culmination here, its *τελειον*. The form of the image implies absolute abstraction; its position is also, and essentially, the position of its own content as non-placed, i.e. as a given. The ‘I’ cannot affirm the pure value of the unconditional without tearing itself away from its own substance and projecting this into a self-existence, without positing its own body, its own mediation, as something that is there, in pure external existence – as nature, as non-‘I’. To transcend being in a pure form and, in so doing, to oppose it, to bestow upon it an absolute being – to precipitate the mediation of one’s own freedom into a nature: such, then, is the meaning of the further experience.

Specifically. According to the antecedent, the ‘I’ is unfolded and alive within a certain organic system, albeit one that is as yet of a non-particular nature. This system is, by the new synthesis, posited as non-positd, and opposed to it – and, through this opposition, connected to it – is the pure form of its ‘law’ and, to be precise, in the sense of an unconditional freedom. The correlation has as its terms an organic life which, whilst being posited as life—that is to say, as an inner essence mediated in itself—appears as given; and its self-representation in a state of absolute autonomy, unfolding in images, may be designated as personality. A personality which, evidently, is not yet to be understood as finite and particularised, but rather as the pure form correlative to the system of posited reality, and which, to a certain extent, as a ‘mode’, would correspond to what was hypostatized by a still mythological mode of thought as the ‘soul of the world’ or *ishvara*. It should also be noted that what has been deduced here is simply the generic form of the given – the value through which the

possibility arises for the 'I' to experience something as unposited. The particular meanings in which the genus of the given can be qualified are not to be sought in this category, but must be linked to the further individuation proper to new forms.

It is not necessary for the organism to be integrated into a personality: the foundation of this transition, just as of the others, lies solely in a transcendental arbitrariness; it follows, however, from its very definition that personality implies an organism, the centre of dynamic and spatio-temporal relations – and this not in the sense that an organisation is given prior to or separately from it, but in the sense that if the object of the transcendental assertion is the value relating to personality, it will also posit and encompasses an organisation, albeit as a moment and abstract matter. – Attention should also be paid to this particularly important point: that the emphasis of the 'I', at least at this stage, does not fall on the formal distinction (image), but on that which distinguishes the image itself; that is to say, it lies within that interval in act from which both the organic (objective) term and the formal term (the image) are conditioned.

If, in the personality, there is that pure affirmation of the individual whose condition is the becoming-objective of the very substance of its own position or mediation, it is clear that, for such a category, the task of the first epoch is exhausted. In the personality, the objective absolute-in-itself, proper to the form of the given, of the 'placed as unplaced', and the subjective absolute-in-itself, proper to non-being, condition, generate and balance one another. The elements of immediacy and mediation remain synthetically reconciled within it, as required by the first moment of the subject's becoming.

It would be advisable to clarify what may follow from the

condition of this category with regard to the problem of knowledge. An important doctrine of Schelling – to be sure, derived from Leibniz’s view – is that, whilst acknowledging the necessity for the knowledge of a correlation to be linked to particular organic determinations, it is nevertheless asserted that it is not the representation (in the common sense of the term) in itself, but only the consciousness of it, that requires organic or physical modification; and it follows that, for example, the blind person does indeed have a representation of light, but this representation is not an object in itself for him, since, owing to the physical organ’s lack of capacity, it cannot become an object in its own right⁷. – This view must be supplemented by the principles of a more comprehensive idealism. One must not confuse the concept of value with that of consciousness in general. Every category, as such—that is, as a subjective assertion—is conscious. Therefore, strictly speaking, one cannot speak of determinations that are first unconscious and then become conscious, as if it were possible to attain consciousness at some point when it was not already presupposed from the outset.

Organic formation must itself be regarded as a state of consciousness, as a form of experience; on the other hand, there are also possible modes of perception which, whilst being conscious, are entirely independent of organic correlation in general or of correlation with particular organs⁸. As for the idea that there is no consciousness unless it objectifies itself and recognises itself in this objectification, this is nothing more than a suggestion of a physical mode of knowing, whereby, for example, one does not become conscious of one’s own features until one sees them reflected in a mirror; a mode alongside which, of course, there are other possible ones.

What must be maintained, however, is that if one is to place oneself within the value relative to personality and not within another (for example, that inherent in quality), then, for perception, the correlation and conditionality of an organic determination must be posited; and, to tell the truth, in such a way that what in itself, as a category of the organism in action, was conscious, now appears as unconscious—that is to say, is posited as not posited, no longer experience but the object of experience. When this correlation and this position cease to exist – either in particular or in general – then, to the same extent, perception as proper to a personal subject is no longer possible, although the possibility of it remains according to another value.

This view reconciles the realism of immediate consciousness with the idealism of reflection. When one remains within the state of the 'I', in which it manifests itself according to the absolute formal freedom of the image, one must maintain that representation, when understood in its entirety, is not merely a mental process and abstract ideality, but also a concrete and physical process which encompasses the spatio-temporally determined object within the series of mediations that lead it to the organism and which continue in the corresponding physio-physical modifications of the latter; a series which is therefore not mechanical, but glimmers with elementary degrees of consciousness.

From this perspective, everything proceeds as realism would have it; and the possibility (in the abstract, not in terms of value, since nothing is yet known of the value of the conclusions of positive inquiry) of natural science—which is based on this and must be based on it—is fully confirmed. But this is merely a particular aspect, and realism would overstep its bounds were it to

treat this objective complex as something existing in itself, and were it to deduce from it representation—and indeed, awareness as a free personality. When the realist embarks on this naïve venture, he fails to realise that he is already presupposing what his theory purports to explain, for speaking of an object only makes sense from the point of view of a subject, and consciousness – consciousness as an image – is already present prior to its examination, simply because the realist himself, before being such, is already, in general, a person. The psycho-physical parallelism cannot refer to an external to consciousness that determines consciousness, but rather to two elements equally internal to consciousness, which thus remains the matter or elementary substrate of the very concept of ‘object’.

What must be said is that representation in the person is an ‘image’, that is, an immediately distinct, separate unity; that there is no way of taking the term of the object and that of the subject separately; and that therefore, in order to understand the possibility of the correlation, one must refer to an *a priori*. This is not reducible to one term or the other, but encompasses both and places them in simultaneity through the very relation that renders them possible as they are here determined, namely: the objective as factual, as a given, and the subjective as freedom. But, once again, this unity or category must be understood – one need not stop at it as if facing a transcendental fact, an original law of the spirit; one can construct it as a value, implying various degrees which, in themselves, can be conscious and each count as a complete affirmation of the spirit⁹. In this way, idealism is in turn satisfied and is taken a little further than its purely gnoseological form would allow.

Representation as personality is therefore neither object nor

subject, nor is it the causation of the subjective by the objective or vice versa: these terms come only later; what comes first is simply the synthesis, whereby positing becomes being and the demiurgic power is set free, idealising itself, in the pure transparency of the image. It is therefore not admissible – and idealism must hold fast to this – that there should be developments of organisation in themselves that are unconscious, that is, absolutely free from a correlate within an image. The unconscious is nothing but a moment of that which is posited as unposited; this is not an unconscious function, but a conscious one, whereby even the seemingly most lifeless or opaque forms are permeated and animated by a thrill of hidden spirituality, upon which their entire being effectively depends. And, referring to a particular being (although here there is not yet any question of such a being), its perception in the strict sense must be regarded as the *τέλος* of a continuous, essentially spiritual dynamism which is already aroused in physical and organic conditions in a dull form, and gradually burns and illuminates itself until it reaches, precisely in that *τέλος*, the act of distinction that precipitates a ‘given’ (non-I) in contrast to its image (I).

If, therefore, the new experience, from a material point of view, appears as mere learning and reflection of a reality subsisting in itself, this is, in truth, to be understood in the sense that here the positing of an object takes the form of a simple reflection, and the form in which what is posited is posited is that of a reality existing in itself. The simple act of perceiving, through an image, an object that is not immediately posited by the ‘I’, is now the form proper to the synthetic nature of the category. In a word: here, analyticity is a particular form in which syntheticity appears. Realism is a category.

From this it follows that the 'I' is that which posits the formal term of the image only insofar as it is also that which posits, in general, that objective and physical content of which the image is a representation, since the two terms are inseparably correlative: if one is posited, it means that a relation is posited which also encompasses the other; and to say that the 'I' asserts itself as a personality means that it provides such a relation or functionality as the content of its own actuality. Anyone who confines the principle of the 'I' to a single term, rather than placing it at the head of the relation itself, loses all hope of accounting for representation, for in so doing they have opened up such a chasm that no miracle will ever be able to bridge it again.

Therefore, in general: whilst, on the one hand, the pure form of personal self-consciousness depends on a nature (for if the eonic power did not make itself external to itself and artificial as nature, there would be no self-consciousness, no interiority, no freedom), on the other hand, the reality of an external world articulated in those various moments—through which its objectivity is mediated to the extent of a teleological system—does not have its own principle within itself; it is a distinct entity that would not exist outside of a process of distinction, that is, outside the small light, the 'irrelevant' psychological actuality of the principle of the person.

From this very point comes a light on the problem of birth. Why do I, as this unconditionality which I experience in my innermost being, find myself here, now, in this form and in this era? What is the meaning of this radical contingency? Implicit in what has been said is a solution to this problem. Personality, by definition, implies the moment in which the totality of the various determinations in which the organisation (in the broad sense = §

10) is posited, together with the particular factor of freedom inherent in each of them, as unposited; this whole appears simply as a given, that is, as something that is there by absolute chance, without any further mediation, and whose possibility as the very experience of a personal consciousness – a question which the empiricist's dogmatism does not even dream of – would undoubtedly be contradicted were it possible to explain it within the form of personality. The inexplicability of the order to which the person awakens is in fact only such insofar as it is by right; it is real only insofar as it is necessary: that is to say, one can perfectly well explain why it cannot be explained. If, beyond that, one seeks a material explanation – then one must not turn to this order itself, which does not already possess it, but must create it within it by developing it further, identifying the principle of the person – and therefore its experience – in further categories.

Another question: What was the world before I existed? To this one must reply: If by 'world' one means that of natural things correlative to personality—that is, if one seeks an answer in terms of the value of personality—it is certainly true to say that the world before I existed was absolutely nothing. The 'past', the filling in of time prior to the present according to the forms of the given, is simply the projection of a certain development of the personality, which is evidently presupposed by the emergence of the personality itself. Here, once again, one must be aware of that sophism of backdating – which now, by the very nature of the category, is particularly effective, so that within the structure of the image the content appears independent of the act in which and from which it arose; and whilst this act is fixed in the present and related to the personality, that content is placed, for example, in a time prior to that very act which establishes it. But in truth, the situation is the reverse. The past comes after the present; it is

determined by the present, and not the other way round.

It must also be said that, prior to the position of the person, not only is the world as the world of the person non-existent – which is obvious – but also the world in general (for example, as that proper to a prior category). This point is of fundamental importance: it is linked to the proposition that every category is a principle in itself, that every value in act encompasses and dominates the entire series of its conditions; this series therefore collapses en masse with the collapse of that value, and can be halted at a hierarchically prior moment only by a new, original positioning. Thus, for example, if the assertion relating to representation ceases to hold, it is not that one passes to the prior form of the quality, but quality itself remains negated, inasmuch as it is not present in representation as in itself, but rather as a moment of the higher synthesis: for quality to exist, it is necessary that, beyond representation, the value pertaining to quality itself be affirmed with a distinct, discontinuous flash of insight. The separation between ideality (form) and reality, or, more precisely, the separation between form and matter within the substance of the ‘I’, is therefore the law that now governs possible experience. This implies that mediation is fully established, and hence the hierarchy of the preceding forms; but these, in relation to personality, are no longer what they might be in themselves when the value attributed to them comes to a halt, but are recreated and transfigured from the very foundation by the principle proper to the consequent. The posterius, as a category or *τελος*, is the prius of all its moments and all its conditions. Personality is therefore not to be understood as the flower of the objective world, but rather as that from which the objective world itself arises, its reason, the power that sustains and permeates all its categories and infinite determinations—without being exhausted by them—

whilst always remaining true to itself; and in the apparent psychological and 'subjective' irrelevance that seems to characterise the act in which an ideality liberates and distinguishes itself, one must see the fulcrum around which the reality of the entire universal system now gravitates. – On the other hand, as conditions for the possible positions according to the value of the person, remain the various categories of representation, whereby the substrate of certain elementary laws – such as space, time, cause, etc. – is established; naturally, at this stage, this is without prejudice to what may apply to further values. All these elements are already encompassed within the character of the 'given'.

The order of the first and second sections may be brought into correspondence, with the necessary speculative reservations, with what certain Indian metaphysical traditions call *sadâkyatattva* and *îshvaratattva*, that is, with the manifestation of power (*shâkti*) in a distinction in which the ideal principle (*aham*) and the real principle (*idam*) respectively predominate. The degrees of the second section may be understood mythically as deities (*devatâ*) or aeonic powers: they embody the real principle of an ever more intense affirmation, the limit of which is the appearance of 'this' in the absolute polarity with the Self (= *sadvidyâtattva*)¹⁰. In the 'raw fact', one may then understand, following Fichte, the body of the Absolute itself – of the very powers of being – mediated, self-contained, to which reflection is opposed and which it distinguishes; and thus, in the person, the transcendence, the exceeding of the Gods. In this, the energies of being become the abstract condition or 'potency' (in the Aristotelian sense): the formal order, the order of the person, ideality, is the ultimate affirmation, in which they go beyond themselves – to seize and liberate themselves.

§ 12 – SUMMARY

Taken as a whole, what has been constructed so far may be presented, roughly speaking, as follows.

In the self-affirmation of the individual according to positive value, its affirmation is initially taken up by the principle of the immediate and thus appears as the very power of objectivity; however, this develops in relation to an intimate contradiction and realises the objective only insofar as, through it, it proceeds to the manifestation of a content that transcends it. Hence, the 'I' originally experiences the absolute spontaneity of an incorporeal nature transforming into the miracle of qualitative determinations (first section). The central affirmation, at first, is the discontinuous, the pure instantaneous limit within the voracious phenomenal continuity: it creates the pure appearing and self-affection of the principle: quality. As value, as the 'other', distances itself from this form, phenomenal power turns to fill the interval, so that beyond the conflict and compulsion of feeling, the absolute manifestation of the act flashes into view. But this mediation is rather the negation of mediation: duality remains for it, strictly speaking, as a limit which it does not become sufficient of until, through an individuation of the pure interval—by adapting itself to the other as such—it attains distinction.

But insofar as distinction is realised, the value of position—as a superior unity of right—arises in response as a consequence; and as this reabsorbs it, one passes to causality, to the power that derives from the reduction of the other to itself. In qualitative causality, in the struggling and split force, in the energy which, beyond the desire and nostalgia that shape *māyā*, brings about change and transfigures the opposite, the nature of the simple

position becomes more complex, becoming the positive, dynamic unity of the two terms. However, in proceeding towards its fulfilment, this form also proceeds towards its dissolution: the God of Darkness, the divine 'No' which the power of the 'Yes' has rendered entirely transparent in terms of its own value, leads to the experience of absolute negation; and this consequence, by penetrating and dominating the demiurgic force of qualitative causality, unfolds it into the intoxicating overflow and blaze of Dionysianism, into the enlightened and essential ambiguity of the symbol, of theurgic and divinatory participation, of spiritual perception – into the double negativity of substance in which the supernatural light of the individual already flashes forth, as an indispensable moment and condition of nature; and this principle, which appears in its freedom and purity on the very edge of the agitated and demonic ecstasy of the experience of substance, determines the ultimate relationship, the extreme tension of the order of pure spontaneity. If the principle of the immediate is to become sufficient to this new term, it must entirely transcend itself, alienate its own substance, and make its own mediation contingent upon the moment of becoming other; thus, in the 'mixture of bliss and bitterness' that generation entails, the form of the other develops from the obscure, elusive 'presence' of the 'original matter' to the luminous pain and absolute freedom of the self-revealing God. Insofar as it becomes the objectivity or distinction of revelation, nature grasps life in its own death and, likewise, death in its own life. The form of the first moment has unfolded to the point of taking the manifestation of the content into itself; the end-point is the individual itself, but this represents merely an unstable point of equilibrium, for an individual whose mediation is nature, or a nature whose matter is its own negation, cannot be understood as anything else.

A new cycle therefore begins (second section) in which the individual reaffirms itself in that it regards its own mediation as immediacy and thus as mere potential for its actual position. Then the primordial, fiery nature of quality dissolves into the determined, unequivocal clarity of a physical and quantifiable universe. The 'I', which bears witness to its own freedom in simple distinction and in the distinct, resumes the spatial form in which the objectivity of the term of the first section is resolved; it represents and creates existence. The reality in which the very power of representation is then set free, in which the 'I' comes to establish for itself that inner life which remained in itself or was immediate in representation in action, takes the form of dynamism. However, the progressive development of spatial distinction as and within a determined time remains subject to the condition of the unity of value; hence the interval of pure dynamic difference must be reconciled with a principle of continuity, and thus the 'I', having brought the unity of the two moments of its new mediation into the act of existence, experiences specification. Now, since in the relation of specification the individual has, in objectivity, its own very act of distinguishing and therefore its own very assurance, the relation of representation is turned in on itself and remains reversible; the act of distinguishing and the distinguished, or, rather, the act of distinguishing and the act of distinguishing within which the distinguished proceeds, are synthetically united; objectivity adapts to subjectivity and vice versa, and thus arises the generic form of a teleology, of an organisation, of a principle which expresses itself in reality through the production of a system of distinctions, in the reciprocal and essential connection of which it remains firm and actual, absolutely mediated with itself. With this, the individual has entirely liberated its own mediation, has redeemed its obscure

past: but, beyond redemption, lies the act of redemption. – The ‘I’ reabsorbs mediation or nature, and distinguishes it from itself in existence: such is the meaning that governs the development of the elements of physical reality, a development which, however, finds its fulfilment – that fulfilment whereby being is exhausted, is brought to its completeness, to its absolute state – only in the final act of separation, whereby the personality becomes the object of transcendental affirmation. The individual, in a final flash of insight, distances itself from its own mediation, shatters the equilibrium of purity and impurity inherent in the objectivity of the latter, and asserts itself decisively in the principle of unconditional freedom.

It is then unleashed and plunges – on the one hand – into a sort of ‘place-as-non-place’, a brute objectivity, the entire system of mediation, the completeness of ‘being’ – the totality of power teleologically unfolded in space and time; whilst, on the other hand and at the same time, the non-entity, a pure form, a pure transparency (image, reflection, ideality), dissolves and frees itself from this ‘precipitate’ as an act of transcendent value.

1 Note: this does not mean that forms already proceed from an absolute arbitrariness, from a will entirely self-sufficient: this will only begin to be possible at the end of the epoch, when the series of forms through which value frees itself from its own mediation is complete. For the time being, ‘possibility’ simply means that the subjective presides, as a principle of action, over the experience in which it manifests itself, even though this experience remains inseparable from it.

2 H. Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*, Paris 1921, p. 83.

3 It is clear that there is no point in relating space to the requirements of action when the meaning of action has not already been explained and its possibility deduced.

4 The flaw in Biran’s doctrine lies in connecting, in a certain way, a temporal relationship—however infinitesimally small it may be—to the point of effort, and failing instead to recognise in this a priori from which all time (naturally, not qualitative) is made possible. Hence, the causality of which he speaks oscillates between that which is purely qualitative and psychological, and that which is merely a concept of discursive consciousness. [François Pierre Maine de Biran (1766–1824) was the leading figure in the revival of spiritualism in French philosophy in opposition to the Enlightenment. During his lifetime he published only one book, and his complete works were published posthumously, edited by V. Cousin (Editor’s note)].

5 Certainly, the spirit is always life: but that life which is connected to a certain set of organised physical elements and determinisms is nothing but a particular species of the genus of that life which is shared with categorical activity in general.

6 On the deduction of the principle of the ‘given’ from the task set by the one who represents—namely, to represent oneself as such—see J.G. Fichte, *Transcendental Logic; Exposition of the Science of Knowledge* from the year 1801

7 J.W. Schelling, **System of Transcendental Idealism**, 1858 ed., p. 497.

8 Even as it stands at present, science today is coming to realise, for example, that one does not see solely with the eyes and that one can also see independently of the eyes; in general, that there exists a form of knowledge which, whilst concerning physical determinations – i.e. those explainable by means of the categories within this section – is determined outside organic conditions.

9 Here, too, the absurdity of those views becomes apparent, in which one conceives of an evolution of consciousness from ‘matter’ through the various organic forms up to man: for matter does not stand at the beginning, but at the end of the series. It is a phenomenon specific to the level of the person and has no meaning whatsoever

outside of this: if there is to be a series prior to the person, this can therefore only be fundamentally non-material.— As Leibniz had already noted (*Considerations on the Doctrine of a Universal Spirit*, ed. P. Janet, vol. 1, p. 689), matter is not to be understood in relation to the spirit in general, but rather to the representation of it that imposes itself upon a limited spirit insofar as it is limited. Aristotle, *Physics*, II, 194b, 9: τῶν πρὸς τι ἡ ὑλὴ [the (notion of) matter is one of those that are relative].

10 See J. Evola, **L’Uomo come Potenza**, Atanòr, Todi-Rome 1926, section II. (A completely revised edition of the work was subsequently published as: **Lo Yoga della Potenza**, Laterza, Bari 1949).

THE ERA OF PERSONALITY

At the end of the first epoch, the individual emerges no longer in accordance with the ambiguity inherent in the middle ground between the two sections, but in purity, as something that has its own guarantee within itself. This is in relation to what preceded it; but in relation to itself, this principle within the category of personality is once again immediacy, whilst in its substance it finds itself to possess an abstract distinction, a mere flash. – According to the principle of arbitrariness, this point may be regarded as self-sufficient and definitive, just as it may instead be understood as material for further individuation: and, certainly, if the second alternative holds, the equal possibility of the first is thereby also postulated.

According to the final form of the first epoch, there is a mutual stimulation between freedom and the antithesis of a being as a given.

The principle of freedom corresponds to the pure form of such a being – yet it is indifferent to the particular individuations according to value present within it. Hence the way to understand in the consequent – which for now is simply the empty form of ideality, a bare, formless transparency – a pure potency whose act is directed towards the movement whereby the elementary value, which is proper to it and which is the flower of the first epoch, reaffirms itself upon the varied matter of the antecedent. That is to say: the principle of formal freedom can proceed in a process whereby, through a series of categories, the ‘given’ of individuation is reduced—that is, constructed with—and its various elements are organised in terms of that very formal freedom or ideality 1. But this freedom always implies and posits the ‘other’, the objective correlate; and thus the completion of the aforementioned process, whereby nature becomes a system posited

by reflection and freedom, does not so much negate the antithesis as rather potentiate and develop it: it is only when the 'I', through the formal resolution of the given, attains the full realisation of itself as a consequence of the relation, that the absolute opposition actually springs forth. The point of the perfect mediation of the 'I', in its own consequence, is at once that of absolute opposition and – since this, in its primitive form (= § 11), was that which underlay the value of the individual – in this it is also the perfect, absolute affirmation of the unconditional. The progressive polarisation of the two principles thus brings about the mediation of the pure element of the individual – and such is the subject matter of the second epoch.

For those with a taste for mythological trappings. God creates his own image or, more precisely, posits himself as the image of himself. The image, as such, is empty; it has its own content – or the substance of God or the real Self – outside itself, and therefore as nature. Now it sets about making internal that which has become external to it; and this, since its new mode is formality and freedom, means idealising the real 'I' within an order whose condition and elementary substrate is freedom.

SECTION ONE

§ 13 – FINITE EXPERIENCE

In the category of personality, freedom becomes a formal distinction, and thus, under the law of opposition, an ‘in-itself’ stands opposed to an image, which appears as its mere reflection. Hence, the characteristics of necessity and identity are essentially inherent in the objective termination of the category: in the image there is nothing more than what is artificially present in the given; the principle of ‘in itself’, which is realised therein, is felt within it as determined and bound by the content, of which, owing to the transition, the ‘I’ can no longer, nor ought it to, recognise itself as the immanent, real productive power.

On the other hand, the category is realised insofar as the substance of the ‘I’ is animated in the value of the unconditional. Hence, at the point of its becoming real, the category ends in a rupture: within it, form and content come into conflict and contradiction; and this would determine the ground for a new synthesis.

Such a synthesis cannot abolish the principle of distinction inherent in the image in general, since this would contradict the very condition by which one can now conceive of a synthesis beyond personality.

Included in the very concept of formal freedom, the correlation to our being of a ‘given’ must remain the substrate of any further determination of it. It will therefore be merely a particular determination internal to that generic distinction. Whilst the law of distinction that objectifies the content remains in force, the context in which this substrate will come to life will no longer be a materially identical relation; instead, freedom will come to affect the term of the image, generating a particular

difference. Such is the direction of the new synthesis. In it, therefore, there will no longer be a pure eye, but a principle of action—and, to tell the truth, of personal action—will be reaffirmed. However, this action is experienced only formally; it realises itself on the plane of the image, whilst, on the other hand, its physio-physical correlate remains posited as unposited (albeit as a mere condition existing for the further value, by virtue of which it remains, in the totality of its determinisms, dominated); arising, in a certain sense, from this objective, formal freedom, in its further potency, reacts upon it, and makes of the content a raw and abstract matter to which the actual image stands in a synthetic and contingent relationship. Freedom, which in the previous category was limited to the mere distinction of the real in an image of itself, thus passes here to a distinction internal to the general substance of the image itself, from which the first distinction is taken up again as an implicit and subordinate moment.

The nature of this further difference remains to be determined. In the simple personality, the content possessed a character of universality and teleological totality, expressing the closed mediation, the exhausted process of the elements of existence. As for the distinct, it was the transparency or reflection (as ‘of a flower in a crystal’) of this total and accomplished being (macrocosm), without any individuation of its own. Now, insofar as an act within the order of matter is still affirmed in the new synthesis beyond the freedom of simple distinction, the content of this act can no longer retain a character of universality.

The mediation of the principle of the-in-itself is possible only insofar as it, so to speak, quantifies or divides the content pertaining to the affirmation according to the category of personality in general (*ishvara*), and actualises in the image only

one particular determination amongst the possible ones thus given. – And, conversely: the material moment of the unconditional requires that the act stand as one possible amongst many others. Now, one cannot conceive of this at the point of the universal, which is everything that can be, in which the real and the possible are one and the same thing. This point must therefore be abolished; an analysis, a division, must create within the given whole a multiplicity that stands as the multiplicity of the compossibles, from the vantage point of which the act of freedom can derive precisely its sense of itself as such. But then, within the new category, there will be the positioning in consciousness of a partial form of the given to the exclusion of others; that is to say, in general, the positioning of a particular point of view, of a finitude¹.

Thus, at the point where the transcendental function inherent in the pure transparency of the image comes to an end, an activity arises which, from a particular point of view, carves out a system of aspects of representation against which the others are obscured, submerged. The power of the individual lies precisely in this further act of distinction, in the interval of this individuation of a particular through the exclusion of the remaining particularities: the person is now the formation of a centre through the obscuring, in consciousness, of a certain quantum of reality posited—posited (in the full sense of the term)—according to the principle of the priority of syntheses, precisely through this negation. The object then appears, in a certain sense, anew in a quality, whilst the existential form with its various physical categories remains: the real that can now come to consciousness is inseparably connected to a qualitative tone; it is as though surrounded by a strange halo which is the obscure presence, in its form or particularity, of all that is excluded from it². A reflection of the one totality, this

elusive quality that permeates the physical object reflects synthetic simplicity, the immaterial continuum that binds the various perceptions into a unity of experience, constituting for the person their original matter, their obscure, contracted infinity.

The transcendental in such an experience is therefore an act of the finite subject. The act that forms the person and that which forms the world relative to it are one and the same thing: the finitude of the former and the latter are mutually conditioned and spring from a single point, thus determined by the reflection of the absolute-in-itself upon its own primordial affirmation.

In a retrospective consideration, at the moment of generic distinction relating to a particular image, one must discern that which establishes the series of corresponding physio-physical determinisms; as for the specific synthesis of this category, it appears as the subject's particular 'reaction', as its particular perceptual capacity or aptitude with regard to the preceding physio-physical element. The fact that the person elevates to actuality and distinct consciousness only a finite part of possible experience, corresponding to the particular faculties and their limits (and, with this fact, the theory of organo-leptic properties), and, to tell the truth, precisely as a fact, thus finds here an a priori deduction and a value. The notion that the selection of specific elements from the indeterminacy of experience corresponds to a teleological disposition— which, as soon as it claims to explain anything at all, into a vicious circle, will give rise to the view that the personality and its world are constructed through a single synthesis, the foundation of which, as regards matter, is pure contingency, and as regards form, is the value set out above. Certainly, one may admit the existence of teleological orders – which will not be determined here, but when consciousness

becomes a natural science – with regard to the functions of a given personality; but such teleological principles are, in turn, merely means whose end lies in the actuality of the value deduced for this category.

It may not be unhelpful to point out what is, in any case, most clearly implied in what was said about the continuity of organisation: namely, that human consciousness, as it relates to the known system of organisation, is a species within the genus of finite consciousness. At this stage, the personality must be understood within the scope of the Indian concept of *jīva* (as opposed to *īshvara*, which corresponds to the personality in general, or universal subject, of the preceding category), which refers both to principles of organisation inferior to that of man and to superior entities of which man himself might be regarded as a part³. That the 'I' should then be found to exist in one particular form of personality rather than another is, at this stage, as little explained as the very problem of birth in general; and a similar obscurity – as far as one can discern – may extend to every further form of this epoch, that is to say, until the principle conveyed by the image has been so perfectly mediated as to enter into a conscious and sufficient causal relationship with that relation, which originally brings the content of its experience into artificial existence.

One more word on an important point. It must be stated here that it is precisely the activity of the finite person that causes the plant to grow, that animates the animal, and so on. This will seem entirely absurd to some: what else, one might ask, does the person have in common with a plant, an animal, and so on, if not an empty, abstract image? It is solely of this image, and insofar as it is a pure image, that the 'I' is the cause; but is it perhaps upon the

image that the life and reality of such beings are founded? – Certainly. It is precisely insofar as the image is abstract that it gives real and distinct life to those beings. The key lies in not thinking of the image taken in isolation, but rather of the image as a self-distinct actuality that is self-distinct: such actuality, on the one hand, posits the image – that is, ideality – and, on the other, the real content to which the image as such (as empty and abstract) is opposed. In becoming an image, the finite person distinguishes herself, empties herself; and without such a distinction, there would be no life whatsoever in the beings she knows precisely as images – precisely as the life of real, distinct beings external to her. In the psychological act of the image, the finite person is therefore truly and objectively creative: in it, as has been said, the very same eonic powers—the very same powers of being—pass without residue and are exalted in a synthesis of ‘Yes’ and ‘No’.

To clarify the relationship between the prior category of personality and the present category of finite experience, one may refer to the life of the instincts, which, by their marvellous wisdom, decisiveness and precision, far transcend what can come from the faculties of an autonomous person, whether directly or through the mediation of discursive knowledge. – Of particular significance is the study of so-called ‘supernormal knowledge’: first and foremost, it possesses the character of immediate perception; and through a sort of ‘lowering’ of the personality in the strict sense (of its particular individuation), correlative to the emergence of another entity, in the presence of which the former is reduced to a purely passive act of learning and receiving; the barriers of space and time fall away for perception – certainly not in general, but according to those particular individuations which, in our case, relate to human sensory perception – so that the scope of possible experience extends to an almost universal content. This

corresponds perfectly with states of consciousness, an echo of which is found in Eastern wisdom, particularly in that from which Hatha Yoga arose, where reference is made to a form of knowing understood as a resonance of the life of the cosmos within the very functions of the body and, in particular, within the breath⁴. But this formless, elementary person, which was a perfect mirror of the macrocosm (= hiranyagarbha), is abolished in the further mediation of freedom: it becomes like a dark canvas, only in opposition to which the act, commanded by the law of particularity, brings forth the various images. Correspondingly, the various organs, which were functions of the universal, become functions of the finite, of the particular: from 'sense' organs they become organs of the senses.

If one seeks what, in the form of freedom reaffirming itself through the image, might correspond to an objective interval, one arrives at mental association: that is, relationships which are themselves liberated, linking or unfolding the various images into orders that are entirely subjective and contingent. On the other hand, the counterpart to what, as an ontological unity, was organisation, is memory, upon which the identity and continuity of consciousness now rest. Memory will thus be founded on two elements: that which is distinctive to the particular image and that which is proper to association. And just as every development of organisation is unity within distinction, so, correspondingly, memory will be a moment inseparable from perception, that is, from the becoming of the particular image.

Perception (acquisition) and memory (retention) will be found in the person in mutual interaction, as two inseparable aspects of a sort of dynamic unity or entelechy, without reference to which there is no way of conceiving the possibility of psychologically

conditioned experience: which is not a process of sedimentation, a mere stratification of impressions, but rather a process, a living syllogism in understanding – even if the various connections in which it is determined are, for the time being, contingent, subjective, and in a certain sense extrinsic to an essential order inherent in the elements.

Furthermore: according to the principle of the continuity of organisation, it follows that whilst a perception in general, on the one hand, has the character of a distinctive or acquisitive moment initially opposed to memory, on the other hand, in itself, it is itself a system of memory, an organic synthesis: hence the fact that the simplicity of elementary perceptions is relative and may in turn constitute a unity of a series of elements of a lower order – as demonstrated by Helmholtz's analysis of auditory sensations⁵ and taken up by Hartmann in his *Kategorienlehr*⁶; and the relationship between elementary perceptions and memory studied by Bergson; a unity in which the qualitatively unified particular is always expressed in the simplicity of that total microcosmic synthesis, which is the elementary form, the substrate of personality. This formal unity of the person, a reflection of absolute synthesis, is the transcendental foundation of memory and, with it, of the possibility of all perception – in general: of the existence of a subjective unity of the world as psychological experience.

Sleep and death may also be cited as aspects of the particularity of experience. Death, as Novalis has said, is the privilege of a higher essence: through it, the 'Gods' transcend and liberate themselves.

Within the order of this category, the spirit is mortal. This must not, therefore, be understood as meaning that, with the death of a particular person, the possibility of experience is cast

into nothingness once and for all; rather, it means that the generic object of the transcendental affirmation or function is now finite, and thus the various experiences or lives flare up and fade away without being able to connect into a continuity or memory, lacking a higher, non-particular principle of relation. Such is the full meaning that the doctrine of rebirth can have at this point.

The identification of the Self with a particular, finite system of experience is that of *ahamkâra*, which for the Indians is synonymous with ignorance (*avidyâ*); ignorance, since the Self is an infinite power of freedom, and never any particular, finite system. However, this very identification bears witness to, indeed lays bare, such a power of freedom and is justified by it – only that, at the moment of the act, there is still a lack of mediated awareness of such a value, so that it appears merely as something precipitating, enclosing the ‘I’ within an obscure boundary (the myth of the ‘fall’).

§ 14 – PERSONALITY AS ACTION

Freedom manifesting itself in the pragmatic, finalising moment can reflect upon itself; and the ideal completion of the category is conditioned by this self-penetration of the principle of personal limitation. Now, what can properly be established as a prerequisite is a unity of the two moments—formal and material—of freedom; that is to say, the particular image will now appear to consciousness only in terms of a principle of action that intimately permeates it, that is: when transformed into a motive or object of tendency. On the other hand, to say that the principle of material freedom reflects upon itself is to say that an ideal multiplicity of compossibles is posited; it means that the ‘I’, in its determination, comes to possess itself no longer simply in a given part, but in that part in so far as it is also in the possibility of all the others – that is to say, in an absolute agility of the particular. To tell the truth, the ‘quantity’ is already present in the preceding category, though by right and not explicitly or consciously: owing to the immediacy of the pragmatic moment, what existed in consciousness was properly the content of the particular act, whose position coincided, without further mediation, with the annulment of the other possible options. Only when material freedom reflects further upon itself is the discretion over the totality fully established for and within the ‘I’, in accordance with the ideal value of choice and free will associated with it.

There is therefore a point at which a multiplicity of motives arises, of possible directions for the further formation of freedom, so that the act must essentially be connected to a process of deliberation. Secondly, the new power of reflection complicates the relationship between the distinct elements. For through it, the person experiences themselves as a mediated principle of activity;

but since the condition of an elementary distinction persists, one is led to the determination of the consequent as the interval of action proper or extraverted, where the motive propels the power of finite determination beyond the mere image – and this assertion now essentially serves as a distinction between the various possibilities – or to refract and exert oneself, to extrapolate into a non-Self that infinity which had contracted within the previous category as a quality of the various finite images. The moment of the given thus lies in the transgression of freedom that has asserted itself over the content, in the form of actual action – it comes into being only in the opposition of the ideality of the motive to physical reality – and it is within the relative interval of effort and contrast that the principle of distinction is preserved, and thus the condition whereby, alongside the further value that flashes here, the elementary law for personal consciousness subsists. Action, as the synthesis through which the world of finite experience passes, is therefore, essentially, an objective reflection of freedom; that is to say, it has the character of a distinctive relation, of the position of a particular determination insofar as it stands in relation to other possible determinations as unposited, a partitioning of reality into zones in which the ‘I’ is actual so that they may be directly taken up by action, as opposed to others which, if are likewise posited within the action itself as distinct terms, are connected to a negativity of the subjective moment – and the reality of these, since affirmation renders real only a particular determination, yet is dominated by the reflection of freedom and therefore, from the standpoint of totality, is rejected into a non-self.

The category would thus comprise two moments: the ideal moment of deliberation and the real moment of action, distributing the various quanta of reality and negation: moments

which are therefore inseparable, for in the concreteness of the synthesis there is no deliberation which is not already, to a certain extent, an effort, which does not already excite and define, in a play of obscure organic exponents, various antithetical elements; and as for action, here it is nothing but an objective realisation, a precipitation onto the plane of reality, of the situation proper to deliberation. Even as the 'I' moves beyond the image, it holds fast to the distinctive principle that makes it a person, for extroverted action implies the 'other', produces the 'other', though no longer through immediate distinction, but through the inner drive towards nature as the object of 'desire'. In this 'other', the ideal unity or indifference of particulars (the 'I' that has penetrated itself as the principle encompassing the indeterminate multiplicity of possibility) is projected, and manifests that transcendental law, by which that which is not posited by a particular realisation of the action is posited in a 'non-I', which itself appears as a reality.

Possible action thus remains, in a certain sense, peripheral: the unity which it forms, falling into the moment of the given—the emergence of the non-I—whilst remaining generally conditioned by the action itself, appears as independent of the I; likewise, the various physical categories appear as elementary yet indispensable conditions of action, inasmuch as that unity implies their closed system. And, to tell the truth, whatever can still be determined from the point of view of formal consciousness must, according to its concept, fall under a similar situation. Beyond the originality and unconditional nature of the point of personal initiative, the movements in which it subsequently unfolds and takes shape must, in the final analysis, appear just as insufficient as the image generally is in relation to that of which it is known to be an image and an ideal.

It follows from the principle, already mentioned, of the continuity of organisation that this category can admit various degrees. The simple movement of deliberation already distinguishes and defines in reality a first organic system – correlative to the immediate order of motives and tendencies – as *αὐτόν* in contrast to certain antithetical elements. A new power of action, which serves as an affirmation proper to this already constituted first organic system, can remove the terms and give rise to and define a new order of elements in which the '*αὐτόν*' incorporates new functions and opposes new antitheses. Thus, the resonance of action and, with it, the further becoming in reality and the solidification of finite experience, can extend indefinitely through the successive distinctions that individual affirmations progressively give rise to.

This category makes it possible to distinguish imaginary representations from real ones. They arise from the abstract moment of the antecedent: they are mere desires, actions that have not yet taken place or have only just been proposed, and are therefore still indeterminate within the system of possibilities; the ego, so to speak, withdraws from the fundamental opposition of the present era and refrains from identifying the principle of freedom. It follows that they would not be possible in a person without the use of elements stored in memory, derived from other determinations previously realised through action. Such representations are abstract, just as the moment of the antecedent is when taken in isolation: they, in a certain sense, express the logical transition from one's own experience of the prior category to that in which the defining distinction is no longer immediate and ideal, but is directed towards a *nisus*, towards an action proper. – From what has been mentioned follows the tenet of the theory that 'consciousness' arose for the sake of action, and the

other tenet that there is no consciousness where there is no inadequacy in relation to the 'environment', contrast, or differentiation of the act in relation to something that resists it or that, in its realisation, carries it beyond itself (heterogeneity of ends) – given that by 'consciousness' we mean reflective personal consciousness, i.e. the reflection of freedom – and that we thereby dispel the empiricist misconception of unconsciously transforming what is a simple factual correlation into a legal order and metaphysical causation, whilst entirely neglecting what may arise in the search for the transcendental conditions of possibility.

Overall. Whilst, on the one hand, for further reflection, the totality of the multitude of possibilities is posited, on the other hand, according to the principle of the antecedent, there is a finite act. But if the antecedent is to be taken up within the new form brought about by the consequent, it is necessary that, by virtue of the finite act itself, the other possibilities which it, as such, excludes should likewise be illuminated (and this in a factually objective order in accordance with the generic moment of distinction), and that the 'I' should be posited in these as negation. The dynamic deprivation of the 'I' is thus deduced from the reflection of the principle of the preceding category in connection with the general condition for active personality which, if I may be permitted the expression, in reality precipitates or distinguishes its ideality. The limited position is also the position of those limits by which it is limited.

The experience of an 'objective' here is nothing but the experience of limits or immanent interruptions within the action itself, of the 'No' with which the action itself is imbued. – Objects are now, so to speak, nothing but the 'concavity' of a limited

action, nodes of activity and passivity of the single immanent power; the so-called laws of nature are but the projection of the formation and internal conditions of the action itself, and are therefore real only in relation to and for the sake of this action; finally, the generic antithesis of the non-Self is nothing but the shadow cast before itself by the action, that which it suppresses within itself and posits as its negativity – and this is because material freedom implies finitude. There is no substantial difference between representing and acting: a representation is always an experiment, a more or less complete attempt; an action is always the organ that brings about becoming and sustains the varied articulation of experience.

Thus the position ceases to be simple: there is a differential between ideality or motive and objectivity. Nature ‘resists’, and the determinations in which the category finds its fulfilment are neither pure objectivity nor pure ideality, but a synthesis of the two aspects—of arbitrariness and necessity, of quality and spatiality, of particularity and universality. And the universe, as it now appears immediately—that is, in the images outlining the various impulses to action—remains a pure moment, an indeterminate that is completed solely through the concreteness of the very act that brings about the distinction, the ‘lesson of experience’ – in which, moreover, a reaffirmation of experience is also expressed, a renewed shaping and moulding of the objective according to the particular arbitrary formation sketched out in the preceding category; and through this movement – which to those unaccustomed to the transcendental gaze may appear as an ‘action from the outside’ – there is a shaping and individuating of one’s very personality as a dynamic system: acting upon the external world is simultaneously a sculpting of the substance of one’s own personal interiority; at this point, one does not know what one is,

except through the testing of one's own power and, therefore, in relation to a distinct entity. Action certainly implies an irreducible initiative ante rem; but, according to the form that now governs every possible position, determination properly becomes the substance of the person only post rem or, rather, in re – only in relation to the action that serves to reaffirm and, so to speak, to refract its formation within the distinctive interval.

Just as in the previous experience there is no subject except in correlation with an object according to the pure act of distinguishing the image, so here there is no subject except in relation to the distinction of τῶν ἐργῶ [the fact] of the resistant thing. However, this duality, like the other, must be understood synthetically. Conditioned by experiencing in the act, the substance of the person is likewise conditioned by the object – the environment, the bodily vehicle, etc. (realism). But what is the object? As a thing-in-itself, it could mean nothing to the subject and would therefore fall outside the aforementioned relation (care must be taken not to fall into the illusion of apprehending a thing-in-itself of the determinant through indirect knowledge, such as that characteristic of the physical and chemical sciences, since such indirect knowledge, by implying direct knowledge, is always given in relation to a person's particular grasp of things): but as the term of the relation, it is as it is determined by the subject's action (idealism). Bound together in an inseparable, reciprocal relationship, the two terms do not explain one another, but rather are explained by the unity of action, of the experience in progress, which is the transcendental prius of both. It is not that there is an action because there is something external and opposed to it, but rather there is something external and opposed to it solely because there is action.

The various manifestations of action result from personal volition in synthesis with the various elements of objective representation, which provide the former with that 'opus conditionis' against which it can assert itself as such. These manifestations may coalesce into clusters of greater or lesser uniformity; clusters which, taken in their objective moment, appear as the natural laws of personal experience. Referring to such a conjunction, it was stated earlier that the laws of nature are nothing but habits; and that the constancy of the world's order is nothing but that of a transcendental character of the 'I'. This, to tell the truth, extends to a far vaster sphere; but for now we need only refer to the original root of the law as it springs directly from a pre-scientific and pre-logical moment, in action and for the sake of action (properly so called). At this level, laws are not presupposed by the will, but rather the will is presupposed by them, determines them, and conditions their reality. Natural determinism in no way dictates my act – it is my act which, at every instant, sustains it and confirms its particular form. By right, the whole world hangs at every moment upon my will and my action as upon its τέλος [end]. Thus: if now my will is being translated into writing, this does not happen because a certain energy is subsumed under a law X existing in itself (which a sufficiently advanced science may well be able to determine) governing the connection between psychological and cerebral modifications, and then under another law Y governing centrifugal transmission right down to the given effect of my writing hand, and finally under the general complex of external physical laws: but all these determinisms are created or recreated by my act, by my affirmation; they, moreover, are hypothetically condensed within the determination of this act and unfold and come to pass only at and through the actualisation of the act of

said affirmation. Thus the most insignificant action sustains, contains and governs the entire universal necessity, since everything, at the moment of organic unity, is interdependent: it is the impetus of the act that gives continuity to nature, connecting and justifying its various determinisms by effectively bridging those gaps, the elimination of which science possesses only in its ideal.

Furthermore: if that which is originally and in essence free will and subjective agility, through habit⁷ crystallises into automatisms that take on the appearance of self-contained laws—to which the will obeys almost as it would lines of least resistance—these seem to impose irrefutable conditions for the efficacy of an action that is not stirred from its deepest root; this too, as has been shown in due course, must generally be explained by an original direction of freedom. If, by the very structure of action—as it appears in the hierarchical context to which it is now referred—there is a moment inseparably connected to the life of the root of the arbitrary, whereby the ‘other’ is sought and the appearance in this other serves as confirmation and faith in that power and in that particular formation which, in the transcendental moment of any act of the person, is nothing other than a pure inner initiative; yet without an original, buried conviction and creative spontaneity which immediately flees from subjective consciousness and becomes embodied and multiplied in the various resonances that animate the sensible world, the entire system of reality would be deprived of its foundation. – It should therefore be emphasised that the laws referred to above are stable to the extent that subjective determination is stable; they generally follow and reflect the development of the person; and, conversely, the person is shaped through the becoming of the laws, which proceeds from their action.

Action, in general, is individuation: it is this which now creates the person's body (i.e. that which lives as $\tau\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\nu$ within a reflected freedom). Our world is the mirror of our person or, rather, our person is the consciousness, the mirror of that act of theirs which is our world: we are as the world is, and yet as we make ourselves to be, by acting in the world or by bringing a world into being. We ourselves determine the conditions and forms in which reality, truth and, in a certain sense, even freedom must appear to us.

§ 15 – SELF-PRESERVATION / CO-ACTION / SEXUALITY

Personal freedom, which asserts itself no longer as a matter of fact but through self-reflection, finds in its immediate object a limit, something transcendent that brings it to an end in moments of deprivation. And reciprocally: from the welling up of this transcendence, reflection—the ‘in-itself’ of freedom in the person—is now stirred. The experience of an ‘other’, in which the character of the given is preserved in relation to action, is therefore what emerges as the ideal culmination of the category.

On the other hand, in the category which, as it comes to an end, comprehends and objectifies itself, there will be a synthesis of the two moments—formal (§ 12) and material (§ 13)—of freedom; these will be taken up again in a mediated unity, provided precisely by the person in the act of realising themselves as a choice of freedom permeated by reflection. But since this unity presently remains connected to a given ‘other’, in accordance with the fundamental law of the epoch, in a fictitious immediacy, the experience in which the category of action comes to an end may also be understood as ‘potency’ with regard to a further synthesis. The meaning of this would be a new mediation of the heterothetic function within the personal centre; that is, this centre which, to a new degree, assumes and becomes sufficient for the production of the original distinction, which, in the moment of transcendence that it generates, is still governed by pure spontaneity.

But this immanentisation cannot be absolute. – According to the consequent, since the other appears simply as the possibility contained within the principle—now reflected in itself—of personal affirmation, the crude and artificial form in which it springs from mere action can no longer be tolerated: it must be transcended into an ideality. But on the other hand, according to

the antecedent, the principle of distinction must in some way persist, otherwise the universe of the person would dissolve into that of a mere quality. Therefore, what may determine the subsequent syntheses will be a merely formal resolution of the otherness of the other, a construction which, whilst making the objective whole—which the person sees arising in opposition to the particular affirmation—something transparent, ideally identical to this very affirmation, nevertheless appears to consciousness as limited to the ‘what’, and, as for the correlative ‘which’, it will always appear to be posited as unposited. First of all, the formal construction or mediation will assume and absorb the general function that underlies the otherness given in the preceding category; then, in the second section, the content of this otherness, in its various elements.

a) At an initial, general stage, the person’s being will be directly connected to the other, in the sense that the other will become the essential material for an act of self-preservation. The person becomes desire, need, and will see in the object nothing but material for their own enjoyment, for their own particular affirmation. This makes the relationship more intimate: as the correlate of desire, the other no longer enters the action extrinsically, but is organically encompassed within it; the other is, as it were, willed within the person’s own will, so that the person no longer merely experiences, but assumes the condition for the consciousness of freedom in its particular form—or body—within which it has been enclosed. Yet with this, the unity that can govern the subsequent synthesis has not yet truly been attained.

Desire is in itself contradictory: on the one hand, in the absorption of the other, it seeks its own extinction, and thus the extinction of that interval by which it is a value; on the other hand,

this endeavour of its is powerless precisely because the object is merely a symbol of the desire itself (need – as has been said in connection with a similar form – creates its object in the otherness proper to it, and not vice versa: the self-sufficient being has no other opposite – it is from the deficiency of being that the other arises, towards whom desire turns, and need is the act which, by creating deficiency in the Self, simultaneously gives life to the non-Self); and by turning towards it and feeding on it, the 'I' feeds only on its own deficiency, which in doing so does not negate it but rather reaffirms it, since this turning towards it upholds the point that life does not live of its own accord, and is therefore precisely what gave life to the 'other'.⁸ Hence, this first moment, rather than providing the solution to the problem, merely sets out its terms. Insofar as the person seeks to reaffirm itself—in accordance with the further consciousness realised through the fulfilment of the previous category—in relation to the thing, just as this desire manifests itself in the new experience, a development takes place, moving from the relationship of co-action to that of sexuality.

b) The ego thus becomes aware of the inadequacy of the solution inherent in mere desire as an immediate impulse towards self-preservation, which does not reduce but rather repeatedly engenders its object in opposition to the person. The ego now seeks to escape this correlativity by partially renouncing the mode proper to desire, moving towards cooperation, respecting the other, and positing them as a recognised and accepted element in the objectivity of its own action. That is to say, the person compromises, desisting from that voracious assertion of its own which, as an immediate negation of the thing, contradicts itself; instead, it assigns a person to its own deficiency in order to introduce it into its function as a positive upon which it relies. The very dependence inherent in simple desire is thus articulated

into new correlations, from which arise the hypostases of the various things-in-themselves as conditions of potency, concreteness and life. And the action becomes explicitly impure; it realises its own object – and, in this, itself – only insofar as its act is also that of a principle posited as other than the centre from which it proceeds.

Such an ΕΤΕΡΟΝ, which action—insofar as it is determined in the form of cooperation—brings about and recognises, must, in general, be made ΤΑΥΤΟΝ; that is to say, it must be understood as a compossible, subsumed under the indifference of freedom. This initially occurs insofar as one comes to find in it the very situation in which the person lives, namely that deprivation which demands it, which relies on it, which exploits it. And such is indeed the truth of the other at this point, for the dependence inherent in cooperation is reciprocal; the other is present here only insofar as, and to the extent that, their affirmation is also that of the conscious personality: they impose themselves upon it only in the very act in which they also serve it, and are therefore formed from the very substance of the latter. Hence the transition from the relationship of cooperation to that of sexuality.

c) In the experience of the woman defined in terms of love, the person seeks to fully consummate the original contradiction of desire. – It is an intensification of that abdication which the previous form already partially embodied. The being which, in cooperation, was willed and recognised solely in the service of an object of action—which the person nevertheless still desired for its simple and direct enjoyment—is now willed in itself. In this other, willed in itself, the person now seeks and demands itself, according to a sexual relationship. Here, the function that posits the other is love: the existent exists only as the beloved. But to love means to

internalise the other, to pass into it; thus, as an object of love, it remains dissolved in its material self-existence, is determined by right as a negativity, returning to the very principle of affirmation: that is, it, insofar as it is loved, loves, distinguishes itself, returns. The relationship is such that the other is not perfectly established and willed in themselves until their very substance comes to be determined in love: love does not forgive any beloved for failing to love; it brings to perfection the activity willed within them only when it is found and reflected in the love of the other, since it is precisely the other who distinguishes themselves who experiences having willed them entirely for themselves. The other, who is for love, is the woman; she therefore comes into being in reality to the extent that she loves. But this love of hers is passive; it stems from an initiative that lies not within her, but in a force that carries her along and which appears transcendent to her, for it is reconnected to the central power of the category, which in the woman posits love as the *τέλος* and condition for her very substance: it is not the woman as a ‘for-itself’ that conditions love, but love that conditions the sole ‘for-itself’ that the woman, as such, can possess⁹. – Now, the person, insofar as she loves perfectly and thus generates love, truly succeeds in recognising herself in the other, in resolving the resistance, obscurity and heterogeneity inherent in the other’s previous manifestations, and thus in reconciling herself with herself in a circular mediation that renders the antecedent adequate to the consequent of the category¹⁰. This point is expressed in the transition from the woman to the child – which is precisely the objective or distinct correlate of the act in which the person comes to affirm themselves, to possess their own identity through the resolution or dedication of the lover (sexual union).

Thus, in the relationship between man and woman, the

principle of freedom begins to penetrate that heterothetic which, in the immediacy of its reflection, sprang unexpectedly from, or against, realisation; the other is understood as identical to the identical, and is recognised as a compossible. The independence of the child is the objectivity of this consciousness, within which the transcendent alludes to the real possibility of freedom itself – to be precise, of freedom as that distinctive interval of a person, which now stands at the beginning of positing – to will otherwise. If the ‘I’ is to truly resolve the given and at the same time maintain its own value as a person, then it must transform that into an intimacy; it must recognise in it that which it likewise can and may be, and which, nevertheless, in service to the principle of material arbitrariness, it has distinguished from what it has properly and finitely willed.

The first three categories of the present epoch, already described, successively realise the pure appearance of the unconditional in ideality, its simple reflection in act, and its mediated reflection—that is, the form in which particular affirmation is joined by the consciousness of the agility or indifference that essentially and truly belongs to the principle from which it proceeds. Affirmation, in the person, is conditioned by absolute freedom, and this is for the ‘I’: such is the value that governs this category and which, in the reality determined by it, brings about, so to speak, its objective experience. Thus, beyond the sexual relationship, the synthesis results in a child – that is to say, one is certain of oneself insofar as that which is now understood as homogeneous with the central principle always has its substrate in otherness. An objective reflection of the transcendence of the real power of generation in relation to the lover’s conscious will, this situation is likewise a reflection of the imperfection inherent in love itself, which in its very concept

implies the dyad, the turning once more towards others – but, in this, the destiny is that the body of persuasion should not fall into the identical but into the distinct, that there should be heterogenesis and not autogenesis. And so it remains that the person, only by recognising themselves in another – in the child who is ‘synthetic’ or contingent with respect to the act of love – feels grounded. In this, whilst the original distinction resounds, the transition to a new power of reflection is also accomplished.

Note the distinction between the moments described above and those specific to the subcategory of recognition (§ 6, C). There, we had something entirely qualitative and spontaneous: a transformation of absolute perceptions within a consciousness in which object and subject, the real and the ideal, are fused together. Here, on the other hand, recognition is something active and free; it is a ‘construction’, an effort (mediated by the system of images, associations, etc.) to relate the immediately given physical reality to a subjective essence. Hence, what is recognised here is likewise a spatial entity, a physical organism, etc.

Wherever one does not merely ask of oneself but also of another, who thereby fills a deficiency in the *ταυτον*—the efficacy of one’s own act— wherever the immanent principle does not draw from itself all the means or intermediaries by which its affirmation may be objectively realised—in short: wherever the action is not simple, the principle of cooperation is present. The realist philosopher, in explaining perception by means of a power that does not come into being, which—insofar as this act is also that of the object, understood as a principle subsisting in itself—is subject to the law proper to such an experience.

It may be of some interest to indicate how woman is to be conceived according to the view set out above. – Man is such

insofar as he is, by right, self-affirmation, a reference to himself and the possession of value. His antithesis is that which cannot find value within itself, but derives it from a reference to something else, and therefore, having fallen short of self-affirmation, desires. Such is woman. The substance of woman is, fundamentally, a reference to the other, passion: not a being, but a negation of self, an asking, a surrendering and giving oneself to another: a total need not to be in order to be. But this is by no means a faculty of hers: as has been said, according to the order of conditions, there is not first woman as an in-herself and then love, but first love and then woman. Love in a woman is fundamentally something negative – not a possession, a faculty, but something that overwhelms and carries her away; yet it alone gives her an essence, and it is only through it that the semblance of a personality shines forth for her.¹¹ Experience shows precisely that it is only passion that has made possible that in which woman has risen from being an amorphous and obtuse entity; that feminine mysticism itself, insofar as it is feminine, is at best justifiable as deviant or repressed sexuality; and an absolute mediocrity of women's work in those fields that involve a principle of mediation and positive initiative, starting with science and philosophy, not to mention the higher achievements of power and self-sufficiency characteristic of the third epoch. Already, morality is in women an empty sound, just as dictated by the logical context in which it is determined, which hierarchically precedes such formations. To claim, on the other hand, that this lack of value in women stems from external conditions, essentially brought about by men, is mere talk, not thought: for if this is indeed the case, it means that they could not have turned out otherwise; that is to say, that women lack the power that might have enabled them to achieve a better substance (and here there is no need to refer to physical

power, which, in contrast to the intelligent principle, always comes off worse); for when this substance were instead to be begged for as a 'permission' or 'respect' or gift from man's superior power – as according to that remnant of medieval barbarism and superstition known as 'chivalry', from which arose the absurd modern type of the 'Lady' against which Möbius¹² so rightly rebelled – it is clear that a woman could not claim it as her own: since it comes not from herself but from elsewhere, it would be problematic for her, not essential but incidental.

And if this is indeed the case, there is no reason why, in principle, things should be any different. There is nothing reasonable about turning a woman into a man: for as soon as a woman advances into higher spheres of culture, she begins to lose, even physiologically, the characteristics of femininity; and what she achieves in such cases she does not achieve insofar as she is a woman, but insofar as she is a man (Weininger) – this is a point on which experience and a priori deduction are in full agreement. The 'evolution of woman' is an absurd concept, given that evolution – in the order of value – pertains not to the phenomenon but to the transcendental function on which it depends; now, such an evolution refers to the logical transition which, through the mother, transcends the woman in the value of the child – that is, of the other who is recognised by the person as themselves – and which, beyond this, leads to the realm of morality. To take, instead, woman as she is according to her concept and as a fact of experience, and to add to this those elements relating to the further development of the person understood as a transcendental centre – and which transcend her – is to create something hybrid and contradictory.

Herein lies the fundamental point: those who take pleasure in

bestowing personhood upon women are obliged to demonstrate – and not merely to assert – that women possess spiritual forms that cannot be reduced to those proper to men; and that these forms, as such (that is, as specifically feminine), can be recognised as having value. For if what is of value in women were instead to be recognised as masculine, the argument would achieve precisely the opposite of what it aims at, namely the spiritual negation of woman as woman and not as man. But the above assumption is chimerical. Once the elements proper to man are removed, sentiment, sexuality, passion and motherhood exhaust the essence of woman. Now, everything that makes sense as aspects subordinate to the deduced category, taken in itself, represents nothing but brute nature and impurity; it falls within a passive, irrational and insufficient life that still lies infinitely below the level of personality; indeed, it falls within the form of the objective option¹³, which here presents itself as a non-value. Woman, in her essential nature, in contrast to the positive will of the true man, is a desire to give of herself, to be dominated, to serve and worship, and to confirm, through loss and complete devotion to the other, her original non-centrality. Should man's will become corrupted and degenerate – then, in relation and proportion to this, claims to autonomy, to a will of her own, and to equality arise in woman. But man alone is the cause and the responsible principle of this: the non-being he creates within himself is transformed into a congruous being of the opposite principle.

This might explain the fact that the female tends to become equal to the male and sometimes even to surpass him, the further down one goes in the hierarchy of zoological species and the more one focuses on periods of evident decline in human history in the strict sense; and might therefore lead one to think that the Bushmen, in their treatment of women as objects, are, in this

respect, superior to various 'highly civilised' societies – particularly the English and American ones – in which men superstitiously bestow upon women the status of a person, or, to put it more accurately, in which men, having become women themselves, come to recognise in them their own kind. The importance, respect, and – if I may use the term – the 'spirituality' of women is directly proportional to the degree of ideal degeneration of a race. And furthermore: woman as an 'in-itself' is not yet a woman; that is to say, she does not refer to the final moment of the category, but to that of cooperation: she is the hypostasis of what is merely a correlative of desire; she is the fetishised reification of the impotence of the decadent androgyne.

This leads us to clarify the more general meaning of the feminine principle. At this point, in woman as 'the other', the person sees the mythical embodiment of that power which transcends them and only by uniting with which they can achieve procreation. The transcendence, beyond the person's conscious principle, of the real principles that form and govern their organism – a transcendence in which lies the inability to give themselves a body – and the existence of woman are two inseparable points. But insofar as the generative act is impure—that is, insofar as it requires the 'other'—it must, as has been said, result not in self-generation but in hetero-generation. Thus the feminine is linked to the generic principle of privation or non-being of the ego, as it appears at the level of the person; it is the *ετερον*, and therefore, as in ancient soteriologies, the original root of impurity, of evil, that which ought not to be and which, insofar as it is, bears witness to guilt and injustice.

The process is directed towards consummating this in the one who is no longer divided, but whole, as the sufficient cause of one's

entire life – in the spiritual Androgyne. – As long as woman imposes herself as a content of experience, as long as one cannot help but see her, the person will be ‘impure’ and guilty; this, however, will continue (even if the feminine principle takes on other forms: the moral principle, rational necessity, God, inspiration) until the ‘I’, passing into the age of the individual, comes to possess itself in those real powers of the organism or ‘divinities’, from which it is now alienated due to the principle of distinction inherent in formal freedom. Then they will have ‘brought the woman’s work to an end’ – they will have consummated and mastered their own tetic, extraverted moment.

One further observation on a point that has, moreover, already been considered. One might ask whether, by any chance, it is really claimed that the person simply creates the woman before them, as that concrete being given in common experience. The answer to this is that what the ‘I’, in accordance with conscience and freedom, creates in the experience of sexuality, is the differential which, from the heterothetic point of action or from the obscure ‘in-itself’ of compulsion, draws precisely that which, for him, has the meaning of a woman: for, as regards the physical element, this is, in accordance with the law of the person, something entirely artificial. However, insofar as the act of love—through which the woman as such emerges from the abstract matter of this artificiality—presupposes the value of the person, by virtue of the principle of the unity of the category and the priority of synthesis or *τέλος* over its own conditions, it must be said that in that position, in accordance with freedom, all the elements that it logically implies are likewise encompassed, even if in part in the form of positing as unposited. And the same applies to the child and to the other who, in subsequent forms, will be recognised as a person in their own right. – It is, moreover,

pointless to dwell on the question of what the woman was prior to this point: by definition, she was not a woman, although she might have appeared elsewhere, for example as an object of mere desire, as one of the 'ideas' or archetypes of qualitative otherness, and so on.

§ 16 – MORALITY

With the preceding category, the material principle of otherness in general is resolved, but not so the formal principle of the relationship within which the other appears. Hence the possibility of a further task: beyond the act which, by reducing the content to identity, mediates it— the reflection on this very act, whereby this very identity is mediated.

Indeed, freedom, in its true sense, is not merely the awareness of the act, but also of that transcendent free will from which the act proceeds.

Thus, that form which, by recognising the compossibles in their identity, illuminates the unconditional nature of the position, may not be regarded as the ultimate instance. However, one must always bear in mind the condition of that distinction which, so to speak, envelops and underpins the formation of the person throughout this entire period. – To specify this further task more clearly: insofar as the ‘I’ recognises the other—that is to say, insofar as the preceding category comes to an end—the ‘I’ is no longer precisely identical to the other, since, through this experience of recognition, it has added a differential to its own substance; that is, it has posited itself as the freedom to recognise, as the power of relation, and because in this relationship the experience of compossibility is at work, as that which, by providing its condition, is precisely the unconditioned of self-determination, of absolute self-positioning. A value which, however, shines forth only in inseparable connection with the antecedent, that is, with the becoming of the other recognised beings, so that the meaning of a synthesis will be an experience in which the self’s position, reflecting a general self-positioning of the

other, has as the condition of its own unconditionality the form of the universally valid. In other words: the other will no longer be given in a 'concern', in a relationship that is immediately directed towards and grounded in him, as was the case with both desire and love, but rather from within, for the sake of the autonomy of freedom itself. This implies that, in its deepest self-penetration, the personal principle immediately becomes a universality, and that the particular position is directly conditioned by indifference towards this particularity.

On the other hand, according to the principle of consequence, such a point must be reached only through an act of absolute, reflective freedom. The perfection of recognition or indifference – universality – and the person's power to determine themselves absolutely from within are therefore elements that must here be mutually conditioned.

At this point, the relevance of morality to the synthesis in question becomes clear. As preparatory forms of this synthesis, in which the immediacy and artificiality of identity are gradually mediated and the initial extrinsic nature gives way to intimacy, one may consider the personality conforming to custom, the personality conforming to the State, and the human personality; but fulfilment is properly achieved only in formal morality, in autonomous determination according to the universal form of the person: 'act in accordance with that law which could serve as the principle of universal legislation', which here is founded solely on an absolute reflection of formal freedom. In such a synthesis, the other is even more internalised and, at the same time, liberated, drawn by the person from within itself; and a further step is taken towards the perfect alignment of the immanent principle with the original distinction: which here shifts from the material opposition

between sameness and otherness to the formal opposition between autonomy and heteronomy. The person, in fact, is now autonomous only insofar as they are heteronomous (in accordance with objective law) and heteronomous only insofar as they are autonomous (in that the centre always lies in the discretion of the personal principle, without which there would be not free adherence or spontaneity, but an extrinsic conformity to law or, if I may say so, a spiritual automatism).

This gives rise to the concepts of 'lower nature' and 'moral nature', concepts which therefore make sense only as terms of a correlation. Indeed, the category, insofar as it is not identification immediately but medially, in a reflexive manner, implies the moment of difference: morality as a pure, unchallenged determination would not be morality, but rather a quality, the spontaneity of a natural act. The value of the person is preserved in the form of morality precisely, and solely, in this: that the person multiplies itself, sees itself as the other and the other as itself within its own closed unity, in the sense that in the principle of universality (which is nonetheless a reflection of the pure act by which it has established itself) it recognises a law valid in itself, a transcendent normativity, to which it nevertheless conforms as to its true self, setting against it the particular determinations of its material, indifferent freedom as something that must be resolved within that normativity. Morality, as the principle of interval which it generally is as a category, appears precisely in the elementary distancing of a universal from a particular within the will; and it is in the synthesis in which a personal consciousness, imbued with a sense of duty, elaborates its own particularity in a manner conforming to the universal principle. The transcendence of duty, within the very intimacy and autonomy in which it exists as such, and the principle of antithesis of a non-moral nature—

which cannot be reduced but only ‘shaped’—are the conditions by which, in this category, the value of the person can be preserved; conditions which, moreover, determine one another.

Thus, the fact that morality is, essentially, intention and, in material terms, an infinite process, follows from the very concept in which it has been determined here.

The general foundation of the so-called categorical imperative for us is therefore the act – which has drawn the particular individuation of the person from the infinity of the determinability of freedom – in its reflection or appearance in formal consciousness; its categorical nature simply mirrors the character of bare unconditionality or contingency inherent in this very act. As for its imperative character, this stems precisely from the formal character of the consciousness in which it is reflected; whilst this consciousness strives to penetrate its deepest principle and thus to make itself self-sufficient, it nevertheless has as its condition and elementary locus a particular, finite formation. And so, just as the compossibles must previously have appeared to it as heterothetic and other, so the original affirmation—in which this heterothetic nature is rightly resolved, since it is precisely this that governs it by virtue of its compossibility—will appear to it as something which, whilst being felt by the person as the truth of their deepest nature, transcends and commands them. Hence, the person here does not free themselves from the other except by reviving it within themselves, by absorbing it intimately: otherness, which was extrinsic and given, is absorbed and internalised¹⁴. This, in a certain sense, takes the person beyond themselves. Through morality, the principle of the formal ‘I’ passes from the order of the subjective to that of the objective. Reflection or construction now has a form appropriate to the

distinct as such. In this, therefore, it can mediate only through itself, and thus fully idealise and formalise that world or content for which, in their immediacy, the initial powers of personal affirmation were insufficient. These assertions were directly related to the person as a term in its own right within the original relation, against which the content was then polarised in impenetrability. Insofar as, however, with morality this self-reference—which creates antithesis—ceases to exist, the way is opened for form to re-affirm itself within the very bosom of the opposite, that is, to construct, according to its own principle, the objective powers of that opposite.

‘The “Perfect” and the others never meet: their paths run constantly parallel¹⁵ for the person who lives according to reason, who subsumes their own personal will to the universal, the ‘other’ no longer exists – because otherness has become internalised within them, has become their very own intimate substance.

The moral aspect of morality is purely formal; that is to say, it lies beyond the various moral systems, like the a priori that makes them such and which is indifferent to the diversity of their subject matter: it is the pure element of obligation, of obedience to a universal law intimately and immediately recognised as imperative in itself.

Inseparable from a subject matter, since its principle—which is the reflection will of freedom, can only assert itself within a particular individuation; yet it has such a subject matter merely as a means, as a vehicle for its expression. – On the other hand, one must not think that morality arises ex abrupto – transcendently, it is rather the boundary of an interval, the origin of which is the simple recognition of the other as a personality, and the meaning of which is the transition from the mere fact of this personality (§

14 D) to the consciousness of it as a formal unity, that is to say, as the act or law that constitutes it. At the conclusion of the preceding category – due to the interplay of values that this provokes – the other appears as a principle of spontaneity; thus, beyond the accomplished material equilibrium of the preceding form, it re-emerges in a residue of contingency, in a differential which is, in truth, its very inner being: the 'I' cannot dominate this or encompass it within itself until it objectifies its own inner being, until it subsumes its own self-determination under the pure formality of the moral law – which transcends it, but in transcending it identifies it with the other, brings it into the bosom of the other. Thus 'pure' morality is rather the culmination of the development of a 'material' morality, the stages of which are, as has been mentioned, the law of custom, of the State and of humanity, unless one also wishes to include the stages of the preceding categories, namely the units proper to compulsion and sexuality. These units become ever less 'given' and ever more free as they turn to express and take up a principle more intimate to the other, until the limit brings about their complete internalisation or absorption, bringing about the reflection of the relationship upon itself in accordance with the legislation of the categorical imperative, with the necessary formation of pure autonomy. Therefore, pure morality, whilst on the one hand being a principle in itself, is on the other hand connected to a whole realm of matter, from within which it has arisen and through which it mediates and purifies (formalises) itself. Hence a continuity, in which one must see the foundation of the real possibility of subsuming the matter of 'lower nature' under the form of pure duty.

Here, too, it is worth noting that it is not because other beings are now experienced by the person as ends in themselves that they

cease to be phenomena and 'positions' of that person. The consciousness of the One always remains the principle underlying them, the realm within which their entire reality is carved out. They exist in themselves only insofar as, by realising them as such, the 'I' penetrates a certain value; and therefore they exist in themselves not in themselves, but relatively – in their being ends, they are means. Their objective independence is equally relative and is linked to the moment of positing as unposited. Generally speaking, the relationship between that 'I' which, as such, is 'without a second', and the multiplicity of 'other' 'I's, can at this point be traced, for example, to Plato's situation in relation to the various characters in his dialogues, each embodying a certain thesis, through the interplay of which his own thought was clarified. Thus, the 'others' of society, culture, etc., are dialectically situated within the 'I' as the multiplicity of compossibles which, initially excluded from the particular position, are then taken up again in relationships, objectively unfolding a sort of 'transcendental discussion', through which the mediated consciousness of liberty¹ is precisely realised. Thus, from these categories, one can deduce as a value everything that constitutes social agreement, the work of persuasion and culture, proselytism, sympathy, etc.

However, it is of paramount importance to note that all this is open to being interpreted in two entirely distinct ways, depending on whether the other is resolved by means of a principle or law which is recognised as valid in itself and therefore transcending the very will of the one who, by means of it, engages with the other; or whether it is merely a matter of absolute causality operating directly upon others from their very core, in accordance with what is willed from a point at which every law or duty is an empty word and which is merely pure power. Now, only the first case is

relevant to the present context: here, the 'I' realises a certainty insofar as it experiences within itself a unity that encompasses the multiplicity of other particular beings; but the nature of the category is such that this unity cannot be realised directly – rather, it is only because one has been the first to recognise a law superior to one's own particularity and to obey it that one demands, and obtains, the assent of the other. In the sense of duty lies the foundation for which certain determinations appear to us as necessary and universally valid, and the reason why we demand the consent of others—that is, an equal submission—so that, in the name of such a medium, they may be incorporated into the 'I'.

This sense, in turn, has its roots in the original deprivation of formal consciousness. For he who possesses this power within himself has no need to subject his own assertion to a higher norm in order to render it objectively valid, his stronger will alone being sufficient for this; nor is he driven, in order to confirm himself or to convince himself of his own worth, to seek the consent of others, or to accept nothing but the other's negation: the reduction of the other does not come first for him, as a condition, but afterwards, as a consequence and an accident reflecting the absoluteness of the central determination of self-conviction, which already possesses itself *a priori*. Laws, norms, conventions, imperatives, duties, etc. are like crutches to support the act of an 'I' not yet fully mediated, of an 'I' that is still outside itself, subject to the law of ideality. A similar situation will re-emerge in the realm of the remaining categories of the era: and before matters can take a different turn on this point, there is still a long way to go.

Nevertheless, in the law of human respect—which extends to

universal love, that is, to a sense of identity amidst the infinity of possible perspectives of representation—the consciousness of freedom and of absolute indifference is celebrated: herein lies the supreme value, even if under the conditions of the form of mere ideality and the substratum of the existential given.

It ultimately follows from this that the demand for universality and necessity, which in the person accompanies certain determinations, constitutes a problem not only in terms of ‘how’, but also in terms of ‘what’: it boils down to a fact, to an immediate given of consciousness, which must be constructed in its innermost meaning for the ‘I’, and not merely reduced to a set of relatively external conditions, as, for example, in Kantian inquiry.

1 In the first section of the first epoch there was pure spontaneity; in the second section, contingency, in the sense that the act presupposes the prior existence of a causality of the 'I'. In the second epoch, this contingency properly becomes freedom insofar as causality is linked to the ideal antecedent of the compossibles, first in fact, then in consciousness.

2 Here there is a connection to Leibniz's theory, according to which the soul would be a divinity (i.e. its experience would have a cosmic character) were it capable of distinctly perceiving everything that is given to it in a confused manner as the 'qualities' of things. Cf. G.W. Leibniz, *Theodicy*, § 64; *Principles of Nature and Grace*, § 13. E. Carpenter (*The Art of Creation*; Italian trans. [Rome 1909], p. 167): 'The past of the world is accumulated within the individual [= person]. Thus we see the object not in its naked state, but surrounded by a strange halo, which is the reflection of the entire past'.

3 That such a position does not contradict certain categories which may be established later on (such as that of natural science) becomes clear to anyone who recalls what has been said (pp. 45–46) regarding the purely symbolic significance of the material determinations of categories beyond the mere articulations of value, of which they are contingent vehicles.

4 This reference is made solely for the sake of clarification: for both in these echoes of ancient Indian consciousness and in the various instances of supernormal knowledge, it is very difficult to determine from an external and general point of view whether one is dealing with a genuine objective vision or with elements of the world of quality, or even with hints of the further magical powers of the third epoch.

5 Hermann von Helmholtz (1821–1894), professor of physiology at Königsberg, Bonn and Heidelberg, and of physics at Berlin, examined physiological phenomena using the tools of physics, thereby theorising a kind of materialistic Kantianism (Editor's note).

6 Having become famous at the age of just 27 with his **Philosophy of the Unconscious** (1861), Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906) drew inspiration from Schopenhauer, Hegel and Schelling to theorise an unconscious principle in reality and subsequently develop his own cosmic philosophy with a mystical and spiritualist backdrop. *The Doctrine of Categories* dates from 1896 (Author's note).

7 It should be noted that at this stage, concerning the original formation of personal experience, natural necessity is simply explained by habit, and a formal or legal necessity has no place here; this is a further power, which arises only when, with the next category of science, the transition to the 'other' is conditioned by the form of the universal.

8 Cf. Plotinus, *Enneads*, III, v, 7: 'And Eros is that which, by its very nature, is destitute of itself. Hence, when it finds itself destitute, it is again destitute; for it has not been fulfilled, because it lacks the mixture. For it is truly fulfilled only insofar as it is fulfilled by its own nature.' But that which, through its inherent lack, is driven on, remains empty even if it is filled for a time; for it cannot be filled, because it lacks the necessary mixture; only that which is already full by its own nature can be truly filled. He, on the other hand, because of his inherent destitution, desires constantly, and even if he momentarily possesses fullness, he does not retain it].

9 It is therefore a woman who is fully aware of her own nature who articulated the principle: 'I love, therefore I am' (S. Aleramo, **Andando e stando**, Florence 1922, p. 141). [In 1927, Aleramo published the novel **I Love, Therefore I Am**, in which she referred to Julius Evola and Giulio Parise under different names (Editor's note)].

10 See O. Weininger, **Ueber die höchsten Dinge** (Italian trans.: *Intorno alle cose supreme*, Bocca, Turin 1912, p. 59: 'Man kills woman [as a metaphysically autonomous being] by loving her, because, through such love, woman is nothing but an instrument that serves man so that he may better attend to his own work'. Such work, he says elsewhere (p. 80), is a matter of rediscovering and affirming oneself: indirectly through woman, who is therefore always a means to an end).

11 There is a love that springs from an overabundance of being and a love that springs from need, from a deprivation of being – and that of the woman (the woman as a type) is, for the most part, the latter. The former love does not yet appear at this stage. As for the 'I' as a man (and to the extent that he is such), here he properly desires a love, strives to bring about a love in the other, in which he takes pleasure; hence a differential through which the task and function of recognition is elevated to the next category of morality.

12 P.J. Moebius, **Ueber den physiolog. Schwachsinn des Weibes**, Leipzig 1902.

13 It is important to note this. For what matters is always the form. And the woman is defined precisely by the passive and extroverted form of living even those things which, in other situations, might relate to higher values. In this sense, it is not certain that every man can be called a personality. On the contrary. Male positions can be lived out in a feminine manner, just as female positions can be lived out in a masculine manner.

14 This might be illustrated by Spinoza's observation (*Tractatus Theologicopoliticus*, ed. Van Vloten, ch. IV, p. 8), that Christ did not free men from the law, but rather to establish it more firmly, since he transferred it from the outside to the very depths of men's hearts.

15 Lao Tzu, *The Book of the Way and Virtue*, trans. J. Evola, Lanciano 1921, § LX

[Corrected: Carabba, Lanciano 1923].

16 Royce (*The World and the Individual*, New York 1908, vol. III, p. 178) asserts that other beings 'provide us with that complement to our fragmentary understandings which we continually require. Consequently, since reality is always that which completes our incompleteness, our fellow human beings are truly real'. – This 'consequently' is utterly inconsequential: what is lacking in the partial assertion, insofar as it is lacking, is negation, not reality. –

But 'other' is only such insofar as it is lacking. It is reality only when it ceases to be a lacking thing and is instead incorporated into my affirmation – but then it is destroyed as 'other'. Others, insofar as they are others, and as others are real, do not eliminate but confirm, and uphold, my incompleteness. Water, insofar as it keeps its distance from me, the thirsty one, does not complete me, but keeps me deficient: it completes me only when it ceases to be 'other', when I go to partake of it and thereby negate it in its being 'other' or its reality as water. Thus, other beings can never be anything but material to be taken up within my affirmation—not to be respected, but to be negated, penetrated, and dominated within me.

Hence, for example, according to Stirner's principle – which is rejected not because of a lack of coherence but because of weakness and fear – Society exists solely for my enjoyment. But, as will be discussed below, this currently implies a moment of transcendence. – As a corollary, it follows that intolerant and despotic objectivity is nothing but an intensification of subjectivism. If, for example, I shut myself away within my own particular doctrine whilst admitting and tolerating others outside it, then, ultimately, I deny this very doctrine: only when I set out to persuade others, when I set out to show them that mine is the 'truth' and that they must recognise it, do I dissolve the otherness of others, bringing them back to myself. The means to this end vary: a sufficiently strong individuality has no need to resort to the mediation of logic; it possesses a causality that affects others directly at their very core, in the manner of so-called 'conversions' and 'graces'.

To persuade others is to dominate them and to strengthen oneself. Since the 'I' does not lead a perfect and solitary life, but rather experiences moments of non-being, it cannot progress unless, in these moments, it develops the value of V_IVYe, unless it persuades them. And that is why it has been said that the objection against the solipsist, insofar as he communicates his own doctrine, falls completely flat, since, precisely by doing so, he is a solipsist and inactive – he reduces that possibility of thinking differently which makes another thought, another mind, an 'other'. The very act of apostolate is a deeper degree of solipsism in action. The theory of the One can therefore encompass every form of morality without, however, being understood by any of them, whilst instead providing them with a further foundation in accordance with the central value of the Self.

SECTION TWO

§ 17 – SCIENTIFIC CONSCIOUSNESS

The individual may reflect upon moral formation itself, thereby fixing it in objectivity, and yet allow a new duality to spring from it, heralding a further value. – That the ‘I’ should render transparent the particularity of its material affirmation in the principle of pure freedom is, as already stated, entirely contingent; but that this movement must imply the sense of duty, the recognition of the intrinsic validity of a law—entirely independent of personal will—follows from the very fact that morality must continue to hold validity as the experience of a person. That is to say: that by which the category may be brought to an end, and the function through which, without further mediation, something inwardly transcendent is posited, are inseparable elements. – On the other hand, morality is not exhausted either in the moment of ‘lower nature’, nor at the moment of the law, but is the interval between that which, on the one hand, by subsuming itself under the law, establishes the law for itself, and, on the other hand, brings the limit of nature back to the law. This means that the concrete act in which the transcendent is recognised is also the one in which the person themselves takes on the form of the transcendent. Morality is not limited to an abstract ‘ought to be’, but entails a realising activity in accordance with it. But the one who recognises and carries out the divine law—formally in the act of recognising it, and materially in carrying it out—becomes, in moral practice, so very like God. God is at work in the one who acts in accordance with the pure divine will. The objective realisation of the category and the evocation within oneself of the very principle of legislation converge at a single point. Thus: on the one hand, morality insofar as it is morality and subsumption under the law—that is,

distinction, the exclusion of the 'I' from the standpoint of an arbitrary and self-sufficient determination, of the sovereignty of the law; on the other hand, morality in its concreteness, which in practice transcends the abstract 'ought to be', awakens in the will—which truly recognises the law only to the extent that it subsumes its own nature under it—the very principle of legislation.

Now for the summary: the antecedent must be taken up in the consequent; it must exist solely insofar as it is generated in and for the form of the latter. It is therefore necessary to establish clearly the nature of the consequent itself, which is the subject at hand. According to the general principle of the second epoch, the conscious centre falls into ideality, into formal freedom; it follows that what can be experienced as value through the objectivity of moral experience is the immanence of the universal as an ideal form or, to put it more accurately, the faculty of resolving particular determinations—arising from the arbitrariness of the elementary moments of personality (finitude in general, associations, determinations of action, forms arising from the various *idola tribus*, etc.)—in accordance with an ideal universality. This amounts to saying that the consequent is the faculty of the concept, and the synthesis will therefore refer to the scope of that free activity of the person (it is important to note this character of freedom arising precisely from the nature of the moral will, which is truly such only if it determines itself independently of any coercion or exhortation), in which a transcendent becomes present within and by virtue of the concept, as the organ of the absolute self-mediation of the image. What we find ourselves faced with can be described as scientific activity, understood precisely as an objective determinability of personal experience through the autonomous legislation of the concept.

This brings about that transition of form mentioned briefly above: the ‘in itself—for such is the principle of the concept—through its correlation with the antecedent—and this, once again, means: in the service of the value of the person—is not ‘in itself’ but rather almost like the organ within which a ‘nature’ gives itself its own laws. The given, the place as non-place, thus refers, as regards its content, to what it is as ‘essence’, to the formal freedom of the person; but, in turn, within this, insofar as it in a certain sense abstracts from the person itself, it thus flows into the world of a phenomenon that mediates within itself.

The further determination of the synthesis arises from the nature of the antecedent. It may be said that, in a certain sense, the categories of the first section lead once more to a qualitative dimension: in them, the physical determination of the given is a mere substrate; and that to which the person is solely attuned is, instead, the act of arousing within it those values which determine an experience through which the person arrives at reflection upon their deepest principle. With this, pure physicality ceases to exist; it is gradually imbued with subjectivity and ideality. But with morality this process is exhausted, since it posits indifference as the meaning of experience—a state proper to the elementary power of affirmation— and beyond which one cannot go. In this, however, as we have seen, form is carried beyond the order of particular and strictly subjective affirmations – into a principle transcending this order. But what could such a principle ever be, if not precisely the determination according to the elements that constitute the very substance of the given (§§ 7–11)?

And what else can the relative movement be, if not that by which the new quality generated by the finite personal world comes to be subsumed under quantity and the other objective

forms that proceed from it, inasmuch as quality has now properly become the locus of the particular – just as, up to the point of morality, there was precisely the opposite movement, namely the subsumption of quantity and the physical objective under quality? The moral law marks, to tell the truth, the crisis of the qualitative proper to immediate personal experience: as an imperative to will the object as an end in itself, or to give the law as its content the very form of this object in universality, it provides the substrate upon which the physical and quantifiable universe of science can be constructed from that qualitative basis.

Thus, beyond the reflection of form within subjectivity lies its reflection within objectivity. This second stage of mediation, which, in a certain sense, corresponds to the second section of the first epoch, consists in a reduction, in the form of the objective universal, of nature, as it appeared subjectively or psychologically in terms of finitude, desire and action; thus it does not consist in a pure universality, but in a universal assumption of the particular; hence an interval, which corresponds, in the new form, to that indicated as essential to moral practice. For this reason, and since in it the transcendent (the concept) must first of all appear in a formally formless immediacy – the synthesis according to scientific consciousness proper will entail a certain disproportion between form and matter, symbolised by the opposition of scientific activity to the ‘given’ of experience. However, it is to be expected that – through a process analogous to that by which, in the personal and psychological order, the principle of the image came to be mediated – the abrupt heterogeneity of the moment of experience will be gradually reduced to the power of science itself, so that, through a complete adaptation of form and matter, the concept of imperfect actuality may pass into a perfect and sufficient one, and the form may, in the objective order, acquire

the autonomy and creative spontaneity of an organic life.

Where, by virtue of the gradual evolution of the category through which the object is understood, the matter of science has become identical to form, the principle of the person will have fully realised itself; and then the conscious centre will have become capable of establishing for itself—that is, of determining—that fundamental distinction by which it was previously, as a person, determined. Hence the transition to the individual.

Meanwhile, regarding this point: like morality, science is functionality, a range of movement; it is a transcending of the immanent which is at the same time an immanentisation of the transcendent. The prior element of the category is the concept which, in the first, immediate moment of its transcendence, is formed according to quantity: subsequently, according to the other known objective principles, in which the absolute being of the given has been realised. Just as there is no morality without the antithesis of natural being, so there is no scientific concept except in correlation with experience as the matter of the given, imbued with quality and personal subjectivity. But just as the antithesis of the ‘natural man’ arises only in relation to the ethical law, so the antithesis of the concept exists only for the concept itself; it is not a thing in itself, a relative entity which, by right, assumes reality and meaning solely within the very function of the concept: that is to say, it is not the ‘other’ of the concept, but a moment of it – in a certain sense nothing other than the as yet unformed potential of the concept, which its successive formations successively oppose and consume. And science, insofar as it is a category – that is, life, meaning, activity – is precisely the dynamic, transformative relationship between the two terms. Within it, through the concept, the ‘other’ must come into being, but this is not possible

without an original transcendence of the matter which it will go on to shape. It is clear, therefore, the fundamental importance accorded to experience by the criterion of certainty peculiar to scientific consciousness.

Ultimately: the category here is directed towards the determination, according to laws, of a transcendent objectivity along a spectrum bounded on one side by pure quality and on the other by quantity: this defines positive science proper, in which the first power thus unfolds—the simple, unreflective appearance of the concept or objective ideality.

It should be noted that here we are always dealing with a form of synthesis: the work of science is something that continues ‘nature’, determining within it an objectivity and a regularity that were not already present in it. The categories of the first section bring about an initial, rough formation of things, which science continues by establishing them in an objectively valid form. Even these new powers, which are added to experience, remain, by right, governed by freedom, although the generic distinction of the existential moment of that which they resolve in terms of ‘essence’ is always inherent in them.

Some considerations regarding the nature of the category deduced above.

First of all, on the role of experience in science. It can be said in general that there is no science without experience, but only in the same way that it has also been said that there is no subject without an object: that is to say, one must understand this merely as a correlation, so that it must likewise be said that there is no experience without science; this applies not only to that experience or nature which gradually takes shape and is organised through the scientific category—and which cannot in any way be analytically

deduced from the immediate data of personal consciousness—but also to what is designated as ‘pure experience’, as the raw material of the fact. For one of two things is true: either the ‘I’ has not yet raised itself to the level of the concept, in which case this raw matter is not such, but is the determination of one of the other categories – for example, physical resistance, the powers of primitive animism, etc.; or such a positioning has taken place, in which case it cannot be guaranteed that the character of ‘pure given’ is not relative—that is, synthetic—or that the opposition between concept and experience does not arise from the very structure of a higher function. What, with regard to science, is a given, might well turn out to be otherwise in other respects: and as a given for the concept, it is a term that derives its meaning solely in relation to the system of concepts – strictly speaking: it is nothing but a problem of the concept itself. This is how modern epistemology has come to realise that, in reality, facts taken in themselves say nothing; that a true *experimentum crucis* is not to be expected from them alone; so that they never constitute a final authority, nor do they ever possess a single, unambiguous answer to provide once and for all to the scientific theories that seem to defer to them almost as if they were their judge; but, on the contrary, depending on the scientific theory, the fact takes on a different meaning. Yet if experience is thus reduced to an internal moment of scientific synthesis, this does not mean that it is entirely suppressed by science, nor that science—at least insofar as it relates to the value now in question—can unfold on its own, within the autonomy of an *a priori* system: for we must not, even here, jump to conclusions, nor infer from the fact that a science—whose actual possibility has proved to be inseparably linked to the ‘other’—may, in certain stages, organise its subject matter according to a deductive system, that experience is incidental or

indifferent to it. As Mach rightly observes¹: the culmination of systematic deduction must not obscure the original efficacy of empirical observation; the purported demonstration of principles or the intrinsic evidence of axioms always stems from a more or less explicit experimental finding. And if, at the terminus ad quem of science, the facts in a certain sense become dematerialised, if they seem to negate their own mediation and to organise themselves, through calculation and general laws, into a sort of autonomous ideal system, we must not forget the context that conditions their origin and which imparts to all constructions the criterion of certainty specific to scientific consciousness: insofar as science, in its concreteness as a category, is not the abstract result, but rather this result in relation to the sense of the specific actuality within which it has come into being: yet such specificity is dissolved when the moment of experience is abstracted from it.

Experience, however, from a transcendental point of view, remains here nothing more than the very power of the concept insofar as it simply appears – as we have seen, insofar as it is merely immediate – in the world of personal consciousness. This can be clarified by considering, in science, the relationship between necessity and contingency. The consequent entails the aspect of universality and necessity; thus, the ‘I’ here is not certain of itself unless it frames the subject matter of its own experience in universally valid and necessary determinations.

The concept, therefore, asserts itself immediately; it is, in a certain sense, lost in its acts to the extent that it contemplates the aspect of the universal within them: the categories through which it gradually objectifies its world, it tends to crystallise them, to make them almost into things²; but, in accordance with the nature of that matter which alone it now has before it—which is finite

and particular—it thereby regards the contingent as eternal; it wishes those categories and those laws, which are justified only in relation to a given particularity, to hold true once and for all, to be capable of governing any matter whatsoever. Such is the dogmatic moment, which, in a contrapuntal manner, evokes its own antithesis: for to impose the form of the universal upon the particular is to impose the ‘madness’ of the former; hence contingency, the experience that ‘resists’, that breaks the moulds of any closed and exhausted system, that demands the revision and upheaval of established frameworks, and thus new developments in scientific practice. Hence the roles are reversed: whilst, initially, universality attaches itself to the qualitative particular resolved into the necessity of a law, it is this law that now becomes the particular, and the new particularity that eludes the law carries precisely the universal; it is the symbol of that power which projects itself beyond the given precisely because it is infinite whilst the given is finite and particular. Bound to the contingency of experience, science is therefore such that it could not tear itself away from it and cease to ‘becoming’, without at the very same moment falling short of its demand for a concrete universality. What seems to confuse it actually gives it life: a contingent element does not oppose what is gradually established, but serves it, for the duration of the interval that the act itself creates – just as a duty is not separated from ‘nature’ except through the *τελος* of the moral act. However, this contingency is relative; it has no independent existence, it is nothing irreducible; it is always a scientific problem, a mere interval that is filled and derives its meaning arises from the reaffirmation, through a new synthesis, of science. If, once consummated, it perpetually re-emerges—if one may equally say: ‘ignoramus, ignorabimus’ and: ‘cognoscimus, cognoscemus’ – this too falls within the scope of the present category and is justified

by reference to the aforementioned immediacy or disproportion between form and matter. This restlessness, the dogmatic moment and the manner – inorganic, almost abrupt – in which the antithesis, the ‘new’ phenomenon, presents itself, are interdependent elements that will fade as the concept becomes mediated; that is to say: as it turns away from the object of its immediate affirmation and draws upon its deepest potential, which is that which as yet appears to it only in the guise of nature’s contingency.

Science therefore remains a dynamic synthesis of two opposing directions that are alternately and organically effective: one is that which tends to deny change and difference, in the sense that the ideal of explanation is to trace every novelty and difference back to a given uniformity, from which it is possible to deduce it according to an order of necessity that resolves the whole almost into the immobile unity of the Eleatics and into the analysis thereof; on the other hand, there is an irrational element, a ‘nature’ that continually resists the unifying effort and yields only on condition that unity is not merely itself, but admits a qualification through which it is made complex and articulated into a system.

This leads to a second observation, concerning the pragmatic nature of science. It may be said that practice is the foundation of the possibility of what is called the ‘success’ of science (the adequacy of scientific knowledge to its object), and this is because the ‘data’ itself is practice, for the transition from the particular to the universal consists in the grafting of one act onto another, the continuation and articulation of that very activity which has determined the particular and contingent world. That experience, as a collection of contradictory and disordered qualitative data—as it appears in relation to the pure and empty form of the

universal—should evolve into an increasingly ordered system conforming to laws depends solely on human activity, just as it depends on the sculptor's work for the amorphous clay to take on a certain form; but this transcendentially pragmatizing activity of the person, which creates order in nature, takes the passive form of intuition. We are in fact always within the realm of formal consciousness, which cannot remain as such and yet assume an objective form, except insofar as, in a certain way, it alienates itself, distancing itself from the centre: the person can, for the time being, become conscious of themselves as an objective power only on condition that they alienate their own conviction; it is necessary for the person to believe in a nature until that nature turns back upon itself, restoring within the very bosom of the 'other' the point of consistency which the person has bestowed upon it.

And that, prior to this, the act of creating and ordering must appear specifically in the form of observing, describing or, at most, discovering – this is due to the immediate form of science: for the concept, in its immediacy, cannot both posit and, at the same time, reflect upon itself as the positing agent³. Therefore: no merely reproductive reflection of a nature-in-itself, but rather a creative reflection appearing in the form of description. This therefore implies that in science the 'I' does indeed possess an objective efficacy, but only by necessity, so that the reality which comes into being within it cannot, for the time being, be directly commanded from within, but only indirectly, through knowledge of general laws; that is to say, only by submitting to the 'caput mortuum' of the process. Through praxeology and technology, the person transports themselves out of the immanent actuality of scientific experience—where only the principle of an autonomous, objective legislation resides—and parasitically exploits this for the sake of passions, desires or needs, thereby enslaving themselves to

the recognised and accepted laws that condition the efficacy of the act.

And before the image has exhausted its own objective mediation—of which science is merely the first step—the ‘I’, for example, is not able to move a stone, but only to have it moved by ‘nature’ in accordance with those laws in which science will gradually shape the latter.

If this is the case, the inappropriateness of the pragmatists’ claim becomes clear: they do not merely wish to acknowledge the fact of arbitrariness in science, but also to elevate it to a method. Were such a demand truly implemented, then, instead of progressing – as intended – towards the state of potentiality, we would regress to that of primitive man, to the formless world of desire, of immediate experience, of myth; and so it remains a fact that science progresses to the extent that the scientist constantly abstracts from his particular person and devotes himself to disinterested research, free from prejudice and with the deliberate aim of transforming the world⁴.

One might say that the pragmatism of science is effective only insofar as it is not properly aware of being such: were this awareness to be attained and elevated to a principle without simultaneously transcending the level of the present category, there would be a paralysis, an absolute aphasia of science. Pragmatism as a doctrine is, in truth, the product of a rethinking that disregards the conditions under which science actually takes place – essentially: the form in which scientific activity is experienced. In its desire to place a principle of conscious utilitarianism at the centre of scientific research, it succeeds only in creating an aporia that is an ill-timed anticipation.

A similar criticism also applies to philosophy when it claims to

supplant the methods proper to scientific inquiry with a priori conceptual deduction. A priori construction, in fact, involves a degree of centrality and mediation that is not characteristic of scientific experience: it therefore pertains to a subject matter other than that which arises in contrast to the immediate position of the concept, to which only the organ proper to science itself is an adequate correlate. Certainly, the principle of science is rationalism, but an experimental rationalism, not an a priori one. Hence the lack of scientific value and the hybrid nature of 'philosophies of nature', whose 'rationalisation' is in truth carried out not in but upon nature, borrowing from science proper—or from categories preceding it—a subject matter which, in the 'rational necessity' goes on to hypostatise, in accordance with a hypertrophy of the dogmatic and fixative aspect of science itself. The true philosophy of nature, logic—which, with regard to the given as such, is also metaphysics—is exact science itself without further mediation, just as it takes shape from the elementary substrate of quantity and from observation in the mathematician's study, in the physicist's laboratory, and in the field of investigation of the biologist and the historian. Only in this way does the individual truly enter into the very heart of nature as nature, and by bringing it into being—in the becoming of science—through immanent intelligible relations, imprints upon it the seal of their own activity; whereas the conceptual re-evaluation of the results of science—the extrapolation, anticipation and reduction to a priori necessity of those principles which, on the contrary, only make sense within science itself and in relation to the particular subject matter it progressively addresses—leads one away from the immanent laws of the objective world, into a realm of subjective digression and opinion.

Ultimately, science is inseparable from experience: it takes its

starting point from experience and maintains it as the foundation of its ideal syntheses. For science, experience is that over which our mind has no control, that over which our desires and our personal will cannot exert any influence, that which is given and which we do not create. This is the realist aspect. However, this very concept of experience is to be understood simply as the form through which a desire, a will – in short, the person's power of affirmation – brings its objects and its laws into being. The shifting of the centre to the 'other', the abstraction from the subjective, is, in truth, a synthesis, something that science itself— understood as a transcendental prius—brings into being. If that which is in itself freedom and arbitrariness is, as it were, torn away from the consciousness of creative initiative and suddenly liberated and alienated into objective determinations; if, therefore, nature appears gradually to be subsumed into laws of rigid necessity, indifferent to the person and asserting themselves ever more strongly in the realm of life and freedom – all this, in truth, does not reflect an order existing in itself, but is a phenomenon generated by the scientific attitude itself; it is the consequence of the direction taken by an elementary freedom.

Science is not the mere observer, but in reality the responsible creator of natural determinism – mechanical, psychological, historical (just as various other forms of necessity will be established by further categories) – a determinism which therefore lives and dies with the scientific attitude itself, to which it corresponds. Such would be the role of idealism. Science does not exist because there is in fact an ordered and objective nature, but there is an ordered and objective nature because there is science. Science is both means and end in itself; in everything it determines, it seeks only itself – that is, the realisation of that value which is the transcendental foundation of its possibility. Only this

value is what is properly given a priori, and only what is connected with it will be discussed here. As for the content or real matter of the category, it is given by the very history of the sciences: not in a metaphysical and extrinsic re-examination of their results, but rather as it has been determined within their own sphere.

Now, what can be said with regard solely to the moment of value amounts to very little. On the one hand, as regards principles, it is known that they arise from the recurring opposition between a particular demand for identity and uniformity and a demand for contingency. The resolution of these oppositions defines the specific field of each particular science, but in doing so, by establishing zones of homogeneity, it produces a new opposition through which one science transitions into another. – On the other hand, it is possible to sketch out a formal hierarchy of the sciences, based on the fundamental principle that science is constructed by progressively taking up the material of particular personal experience in the universal forms in which the moment of being is gradually realised. Scientific consciousness, in its transcendental development, will therefore, in a certain sense, re-summarise the various categories of the second section of the first epoch, naturally entirely *κατ' αὐτό* [in itself] – not by virtue of an external law, but through the spontaneous striving to realise its own value ever more perfectly within its own proper order.

Such a development tends, as we have said, to reduce the quality, particularity and contingency relating to the personal world into a system of intelligible relations – but this reduction implies a progressive overcoming of the immediate form of the concept, to which, in correlation, its own object becomes ever more intimate until, corresponding to the end of the category of the organism (§§ 10–11), that concept will find itself reflected

upon itself.

I – The concept, as immediate transcendence, is the principle of quantity; and the first moment of science is therefore that in which the qualitative multiplicity is generalised and idealised into a system of quantities. Quantity, which at first appears within quality itself, in a conjunction that to some extent preserves it (the number of the Pythagoreans), already encounters, in an elementary reflection, a principle of contingency in the ‘irrational numbers’, from which springs the antithesis of περας [finite] and απειρον [infinite].

The first reaffirmation of the scientific demand regarding the απειρον is synthetic geometry (Euclid and Apollonius), in which, however, quantity is maintained only insofar as it deals with itself qualitatively, elaborating itself into artificial syntheses (the data of the various entities of quantity that are intuited and presented rather than constructed); the second affirmation is analytical geometry (Descartes), in which the principle of περας, having already become generalised and dominating the various qualities of magnitudes as in algebra, resolves the qualitative and artificial element of its earlier realisation, since it reduces spatial determination to the pure symbolism of a quantity that has become self-sufficient and capable of deriving from its own principle the constructive development of that which, geometrically, appeared as a given, as something that cannot properly be deduced, but only shown or intuited. With Descartes, the geometric problem is reduced to the algebraic problem, so that the concept already begins to detach itself from the sensibility of intuition and to operate within a purely intellectual order, yet one capable of accounting for the sensible given itself: for the space constructed by analysis is the medium through which the

mathematical concept can gain a foothold on external nature itself. – But since the distinct has the continuous as its correlative, within the new realm of analytical geometry—which is, after all, its first solution— the problem of the *περας* and the *απειρον* re-emerges to limit its extension: the number that constructs space in defined syntheses has its own construction as a contingent factor, that is, the infinity of the ‘counting number’. On this antithesis, science reaffirms itself through the theory of the infinitesimal, which determines the synthetic finite in terms of the infinite and thus adapts the principle of number to that infinity which was tacitly contained and actually given in the simplicity of the spatial intuition of geometric entities. This leaves the way open for the further extension of analysis, which now possesses an instrument suited to the synthetic formation of reality in general (the relationship between differential calculus and physics – Leibniz). On the other hand, since this instrument of infinitesimal analysis presupposes the mind’s turning towards the direct apprehension of formal unity – order or law – beyond the indefiniteness of the differential series that is repeatedly generated from it, the pure intellectual aspect of number is now enabled to carry out its own mediation autonomously; this occurs first and foremost through generalised arithmetic (to which Poncelet’s projective geometry⁵ and Argan’s theory⁶ lend a geometric significance, thereby enriching space with new determinations – which transcend its purely, artificially intuitable element – and thus confirming the plasticity and subordination of space to analysis); furthermore, with the reform of the principle of continuity carried out by Weierstrass⁷ and the associated arithmetisation of functions, whereby analysis decisively renounces spatial reference, and through the unity of set theory and class logic, realised by logic (Russell, Peano)⁸, it reaches the extreme of generalisation and

quantitative intellectualisation. But the point of fulfilment is also that of transition. Logistic, becoming self-aware, beyond the aporia of those who deluded themselves into thinking they had found a system of absolute deduction, understands itself as pure formalism, as an abstract 'hypothetical-deductive' system, and is therefore incapable of providing real certainty; consequently, in search of content, it turns once more towards experience. Since it can no longer derive a criterion from the spatial reference itself: composed of pure quantity, from the autonomy of an intellectual principle that has, in reflection, freed itself from its immediate forms linked to a contrived sensory evidence, space has now become something malleable and ambiguous: it is the canvas of pure relational determination, the 'generalised space' of which the Euclidean system, the Lobachevskian system, and indeed the Riemannian and non-Archimedean systems are special possibilities, *a priori* entirely indifferent⁹.

II – The Cartesian notion of space and the differential algorithm are the means through which the concept—which is in itself pure transcendence—can express, within a physical order organised into intelligible relations, the formations of qualitative data. This is already apparent in the concept of 'virtual velocity', a mechanical application of the notion of the differential; a concept which enables Lagrange¹⁰ to construct a mechanics which, compared to Newton's, achieves on another plane a progress corresponding to that which, in relation to the spatial contingent, analytical geometry had achieved over Greek geometry (cf. the transition from intuitive syntheses to their analytical construction).

However, moving beyond the purely algebraic system –

When organised into a regular and uniform development – of

analytical mechanics – the cardinal theorem of virtual velocities appears to presuppose a certain set of fundamental facts (the laws of inertia, of action and reaction, and of the independence of movements), for which no cause is sought and which arise solely from common observations and are confirmed by all experiments. This factuality, reduced to representable configurations, has, ever since Poinso¹¹, formed the basis of the mechanism. This therefore implies an elementary contingency, which is subsequently reaffirmed in the opposition between the principles of conservation and those of irreversibility (and which, in any case, is preserved in the necessary presupposition of an original ‘improbable state’ contained within the statistical theory of thermodynamics): a contingency which science can only adequately address on condition that it becomes less rigid, that it renounces the residual substantialism inherent in the ‘primitive facts’ of mechanical doctrine and to the claim of a conceptual deduction of the various phenomena from the single type of kinetic phenomena; in other words, to delve deeply into experience, to become entirely malleable and immanent to it whilst focusing on the agile indeterminacy of pure mathematism. This is already the requirement of energetics (Rankine)¹² – right up to Einstein’s theory.

It is important to note this connection: that the demand for an objective understanding of the ‘other’ is fulfilled only through complete intellectualism; in modern physics, experience itself compels the scientist to transcend it, to ‘purify’ himself – as Wey puts it¹³ – of every intuitive and sensibly representable element, in order to immerse himself in the intelligible realm of pure mathematism, if he truly wishes to account for it, if he wishes to understand it completely and faithfully in terms of unity and universality. Absolute objectivity, that is to say, begins to

transmute into absolute ideality. Thus, having transcended the sphere of abstract formal perfection, mathematics merges with physics in an immanent unity and mutual enrichment, and goes on to constitute the very framework of that which is objective in objective reality. This results from a further development, in which physics brings to its conclusion that abstraction from the subjective and particular centre—which lies at the root of the category—and strengthens the moment of unification across the various domains of physics. Einstein’s ‘system of transformation’ effectively eliminates the relative contingency associated with the variety of possible reference frames—whether in respect of space, time or acceleration—and thus almost attains a perspective on things-in-themselves that is indifferent to the relativity of observation; yet this is only insofar as it dissolves every datum of sensory intuition into the intelligible realm of pure mathematism. Just as energy and entropy, the Riemannian ‘interval’ and the ‘unit of action’ in quantum theory – which seem to express the objective $\epsilon\chi\omicron\chi\eta\nu$ [par excellence] – evaporate into nothingness outside their analytical expression. Furthermore: the final appeals for absolute objectivity, for indifference to any particular reference frame, are pinned on a further mathematisation, see, for example, Weyl’s theory of the generalised metric continuum which, going beyond Einstein’s tensor continuum, resolves – through the use of covariants and contravariants, co-gradients and contra-gradients – the contingency relating to the function of the sample interval, and reduces the dual identification assumed by Einstein in the principle of least action with respect to electromagnetism and the theory of gravitation; and Eddington’s theory¹⁴, which also eliminates the contingency of the vector direction that

Weyl’s system tacitly implies with regard to the measurement of the sample interval. Having thus become the agile and

immanent function of the 'other', quantity, through stereochemistry and crystallography, has opened the way to penetrate and resolve, within an intellectual objectivity, the various qualitative syntheses in which the person's experience has immediately determined itself.

With mathematical physics, the first stage of science is thus fully established: form, having transcended itself into the physical immanentism of that universal suited to the particular insofar as it is particular—a feature proper to the mathematical method—with which, alongside the catharsis of real connections in 'distinct notions', Descartes inaugurated positive inquiry; in its determination, it directly takes up the synthesis which, in the category of dynamism (§ 8), was opposed to pure spatiality. The interdependence of physics and mathematics follows naturally from this: reflection on the universal, which realises itself in a particular, gives rise to a moment of contingency that leads us, in turn, to multiple possibilities (for example, non-Euclidean geometries and, in logic, the various identifications of 'propositional functions'), and thus to an indeterminacy that is specified solely within physical reality. Thus, the idea of mechanics as an a priori deductive science— one that would provide, once and for all, the universal and absolutely necessary principles to which physics would be subsumed, with a view to a quantitative resolution of concrete experience—as had been cherished by Kant—has dissolved. The relationship with the further development of science has, rather, been turned on its head: it is physics that defines mechanics, driving it to adopt as its explanatory principle by turns mechanism, dynamism, and pure mathematism¹⁵.

Mechanics has become an experimental science¹⁶. And this fruitful interaction of the particular with the universal—which, by

crystallising in its own acts, makes itself a particular—this inseparability of the a posteriori from the a priori extends, in accordance with phenomenological determination, far beyond mere mechanics. With Einstein, geometry—whose principium individuationis had already been subjected to experimental verification by Riemann and Lobachevsky— becomes physics to the extent that, conversely, physics becomes thoroughly imbued with mathematics. Moreover, as Fourier¹⁷ points out, the in-depth study of nature is the most fruitful source of mathematical discoveries. Just as, for example, the experimental study of radiant heat led to the completion of the theory of discontinuous functions that cannot be expanded using Taylor's method¹⁸, and geodetic problems gave rise to Gauss's theory of curves, so Planck's quantum theory now exerts pressure on the very foundations of infinitesimal calculus in accordance with the demands of discontinuity.

The trend towards the increasing generalisation, abstraction and autonomy of methods, and the trend towards the efficacy of the contingent principle of experience, are entirely intertwined – experience, as we have seen, being nothing other than the very power of science, distinct from its closed-off structures, which serve only to uphold a certain aspect of the value of the person. And if, as has also been said, modern epistemology has arrived at the strange realisation that, on the one hand, principles are contingent and arbitrary (Poincaré)¹⁹, and on the other, that 'facts' are ambiguous, incapable of satisfying the requirement of an *experimentum crucis* (Duhem)²⁰ – this stems from the fact that science, in its concreteness, is, essentially, an interval, a self-synthesis: it is either a principle or theory that determines the fact, just as, simultaneously, it is the fact that determines the principle or the theory – and its centre lies neither in the one nor in the

other, but rather in the dynamic and interdependent unity of the two moments. A pure fact or an absolute principle would be the negation of the particular or the universal and, with them, of the very possibility of science as that value which can be experienced in a person's consciousness.

Finally, it should be noted that the heterothetic is effective even within the most abstract levels of this realm – such as arithmetic and geometry: within the individual positions of which a power unfolds, transcending the particular, completed arrangements. Thus, in arithmetic, this applies to the irrational and imaginary numbers; and likewise to prime numbers, whose law of generation remains unknown (Goldbach's theorem²¹, as is well known, has a purely empirical basis), although their genesis is entirely a priori. Hence Galois's observation²², that mathematical analysis, when one penetrates to the concreteness of its unfolding, is by no means methodical and rationally coordinated, as a widespread prejudice would have it: rather, it unfolds by trial and error, bumping from one side to the other²³; and the analogous character—which so irritated Hegel—of the geometric proof, in which, rather than a linear demonstrative progression, one encounters the idea of a continuous struggle of wits and skilful agility to overcome an enemy force that never allows itself to be confronted face to face²⁴. It is precisely this transcendence and this heterotetic nature of mathematical $\upsilon\lambda\eta$ with respect to the various positions that has led to the strengthening of the realistic aspect deriving from its initial empirical determination, right up to the understanding of the most abstract and artificial relations as objective entities, as, for example, in Russell's mathematical realism²⁵.

III – The ideal completeness of mathematical physics, on the

other hand, is limited by a contingency: for at the very point where it entirely dominates the various syntheses within the homogeneous and continuous fabric of quantitative functional relations, these very syntheses stand in opposition to it insofar as they are real syntheses or real simplicities. The perfection of physics implies, as has been said, the renunciation of a system of a priori deduction, flexibility in relation to reality, and a reservation regarding any anticipation and extrapolation that projects the hypostases of given moments onto possible experience; but in doing so, it is brought to an end by the physico-chemical essences understood as the real foundations of the various syntheses or relational nodes; presupposed by physics, which draws its subject matter from them; they permeate it and extend beyond what physics reduces them to; and this becomes all the clearer the more thorough the quantitative resolution of the sets in which they are realised. Every physico-chemical law implies a quality, arising from the reaffirmation of the quantity upon which it comes into being; yet, in the face of this individuating principle as such, physics is powerless. It can account for the compound, but the synthesis as such – a simplicity that is not exhausted in the compound – is irrevocably contingent upon it, whilst, on the other hand, it remains the substrate underlying every definite construction of physics. Thus, beyond the order of quantity as a mere mathematical relation, one is led to that of the units of the quantitatively discontinuous and heterogeneous²⁶; to which science initially seeks to make do by becoming a classificatory science, subordinating the whole—externally bound by quantitative relations and given by them in an entirely formal manner—to principles governed by an internal order of generation, division and hierarchy. In other words, the physical law passes from the syllogism of extension to the syllogism of

comprehension. By ‘element’ we mean the notion understood as the unit governing a given, more or less permanent, group of properties; and the scientific process is the genus which, by relating itself to a certain node of reality, identifies itself in terms of the various differences proper to that node: therefore, it is not an abstract act of juxtaposition and division, but rather an immanent process of the formation of the genus as the unity of the concept, which is constituted through the power of qualification, in a development of systematisation and hierarchical organisation that accounts, according to an articulated structure, for the discontinuity of that individuating contingency which lies at the foundation of mathematical physics. The notion, in contrast to what is law and quantitative continuity, is the schema and the static, originally indeterminate, unity of a formality that is grafted onto change and, through this, is individuated in the various hierarchies of types, *λογοι σπερματικοι* [principles of generation] of the syntheses. This leads to a more organic, objective immanentisation of the ideal principle.

According to the new form of scientific consciousness, the gap which, in physics, set the ambiguous and indeterminate matter of phenomena against a theory that was hypothetical in itself—one which, rather than proceeding from the very foundation of the former, almost met them from the outside through probabilistic approximation²⁷—is now eliminated, and experience itself directly provides a formed object, to which the power of the syllogism is immediately and determinatively applied.

However, at the very point where science incorporates the phenomenon into its classification, it distances itself from it, and no longer appears as the static relation of specific differences and functions, but rather as an interiority that transcends them, as a

power of individuation which, rather than being explained by the connection of the various classificatory categories ('type' or 'organic formation'), is itself what explains this connection – what makes it possible and what contains it. From the static law of 'connections', scientific consciousness is led to the dynamic law of 'correlations' and, through this, to the concept of the 'type' as a vital act, as the prior condition of formation, the reason for the synergy and harmony of the various organs and functions, and for the economy and hierarchy of the various parts²⁸. The general character of irritability²⁹, the disproportion between excitation and reaction and, in general, between 'matter' and 'form', expresses in its own way the state of the particular which, in its subsumption under the notion of genus, transcends itself and, to a certain extent, becomes universalised. Hence, the very concept of an organic type implies a reference to evolution or, more generally, to development; the individual, in accordance with the moment of particularity, can assert itself only insofar as it also establishes a relationship that transcends it and which is nevertheless essential to its individuation. The vital function, being immense and concrete only in particular individuations, extends outwards: it is not an immobile act closed in on itself and fixed once and for all, but an individuation in relation to and within an environment, which is at the same time an individuation of an environment. Life, which organises and gives account of types in their concreteness, is precisely this reciprocal action: a process of individuation that connects with distinct entities whilst simultaneously individuating them, entities which in turn react formatively upon the individuating function. The biological sciences are thus compelled to refer back to general and complex laws of development, organisations and hierarchies to the process of a single vital act which, in a certain sense, encompasses within

itself both the conditioning factor and the conditioned, and seeks to grasp the phenomenon in terms of the rhythm of the dynamic unity of the two.

However, this unity—which lies at the heart of the various theories of adaptation, transformism, mutations, etc.—cannot, in concrete terms, be understood except in terms of that which it nevertheless conditions, inasmuch as the concrete fact can never be a life and an environment as two distinct things, knowable and determinable separately, but rather the point of their encounter or the simplicity of their relationship – this unity leads science to the object as pure experience, that is, as an immediate fact of consciousness; and thus science passes into the further stage of psychology³⁰.

But here too, in accordance with the transcendental structure of the category, the reciprocal interplay of the principles of conservation (ΠΕΡΑΣ) and change (ΑΠΕΙΡΟΝ) is repeated. Whilst, on the one hand, psychological laws, determinisms, faculties and uniformity are established, on the other hand there appears the contingency of the person's action and its priority over the relationships within which it is articulated: just as the organic principle, the psychic principle is, within its own order, at once cause and effect of environment, society, race, habit, character, etc., so that its determination shifts to the laws governing the very becoming of human experience – to historical laws.

And with history, the determination of this category reaches its conclusion. The principle of history, insofar as it remains defined, according to its hierarchical position, as the ideal prius of all experience, cannot be subsumed under a more general law external to it; and, on the other hand, it transcends the character of mere 'being-present' proper to psychological reality. History

cannot be reduced to the interplay of anything artificial or general; in it, the law coincides with spontaneity, and an originality reigns which dominates various elements in a meaningful way. This situation is already glimpsed in the biological field, where, beyond the naïve one-sidedness of the doctrine of ‘conditions of existence’ and the indeterminacy of the ‘fundamental type’ of transformism, de Vrie’s theory³¹, which posits an autonomous principle of variation, in relation to which the laws of selection and adaptation would apply merely as instruments designed to bring about the mutation that transcends them, seems to provide the best account of the matter. Science cannot therefore in any way grasp the unity and the ideal formation of the law in history – which is to say: it cannot adapt to itself, it cannot satisfy the demand that constantly resurfaces in previous forms with the resurgence of the ‘other’ beyond the various positions that have been overcome – unless it rises to a further dimension, unless it negates the principle of the artificial and external relation in favour of that of freedom and meaning; that is, unless it makes the principle of determination – that is, the power of the scientific category – coincide with its object. This means that history is possible only insofar as the scientist becomes the reflection of history itself; that is to say, insofar as the concept—which has the moment of the other immanent within it—ceases to be in itself, ceases to exist in the immediate affirmation relative to the describing and observing consciousness, and becomes for itself, and thus a reflection which, as such, is production—a production that is such only insofar as it is also reflection. The concept, at the point where it adapts entirely to the other and penetrates the heart of the contingent, is reflected upon itself; it is purified and liberated from the final form in which its actuality is imbued with the data of sensory experience. This is the limit of the category.

Which therefore contains within itself its own crisis. For historical science, by purely identifying with history as it unfolds, ceases to be science, universality or objectivity, and becomes an accident confined to a mere moment of history itself; whereas, in so far as it is history that comprehends itself objectively, it is history that transcends itself, and leads, in accordance with the requirement of scientific rigour, to a principle that rises above history so as to dominate its becoming and its relativity. Thus, in order to maintain and fully realise itself, science is carried beyond itself – in a transition corresponding to that from the organism to the person (§§ 10–11).

§ 18 – PHILOSOPHICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

The category of science thus culminates in the reduction of particular and qualitative experience to that form in which the position of the concept is no longer immediate but mediated. Initially set in opposition to nature, the concept has now become the very concept of nature or nature as concept: the ‘other’, in mirroring its form, has reflected it within itself but, at the same time, has placed itself as the substrate of this concreteness of its own: the concept, as in itself, is now immediately and intrinsically for the other. Objectivity is the character of its very determination, which it derives no longer by applying itself to an extrinsic matter, but from within itself. In this, the person turns towards full transcendence, towards absolute morality.

We have seen that such a term comes into being insofar as the principle of science is determined in the form of history. But from the possibility of history as science—that is, as objective and universally valid—we have taken a further step. For if the principle by which a history is formed in personal consciousness is understood as a mere moment of an objective history that transcends it, the point of science is lost, since it is dominated by contingency and relativity, which do not allow it to comprehend history as it is in itself, but only as it appears from the particular, changing point of view proper to the historical moment to which it belongs. Thus, history as a science is possible only in so far as one moves to a principle whose laws hold true beyond time and change, upon which nothing weighs and which is preceded by nothing—a spontaneity, therefore, permeated by the eternity and immutability of the absolute. However, such a value comes into being only at the moment of the concept’s complete alienation, of the objective formation of its very essence, so that the unity of the

two points—the synthesis which enables the preceding category to come to an end—must be attributed to a formal activity, in which freedom and necessity converge at a single point, in this sense: that the meta-temporal legislation and the corresponding, perfect transmutation into the objective realm of all that constitutes the primordial experience of the person is fulfilled insofar as, whilst originating from within, it feels intimately bound to itself; insofar as the person does not live itself unconditionally, as mere personal activity, but rather as the manifestation of a higher, universal nature. With this, the category of philosophy is established. Reality, in so far as it is taken up by a history, which is also science, is philosophical reality or, rather, metaphysical reality. This reality constitutes an order that is absolutely self-contained, the organ of which is the freedom of a concept that is in itself (κατ' αὐτό) in terms of objectivity—a concept whose concreteness lies no longer in experience but in itself, the thing having now become an interiority, a feature immanent to its structure.

This specific character of philosophy—that by which, to put it in a word, it feels itself to be a science and not an art, irony or power—is the equivalent of that original moment of distinction which, even in science, determined the submission of theory or persuasion to 'experiment', lives in the philosophical requirement whereby one is not confined to the mere affirmation of the rational, but feels the need to understand that what is rational is also real (to posit, as a necessary aspect of the concept, the negativity of its other—which remains posited even whilst it is said to be rational, and in which the concept finds nothing but itself) – this, of course, not for the sake of an extrinsic comparison either with the given or with a transcendent criterion – a comparison which could in no way be carried out in this sphere, owing to the very nature of metaphysical reality, which is closed in upon itself

– but rather for the sake of an intimate conformation of freedom itself, which feels ‘objective’. Hence, in philosophical consciousness, thought appears to us not as a spiritual power of creation, but rather as the transparency of a superior, existing rationality: and it is only under the condition of such a form that the objective, unitary, transcendent reduction of contingent personal experience takes place – in which scientific consciousness comes to be self-sufficient.

The idea that the world of metaphysics is constructed almost automatically, in accordance with the intuition of an eternal and impersonal system of truths which it does not create but recognises, is therefore an intrinsic feature of the very concept of philosophy; yet it is intelligible only to those who trace philosophy back to its transcendental genesis. Philosophy, like science, would be absolutely nothing without the underpinning of a set of deep impulses, wills, inclinations, etc. (what Indian speculation calls *samskāra*); the idea of a philosophy that is not the expression of a person is an empty abstraction. But this should not be understood in a psycho-naturalistic sense. By ‘desire’, ‘action’, etc., what is alluded to here are the very formative forces underlying particular experience, which arises in the service of a reflective freedom; forces which scientific consciousness, in the immediacy of the concept that is proper to it, recognises in the context of objective determinations of a mathematical, physical and biopsychic nature, and which here, instead, take shape within a system of metaphysical relations and transcendent meanings. Hence, one should not conceive of a causation, influence or extrinsic action exerted upon philosophy—understood as a particular intellectual faculty—by the will and desire. Philosophy, on the other hand, expresses the very form that action and desire have now assumed, and by which their reality is now conditioned. Hence the moment

of autonomy: the philosopher's discursive act is a liberation and a direct expression of the very elementary powers of the person, in the form of pure, intelligible self-conception. Correlative to this is the moment of transcendence: this liberation is possible only in relation to the limits of science, that is, to that direction in which conceptual reflection becomes an increasing abstraction from the subjective and a disinterested interpenetration into the 'other'. Thus the freedom of the concept is also a passivity: in the philosophical form, the 'I' asserts itself as positive and autonomous – yet, at the same time, it nullifies its own freedom and realises itself as a letting itself be thought. Absolute identity with the other – that is, the character of self-evidence, and the moment of absoluteness and universality in philosophy – is precisely conditioned by this situation, expressed by rational necessity: in rational assent, the 'I' feels free – it is almost a recognition of its own substance; it is self-evidence, self-consciousness, spontaneity – but on the other hand, there lies within it, at its very core, passivity: the 'I' in no way feels itself to be beyond that content which it recognises as true, beyond it as its arbiter: instead, it identifies with it without reserve; freedom binds itself to it irrevocably and thus renounces itself: hence, in rational experience, truth must appear as independent of the act that recognises it as such, as if it were something valid in and of itself that imposes itself as soon as it presents itself to any mind, at any time and in any place.

This category unfolds within a range which, in a certain sense, is the equivalent—on a different octave—of that in which we have seen the value of scientific consciousness unfolds, and the meaning of which lies in the progressive mediation of the criterion of truth. According to the scientific approach, the criterion of truth lay outside the concept, in reality understood as the pure Other: thus,

initially, there is an objective metaphysics as the equivalent of the moment of physical science: the concept becomes the power of expression of a reality which, whilst being entirely ideal and governed by the value of the universal, stands in relation to the 'I' as philosopher in a manner analogous to that of the external physical world (contemplative philosophy). Beyond this point, the concept proceeds through a process of mediation and critique, culminating in that form in which the criterion of truth is situated within the thinking subject, in its immanent rationality: the objective, the true, is then identified with self-positing, insofar as it is the self-positing of a universal subject, that is, of an 'I' which is not the unconditional, but a unity of freedom and necessity, an immanent law, rational freedom, a *causa sui* (in the Spinozian sense). In the 'transcendental I' of absolute idealism, the task of philosophy is fulfilled: immanence and transcendence are immediately united therein, whereby the person, as form and ideality, is now conscious of itself as objective power – not as abstract and immediate objective power, as it already appeared in science, but as reflected objective power, as that which is to bring itself into being, to be for itself, *conceptus sui*.

Philosophy thus remains established as the category within which a contingent world is intellectually apprehended *sub specie aeternitatis*.

As a category, it is a meaning that remains unchanged amidst the variety of possible philosophies: it is a value, in a certain sense indifferent to their various contents, situations and particular problems; these serve it only as means, employed solely so that it may come into being. In this transcendental activity, as has been said, the moment of the absolute is present: hence a fatal immanence of the note of categoricity and universality in any

speculative judgement insofar as it is such. The philosophical principle cannot come into contact with anything without the form of absoluteness being communicated to it through this very act of coming into contact: the philosophy of contingency, the sceptical, relativist or dialectical becoming, insofar as they regard themselves as philosophy, do not escape this fate: they take the contingent, the relative, the elusive and the ever-changing as the very substance of the eternal and the immutable. One may say ‘veritas filia temporibus’, but this very statement is a truth that is placed outside of time. One may say πάντα ῥεῖ [everything flows], but this very formula is not conceived as flowing itself. And just as this fate cannot be averted except by renouncing the philosophical attitude itself in general, so one cannot escape the other, related fate of categoricity, whereby every speculative judgement – as Rickert has emphasised particularly clearly³² – is formulated insofar as it is informed by an inescapable ‘Sollen’ in that it implies, as a prior condition, the absolute and intimate sense of being bound to a transcendent normativity, from adherence to which it derives precisely its own meaning and its own right³³. An inescapable destiny, since at the level of philosophical consciousness the very negation of the Sollen [duty (possible)] will become the object of judgement, only insofar as it appears necessary in the choice against the opposite possibility, in which the generic principle of a pure transcendent normativity is recognised once again³⁴.

On the other hand, the point of the absolute requires a body through which to express itself, and only the personality can provide this.

Hence the contingency of the speculative absolute when, in philosophies, one moves from the formal to the material moment.

What unfolds in the various doctrines and which, in the present reality of each of them – that is, in their categorical moment – appears to be imbued with intrinsic evidentness and extra-temporal necessity, may in reality, by the very concept of philosophy, ultimately prove to be transitory. Every concept, logic and system, in a material sense, always has a hypothetical value, since the principium individuationis—the profound power that determines and affirms the varied metaphysical reality—is always the principle of the person, that is to say, something contingent, a particular drawn from compossibility³⁵. Already in our first book it was shown how, beyond empiricist scepticism—which has triumphed over a naively dogmatic realism—a transcendental or critical idealism renders a system of objectivity intelligible and well-founded; such idealism, from a further point of view, turns out to be and is swept away by a transcendental contingentism. More on the further significance of this movement below.

As for philosophy as a categorical principle, it constitutes itself within a certain interval or motion, the element of which is the relationship between the function of thought and the criterion of truth. Hence the concept of a transcendental history of philosophy, which coincides with the becoming of the very concept of philosophy itself, since philosophy, like every category, does not lie in a given, but in a synthesis; a history which, to tell the truth, can only be referred to as ‘history’ quite improperly, since it falls within time only by accident – in itself, however, it consists of a pure, ideal mediation of the concept. This therefore makes it possible to outline the precise relationships between history and philosophy.

First and foremost, the relationship concerning the boundary linking the current category with the previous one. This refers to

the problem outlined above regarding the possibility of history as a science, the solution to which rests on the postulation of a meta-historical principle that encompasses, within an ideal unity imbued with meaning, that which unfolds under the condition of temporal relativity. This meta-historical principle already leads us to philosophy, and it can be said that history – in the broad sense, as universal history – is philosophy in potential (or, to use a term from Croce's neo-Hegelianism, an 'intuitive' philosophy, that is, one still imbued with that form of immediate, sensible knowledge upon which the concept relies in scientific consciousness) and that philosophy is the act of history, the point at which it gathers itself and burns entirely in a state of pure intellectual transparency. More specifically: the historiographical activity, which reflects upon itself and liberates itself as an immanent science, a self-concept, is a consequence to which the subject matter of history is correlative: it sets out to take up this subject matter and resolve it within itself, and thus there arises an interval, of which philosophy is, strictly speaking, nothing other than the ideal limit, the *τέλος*. Now, the history of philosophy transcendently emerges precisely as the medium between history and philosophy, as this interval in which the concept becomes autonomous and is confirmed in its own internal mediation by internalising the substratum of simple history. In this sense, the history of philosophy is identified with the very ideal construction of philosophy itself: and its culmination lies where it tears away that final veil of immediacy inherent in 'ideal time', to become pure consciousness – the present eternity and self-contained – of the 'transcendental I', in which the nature of the metaphysical principle in general finds its perfect, purified expression.

This development is, in fact, that of the criterion of logic itself, which, starting from an intuitive, formal and extrinsic basis (as a

canon for thought so that it may conform to its own content, understood as distinct from itself), passes to the transcendental and immanent, that is, to the reflection of a thought whose act is the very act of its own content. And that the medium of this transition is the concept of logic as dialectic follows directly from the determination that philosophy develops from the scientific stage insofar as it understands the concept as such to be the internal unity of itself and the other. This is already apparent in Aristotle and, to some extent, also in Plato, who to a certain degree admitted into the rational that which, for example, in Parmenides was pure antithesis, pure irrationality that does violence to the *ΛΟΓΟΣ*; secondly, and in a distinct manner, in Hegel, with regard to the need to incorporate within Schelling's 'identity' the totality of the distinctions of concrete reality; thirdly, in Weber and other modern philosophers of science, in accordance with the need to reaffirm the concept regarding the objective formations that have emerged in the positive disciplines following the dissolution of that 'philosophy of nature' in which it had originally sought to establish itself. Throughout all this, the principle of dialectical logic comes to the fore.

Let us now consider the category as a whole. According to our general principle, synthesis conditions and posits, in its own form, the entire series of its conditions. Such a form, as we have seen, unfolds here in the ideal conception of history. Philosophy thus becomes a transcendental construction of itself, by virtue of that activity through which the totality of its conditions becomes manifest to it in the form of an ideal history; in a hidden striving, it is that through which the opacity and contingency of history proper are transfigured into the eternity of an ideal process, to the point of the transparency of the pure mediation of a form, which is the very act of the objective universal. Here one may sketch a

paradigmatic outline of one such process of the historical-philosophical embodiment of categories; one speaks of 'one' for this reason: that history, no less than space, causality, organisation, science, etc., is not a given or a thing-in-itself, but rather one power of position which, moreover, does not have the inevitability of the indefinite, but asserts itself when and to the extent that it asserts itself and wishes to assert itself. It is, certainly, *a priori* as a category; that is to say, it has articulations, which are general and uniform elements for the possibility of any history in general, constituting the conditions for the very emergence of the value inherent in historical consciousness. But the body, the sphere, in which the historical principle asserts its own determination, is entirely contingent: a certain epoch may count as the complete historical expression of the categories, just as, from another point of view, it may represent a mere moment – and vice versa, as per the principle of continuity mentioned several times. Since the object and purpose of history is history itself—that is to say, the experience of transcendental value, by which it is defined—the state of direct objectivity of the concept, of the truth that is simply a being of the in itself, can connect to Indian in India, which echoes in the Vedas, and which may be called pre-religious in the sense that the distinction had not yet arisen, whereby, in contrast to certainty having become a problem, the need for a 'religare' (religio) had to assert itself. Such is the counterpart of the world of quality.

Already the concept of *māyā* distinguishes this objective consciousness and sows the first seed of that schism which, through logical-discursive form, would generate the equivalent of the principle of the image (§ 11). The point of transition is provided by Greek philosophy. Here, on the one hand, the objective aspect is preserved, particularly in the pre-Socratics and

in the mystery-philosophical doctrines, which are more directly connected to earlier wisdom. The proposition ‘ΤΟ ΟΝ ΕΣΤΙ, ΤΟ ΜΗ ΟΝ ΟΥΚ ΕΣΤΙ’ [being is, non-being is not] must not, in its historical context, be understood as magical idealism might interpret it (that is to say, in the sense that the ‘identical’ of the power of the ‘I’ is being, and every ‘other’ is privation)³⁶, but, on the contrary, as an affirmation of certainty as objective content, as opposed to which stands subjectivity, still merely sketched out in the insubstantial mist of ‘opinion’ (ΔΟΞΑ), which is that ‘non-being which no force can ever bring into being’. However, Greek objectivism must in no way be understood in terms of the idea of the object, as is characteristic of modern consciousness. When Thales speaks of ‘water’, the Pythagoreans of ‘number’, and Xenophanes of the ΕΙΣ ΘΕΟΣ [one god], when Plato speaks of ‘Ideas’ and Plotinus of the ‘Intelligibles’, this is not yet a matter of the objective or the subjective in the proper sense, but of the intermingling of the one and the other, of the ideal and the real, of the immanent and the transcendent, characteristic of a consciousness not yet differentiated, a consciousness for which certainty derives not so much from an intellectual problem as from an intuition, from an experience – an experience that grasps not an external sensible objectivity, but rather an inner supersensible objectivity. Such is the qualitative stage of the criterion of certainty.

The Socratic catharsis in the concept itself finds its proper historical place when illuminated by that in which it culminates: the Aristotelian theory of the ΟΡΓΑΝΟΝ [organon], in which logical movement is grounded in an objective hierarchy of intelligibles – even if, as we shall see, such a meaning, owing to the loss of its original, proper level of consciousness, could only have been realised through the substance of the ‘other’, i.e. through the discursiveness of sophistry, which, in its reaffirmation of the

concept, is almost subsumed under a ‘cunning of reason’. This situation is reflected in the pessimistic and soteriological concern of early Greek philosophy. At the very moment of breaking away from its immediate connection with the objective and the universal, consciousness found itself lost in a shifting world of phenomena or contingent forms³⁷, in which, as certainty and unity were torn asunder, a sense of a ‘fall’, of injustice and of violence arose – which was rightly attributed to existence as an individual³⁸ – hence the pessimism, hence the nostalgia for the ‘golden age’ (and thus the replacement of the lost σοφία by φιλο-σοφία), hence, furthermore, the reduction of the principle of certainty to a theory of reminiscence³⁹.

Given the still formless nature of the principle that had established itself through this breaking away from the objective, certainty could in fact only be grounded in a reference to the past, to the pre-individual vision in the spiritual world not yet disturbed by the principle of the ‘other’ (ἕτερον = māyā = avidyā). Hence the idea that knowledge is contingent upon a catharsis—that is, that it is realised only when, having resolved the fault of individual affirmation, one returns to the pure vision of truth.

The criterion of true knowledge is thus referred back to a theory of salvation—and specifically according to the solution that Schopenhauer would later clearly set out in the third book of his principal work, see, for instance, a resolution of individuation leading to the pure contemplation (θεα [vision], θεωρία [contemplation]) of the objective world of Ideas and the One.

However, this pessimistic and ascetic direction, stemming essentially from the mystery-philosophies, would in itself have meant nothing more than a retreat, a halt to development: but the presence of a centre already formed within the logical-discursive

order meant that it did not result in the restoration of intuitive objectivity, but rather in the establishment of a new form of objectivity: that proper to conceptual mediation. The ‘astuteness’ referred to above is, in other words, reciprocal: whilst Socrates adopted discursiveness solely for the purpose of reaffirming the objective through it, he simultaneously, in so doing, enriched it through mediation, giving it the form of self-sufficiency. Socrates’ profound yearning for the past, finding its outlet in the concept, determined the principle of modern philosophy, for with the concept, certainty—which was being—became an image, knowledge. Thus, in the Greek world, discursive science, as a progressive moment, was able to stand in opposition to catharsis, as a regressive moment. Aristotle’s doctrine, insofar as it fully adapts objectivity to discursiveness, whilst at the same time maintaining that the idea is nothing except in re in matter – that is, in the Platonic ‘other’ – as an individual reality, marks the boundary between Eastern truth and Western truth. Beyond him, truth explicitly transcends and becomes alienated – in Christian consciousness: here the ‘other’, the purely transcendent, becomes a value, and to it, through faith, the criterion of certainty is entrusted. This transcendence is, at first, immediate and qualitative: it is revelation, religion proper, the apocalypse of a supernatural world through faith and feeling. As for the enthusiasm and millennial ecstasy of early Christianity, these are superseded by theological systematisation; the qualitative aspect is moderated, until, in the formalism of Scholasticism, that which has gone beyond the original identity becomes self-aware, aware of its own purely abstract nature⁴⁰.

It is but a short step from Scholasticism to the natural science of the Renaissance. The deepest significance of the naturalistic approach lies in the refinement of Scholastic formalism, whereby,

once the 'other', as a quality, passes into quantity and realises a further potential of the decentralising tendency inherent in Christian consciousness. Whilst in scholasticism reason was ancilla theologiae, in science it is ancilla rerum naturae – yet in both cases the dependence remains, the idea that reason is not an autonomous power possessing its own criterion within itself. But with the science of nature, thought – which in Eastern truth was being – becomes not only form, but the form of phenomenal cognition. With the system of explanation based on intelligible natural principles (Descartes), on the simple mathematical relations between empirical states beyond the 'substantial causes' and spiritual powers (Galilei), an order of pure exteriority is established. But it is precisely this exteriority that completely dissolves the transcendent criterion of truth and, moving beyond medieval theontological rationalism, leads the concept to liberate itself, to mediate with itself, to no longer perceive itself as thought surrounding the object, but rather as the real expression of what the object is in itself. When the investigator, who had almost withdrawn from the object, came to explore it thoroughly, he saw it vanish from his grasp and instead arrived at the experience of himself precisely as that pure form which he had thus become: for science culminates in the dematerialisation of nature into a self-contained system of abstract, ideal relations, in which nothing is reflected but its own abstract essence. However, the realisation of this finds its perfect fulfilment only in modern idealism. In this development of speculative consciousness, discursiveness definitively takes the form of self-sufficiency, becomes self-consciousness and places the criterion within itself.

In Kant's theory of the 'synthesis of apperception', the subject is drawn into the act of positing the object, insofar as it is an object of science: it is the 'I think', the creative faculty of an experience,

which merges with the immanent science (= discursive knowability) of things. In Kant, the power that brings about reality and takes it into itself by idealising it thus becomes self-aware; the objective has become the 'I' – but this is only insofar as, in the very same act, the 'I' has become objective: here, the 'I' resolves the 'other' only on condition that it shifts into consciousness [Bewusstsein] in a general [allgemein] sense; this shift conditions the absolute immanence of truth in thought, the unity of the empirical and the rational. The line of thought unfolds: Kantian criticism presupposed, on the one hand, a dogmatic conception of Newtonian mechanics, Euclidean geometry and Archimedean arithmetic, and, on the other, the dualism between form and matter in intuition; thus, in Kant, the resolution of the empirical into the transcendental could not be complete. In him, identity is restricted to that aspect of the 'I' from which the general principles for legislation—or the possibility of experience as an experience that can be scientifically analysed through discourse—proceed; a legislation which is, however, limited on the one hand by the manifold of the sensible and the contingent, and on the other by the noumenon. This limitation is removed in two ways: firstly, formally, through the progress of critical awareness, whereby the noumenon – 'wood made of iron' – was denied outright, and, through Hegelian dialectic, an organ was constructed so that the 'Chaos ausserhalb des Systems' [Chaos outside the system] and the noumenal antithesis might be organically incorporated into the concept. Secondly (materialiter), through the decline of the very system of 'philosophy of nature' itself. The true transcendence of the Idea or discursivity, through which it demonstrates its own freedom and absoluteness and reclaims the possibility of the other – as required by dialectics – is not that, within the system of the Encyclopaedia,

of the ‘Logos’ in ‘Nature’, but rather that of the whole of Hegelianism in the exact sciences, through the intermediary of the Hegelian Left and positivism⁴¹. And the synthesis is not the ‘Philosophy of Spirit’ but, through the medium of the philosophy of science and the mathematical idealism of the Marburg School, absolute idealism – understood as identical to absolute positivism – where the concept, freeing itself from the constraints of one-sided dogmatism, immerses itself entirely in the other, becomes the very act of the particular and the empirical, so that in the unfolding of objective experience it sees only the eternity of the form mediated in itself and sufficient unto itself – the pure logical universal⁴². Here the scope of philosophical consciousness comes to an end: the empirical and the transcendental, freedom (possibility) and necessity (reality), the universal and the particular, transcendence and immanence, *ταυτοτης* [identity] and *ετεροτης* [otherness], the rational and the irrational merge into a unity that expresses nothing but the self-conception of the pure concept.

The criterion of truth, which, according to the antecedent of the category, was originally grounded in an intuitive-objective identity (Eastern and ancient Greek spirit), alienates itself (Christian spirit, logical formalism and naturalism) only to return to immanentise itself as a pure concept, discursivity mediating within itself (modern criticism).

Truth as being, having died through the transcendent divinity down to the phenomenal matter of science, passes into transcendental logic, into the discursive form which is to itself *υποκειμενον* in a mediation. In this, the element of every metaphysical reality as such, the metaphysical moment of every metaphysics, comes to full actuality.

History is its power; and the interval separating this power from its own act is precisely the history of philosophy.

Finally, we wish to return to what was said in the first book concerning the practical-synthetic nature of philosophy in general, a nature which justifies its possible presence in the world of the Absolute Individual.

Philosophy does not exist because there is a rationality in things, but philosophy endows things with a rationality which they did not previously possess – this is the fundamental point. There is never any recognition, but even the possibility of recognition is nothing but a form in which a positing appears. Philosophy, in its characteristic rationalisation of experience, is justified solely by a practical will that resounds thus: ‘The irrational, the other, must not be’. Its function is always one of commanding and determining, which presupposes an indeterminacy, a problematic that is both subjective (in the thinker) and objective (in things) – and its presupposition is not an objective rationality as a matter of fact, but the power to rationalise the given irrational. Through this function at the level of philosophy as such, the ‘I’ is, however, in a certain sense acted upon (at the moment of the ‘Sollen’); yet this does not make it any less synthetic in relation to its object, nor any less immanent in its form of transcendence.

We have said that the present exposition of the categories, insofar as they are taken as meanings, is derived from a reflection on freedom according to the affirmative option. When, on the other hand, it is considered from a purely philosophical standpoint, this exposition is divided into two parts by a boundary or centre, which is precisely the category of philosophy: the first part takes up the categories described so far, which are then to be

understood as the elements resulting from an analysis of the conditions of possibility of the philosophical form itself (theoretical philosophy); the second part will take up the set of further categories, which will become postulates— that is, the ideal determination of tasks—whose actual realisation is a condition for the ‘I’ to become absolutely sufficient in relation to the problem that looms large in philosophy.

§ 19 – MYSTICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Philosophy thus finds its culmination in that formation in which the concept of the transcendental 'I' is established. Consequently, this point – at which form, in so far as it is the form of objectivity, freely reflects and mediates itself – once fully grasped, is transformed into a point of unstable equilibrium, dominated by the need for further definition. This is in the sense that the transcendental 'I', as a determination of philosophical consciousness, exists only insofar as it is grasped and produced in a concept; but it is impossible to grasp it in this way without contradicting its essence. The concept that truly seeks to correspond to it – and, in so doing, to itself – is compelled to carry the general principle of philosophical formation beyond itself.

Specifically. What is realised at the end of the philosophical category as the 'transcendental I' is the actual principle of objective experience in general, i.e. the thinker of all thinking. Now, the thinking subject as such cannot be the object of a construction or mediation, i.e. of a concept proper. That thinking subject which can be given by a concept is the negation of the thinking subject – not the thinking subject itself, but a thought-of – which contradicts the principle of the identity of form and content that ought to govern the terminus of the category: or, rather, at the point where the concept truly posits the thinker, it exhausts its own discursive formation and drives the centre into that which, as the potential of all thinking – and thus also of that from which the fixation of the very concept of the thinker may proceed – can never be thought, and thus falls outside any philosophical determination whilst remaining inevitably postulated by each of them. Thus the concept of the transcendental 'I' marks a point of crisis: on the one hand, it must be affirmed philosophically – it is the conclusion,

the *τελος*, around which the entire development of the criterion of truth revolves; it is the principle of perfect metaphysical resolution; but this affirmation either negates its own object or, torn by an internal contradiction, finds itself powerless in the face of its own problem and that of philosophy in general; or, if it conforms to its deepest aspiration, in the very act of realising itself it ceases to be a philosophical assertion; it goes beyond the order of the mediated, of the conceptually constructible. Just as the cognition of a sequence of phenomena can objectively count as history only within a principle which itself lies outside history, so too that position which, by aligning freedom with objectivity, gives rise to the 'transcendental I'—insofar as it does not resolve itself into a qualitative category but, according to its possibility and its hierarchical place, is instead a personal determination and, specifically, the development of scientific consciousness – is realised only within a value that transcends and dominates it. And if the transcendental 'I', in its speculative understanding, is the absolute identity of freedom and necessity, and in it the concept mediated in itself within the objective is expressed, its becoming – the fact that, in general, a philosophy is possible which takes it as its principle and yet continues to possess the value of ideality and science – postulates, or confesses, at the same time, the transition of the person into a further element, which transcends the determination of the demiurgic *causa sui*, of the absolute imperativeness in which the actuality of thought—which has also become the act of the object—is formed. In short: the ideal end of philosophy is possible only as a correlate to the value of the unconditional, of the principle which, as the principle of thinking, cannot, be subsumed under any law – and is therefore infinite; which, as the principle of thinking, cannot itself become the object of thinking in the strict sense, of that deducing and constructing

which was at issue within the philosophical category – and is therefore heterological; which, as the principle of all mediation, can only be an immediate.

Beyond correlation lies synthesis: the form of the unconditional and the heterological must be the condition in which that absolute, ideal unity is resolved, for which the concept as the category in which the principle of the person resolves, in immanence, the issue of the *ex lege* [outside the law] and the infinite—even whilst maintaining, in accordance with the moment of the antecedent, the value of the absolutely necessary, of the deepest root of objectivity—may be described as mystical.

The content of mystical experience is precisely the absolute unity of the empirical and the transcendental, formed in a principle of infinity, that is to say, in a principle beyond all form, law and condition – a unity which, whilst remaining something immediate, something that exists solely in a direct, inner realisation of the mystic himself, is nevertheless felt to be objective, existing in and of itself (= as ‘God’). The fact is that the new synthesis, though extreme, is always a mutual interpenetration and absorption of the ideal principle into the other. To be precise: formal freedom, having experienced the value of objectivity as a mere position through science, as reflection or mediation through philosophy, comes to experience objectivity itself through mysticism as the power of mediation. And if such a power is the supreme, in mysticism the supreme immanence—becoming transcendence—is expressed, just as, at the same time, the supreme transcendence—the deepest possible root in the other—becoming immanence, takes shape.

Through ‘ecstasy’, through the act of self-surrender whereby the person denies the very transcendental individuation of the

‘intelligibles’ and ‘ideas’, and plunges into the unutterable abyss, into the solitary desert, into the eternal, naked essence of the ‘Father’, the objective formation of the person is thus brought to its conclusion, to its *τελος*.

Hence a connection to religious experience, provided that this is understood fundamentally as faith in the objective existence of a supernatural principle, whose attribute is infinity, a power transcending any law or formation. And since the synthesis, the *τελος*, is always the very matter from which its conditions are formed, it would now appear that ‘God’ is the very substance within which the whole of the sciences—and therefore also the objects which, in the service of the becoming of these sciences, come into being in experience—live and from which they derive their reality, reason and supreme unification; He is the centre around which the entire system of objectivity gravitates, and which sustains it. But then divinity must be conceived in accordance with that faculty which alone is appropriate to this hierarchical position. Thus: the God of theologies is in truth a negation of God – a particular formation of speculative consciousness (the meaning of which is that determined above for Christianity in the ideal history of philosophy). The true God must not be demonstrated, thought out or determined: He is either faith and pure inner evidence, or He is nothing; religion as such begins where form, having abandoned the plane of that thought which is determinative only insofar as it is simultaneously also determined — identical to necessity—shifts the centre to the formless moment of the determinative itself, which, however, can only be grasped directly.

Hence we shall say that every religion, insofar as it is religion and nothing else, is mysticism.

Now mysticism, as a value, is, like every other category, an interval: the mystical God will therefore not be given *ex abrupto*, but will, in a transcendental sense, be originally connected—as to a matter not yet actualised—to the antecedent moment, that is, to a certain philosophical concept and, more generally, to a certain worldview; from which it is gradually elaborated – just as the philosophical concept itself was gradually elaborated from the scientific moment through history up to the pure principle of immanence. However, owing to the very nature of that which has now become the categorical *prius* and *τέλος*, such a development does not entail a phenomenology that can be determined discursively: it falls within the interiority of the person, who, within natural formations, increasingly deepens the sense of the infinite and the whole. But if, in the various phases of speculative thought, the gradual realisation of the concept of philosophy is to be understood; and since, on the other hand, this realisation is only completed in the transcendent act that affirms and grasps the mystical principle – one can understand the process of speculation, from the objective concept to the immanent concept of truth, as the phenomenon or myth, turning inwards towards its own fulfilment, of the ineffable movement by which the principle of the person comes to realise within itself the presence of the mystical God.

Here too, what has been said of philosophy applies: religion, as an experience of the person, always sends its roots into that irrational world of action and particularity, which constitutes its elementary substance. A human element reflecting the various local and historical contingencies will therefore be indispensable to it, albeit purely as an instrument of expression, from which it increasingly seeks to free itself in order to transform it into its purified form. Thus, whilst it remains true that it is always the

higher which, as the final cause, determines the lower and the elementary associated with it, there is no reason to rule out a positive investigation into the psychological-naturalistic substratum of religions. Indeed, it is only on this basis that a concrete understanding of the evolution of religious value is possible.

And one can conceive of a kind of phenomenology in which the mystical experience, starting from a substance determined by the elementary needs of animal life, develops all the way to the realm of the unconditional, of the infinite principle. Not only that, but one might even go so far as to assert, with Carpenter, that the 'Gods' truly reside in the physiological centres: they correspond to the energies which, through the various developments of the races and recurring experiences, have shaped the concrete individuation of the person, and remain there, sustaining it – these energies insofar as they are awakened and objectified in the mystical moment of their elemental power. Thus, the physiological (not merely the psychological) would be the *ratio cognoscendi* of the divine. The world of transcendental demiurgic essences or 'ideas'—to be reduced, through *πλωσις* [simplification], to the pure ineffable of the *εν* [One], of Shiva or nirguna-Brahman—would express the emergence, within the realm of the thinking or the unconditioned, of the 'precipitating' elemental forces as organic functions of the person⁴³.

The object of religion, it was said, is the supernatural, in the sense of that which is superior to the laws, which is capable of free will, of 'miracles', of accomplishing that which, in relation to a certain system of determinations, appears absurd or impossible. 'Credo quia absurdum', *aghatana-patīyasi* (= that by which the impossible is made possible) – this is the element proper to the

religious object as such – which therefore constitutes a category and a value in its own right, distinct from both the philosophical and the scientific. ‘I believe’ means: the impossible IS possible; all that is does not exist in and of itself; that which is not infinitely transcends that which is; and this non-being IS.

The ideality of the person in faith seeks to exhaust absolutely the other: it seeks to reclaim this possibility as absolute, total freedom; yet it takes as its object the incomprehensible and the impossible.

Hence, within the category arising from such a demand, there remains a residue that will never lend itself to the concept and which, on the contrary, will condition it wherever religion is not a hollow name. Since the transition from one category to another is contingent, one may well remain fixed at the philosophical standpoint: nevertheless, to reduce God to a thinkable entity, to assert that religion is valid for its doctrinal content as presented in it in an immediate or figurative form, remains in itself fundamentally something rational; and thus to dismiss its mystical infinity as an empty framework – this is possible only insofar as religion has not yet come into being in any way, and therefore insofar as philosophy has not yet come to understand, that is to say, to complete, itself. The claim that the mystical object should account for itself in terms of the discursive concept makes as little sense as demanding that green be shown to someone who has first fixed red spectacles to their eyes and has no intention whatsoever of removing them. Let philosophy press on, realise its own value to the full – and a bridge between it and religion will be thrown across of its own accord⁴⁴.

In mysticism, one discerns the connection between the two aspects of immanence and formalism. On the one hand, what

distinguishes mystical certainty is its character of immediacy: what is mystically true – as has been said – is always something which, whilst holding the status of an objectivity, is given directly in an essentially ineffable evidence, for its content is not the formation but the potency of the latter. Nevertheless, mysticism, as that which corresponds to the present point, is always a formal category, subject, as such, to the law of distinction, and thus connected to the substratum of the profound determinations of the finite will. Hence, whilst on the one hand the mystical *τελος* is such that it cannot in any way be transmitted or taught, on the other hand any synthesis remains, in material terms, something abstract, subjective and ideal: it is not a real resolution of things; it is not a flame that concretely consumes the person and, with them, the particular finite world into an absolute point, leaving nothing behind – in short: it is not cosmic praxis. There is no rapture of ecstasy so absolute that the ecstatic does not return to awaken to their own flesh. And since, according to the present understanding, mysticism essentially expresses the extension of the Other down to the very root of the Self—the supreme objectivity or abstraction—achieved through an intensification of the movement of transcendental philosophy, whereby the object is resolved only insofar as it objectively takes the form of a deeper power of the subject; this is why the mystic’s experience, in its activity, is essentially passive; this is why, in the immanence of the unnameable, wonder remains—the principle of grace: just as the ‘I’ in action within science realises its own conviction only insofar as it relies on the myth of the experiment and believes that a ‘nature in itself’ guarantees its theories and principles; and in philosophy, too, it relies on the absolute evidence of logic to the point of making the ‘I’ the mere self-consciousness of Reason, the passive subject of the ‘Sollen’; thus, in mysticism, the various

fulfilments must be permeated by the meaning of a higher illumination⁴⁵. In it, the 'I' is not master of its own movement: at the deepest root of activity, it is instead enraptured, transported – it is alienated, it is devotion, or rather: this profound root – the absolute immanence inherent in the antecedent of the transcendental 'I', which aligns itself with the principle of the infinite – can be realised here only through an intimate sense of self-surrender, self-denial, love and, at the lowest level, devotion.

This finds distinct expression in Novalis's view. The 'Amen of the universe', the 'supreme real', this author attributes to the principle of love; he understands the deepest point of the 'I', which conditions all activity, as an absolute *Empfindung* [absolute sensation]; thus in a sense of humility and passivity, even if freely determined – just as must be the case for every form in the world of the person⁴⁶. This inner attitude of the mystic, which is essential to the category, is the innermost root of all religion⁴⁷. The mystic does not maintain himself and, starting from himself, conquer God; nor does he become God in the proper sense of the expression: rather, he draws himself aside, allows God to speak and to generate himself within him; his work does not appear to him as positive but rather as negative. As if the divine principle were another entity, buried within the person, which one need only listen to, allowing it to speak whilst remaining silent and denying oneself. Mystically, the 'I' does not pass into God as something that overcomes, but rather as something that is overcome. In terms of meaning, this remains true even in the deepest 'states of union' and retains the artificial element of the era: in its abstract reflection, it determines the doctrine of grace.

In contrast to mysticism, magic would therefore be defined first and foremost by the objective, positively effective nature of

its practice. Its function would no longer be aesthetic-formal, based on a fundamental objectivity, but a real resolution of the physical antithesis; no longer a subjectivity which, only insofar as it is lived objectively, penetrates the unconditional, but a subjectivity which, if it is unconditional and objective, is so only insofar as it is power and dominion. Hence, the character of the ego's absolute, explicit self-sufficiency in its own act, of pure affirmation and active overcoming of the realm of the forms of grace, love and ecstasy.

§ 20 – PURE ART

With the category of mysticism, form has definitively adapted itself to its own content: in all the powers of this content – in the simple objective through science, in relative mediation through philosophy, in the principle of infinity through mysticism – it has penetrated and resolved it within itself; that is to say, it has reconciled itself with it by idealising it.

Now, in mystical experience, objectivity exists in an unconditional state, which means: in a state that encompasses the possibility of its own crisis, the freedom to transcend itself, to pass into something else – into something else, that is, into the subjective. And this possibility of its own is, in truth, not merely a possibility, but a reality in the very act of becoming that which is the *τελος* of mysticism – ecstasy. In ecstasy, the person is negated – and yet a difference persists; there remains a living within the divine life whilst remaining distinct from it, for otherwise there would be no place left for the sense of objectivity in this very life itself. But the power of such a distinction – insofar as the latter is posited – can no longer be provided by the person, nor can it be provided even by the objective as such – which is entirely posited, entirely exhausted, driven to its limit – it must be sought solely from the objective, which uses its infinity to effect a qualitative leap, to differentiate itself whilst allowing a subjective to spring forth once more – but another, transfigured subjective, a sufficient, central, self-sufficient subjective, a principle of reality and no longer merely an image and abstract ideality, for the ‘I’ has now taken on, mediated within itself – yet, by surrendering to the infinite, transcended – all those powers of the ‘other’ which, in the immediacy of the ‘I’ precisely as image and reflection, artificially opposed and transcended it. Such is the meaning of the mystical

‘rebirth in God’ of the one who has given himself entirely to God.

From the ideal exhaustion of the mystical experience arises, therefore, as a consequence, the principle of the person, or the ideal ‘I’, elevated to an absolute centre, to objective individuality. This point, as has been said, determines the end of the preceding category and, at the same time, exists only in relation to it.

As for the antecedent, we may refer to it as a form which remains objective and universal insofar as it conforms to the principle of the unconditional – the category of mysticism, at its culmination, giving rise precisely to an experience in which the infinite, the objective and the formal are united. This unity must now be drawn into the value of the consequent; that is to say, it must become the substance in which the returning subjective consciousness is mediated and gradually manifested, until it becomes pure expression. The synthesis will therefore arise from a situation in which a formal activity of creation – which, to tell the truth, is in itself materially permeated by the value of objectivity – is taken up by the person so that, through an appropriate arousal of the principle of the unconditional, which must also be proper to them, it may consummate the form itself and transform the universal and the objective into the self-consciousness of an ‘I’ as absolute ‘sufficiency’. Now, art—insofar as it is pure art—may be regarded as suited to this formal creativity, which is internally conditioned by the position of the ‘I’ as an autarchy beyond the indifference of immanence and transcendence characteristic of the preceding categories. In such art, the transition from objectivity and the return of the subjective unconditioned are realised, certainly not as the simple principle of the first category of this epoch, but enriched by the experience of the universal and the

objective – which are still communicated to it here by the antecedent – and passing from form to matter, from the ideal to the real.

One will recall having already encountered an analogue of the aesthetic phenomenon in the first epoch (§ 6D): but there it was absolute mediation. The ‘I’ was, quite simply, in a state of wonder at a transcendent that revealed itself through its expression. There was no conscious determination or production, but rather absolute spontaneity, a pure ‘sensation’ that immediately transported the ‘I’, which only through and by means of production became aware of the superior value. Hence the ‘genius’, the ‘inspiration’, the ‘enthusiasm’ in art, the idea that in art one is, as it were, seized by a higher spirit which expresses itself through us. Now, albeit subject to the condition of the further value realised, there is something analogous in the objective categories of the person. In these, in fact, the ‘I’ positions itself, so to speak, from the outside. Although its activity is no longer a passive compulsion but rather the free act of a ‘for-its-own-sake’, experience is nonetheless determined, as regards its content, in a direction of being received from another. And without the preliminary moment in which the ‘I’ alienates itself and gives the form of reality-in-itself to nature, rationality and the infinite, the principle of the person could in no way gain conviction of itself as a real principle.

Art, as the new synthesis now under consideration, in relation to what has gone before, provides this point, and is grounded in a manifestation of the universal in form—one which, to tell the truth, carries with it a sense of infinity and springs from the very depths of the person; but insofar as it is an interval and, strictly speaking, a category, art is this manifestation so constituted that, in its realisation, the centre of the universal—and thus of the

unconditional—gradually consumes its own transcendence, so that, in the end, it may instead take the form of subjectivity. Art, that is to say, becomes here an instrument for the internalisation of the ‘genius’, for the reaffirmation of the ‘I’ at that original point of its productivity where, in the service of objective formation, it had placed itself as passive and unconscious – a reaffirmation in the non-being of love and of absolute *Empfindung*, such as to ‘digest’ the mystical God within the ‘I’. Its transcendental development is the gradual realisation of this shift, whereby the ‘I’ recovers itself from the objective realm it has traversed: its conclusion is precisely the pure apprehension of the ‘I’ as such within the infinity or arbitrariness of a power that has now attained the status of absolute, conscious, formally sufficient creation. Appearing as a process of resolution and reduction of art in general to a matter of pure individual will, the category—in relation to what art itself is according to its qualitative concept, one might well say that it expresses a self-concluding process of art.

In the light of the value of ‘sufficiency’, the inner state from which so-called ‘great art’ was, for the most part, born cannot fail to appear as something typically negative. In ‘great art’, in fact, the artist was productive – and productive of forms possessing objective, universal value – insofar as he surrendered to inspiration and intuition, insofar as he allowed himself to be possessed and carried away almost by a superior, divine force (Plato’s *μανία*, the genius of the ancients and of the aesthetics of Kant and Schelling), of which he knew nothing and which, at the very moment of creation, treated him almost as a mere instrument. Since, therefore, in such a situation it was not so much the ego that possessed art as art that possessed the ego, with the further mediation of individual consciousness there arises, as a matter of

logical necessity, a crisis of this category; and from the problem of overcoming this fundamental 'femininity' and 'mediation' of the artist—and thus to realise an art which, whilst remaining art, was positive and individual—arose that determination to which the present category pertains and which, in its ultimate potency, may be designated as pure or abstract art. – The medium of 'abstract art' is to be traced back to the principle of so-called 'aesthetic formalism'. Whereas in 'great art' the means of expression was subordinate to an objective and transcendent content, in the new form the focus is instead placed on the means of expression, in contrast to which all content becomes a means to an end. In other words: the paradox is realised whereby form is posited as the content of the work of art. This, of course, is not in the sense of mere technicality or virtuosity, but rather in the sense that form is employed in a purely harmonic manner (in the musical sense): in a certain way, it no longer signifies anything, since a kind of counterpoint—a pure orchestration of forms and colours, words and images, tones and chords—constitutes the entirety of the work of art. An expression whose object is the very act of expressing itself, which exists not for anything else (impure art), but for its own sake.

Now, the pre-eminence of content over the means of expression in classical art may be regarded as a reflection of that situation in which the artist in himself was nothing and created only insofar as he became, in his immanence, the passive instrument of a universality that expressed itself through him; so that this reversal of the relationship, which elevates to self-sufficiency the pure means of expression to self-sufficiency—making it 'for itself' what it was previously 'for something else' when the artist was nothing but the expressive organ of God—bears witness to the shift of the centre towards the subjective,

celebrating, in the realm of aesthetics, the sufficiency of the immanent principle, the overcoming of the objective form of the unconditional—its realisation in art as an individual value.

From another point of view. In conventional art, the work revealed and embodied far more than the artist had intended: the artist did not so much determine a priori that situation of beauty which he subsequently expressed, as witness it spring forth unexpectedly in his work, beyond – and often even in defiance of – what he had consciously intended – in accordance with a typical manifestation of Wundt's 'heterogenesis of ends'. At the still formless moment from which the particular creative process begins, the artist is, in general, passive; it is a 'mystery' to him, not a possession: it is within him in an almost unconscious manner, and therefore not as within a creator, but as within a labourer, an executor. Where consciousness (as a personal value) begins to shed its light, it already finds an infinite disproportion between what has been produced and what was intended. And the more perfect the work is in classical art, the greater this disparity becomes; the more it seems that personal will is reduced to a minimum, steps aside, or surrenders itself entirely to the transcendent power which fertilises it and generates something infinite within it – just as in the experience characteristic of the earlier mystics. Now, the modern demand for art as an individual value reacted quite sharply to such a situation, and – already with Novalis, Schlegel and, to some extent, Wagner – in opposition to the concept of the work of art as genius, it affirmed the concept of the work of art as will. Thus, within the schools that emerged from the movement of 'aesthetic formalism', these two demands were also at play – albeit not always in a sufficiently conscious form: to reaffirm the principle of the person as the deep wellspring of aesthetic creativity; and secondly, and correlatively: to contain the entire

work within the will, reaffirming and defining within lucid will that which sprang from beyond the realm of intention. The process of immanentisation, of the transformation of mediumistic or feminine art into individual or active art, unfolded in the modern era through various stages, corresponding to the gradual dissolution of the principle of the ineffable transcendent characteristic of the preceding mystical tradition. These stages range from Symbolism to Dadaism via Analogism, Cubism, Primitivism, Futurism and Expressionism, in a logically continuous sequence. The features of the dialectic of these forms have already been set out in another of our works⁴⁸, to which we refer and from which, moreover, the present derivation of the concept of pure art has been drawn. Here we shall speak only of Dadaism, understood as the *τέλος* [end] of the interval.

To immanentise ‘genius’ means, in the final analysis, to place the foundation of aesthetic value in the hands of a will that is entirely master of itself, and therefore unconditional. This is a fundamental point. As long as the individual is absent from their own centre, values in general present themselves to them as facts, almost as something inevitable. This is certainly not because they have a real foundation in things – in the aesthetic order, Kant himself showed that beauty is not to be attributed to the object in itself, but rather to a certain state of the subjective faculties, which the object reflects – but rather because the person, in everyday life, is fixed in certain forms and passive with regard to the faculty of judgement, which is determined almost automatically, as if following lines of least resistance dictated by ideal and social habits, culture, environment, etc. – in general: by their own *samskâra*. Now it is clear that to the extent that a person ceases to be what they are, and instead reaffirms, over all that is, dominion and freedom, the situation changes: values will lose that ‘self-

sufficiency', that transcendent and fateful aspect in which they previously appeared, and will become contingent. That is to say, they will be experienced as a malleable and indifferent substance, whose principium individuationis, whose measure, is personal will. Hence, for one who has risen to such a level, the 'Mona Lisa' and a tram ticket may be works of art in the same sense – any element of everyday experience may be the cause of a lyrical emotion as intense as the values resonating in the 'great cries of tragic art'. – With this, the essence of Dadaism has been laid bare. In this school of abstract art technique, one finds a sort of elemental chaos, in which the ego is transformed into transience, into the power to animate everything and to deny everything indiscriminately. In absolute incoherence, in the indescribable fluctuation of opposites in the 'great mouth full of honey and excrement', in the 'impossibility of discerning between the various degrees of light' – which the 'Dada' manifestations come to realise, one finds aesthetic power in its unbound state as the formal expression of the person's self-sufficiency, as the mediation of the principle of morality, as the aesthetic reflection of what may be the supreme value.

If art proper – that is, art born of spontaneity, which in its essence relies on qualitative value – fulfils its function precisely in the revelation of the aura that transcends creation by conscious will, it is clear that the development of the ego must impose a limit upon it, beyond which aesthetic consciousness can only continue on condition that it incorporates, in a certain way, the negation of its own nature. Hence, the view of those who, rooted in a traditional order, assert in opposition to modern art today that we are no longer dealing with art, or that art is dead, is entirely understandable. To tell the truth, from Symbolism to Dadaism, we are dealing with an 'irony' of art, with schools which, in their

very essence—albeit to varying degrees—are meta-artistic, if not downright anti-artistic. However, it is a higher value of self-assertion, of ‘morality’, that demands this. In relation to the individual, ‘great art’ is something feminine, something immoral.

Dadaism is a limit: within it, art – in its religious value and, more generally, as a spontaneous expression in universal form – realises its own negation. The ideal principle, or the principle of the image, is consumed there; and, unleashed and liberated, the ‘I’ finds itself as the ‘I’ within the determination of the real. Hence the transcendence of the category. That dialectic according to which pure art came to realise itself up to the experience of Dadaism through the progressive resolution of the objective and the spontaneous inherent in art may, from a further perspective, appear merely as an anticipation in formal image, an apparition, within the ultimate power of form, of a further process determined by a similar rhythm of immanentisation and reduction to freedom, but brought into the order of powers not of the ideal world, but rather of the real one. Thus, pure art may be said to be the prelude to magic.

§ 21 – INDIVIDUALITY

At the very limits of pure art, the person achieves a self-sufficiency in that original moment of their act, from which they were previously absent, and thus, by right, attains the level of genuine creation. The final interval resolves the elementary religiosity of form, and places the 'I' – in the value of freedom and of the absolute, conquered for itself through the experience of personality – at the centre: in this interval, therefore, an energy emerges, governed by objective formation, which nevertheless transcends itself and flows into the principle that subsequently liberates and affirms itself in a self-consumptive process of form.

However, here a contradiction would arise: the body of the value—that in which it is mediated and realised—is consumed to the very extent that the value itself is affirmed. What in fact emerges within the preceding form, within the scope of its concept, is merely that the new principle realises itself insofar as it remains, in a certain sense, incomplete in its own affirmation, due to its inherent connection to a certain form (that relating to meta-artistic manifestations), even if this is extremely rarefied and entirely governed by subjective will: but its perfect actuality, the limit of the category, as such, ought to be conditioned by a definitive negation of form. It follows, therefore, that were this negation to be understood in an abstract and immediate manner, it would, at that very point, nullify the law of relation which, hitherto, remains the indispensable condition for ensuring that the value of the person is not compromised; a value which, certainly, must not be abolished, but integrated and enhanced.

To resolve this point, let us reflect on the meaning of aesthetic development: in it, value, in accordance with its own nature, was

present as a dynamic principle: it developed a series of formal situations such that, in experiencing them, the person is increasingly led to delve deeper into themselves and to break away from transcendence. The which evidently implies the emergence of a power, by which form is set as negated, albeit to varying degrees. It follows from this that, in the end, there is not a simple, silent dissipation of the distinction, but rather the point at which the Self—no longer merely deepening itself through the creation of ever more liberated and rarefied forms—instead takes direct possession of its own value and now affirms it in a decisive actuality, flashing forth in the potency through which that which may be the pure negation of form is posited.

On the meaning of such a power. In the first epoch we witnessed the construction of being up to its perfection and, subsequently, its transcending of itself – in the light of reflection or ideality. The formal principle in the second epoch undergoes a process parallel to the first, and progressively adapts to the various powers of being, which are thus taken up in an ideal mediation. Corresponding to the perfection of being is the perfection of reflection: the form that has entirely resolved the ‘other’ and has become entirely self-sufficient. But just as the perfection of being implies its transcending itself, so too will it be for the perfection of reflection, which is its counterpart in the formal order. For such perfection is the absolute self-consciousness of form. But what else can it be, if not the form that realises the abstract and dependent nature of itself as such, its negativity, and distinguishes and recognises a real principle, of which it is precisely the form or reflection? This is the meaning of the act within which the preceding category can be brought to a close. There is an absolute distinction which, to tell the truth, is the very same one with which the second epoch began; yet it is now experienced not artificially,

but positively, as an act of the person, and thus coincides with the elevation of the person to the order of real powers.

Let us define the new experience to which we are thus led. On the one hand, due to the presupposed sufficiency of form, the 'other' is excluded: everything that, during the period of the person's self-mediation, seemed to be in and of itself, is recognised as a phenomenon, as a purely ideal and dependent existence projected by the person. But insofar as this formal sufficiency is also connected to a detachment of the person from itself, the phenomenon is posited as such, that is, connected to something that transcends it, which is its negation. And the act in which the progressive self-assertion of the 'I' culminates, consummating the form, thus coincides with that through which, beyond reflection—now self-conscious as such and exhausted in a complete system—the antithesis of a 'being' arises anew: a being—meaning thereby that which, in itself, is the negation of the nature of the image, and to which the image, as formal freedom, is opposed—is the inseparable correlate of the position of that point, whereby the absolute liberation and self-assertion of the principle of the person—the terminus of the preceding category—is made possible.

That such a being should not be conceived at this point as a 'thing-in-itself' follows immediately from the fact that this point hierarchically implies the perfection of formal mediation, which has always exorcised such phantoms: by virtue of what it has achieved in the preceding categories, the 'I' now remains alone with itself within the entire realm of the universe, according to a circle that can no longer be broken.

Being must therefore be found within this circle: it must therefore be that which, in form, the 'I' can posit as the negation of form. But the character of form is pure freedom; it follows that

that to which, in absolute reflection, in its ultimate fulfilment, the person opposes itself, is necessity. Yet the question is not yet resolved. For how, indeed, can there be necessity in form—which is now entirely a ‘construction’—if the ‘I’ is now reconciled within it solely with itself? Necessity cannot, therefore, refer to form insofar as it is such, that is, insofar as it is essence; but to form insofar as it is something else, namely, the essence of an existence. Here, then, is the result: beyond the essential order—now resolved within the ‘I’ through the work of free formal mediation (the second epoch)—the order of existence in raw facticity stands opposed to the ‘I’. Being, or non-being, into which every form passes when it is consumed in absolute mediation, when it attains perfect self-consciousness, is the form itself—taken, however, no longer in terms of the peripheral freedom of the ideal ‘I’s’ reflection, but rather as a sign of a profound necessity, of the deprivation of the free ‘I’ with regard to the order of real powers which only now, by the light of the new value, at the end of the entire formal system, lays itself bare and bursts forth in opposition to it. Such is the term sought.

Having sunk to the very root of its own substance, the person thus resurrects its original antithesis; which now acquires an entirely new meaning, a direction opposite to the original one. The antithetical ‘being’ or ‘non-being’ is here brought about by the self’s transcendence as a formal principle, by its realisation within the consciousness of a power that lays claim to the universal and the objective, whilst the value proper to the personality remains firmly upheld. Whilst at the beginning of the era what was overcome was being, and what overcame it—that upon which the emphasis of the ‘I’ shifted—was form; here, conversely, what is overcome is form, and what overcomes it is the point of being. Note, however, that form—reduced to privation by the second

distinction—is that in which what was ‘being’ in the first distinction has become without residue; and the new principle of real power, which is the transcending element, the ‘I’, is that which was ‘form’ in the first distinction—a reflection which then, through the second epoch, rose to the level of an absolute self-being. The emphasis of the ‘I’ has therefore shifted from one term to the other; and, with it, what will be called reality.

Another distinctive feature. According to the moment of the consequent, the ‘I’ knows itself as an autonomous creativity; from this point, therefore, the act of distinction is experienced, so that the antithesis is no longer a mere appearance, as was the case at the outset—and, to a certain extent, even within—the epoch, in the immediacy of value. Instead, it now lies within the form of the subjective unconditioned. The person is now sufficient unto itself – which means: it is sufficient unto itself, unto its own substance.

Whereupon they cease to be a person and become an individual.

Individuality expresses the state of the person in that it is no longer the relationship that defines them, but rather dominates them and positions them according to absolute freedom; thus they have their first experience of the point of a cause sui that is no longer merely existing, but mediated and positive. Such is the category from which the ideal term of aesthetic consciousness is made possible.

This very act transforms the order of form into that of necessity and privation, generating an opposition and a detachment of the ‘I’ within the very body of its own reality. For, on the one hand, the ‘other’ is entirely resolved into form, so that the ‘I’, albeit within the entirely subjective order of essence, knows itself as the absolute principle of all that in which it lives its own

life. On the other hand, this absolute consciousness implies a further distinction, and thus leads to the highest point of freedom as real power, in relation to which everything that, in its own time, as form or ideality, was being, life, freedom, becomes non-being, privation, necessity. A principle of real insufficiency is thus reaffirmed within the closed order of ideal sufficiency; a new world tears itself away from the 'I' and resists it, and the 'I' finds itself in naked affirmation, devoid of all support, amidst a nature that is entirely alien and other to it, even though it is recognised by the 'I', by virtue of the mediation that this very affirmation presupposes, as nothing other than itself, as its body, as its very substance and condition.

It should be noted that whilst, from the very outset of simple personality (§ 11), experience was a pure given, it did not, however, appear with the distinct character of a negation of the 'I', but rather as something with which the 'I' itself was immediately connected, and alongside which it lived confidently as it developed its ideality.

Likewise, in the subsequent forms, the 'I' continues, albeit with varying degrees of complexity and to varying extents, to rely on the matter of the distinct, from which it indeed derives the conviction of its own assertions. Only when objective experience has been fully realised, and discursive thought suggests to the person an awareness of autonomy, does the clear separation and antithesis emerge, and what was 'given' and mere 'other', it becomes mortal non-being and an enemy to the Self. Being: whilst the person was the non-being of a mere ideality, nature becomes non-being in relation to the person who is asserting itself in the value of self-sufficiency as a real principle. But this birth of the antithetical is not an act of violence: it was not so for the

personality, because the term in relation to which it could be such was lacking; nor is it so for the individual, since the latter is now absolute reflection and perceives the transparent darkness of light: he is conscious that it arises solely from a freedom which tears itself away from its own substance and renounces what it has constructed through its formal powers; he takes full responsibility for his own act upon himself and does not wish to shift the burden onto anyone else. He is therefore sufficient unto deprivation – born of him, caused by his own supernatural value as an individual; he now embraces it with joy and therein recognises in it the substance from which alone he can draw absolute life and reality. A vain, lost glimmer in the dark and boundless desert of necessity and deprivation, the individual knows, therefore, that in that light lies the reason and condition of such an order, the act, the *τέλος* upon which all the rest, as mute potentiality, depends.

The determination of the category is thus linked to the point at which the immanent centre borne by the person moves beyond formal and dependent consciousness, and emerges upon the threshold of the order of real powers; and to the consequent antinomy of an ‘I’ which attributes to itself value, absolute being by right, and denies it to everything else – but which, on the other hand, in relation to power, is as yet nothing but non-being, nothing but a task, a *Sollen* in relation to the infinite passion of the world, to the deprivation to which it is bound, almost as to its own paralysed body.

To put it in Michelstaedter’s terms, the point at issue is that at which the ‘I’, having assumed the persona of its own deficiency, consists as ‘persuasion’. This has already been discussed at length in the final section of the first volume⁵¹. It suffices to recall the fundamental principle set out there: that from the deprivation it

perceives within itself, the person cannot infer the reality of another, filling that void—which instead demands a real, magical act, of which one is afraid—with an ideal act of pseudo-recognition. And let us bear firmly in mind the relativity of the concept of deprivation: a given element is never a deprivation in itself, but always in relation to the value of autarchy⁵².

The transition to such a value transforms what was positive as a formal construction into something negative and ‘potential’ in relation to the next stage; just as only the transition to the value of the person transformed what was subjective as spontaneity into something objective, the ‘other’ of nature in relation to reflection. Therefore, for those who do not wish to move from the logical standpoint to that of the will to power, the concept of privation will remain incomprehensible – but then one is left with the order of abstract ideality as the final instance. Indeed, anyone who believes they can ‘overcome’ magical idealism—not by stopping at the negative concept of privation with which it explains every necessity, but by explaining this necessity through a distinct reality—takes a step backwards rather than forwards, since they make use of the category of causality, whereby this very supposed reality becomes conditioned, logically posited by the formal ‘I’. And the circle closes; and, to tell the truth, as regards the experience referred to in § 18. Instead, one moves beyond this into absolute positivism. What, as we have said, is the difference between a real thing and an imagined one? As representations, they are both equally so, and from a logical or essential point of view, there are no features in one that the other does not possess. But beyond that, the representational activity to which the real thing corresponds is an activity in relation to which I am powerless⁵³. That is all. There are elements over which I have power and others over which I do not. The so-called real things are symbols of this

powerlessness of mine, of this deprivation of mine. It is because I experience a deprivation that I call a thing 'real', and not the other way round. Deprivation explains the concept of an objective reality, not the objective reality the concept of deprivation – and referring to another to explain how deprivation is possible is a pure vicious circle. If one does not grasp this point, which we felt it useful to set out once more, one remains at the level of the person and, in particular: in abstract idealism. Spontaneity, in itself (in the first epoch), is act; in relation to the person it becomes 'potency', whose act is ideality, representation (second epoch); in relation to the individual, ideality, representation or essence, in turn becomes 'potency', whose act is the real, objective – magical – affirmation of the individual. (It should be borne in mind: these moments do not coexist, but are part of a transformative continuity; there remains, for example, no residue of spontaneity in the image – a thing-in-itself – but that activity which was cosmic spontaneity is entirely transformed into representational activity, into ideality, and so on for the rest).

It is now important to distinguish the nature of those determinations that are hierarchically posterior to individuality – and which, let us state at the outset, are linked to the body of esoteric-magical sciences – from that of various determinations which are objective only in a formal sense, yet remain within the sphere of mediation of the principle of the person. Nothing is more common than the confusion of these orders, which can be traced back to two causes. First of all, to an inadequate understanding, in terms of the principle of the individual, of the value inherent in the inner spiritual attitude from which categories such as philosophy, art, etc., spring; hence the fallacy whereby that freedom—which is productive only insofar as it exists formally – and therefore insofar as it remains imbued with an element of

necessity and otherness – with the full and powerful freedom pertaining to the value of the individual. Such a misunderstanding is possible only in the theoretical realm, that is to say, as long as the individual in question remains a mere idea; for when one moves from theory to practice, it would immediately become apparent which antitheses must be overcome so that any activity may be objective whilst retaining the value it has attained. Consequently, when a system is founded on such a misunderstanding, its value is not what it believes itself to possess, but rather that of philosophical consciousness in general, of which it will constitute nothing more than a particular adaptation; and it remains to be seen whether freedom will decide, if it so chooses, to go further in its experience, until, having truly reached the individual, it comes to realise what the true meaning of the objective act is.

But such confusion may also arise in the context of genuine communication with the individual, in accordance with the immediacy inherent in the very end of the person's era; and then it is linked to a moment of fanciful deficiency: that is to say, value may flee in the face of the real antithesis, rather than being understood as a task, as a *τέλος*, whose reality is entrusted to the resolution and mastery of that 'being' and that necessity, which is opposed to it and separated from it only by the light of the individual itself; it may feign self-sufficiency by vibrating within a purely formal creativity, that is, by exploiting its own mediation in an incestuous manner. It is from such a situation that we must derive the meaning of the earlier critique of discursive self-sufficiency, of its display as *piétiner sur place* [treading water], leaving the fundamental and real antithesis intact. Here, then, activity is relegated to hierarchically prior forms which, consequently, cannot be suited to the individual, but only to the

person; to the individual, only on condition that one concedes the rationale of the irrational, that one admits violence, alteration and rhetoric.

What follows from this for philosophy—thus elevated to the real affirmation of the immanent principle—has already been sufficiently demonstrated in the first book: an irrational element breaks forth indomitable as, within its system, an ‘I’ that has risen to self-consciousness begins to ask itself after the absolute reason for the various determinations. And this irrational can only be reduced discursively on condition that the ‘rational’ is rendered ever more irrational. – As regards science, no particular observations need be made, inasmuch as it has, by and large, remained—thanks to an adequate self-awareness—outside the rhetorical movement of deficiency of which we are now speaking. Even in the most daring philosophies of science, such as Weber’s, the emphasis is correctly placed on ‘Knowledge’ and not on the ‘I’. The suspicion is directed rather at technology, applied science – praxeology – insofar as it fantasises about the dignity of a state of power. This, moreover, has already been alluded to in the remarks below concerning the category of compulsion. The power to which man can attain through technical applications of scientific knowledge is in no way power – if by this term we mean command: direct dominion in accordance with self-sufficiency. It is rather a recognition of powerlessness, an alienation of subjective conviction – which, naturally, corresponds in itself to a value, constructed in its own right, but not to the value we now require. Indeed, in praxeology, knowledge comes first; action succeeds only on condition that it conforms to recognised and presupposed objective laws. Secondly, and in connection with this, the act is not simple: it neither derives from itself nor dominates all those intermediaries that lead to its success; rather, it regards them as

things that transcend its power, which it must utilise and combine extrinsically. Its effectiveness therefore rests on a promissory note – on the principle of constancy of the realm of the ‘other’, a principle that is a pure matter of faith: its sufficiency is an empty name. In such an order, the positive centre lies instead in scientific activity, from which nature in its laws emerges. Praxeology or technique, on the other hand, lead the life of a parasite; they are theft that makes a value of itself, and in no way can they be suited to that activity in which the individual proceeds towards an objective affirmation; an activity which is a domination without conditions, without recognising laws but imposing them, without asking anything—except of itself in pure power—for the success of the act. – It would, however, be more appropriate to focus our consideration on the relationship between this activity and religion and art.

If faith is regarded as the instrument of religion and religion is seen as the sphere of the individual’s objective self-assertion, it is indeed

It might be said that the foundation of such faith is a lack of faith.

When, faced with the gulf that separates reality from value, one is not sufficiently convinced and steadfast in this belief to imagine that one can, in spite of everything, imbue reality with it, and yet one feels that it is only through such a reaffirmation that one can actually realise oneself at the level of the individual – then faith arises with its postulates. Value is no longer recognised as what it is in such a hierarchical context: a demand, a goal, a task for real activity; but is instead immediately transformed into an existence – an existence, however, which, when merely conceived, is not an existence, but the concept, the supposition of an

existence. Hence the God of faith; hence the formation of his various attributes, which are the abstract, projected hypostases of impotent desire—that is, of the various determinations which value, as a task, can assume in relation to its own antithesis. Consequently, to the extent that desire, whilst feeding on such abstractions of its own deficiency, also upholds the value of the individual, it always finds the antithesis set against itself; and so the God, the being created by faith, projects itself beyond the ‘I’, and thus becomes another. The formal, rhetorical character of realisation, and the note of transcendence associated with its object, are two inseparable aspects, arising from the very concept of the religious phenomenon in general, as a failure to act, as delinquere.

More specifically. The fact of religion simply expresses the existence of an endeavour towards divinisation⁵⁴. We might add, on the other hand, from this point of view, that there is no human life which, even for an instant, is not, at its deepest root, religious; for if it were not, it would be detached from the transcendental condition, from the *τελος* of the individual, by virtue of which, in this order, every existing thing is. In every human desire or need, in every act, one desires and affirms only God⁵⁵. However, this ‘religiosity in the broad sense’ is a myth, the meaning of which must be penetrated, the demand laid bare, and real satisfaction provided for it. And one can thus conceive of an ideal history of religiosity, to be aligned with the development in which the unconscious divine desire gradually takes on a conscious and adequate form. The perverted aspect of religion, on the other hand, lies in the exchange of the reality of the desire for a reality for the reality of that which is the object of this very desire. For this reason, the Word immediately becomes flesh: the problem is that here the Word is mere discourse; consequently, the theogony

is imagination, not real power; so that religion, as Feuerbach noted⁵⁶, is situated at the very level of aesthetic creativity, culminating not in divine existence but in the mere thought that God exists, as something other. As the hypostasis of the differential between the essence of the individual and its mediated existence, the transcendent God is therefore true only as an antithesis and a negative moment to be consumed within the immanent principle, as fuel that is wholly resolved in giving life to the flame of a divinising activity. Such is the deepest meaning of the mystical feast of the flesh and blood of God: God must be killed within the Self, in order to become its absolute life. God, on the other hand, is false when, posited as something that already is, he halts the individual, strips his activity of all meaning, and relieves him of the task of creating it, of becoming God⁵⁷.

Empirically, such a position arises from the antithesis between man and nature, nature being the most immediate and tangible symbol of deprivation: God is the positivity posited in that which is felt as one's own negation by an 'I', which does not yet dare to assign itself the task of actualising itself therein, or has failed in such a task and creates a superstitious compromise, akin to the belief that, through the mediation of the recognised God, invoked through prayer, sacrifice and ritual, it may reaffirm its own sufficiency over the negative, over nature⁵⁸. This situation has not only been confirmed by the study of primitive cultures (Moore, Frazer, etc.), in which the gods appear to have emerged from the collapse of magic, but is also found in seemingly superior forms – for example, in the doctrine of grace and the mediation of Christ and 'Saviours' in general ('without me you can do nothing'), clear products of eras of moral laxity and weakness. This, moreover, brings us back to the category of co-action, and thus, from yet another angle, the incompatibility of the phenomenon in question

with the principle of individuality becomes apparent.

And, let us be frank: is it perhaps by a different line of reasoning that Kant derives religion from the doctrine of the primacy of practical reason? Does this ‘primacy’ perhaps signify anything other than the optimism of an unwitting will, of a will that is not truly such, but mere wishful thinking, and by alienating the body from that concreteness in which the act of its real willing would be expressed, does it delegate this to another, to whom it thus assigns the task of willing on its behalf? For Kant’s reasoning is this: the moral imperative exists with objective certainty; but given that man, of his own accord, would be unable to fulfil it within the natural order, just as the imperative is certain, so too must be the existence of a principle (God, the supernatural order) through whose mediation the antithesis is resolved – that is to say: it is illusory, it does not exist. ‘You must, therefore you can’; ‘I cannot’ – there is something else in which you will be able to. But who fails to see that the entire force of the argument rests on the dogmatic-optimistic presupposition that unity, rationality and providence – rather than contradiction and tension – are the law currently governing things? That is to say, on a vicious circle?⁵⁹

Inadequacy, cowardice, the state of an individual whose being is a hunger for being, who, in order to be, needs others to be – such, then, is the psychogenetic basis of the religious phenomenon in its dualistic-devotional forms, such as the Christian one. This need creates *αργος λογος*, the idle sophism of optimism—that is, the belief that what is necessary to us, by the mere fact that it is necessary, simply is—is, and let it take care of resolving our deprivation; is, and so that we may abandon ourselves to it, and thus avoid imposing ourselves, avoiding the will. As if hunger could not remain hunger, craving remain craving, eternally

unsatisfied, eternally consumed by its immanent deprivation – craving without any object! Faced with this vision – upon which, nevertheless, a Buddha, a Nietzsche, a Michelstaedter were able to fix their gaze and reaffirm themselves in tragic splendour – the Christian, on the other hand, recoils in horror – and believes: believes, and lo and behold, the anguish is resolved, it subsides; lo and behold, the mirage of God, of the Saviour, of Grace arises – ‘shimmering spots coming to the aid of the eye, wounded by having gazed into the horrible darkness’.

In conclusion: the God generated by desire is as real as this desire itself is capable of producing the reality of its object. The existence of God is attested to in proportion to the degree to which the will towards God, the *Wille zur Gottheit*, having become self-aware, is capable of actually realising itself. The only ‘proof’ of God is therefore: to become God (*αποθεωθῆναι* = deificatio) – a purely technical problem, beyond the lacklustre projections and fine words which sentiment and devotion, in hope and terror, superimpose upon an inert humanity: God as the act and state of the individual. – Nor can the demand to admit the transcendent God on pragmatic grounds – that is, in the name of utility, which may stem from the belief that He exists for the sake of certain realisations – be accepted; for if realisation is necessary for value, a realisation in which its value or meaning is not immanent in actuality is null and void – what matters being not the act in itself, but rather the value that this act embodies and of which it is a means of expression. Nor can the phenomenon of transcendence as a provisional moment be tolerated: did not such a moment perhaps unfold throughout the entire second epoch? But the problem now at issue lies beyond this very epoch itself; therefore, if it is to be resolved, no compromise of this sort is any longer possible: every development must instead be entirely governed by

the self-consciousness of an 'I' that feels itself to be the centre and condition of all things.

Thus, the individual will no longer seek his own assurance and concreteness from anything other than himself; he will consider that, even if a God were to exist, he would not know what to make of him, since anything he might achieve not simply through his own power, he would in reality not have achieved at all, and would possess it not by essence but by accident, contingently. Any conviction or power attained by any means other than that of his own unique and sufficient initiative would not be his conviction or his reality; and, under the material guise of a fulfilled life, it would instead inflict upon him the curse of an absolute, inner death, for it would stifle his capacity to be in and of himself, his capacity to be as a value. Therefore: this is what he who wishes to pass beyond the human state of existence must know: that he is alone. Alone with his infinite deficiency and his will – and nothing to ask of, nothing to rely on, nothing to hope for; nothing that is due to him, nothing that is already given to him – immortality, bliss, survival. The spirit is mortal. The innumerable contingencies of existence are not illusions; rather, they interlock with my deepest substance; they are the only thing that is real, and this – my own state – is the state to which 'God' himself has now been reduced! Here, then, lies the dilemma of despair: either to crash, to vanish – or to assert oneself, to become a creator, to rise up in the midst of this desert to draw from it an absolute being, a glory. The world is left to itself; it is free. The absolute, the supersensible, no longer exists except insofar as the 'I' creates it there; the heavenly realm, the υπερκοσμια, exists only to the extent that the 'I' can transform the earthly world into such a realm; the spirit, only to the extent that the 'I' can transform the flesh into such a spirit, of its own accord. And so the 'ought to be', which the

individual may experience within himself, but which does not burst forth as an overwhelming power of dominion over the non-being of brute existence – is nothing, is error, is illusion.

An art that reflects upon itself could be described as a religion that becomes aware of its own nature and that of its subjects. Indeed, whilst on the one hand art – particularly in its most modern forms – is originality and subjective creation, on the other hand it is a fact that these values are confined within the purely ideal sphere: art is imaginative creativity; it stops at the boundary of the objective; the ‘nature’ of its agitation remains entirely unaffected. In relation to the task proper to the individual, the world of art thus appears merely as the phantasmagoria in which a powerless magician may find solace, as a realm of shadows (shadows not of things, as Plato thought, but of the form or mode of a creation of things)⁶⁰; and the self-sufficiency one might presume to derive from a reference to this world in no way reaches the concrete substance of the individual, which can only be attained by truly grasping and stirring the real, making poetic activity what, according to the etymology of the term, it is: action *ποιησις*, from *ποιεῖν* [to do]) and, to tell the truth, objective, cosmic action, embodying a meaning and a power no longer in organisms of words, signs or sounds, but in real, animated and mastered forms, in which the entire system of those physical, external determinations—which are, on the contrary, presupposed by the poet in the strict sense, limiting and transcending him—is resolved, like plastic matter torn from its elemental necessity and rigidity. Art is therefore merely preparatory to individual life: just as religion is the abstract, static – one might almost say: Apollonian – apprehension of the objects of profound striving in a mythical-fantastic form, so art is the ideal itself, experienced, within the formal realm, in the opposite,

Dionysian, dynamic aspect of that creative fantasy of hypostasis. It is therefore a perversion in the very sense in which religion is also one: that is, when it comes to constituting the formal reaction by which an individual thinks to resolve the antithesis inherent in their own concept, and to which, on the contrary, no formal activity can any longer be adequate. In such a case, art is purely mimesis, parody, a shadow of being upon non-being; an image not of the 'other', but of the very substance of the Self (of the absolute act), which the Self knows no other way of living than in the mere shadow anticipated by the imagination; whereby the Self, by creating myths, makes itself a myth.

The real problem is therefore this: to understand that what matters now is solely the real, concrete, stripped-down relationship of the self with things and with beings; a relationship which, for human beings, is the extrinsic and contingent one proper to the physical state of existence and to the spatio-temporal categories that underpin it. Of this state, what people call 'spiritual' is nothing but a mere backdrop and accessory; and with all the values and non-values of its categories—logical, emotional, moral, devotional, and so on—it does not take one a single step beyond it, nor does it in any way transform what, metaphysically, in the order of absolute concreteness, the 'I' is as a human being, as a person. For the greatest 'genius' or man of action is, just as much as the lowliest peasant, a slave, in his 'spirituality', to an accident that strikes his physical being. Anyone who wishes to call themselves an individual must have the strength to understand this, to take, in its entirety, everything that one is, thinks and feels, set it aside, say: 'Enough', and move forward. To move forward through a radical and inner transformation of the relationship by which one stands in relation to things and to oneself.

According to the category that brings the first epoch to a close, the emphasis of the 'I' fell on the ideal aspect of a correlativity in which the other term – the real, the physical – remained as if non-existent, its function becoming obscured or even submerged in the subconscious.

The further mediation of the person throughout the second epoch does not fundamentally alter the situation: it is a development in which the objective remains a distinct, transcendent entity.

For an action beyond the category of the individual, however, an entirely different attitude is required: by reversing the relationship proper to personal consciousness, by renouncing psychological subjectivity, the 'I' will shift the self-conscious principle into the very heart of that which objectively corresponds to the image; it will assume it, identify with it, and thus act from beyond, in a function of dominion, in the construction of inner superiority. Only that which comes into being by virtue of such an affirmation, beyond the original artificial, spontaneous or automatic functions, is the real body of the individual beyond the mere principle of it; it is absolute being, life that possesses itself, self-sufficiency. No longer to persuade oneself in relation to (and by receiving from) things, but to persuade oneself by persuading things, reclaiming oneself from them, actualising into being—through assumption according to potentiality—the non-being that, as 'others', represents me.

Such is the meaning of the previously postulated 'objectivity as subjectivity', of what Novalis termed 'active empiricism'. To think one can dominate nature from the outside—that is, starting from the image and the 'I'—is an illusion that is at the same time a contradiction in terms. Instead, one must descend into the very

heart of the objective and, from there, act, command and liberate.

A distant reflection of this can be found in hypnotic and mediumistic states: a subjugation of the 'I', a submerging of the 'higher psyche' into the dark power of the so-called 'subliminal I' is what brings into play powers that far transcend what the normal waking 'I' is capable of. The 'I', restricted as a person to rational functions, is almost the periphery of itself, and finds in the 'subliminal' powers of action and knowledge of a higher order⁶¹. In the development beyond the second epoch, there will be a similar 'lowering', though one that is conscious and active: the person, whilst dissolved in their substance, will not be dissolved in their principle or value: they will persist at the threshold of transition; they will be not that which is overcome, but that which overcomes; they will re-assert themselves within their own negation according to a higher principle which will not dissolve into the objective and the universal in a qualitative regression, but will instead reduce them to itself, in a process of dominative progression. However, if the person does not renounce the world of the particular, of desire, of action, and of form—which may feign self-sufficiency insofar as it has not yet fully realised the consciousness of its own nature—the path to the absolute individual is barred; that is to say, its freedom does not truly will itself as an individual. As Michelstaedter would say, the 'I' as a person cannot help but obey, because it has already obeyed: it can it imagine a power based on desire, knowledge or devotion, since these determinations, by their very possibility, presuppose a powerlessness, an elementary, essential dependence. A radical catharsis can therefore be glimpsed as a prerequisite for higher forms of affirmation; a catharsis which, to tell the truth, has nothing moralistic or sentimental about it, and which, rather than

abolishing or limiting freedom, leads it to realise itself fully, to extend and take hold at the deepest level of things.

Let it therefore be firmly established that, with regard to this plane, everything that men call good and evil, pure and impure, material and spiritual, superior and inferior, and so on, no longer has any meaning whatsoever. All this appears as a parasitic, pale, insubstantial flora, external to being, which the point of being devours like a blaze consuming fragile stalks. Anyone who turns towards magical self-realisation must completely sweep away the entire world of feelings, values, 'humanity' and 'spirituality': these once had a *raison d'être* – now, they no longer do. Now it is a matter of a realm of bare powers that have no attributes, that are merely themselves, in the pure nature of a flash of lightning and a flicker. Terms, however lightning-fast, dizzying and terrifyingly pure they may be, can themselves offer only a distant hint of it. Nietzsche touched upon this when, in an early fragment, he wrote: 'How beautiful, how pure are these free forces of nature, not yet tainted by the spirit!' (Spirit: that is, the whole world of feelings, of the 'human', of morality, of the psychological). Except that now it is not a matter of 'not yet tainted', but of 'now purified of the spirit'. Through the 'spirit' they have passed through and been refined. The 'I' will now appear to you no longer as a force hurled amongst other forces, but as a super-natural ruler and lord – superior to them all.

§ 22 – SUMMARY

The 'I', tearing itself away from the body of an objective affirmation that had now reached the point of complete mediation, appeared to itself at the end of the first epoch as the transparency of ideality from which an existence, a given exteriority. On the other hand, this occurs only insofar as the experience of the value of absolute freedom is realised.

Opposed to this value, precisely at the formal moment of the category, is the nature of the 'given' proper to the matter of the category itself.

Therefore, even simple personal consciousness already contains an antithesis; from this arise the categories of the second epoch, in the sense of a reflection upon that which, as a formal value, still lived an immediate life within the simple person. Thus, in the first self-awareness as a categorical principle, the person reaffirms itself upon the given of the image and derives from it a finite experience in accordance with the theme of arbitrary agility. As a consequence of such a movement, the 'I' experiences a being that is also connected to a non-being, and this experience of theirs stimulates a reflective assumption of precisely that freedom which, according to immediacy, has now proceeded into the material realm. This occurs with the emergence of a world of action from the spell of freedom immersed in its new affirmation. But because action is imbued with a transcendent dimension – for it, already in the innermost sense of carrying pure contemplative ideality beyond itself, turns towards, and thereby gives life to, another, of which it becomes conscious through the heterogenesis of the end, with the heterothetic power—whether resistant or fertilising—that gives rise to manifold repercussions of the initial affirmations—the person is led to an awareness of freedom no longer as a direct

affirmation, but as the unity of the affirmed real and the excluded compossible, as an affirmation which, in its own finitude, in a certain way also grasps the sense of virtual infinity and the agility that permeates it. The 'I' that seeks to understand this freedom proceeds in ways in which it tends to reduce the 'other', to experience in it the identical, the indifference of the co-possible. At first, it is desire.

But the 'other' eternally eludes desire: for its negation through the satisfaction of desire, being immediate, succeeds only in confirming the deprivation of the particular affirmation of which, in truth, the 'other' is merely the symbol. The reduction is real rather in the form in which the transcendent is, in a certain sense, liberated; this occurs initially through the compromise of coercion and exploitation; but since here the 'otherness' of the other comes to depend on the relationship with the 'I' that evokes it, the success of the endeavour lies rather there where the reality of the other is linked to the possibility of one's own self-denial – in love. However, this gives rise, through a new distinction, to a new task; the other must be recognised not merely in the naturalness of a 'child', but also as a free possibility, since it is precisely in the awareness of this point that the preceding movement, from desire to love, has come to determine the central principle, namely the 'I' of the person. The task of identification will therefore elevate the 'other' to such a form that the person cannot internalise and adapt it to themselves – and thereby perfectly fulfil the reflection on their own principle – unless they welcome it into their own innermost substance, into their pure principle of self-determination. When they do so, this is morality. Morality is therefore the form in which the element of essence (not that of existence, which is not at issue for the entire epoch) – of the given or the content – is comprehended and resolved in a conscious

activity of the formal 'I'. Beyond this element lies the assumption of its various powers, so that such an 'I' attains complete sufficiency in relation to the original duality. This implies that it experiences itself in objective activity: but the person, being merely subjective ideality, cannot experience itself in this way except by alienating its own activity. That is to say: the person can find self-conviction here only insofar as they receive themselves from their own substance, which they project and externalise into a 'nature': in the form of which they go on to unfold those very moments that formed their mere subjective consciousness⁶².

Thus, initially, it is the science of nature. But the science of nature is realised – and so the world of objective formations, the world of mathematised observation, is set against the very power of science, which presupposes that world and whose symbol, formed at the moment of alienation, it apprehends it precisely in the experience of the contingent, eternally reborn in opposition to the systematisations, owing to the character of the immediate, abstract position according to which these are realised in said science. Such a contrast appears in all its vigour in history and presents the task of a new power of alienation to which the 'I' adapts by positioning itself according to the category of philosophy: in philosophy, the 'other' takes its own mediation or knowledge into itself, and is thus immersed in the very act of the subject. But, once again, the unity of freedom and necessity, of ideality and reality—which is proper to the philosophical category—is dominated by the principle of the unconditional: contingent and distinct from formed thought, an obscure power of life of which logic and truth are but phenomena; it represents the moment of pure subjectivity which, in relation to the subjectivity now experienced objectively, appears as a transcendent, of which the latter is justified only in reaffirming upon it, in mystical

practice, the principle of alienation. Thus the entire substance of the person, as it had been articulated in the moments of the first categories, is given in objective form. In this, the 'other' is, at the same time, brought to a crisis: in mysticism, it has, in fact, become absolute freedom, and this, at the limit of its manifestation, repels the 'I' back to itself, restoring its autonomy along with the added awareness of itself as objectivity. This movement of the 'I's' return is definitively realised through pure art, in which the objective form—that is, the determination proper to the exteriority of personal consciousness—unfolds in a manner conditioned by its own consummation, until the positive principle of a central creativity coincides with the conscious will of the 'I', within which a 'genius' and an absence previously reigned. The limit of art is thus also that of the person's objective training, beyond which the act is affirmed in which the original law of the person becomes, through mediation, a transparent freedom. That is to say: beyond the process whereby formal freedom, 'by constructing it', encompasses the other as nothing other than its own substance (positive moment), an experience in which this very substance is distinguished—that is, posited—in relation to the now entirely mediated form, as a non-being; and which therefore actualises the distinct no longer according to essence, but rather according to existence—according to its *το οτι* [the quod], or Dasein [being-there].

Such is the act that creates the principle of individuality – that of a person, that is, who is entirely master of their own substance as such, who has redeemed in self-sufficiency and anchored to the value of the unconditional that distinctive law with which, at the dawn of time, they coincided in spontaneity and immediacy.

1 This is the Austrian scientist and philosopher Ernst Mach (1838–1916), a professor of physics in Prague and later of the history and theory of inductive sciences in Vienna. He theorised a radical empiricism known as ‘phenomenism’: scientific concepts and theories do not reflect the nature of things, but are merely tools for organising acquired data (Author’s note).

2 É. Boutroux, **De la contingence des lois de la nature**, Paris 1921, p.160: ‘But this free spontaneity, enamoured, as it were, of its own acts, as if, at first, they realised the ideal, allows itself to be determined by them and is transformed into habit. This metamorphosis is the work of the metaphysical understanding or instinct of immutability which, with its eyes fixed on the immutable essence of God, lends the form of the absolute to the aspect of human actions that looks towards the divine ideal.

This pause would be legitimate if the works of human spontaneity were ever to display the full perfection they possess, if the human ideal were ever to be realised. But free spontaneity, under the conditions of the present world, can only draw ever closer to it. It is never at the end of its task’ [But this free spontaneity, having become somewhat enamoured of its own acts, as if, at first glance, they realised the ideal, allows itself to be determined by them and is transformed into habit. This metamorphosis is the work of the metaphysical intellect or instinct of immutability which, fixing its gaze upon the immutable essence of God, attributes the form of the absolute to that aspect of human actions which relates to the divine ideal. This would be a legitimate stage, were it the case that the works of human spontaneity never displayed the full perfection they entail, were the human ideal never to be realised. Yet free spontaneity, under the conditions of the present world, can only draw ever closer to it. It never reaches the end of its task].

3 Positive science is the individual’s endeavour to conceive of themselves—whilst remaining within the formal sphere—as the very power that sustains the objective world, nature. Self-conviction here appears in the guise of the objectivity of the laws established in science; it is realised in the ‘success’ of intellectual procedures – at the moment of ‘objective deduction’ (in the Kantian sense); it now finds its fulfilment.

4 This is an observation made by various authors. Here one may cite, for example, the words of Windelband (*Geschichte der Philosophie* 9, p. IV, chap. II, 2) in relation to Bacon: ‘The golden fruits of science ripen only when they are not sought for utilitarian purposes...The intellectual creations that have enabled the natural sciences to lay the foundations of our modern civilisation derive... from those thinkers who, driven by a pure desire to understand, and without setting out to transform the world, perceived the order and harmony of that nature which they admired’.

5 The French mathematician and engineer Jean Victor Poncelet (1788–1867)

published his *Traité des propriétés des figures* in 1822, a work which ranks him amongst the founders of projective geometry, having intuited the ‘principle of duality’, according to which theorems occur in pairs that are identical in structure (Editor’s note).

6 In **La tectonique de l’Asie** (1924), the Swiss geologist Émile Argand (1879–1940) set out his mobilist tectonogenic theory of strata (Author’s note).

7 Regarded as one of the greatest analysts of the nineteenth century, the German Karl Theodor Wilhelm Weierstrass (1815–1897) imposed, through his works, a new rigour on mathematical analysis in particular, with a view to its ‘arithmetisation’. His name is associated with numerous entities and theorems (Author’s note).

8 Russell is Bertrand Russell (1872–1970), an English mathematician, philosopher and politician who opposed all forms of metaphysics in the name of logical empiricism. Peano is Giuseppe Peano (1858–1932), the famous Italian mathematician and logician to whom we owe the well-known ‘Peano’s axioms’ on basic mathematical concepts (Editor’s note). (9) On the theories of the Russian Nicolai Lobachevsky (1793–1856) and the German Georg Riemann (1826–1866), 9 On the theories of the Russian Nicolai Lobachevsky (1793–1856) and the German Georg Riemann (1826–1866), see J. Evola, *Essays on Magical Idealism* (1925), Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 2006, pp. 33–47 (Author’s note).

10 Born in Turin to a family of French origin, Joseph Louis de Lagrange (1736–1813) owes his fame to *Mécanique analytique* (1788) and *Théorie des fonctions analytiques* (1797). His name is associated with equations, functions and methods (Author’s note).

11 The name of the French mathematician Louis Poincaré (1854–1942) is associated with the study of the motion of solids considered to be rigid and with the geometric interpretation of their rotation (Author’s note).

12 Alexander Oliver Rankine (1818–1872), an English physicist and engineer, also devised an apparatus for measuring the viscosity of gases (1910–1926) which bears his name (Editor’s note).

13 Claus Hugo Hermann Weyl (1885–1955), a German mathematical physicist, applied Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity to geometry and published a seminal work, **Reine Infinitesimal Geometrie**, in 1918. He also expanded upon Riemann’s mathematical concepts (Author’s note).

14 The English astronomer, physicist and astrophysicist Arthur Eddington (1882–1944) was, through his observations which confirmed them, one of the leading popularisers of Einstein’s theories. He applied General Relativity to the study of the universe considered as a whole (Editor’s note).

15 As has been said, experience itself leads to a rationalism that is therefore not a priori, but experimental; to a rationalism received from the ‘other’, which does not appear so much to be imposed by the ego upon nature, but rather by nature upon an ego that has abstracted itself from it. See E. Myerson, **La déduction relativiste**, Paris 1925, pp. 134, 143: ‘The relativist, who did not set out at all with the idea of seeking a priori principles in nature, has nevertheless discovered them, in spite of himself, one might say... The Einsteinian physicist, fundamentally realistic like any physicist, finds himself, however, through the very success of his deduction, arriving at a construction that is fundamentally idealistic’ [The relativist, who did not set out at all with the idea of seeking a priori principles in nature, nevertheless discovered them, in spite of himself, one might say... The Einsteinian physicist, fundamentally realistic like all physicists, nevertheless finds himself, due to the very success of his deduction, arriving at a construct that is itself fundamentally idealistic]. See p. 170.

16 H. Weyl (Raum, Zeit, Materie, French trans. Paris 1922) explicitly states the impossibility of conceiving of an autonomous geometry, and that geometry, mechanics and physics in modern science constitute an inseparable theoretical unity, which must be taken as a whole (pp. 292, 57). It is from the determination of physical reality – adds A.S. Eddington (Espace, Temps, Gravitation, French trans. Paris 1921, p. 223) – that the new geometric theory has emerged.

17 C. Fourier, *Oeuvres*, Paris 1888, vol. I, p. XXII.

18 A disciple of Newton, the English mathematician Brook Taylor (1685–1731) studied capillarity, ballistics and the theory of perspective (Author’s note).

19 The French physicist and mathematician Jules Henri Poincaré (1854–1912) was also interested in epistemology, advocating a form of intuitionism: a mathematical concept or entity is defined not in logical terms but on the basis of intuitive data (Author’s note).

20 The French physicist and epistemologist Pierre Duhem (1861–1916) criticised the feasibility of so-called ‘crucial experiments’, that is, those capable of falsifying one hypothesis whilst thereby verifying another (Editor’s note).

21 The Russian mathematician Christian Goldbach (1690–1764) worked on number theory and differential equations. He put forward two ‘conjectures’ in 1742, the first of which remains unsolved to this day, whilst the second was only partially resolved in 1937, i.e. after the writing of Evola’s text (Author’s note).

22 A mathematical prodigy, Évariste Galois (1811–1832), died at the age of 21 in a duel, leaving behind a sort of scientific testament in which theories and intuitions were summarised that were only verified much later (Author’s note).

23 E. Galois, **Manuscrits et papiers inédits**, in **Bulletin des Sciences*

Mathématiques, 1906, I, p. 259, cited in L. Brunschvicg, *Les étapes de la philosophie mathématique**, Paris 1922, p. 22. See *ibid.*, p. 490: 'This abstract speculation (number theory) develops in step with a natural science; truths are discovered and established therein by a method which is, in effect, as Hermite had shown (Chicago Lecture, 1893, trans. Laugel, 1898, p. 58), a method of observation, whilst, on the contrary, ordinary arithmetic, arising from practice and developed with a view to practice, has retained the character of a deductive construction in which the mind itself creates its own concepts and posits a priori the laws governing their relations' [This abstract speculation develops in accordance with the rhythm of a natural science; truths are discovered and established through a method which is, in fact, as Hermite had demonstrated, a method of observation, whilst, on the contrary, common mathematics, born of practice and developed for practical purposes, has retained the character of a deductive construction in which the mind itself creates its concepts and establishes a priori the laws governing their relationships]. E. Boutroux, *De la contingence*, op. cit., p. 52: 'It was not at the first attempt that man discovered the first principles of mathematics. He groped his way forward, employing observation, experimentation, abstraction and induction' [It was not at the first attempt that man discovered the first principles of mathematics... He groped his way forward, employing observation, experimentation, abstraction and induction].

24 See E. Myerson, **De l'explication dans les Sciences**, Paris 1921.

25 See L. Rougier, **Les paralogismes du rationalisme**, Paris 1920, p. III, ch. X.

26 As transitional points: the need to provide a physical interpretation of mathematical coefficients, which is contingent upon them; the halting of physical deduction at a primordial, irreducible, purely given 'quality' – the 'improbable state' in thermodynamics, spatial curvatures in relativity, the inscrutable foundation of quantum discontinuity (on which see F. Reiche, **Die Quantentheorie**, Berlin 1921, p. 160), etc.

27 This situation is particularly evident in theories of physics such as, for example, that of Duhem.

28 Here it may be objected that the phenomenon studied by biology and physiology is distinct from that studied by classification and physics; that it is therefore arbitrary to rank the various sciences hierarchically, since they are in fact on the same level in relation to a given subject matter as a whole, of which each takes a particular domain as its object.— Whilst such a concept may be accurate in empirical terms, it has little relevance in transcendental terms, where, in the study of the conditions of possibility, it is maintained that the diversity of the phenomenon stems from the diverse form of the scientific consciousness that considers it, and not the other way round. The disordered multiplicity of the various objects of science masks an ideal succession;

and their de facto simultaneity is, so to speak, the ‘petrification’ of the total mediation of scientific consciousness itself in general, abstracted from the process of its own becoming. The object or phenomenon, in reality, is one and the same: in its endeavour to adapt and become ever more self-sufficient, science transforms its own principles, and thus the object changes from one form to another; for example, it ceases to be a physical phenomenon and becomes an organic phenomenon, and so on. But, once again, it is not that the organic phenomenon coexists with the physical one as two distinct phenomena: the organic phenomenon is, rather, the physical phenomenon itself as it appears to physical science when, in its endeavour to realise more perfectly the level that defines it, it finds itself carried beyond itself and becomes biology. And everything can be considered organically, physically, etc.

29 Blondel (*L’Action*, Florence 1921, vol. I, p. 127) notes that something analogous is already conceived within the very physical concept of bodies that manifest their own inertia in response to a dynamic stimulus. A concept which, moreover, is very familiar to Indian metaphysics.

30 It should be noted that here we are dealing with psychology as a positive science of the subject’s phenomena considered objectively – hence the distinction from the early categories of the time, which are not psychological science, but psychology in action.

31 In 1889, the Dutch botanist and geneticist Hugo de Vries (1848–1935) introduced the concept of ‘pangens’ to denote the hypothetical carriers of individual qualities, a term later adopted in the abbreviated form ‘genes’. His ‘theory of mutations’ of 1901 is of fundamental importance (Author’s note).

32 A pupil of Wilhelm Windelband, the German philosopher Heinrich Rickert (1862–1930) succeeded him as professor at Heidelberg (1916) and as head of the Baden School, where he developed a Neo-Kantian ‘philosophy of values’. For Rickert, the object of philosophy is the essence of value (Author’s note).

33 H. Rickert, **Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnistheorie**, Leipzig 1904, p. 116.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 130.

35 This is particularly evident in the expressions, which were extremely common until recently, in which, to convey an idea of the intrinsic self-evidence and eternity of certain metaphysical truths, reference was made to geometric propositions, such as, for example, that concerning the sum of the interior angles of a triangle. Now it is known that such propositions are, from a logical point of view, by no means hypothetical; they simply express one possibility amongst many others, and the intuitive evidence that may be attached to them depends on the fact that the person finds themselves in a physical environment characterised by a certain degree of

density, which one might very well conceive of as being different. Such a factual state of affairs can then be explained solely by the original arbitrariness of the personal 'I' and by the *samskâra* according to which it develops its own experience.

36 See Book I, Section VIII, § 3 [Theory of the Absolute Individual, *op. cit.*, pp. 148–155].

37 The Greeks, as is well known, did not have the concept of 'matter' in the modern sense until late Stoicism, that is, around the time of the advent of Christianity: up to Aristotle, *υλη* itself had nothing material about it; it was merely a principle of disorder and indeterminacy. The early Greeks lacked even the term to express the idea of matter. See Rivaud, **Le problème du devenir dans la philosophie grecque**, Paris 1906.

38 Consider, for example, the well-known fragment by Anaximander (Diels, *Frg. Vors.*, 9: *εξ ων δε η γενεσις εστι τοις ουσι και φθοραν εις ταυτα γινεσθαι κατα το χρεων. διδοναι γαρ αυτα δικην και τισιν (αλληλοις) της αδικιας κατα την του χρονου ταξιν* [The things from which beings derive their origin are those to which destruction also comes, as is due; for they inflict to the others as punishment and retribution for their injustice, in accordance with the order of time].

39 The concept of knowledge as a form of remembrance is expressed by the very term used by the Greeks for truth: *αληθεια* = *α-ληθεια* = the abolition of forgetfulness (forgetfulness = *ληθη*).

40 If, at this stage, a substratum of transcendence remains—an objective backdrop—as if the possibility of thought articulating itself were contingent upon the condition of living out its own form in representation of divine substance or a substantially metaphysical structure—then, in truth, only the rhythm of the determination and analysis of the formal conditions of the concept unfolds within it. As Kant noted (*Critique of Pure Reason*, pp. 135–136), the scholastic maxim: *'quodlibet ens est unum, verum, bonum'* [the entity is in any case one, true, good] is nothing but an exposition of the pure logical conditions of thought. To eliminate this ontologism, and indeed the allegory of the divine hypostases of earlier theology, is to mediate the form, to develop its criterion to the point of the sufficiency and immanence of idealism.

41 It is, however, important to note that this transition here always takes place within speculative thought, for here science itself is not taken as such, but rather as a philosophical moment, as a form of the criterion of conceptual truth (the same applies to Christianity): the antithesis between form, which, being absolutely mediated in itself, advances the claim of powerful and individual freedom, and matter, experienced as necessity and a real deprivation of the Self, relates instead to a further category (§ 21).

42 Note also how even the extreme forms of contemporary immanentism fit within the general structure of the category of philosophy. For example, Gentile (*Logica*, Laterza, Bari 1923, vol. II, p. 78) speaks of an ‘unconditionally imperative character of the law of the concrete Logos’, that is, of the supreme principle of dialectical becoming, and adds: ‘every act of thinking is an enunciation of truth, which would have no value were it not to be preferable and were it not therefore to present itself as unconditionally imperative with respect to its opposite’ (ibid., p. 300). See H. Rickert, *Das Eine, die Einheit und die Eins*, Tübingen 1924, pp. 10, 57: ‘We consider something logical only when we find something that exists as an object independent of our thought’; ‘The subject who thinks logically can always recognise only that which is independent of him, or “objective”’ [The subject who thinks logically can always recognise only that which is independent of him, that is, that which is ‘objective’]. Such a position does not differ in the slightest, *mutatis mutandis*, from that of Plato’s Euthyphro, which held that things are not good because the gods will them to be so, but rather that the gods will them to be so because they present themselves to the gods as good. In other words, the element of ‘ought’ remains in every case, which, as we have seen, assigns philosophy its hierarchical place. And – as has also already been stated – as long as the ‘I’ is conceived in accordance with the philosophical category, there is no way even to make it comprehend the general possibility of a consciousness which, based on that generic imperativeness which is said to be unconditional, reaffirms autarchy and, with it, pure magical freedom, arbitrariness.

43 It goes without saying that here the ‘Gods’ are understood solely as purely ideal forms. Their role as functions of the autarch’s power will not be addressed until the third epoch.

44 It goes without saying that we are now dealing with a God who has made his way through philosophy, and not with one who remains on the other side of it, in the realm of subjective feelings and qualitative intuition. It cannot be emphasised enough that we rank the various elements solely according to their form, according to the particular meaning that animates the ‘I’s’ experience of them. Anyone who fails to bear this in mind will inevitably accuse us of repetition, of drawing distinctions where there is identity, and vice versa. ‘gods’, for example, there are some in the first epoch; there are some in the category of cooperation, of philosophy, of mysticism; and there will be some again in the third epoch, as well as indistinct manifestations. But, in terms of value, none is like the other.

45 The idealists who accuse mystics of transcendence do not know what they are talking about: mysticism is a deeper form of transcendence – but always along the same line, whereby nature has become, in idealism, a category; and therefore, in relation to this, it is a deeper form of immanence.

46 Novalis, **Schriften**, ed. Heilborn, vol. II, pp. 101, 333.

47 H. Simon (*Der Magische Idealismus. Studien zur Philosophie des Novalis*, Heidelberg 1906, p. 141) summarises Novalis's view as follows: 'This deepest sense of self is not the proud result of moral consciousness of God, which elevates us to divinity in our judgemental actions... – but rather in humility, in what Schleiermacher calls 'selective dependence', lies the solace for the ever-more-demanding moral being. Here, the positive aspect lies precisely in the renunciation of all activity; and yet this religious love is not merely the purest feeling, but as such is also the prerequisite for all living action. For only it can bestow upon us the 'power of faith' which we require for all ideal, value-creating actions. This pure, 'absolute feeling is religious' (II, p. 101); in it, 'all individual inclinations are united into one, whose wondrous object is a higher being, a deity' (II, p. 279). [This deepest sense of self is not merely the result of the moral awareness of God, which elevates us in our actions towards God – but it is in the humility, which Schleiermacher defines as 'dependence par excellence', that a person finds peace amidst ever-increasing moral demands. Herein lies the positive element, the task of all activity; yet this religious love is not merely the purest perception, but as such represents the transposition of all human activities. Only on this basis can the 'power of faith' be transformed for us into meaningful action. This pure 'absolute sensation is religious'; in it 'all individual inclinations are gathered into a unity, whose magnificent object, as the supreme essence, is a divinity'].

48 J. Evola, *Essays on Magical Idealism*, Atanòr, Rome 1925. Appendix, p. 184 ff. [Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 2006, p. 143 ff.].

49 T. Tzara, 7 manifestes dada, Paris 1924, p. 15 ff.

50 In Dadaism, however, the emphasis is far more on the dimension of the infinite and the reduction of content than on the reduction of spontaneity. Consequently, 'abstract art'—though clearly defined as a necessity (and here one should emphasise, more than has yet been done, the personal contribution made by the painterly and poetic work of the author)—remains, even today, in part, a task yet to be fully realised.[Evola set out his theoretical and practical position in **Arte astratta**, Maglione and Staini, Rome 1920; facsimile edition: Fondazione J. Evola, Rome 1992. Half a century later, he collected his poems in **Raâga Blanda**, Scheiwiller, Milan 1969. On Evola the painter, see the following two catalogues: **Julius Evola e l'arte delle avanguardie**, Fondazione J. Evola, Rome 1998, and **Julius Evola: arte come alchimia, mistica, biografia**, Iiriti Editore, Reggio Calabria 2005 (Editor's note)].

51 See J. Evola, **Teoria dell'Individuo assoluto**, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 1998, pp. 139–155 (Author's note).

52 Similarly, the system of passions, natural appetites, etc., which becomes an antithesis for those who have awakened to a moral value, remains, on the other hand, a concrete reality for those in whom such a value has not arisen.

53 See D. Hume, **An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding**, Book V, Chapter II. Belief, which for him is the criterion distinguishing real ideas from imaginations, has in turn as its distinguishing criterion the fact that it 'does not depend on the will and therefore cannot be commanded at will'.

54 See O. Weininger, **Ueber die höchsten Dinge**, Italian trans., pp. 193, 195: 'Faith in God is nothing but the highest faith in oneself'; 'God is man's task; religion is man's will to become God'.

55 See Meister Eckhart, **Schriften um Predigten**, f. 292a: 'If God were not in all things, creatures would desire none of them. Whether they know it or not, in their slightest desire it is God whom they seek. And if one takes joy in anything, it is because God is in it'. *Brhadâraṇyaka Upanishad*, II, IV, 5: It is not for the sake of things, creatures or the world that things, creatures and the world are dear to us, but rather for the sake of the *âtmanâ*.

56 L. Feuerbach, *Forty Hours on the Essence of Religion*, Chapter XX.

57 God – as Guyau rightly says (*Esquisse d'une morale sans obliger ni sanction*) – can only hold man back. See A. Schopenhauer, *Neue Paralipomena*, § 395: 'I am nothing as soon as God is posited'.

58 L. Feuerbach, **Forty Hours**, op. cit., ch. XXIII. See J.M. Guyau, **Esquisse**, op. cit., p. 86: 'Man has always sought to scale the heavens and, being able to do so on his own, he invented God to lend him a hand; then he clung lovingly to this saviour'.

59 In passing, we note the incomparable superiority of Stoic morality over Christian morality, which, in place of the self-sufficient and 'content' will, in place of the virtue that is an end and reward in itself, posits the concept of the supernatural kingdom where it is thought that, by a kind of coercion, the powerless are freed from unhappiness and made partakers, by grace, of that bliss which, according to justice, is due only to a perfect will. However, Stoic doctrine is incomplete insofar as it renounces happiness, a renunciation which testifies to a failure to recognise that this—a sufficiently intense affirmation—is at its very core. The 'highest good' is consistent, and in an essential way, with the Stoic assertion, provided that this is truly sufficient—that is to say, that it overcomes dualism and is also power. Suffering is always a sign of imperfection. In the religious doctrine of the 'highest good', however, the individual ends up selling their convictions in order to attain happiness.

60 That is to say, it is argued that aesthetic activity imitates not objects (which is in fact false; art has never been photography), but the form of the creative act of a real

object, that is, magic.

61 Such is one meaning of the mystical 'descent into hell'. – 'You will not say,' notes Eckhart (ed. Buttner, vol. I, p. 126), in a passage of singular depth, 'that it is the coal that burns you when it burns you, but rather that nothingness is the cause of this: for the coal burns you only insofar as it is something you do not possess (= insofar as it is your deprivation); if, on the other hand, you possessed its nature, all the fire that has ever blazed could do you no harm. This 'nothing' that is connected to you—that is to say, this imperfection of yours—this is what burns in hell. And of this 'nothing' you must purify yourself.

62 In summary, it may be said that the given and the necessity, which appear in various ways throughout the entire second epoch, are the 'ratio cognoscendi' of free will, which nevertheless remains its 'ratio essendi'.

THE ERA OF DOMINATION

The distinction which, at the end of the previous epoch, posits and assumes non-being—that is, existential necessity—within formal freedom, thereby realising the point of individuality, reaches only as far as the generic substratum of the existential principle itself, that is, what in earlier forms corresponded to the ‘given’ in general. However, the new antithesis characteristic of that stage does not present existence ‘in general’, but rather an existence that is already qualified, correlative to all the articulations of the personal world. The sufficiency proper to the category of individuality (§ 21) is insufficient for this formation; yet, on the other hand, in accordance with its hierarchical position, it presupposes it, for only when the form has exhausted the perfect development of all its powers does the transcendent point of autarchy arise. It therefore finds itself faced with a new subject matter or task, the resolution of which aims to actualise, in specific acts of power and possession, the constituent elements of the world of the person—its mediation: and thus, on the one hand, to a negation, and on the other, to a filling and bringing back to life—in perfect life and unconditional freedom—that system of determinations which, at the point of the pure affirmation of the individual, embody the deprivation of an ‘I’ conscious of its own substance as a void world of reflection. In this latter epoch, the task is precisely to draw from the non-being of the formal world—which now encompasses all reality—an unconditional, magical existence, so that every ‘in-itself’, immediately as such, realises and expresses the power and nature of the absolute ‘for-itself’.

The generic categorical form here is that particular unity of identity and distinction proper to the experience of domination. The distinctive element implied in domination is that through which the element proper to reflection passes and is preserved; and

therefore it is that through which the value of the person in the subsequent categories is not abolished, but rather confirmed, exalted and brought to the fore. It follows that all those directions of development beyond the human state of existence which are not strictly magical, but rather identificatory and tend to dissolve the very core of individuality into a 'universal', into an undifferentiated higher principle (as in certain mystical traditions and certain Eastern initiatory currents), thereby eliminating the element of distinction, are to be regarded as regressive, degenerative, tending not towards the superhuman but towards the pre-human – towards the world of quality.

SECTION ONE

§ 23 – THE EXPERIENCE OF ‘FIRE’

At the end of the second epoch, the reality of the world of the person gradually loses its reality until it reaches the pure negativity of the principle of reflection, which becomes fully aware of its own abstract nature. In the non-being that thus wells up, the ‘I’ now reasserts itself as the objective in contrast to the subjective and the formal of that world. This transcending of form defines what is properly attained in the preceding category and, as has been said, is in symmetry with the transition that occurs precisely at the end of the first epoch.

Thus: the principle that made the category possible—and which is a sufficient act of distinction and negation—is contrasted with the determinacy of that which is distanced by it. The first synthesis through which the individual re-affirms itself upon this antinomy is that proper to the interval in which the principle of realisation through and within a negation establishes itself as the reason for the various formal determinations. These, therefore, in a further category, will hang upon their burning in a destructive power, and the moment of objectivity and persuasion, and that of negation resonating upon formal determinacy, will converge within it at a single and identical point. Having transcended the state of simple, inert awareness of its own antithetical character in contrast to the world of reflection—which nevertheless takes up its substance—the ‘I’ will transform such consciousness into energy that actively confirms, within the very bosom of form, precisely this antithetical character; hence the determinacy of the form itself is no longer experienced by it as anything other than matter to be negated and contradicted—not with a view to a new formal affirmation, but for the pure love of negation and contradiction. We shall refer to such a moment as the ‘trial or

experience of Fire'. Here, the 'I' is like one who stands firm in the power of negation, in the principle by which it is possible for every phenomenon to be removed and dissolved, and thus amidst the tearing apart and burning of that which constituted its life. It does not exist unless it creates itself, and it creates itself only by destroying and remaining amidst this destruction as the Lord of Fire – in the indeterminacy of things and laws that crumble before the savage onslaught, it celebrates the value of self-sufficiency. Such a blaze of negation and contradiction expresses the first, most immediate manifestation, within the particular, of a universal now embraced by the Self for its absolute purification.

This is one of the meanings of the initiatory expression: 'to bathe in the Waters'. The Waters symbolise the 'feminine' instrumental power – which in itself is pure, chaotic, unbridled dynamism – of the supreme 'masculine' principle; and through 'immersion' in it, the ego is dissolved, that is, liberated, purified and reintegrated into the principle of original indeterminacy. Identical to purifying fire; this Water is therefore, according to an alchemical expression, 'fiery water', and does not 'moisten' but 'dries out' (it is a source not of abandonment, but of new hardness and indestructibility in the essence of the Self – 'gold' or 'sulphur').

The present experience differs from that of pure art: which essentially falls within the formal realm; which brings about the consummation of form always as and for the sake of form: in which the point of self-sufficiency appears only at the end, not at the origin, whereas the unconditional is, on the contrary, that which is objective to mystical consciousness. It likewise differs from that from which the finite experience arose (§ 13), because there the terminus ad quem was the determination of form, albeit

through a principle of partial negation and arbitrariness – whereas here it is, instead, its indeterminacy.

Furthermore, in that distinction, in which the categorical act was articulated, it was not a matter of mediation but of a simple occurrence, and the moment of arbitrariness and agility was therefore not experienced *ante rem*, but—through the identification of the ‘I’ with the act—in *re*, in relation to the experience of the given, of the limit and of the heterothetic aspect of the action. Here, however, since the absolute mediation proper to the individual has taken place and is presupposed, the principle of distinction is no longer experienced in *re* as a given, but rather *ante rem*, in itself, as the power and arbitrary will of the ‘I’; and that which is taken as the terminus *a quo* or abstract matter to which – albeit provisionally, in assigning it a certain degree of rigidity, precisely as mere matter or point of departure – is endowed with the character of a given, is in fact the terminus *ad quem* of the entire process of finite experience.

Thus: whilst personal experience is determined by laws of correlation – that of object and subject and the others that follow from them – the individual’s standpoint establishes the element of a self-sufficient life.

This life, therefore, at the end of the second epoch, neither inserts itself into nor commands, but simply stands in opposition to concrete life.

Sufficient to its own principle in general, the ‘I’ nevertheless always depends, in its specific actions, on the determinisms within which personal consciousness has been realised. But from the perspective of the new achievement, the presence of such conditions is directly experienced as non-being; and thus, as its own concrete life becomes a negation of life, the ‘I’ turns to the

next step, by which it dissolves every relationship and condition, severs what sustains it from its externalised body, and replaces it with an entity of agility, of pure negation¹, suited to its autonomy. Such is the meaning of the present category. Outside it lies Stoicism, that is, the life of one who is unable to give substance to his own steadfastness and who, nevertheless, being compelled in any case to act due to the correlative of the world of reflection, suffers a contradiction and a violence in every action.

With this category, we undoubtedly cross the threshold into the world of the hermetic and magical sciences. Such a world exists. To transform a finite being into an infinite one, to draw from an 'earth' a 'Sun', a God, a being of power, glory and dominion, is not fantasy, is not myth, is not a matter of faith and hope; rather, it is a concrete possibility for a will that can say to itself: 'I shall succeed, or I shall be shattered in the onslaught.' This higher realisation—the subject of a practical technique already embraced by the Hindu yogis, which runs through our entire tradition, whose roots are intertwined with those of history – a tradition discredited and veiled by mystifications and superstitions which, however, in no way detract from its true essence – which flashes through the lives of saints and the founders of religions, and which is ultimately reconfirmed by the earliest findings of modern metapsychology – upon such a realisation hangs the entire hierarchy of forms within the order of the absolute individual. It is its crowning glory, its *τελος*, that which, from a certain level, must determine its truth or falsehood. To be able to cast everything aside, to be able to drive oneself to despair – this, as it is said, is the first condition for a such path. It is the preceding experience: the 'Great Solitude', the lightless desert in the midst of which the Self must endure, by means of a strength which it must absolutely create out of nothing. Beyond that lies the 'Trial

by Fire’.

The whole of determinations not only distances itself from him but becomes his enemy: in every reality of his experience he sees his own negation, but no longer as the opposite in a static antithesis of deprivation; rather – since he now feels that this deprivation is from and within him, and therefore appears to embody an activity of his own, and thus his own assent – as a force that tends to tear him away from the centre he has conquered for himself. This new form, in which the antithesis appears, truly reflects the dynamism inherent in the very first outline of mediation, and is brought about and aroused solely by this, as its correlative polarity. Beyond mere existence, to continue self-creation by means of a negating force that sweeps away the determinations in which the body of the person—inseparably connected to him—is entangled; to remain steadfast and whole within such a force; to generate within oneself the power to bestow upon oneself a higher life through the conflagration and catastrophe of one’s entire own life; to affirm one’s autonomy by persisting when all ground slips from beneath one’s feet, when ‘one no longer touches the bottom’ and everything upon which one’s conviction previously rested loses all firmness and dissolves into an uncontrollable chaos – this is the new task. It will encompass – as has been said – every aspect of the person; it may therefore range from irony in every aesthetic expression and the dissolution of all religiosity, to a conscious and reasoned madness: from a relentless and all-pervading scepticism that corrodes every philosophical and scientific certainty, to the deliberate violation of every moral or social law; from the reaffirmation of that which lies beyond all recognised values and all authority, to the denial of all faith, ideal or enthusiasm, and the contempt for every sentiment of humanity, love or respect – and finally, from the rigour of a

discipline of asceticism and mortification which, in its simply negative, its own end and joy, right up to an unbridled orgy which, by driving them to extreme intensity, burns every passion within itself. Beyond all this: to know how to bring to its zenith everything by which the primal terror is exacerbated, everything that our natural and instinctive being desperately rejects; to know how to break through the boundary and delve ever deeper, everywhere, into the sense of the vertiginous abyss; and to consist in the crossing over, to endure where others would be overwhelmed. At this point, nothing must remain that can be respected, nothing that one feels incapable of doing. And yet one will break free from both the 'pure' and the 'impure', from both the 'material' and the 'spiritual'; one will set out to shatter not so much the external law as the internal law, not so much the fetish-god of the age as the 'God within us', the 'conscience', the 'moral' and 'spiritual' law. To let oneself go completely: one form of dependence is no better than another, and the aim is not to change masters (the law of 'good', of 'spirit', of 'freedom', etc.), but rather to reaffirm the 'I' above every correlation, whatever it may be – to make it something agile, hard, cold, elusive, ready; something that is free in this dangerous way of living as a power that negates all determination and all support.

In this sense, the negative moment here exceeds the positive, and we might call this 'trial by fire' a test of evil. 'Good' (which we identify with the Hindu dharma) expresses conformity to the order of determinations and laws of a particular, fixed personal world; 'evil', on the other hand, is that which transcends this order into that of a 'power in a state of freedom'. Deadly for those who cling to the former, it thus becomes a path, a condition, a source of salvation for those who turn to fulfilment beyond it: in moments of guilt, in moments of crisis and the collapse of laws,

‘ecstasy’ may occur, the veil of formal consciousness may be torn asunder so that, faced with the primordial force, man plays out the game of his own downfall or of his rising above life and death (the meaning of the rituals of Kâlî).

In this connection, we have had no hesitation in stating elsewhere that crime (in the German sense of ‘Verbrechen’, where ‘ver’ is an intensifier of ‘brechen’ = to break) is the act par excellence – certainly not in relation to the victim, who in himself, as a mere thing of the external world, represents nothing, but rather in the sense that such a being is myself, and therefore the act is experienced as cruelty of myself towards myself, as a breach of my fundamental inner law. And so too suicide, and with it everything that is ‘against nature’, everything that is conscious and reasoned corruption, can embody this value of misdeed, of transgression of order, of metaphysical self-cruelty, which is a necessity for those who yearn for titanic power.

It is hardly worth noting that nothing of ‘passion’ should be attributed to this act of negation, which is cold discipline, a bare interplay of forces.

The act is performed solely to provoke the unleashing of forces and reactions from the violated ‘nature’ (whether external or internal—for example, remorse, the Furies)—which would tend to overwhelm and break the one who has dared. He, on the other hand, will emerge stronger than them; he will know how to subdue them beneath himself, realising a vaster, new form of organisation free from the immutability of the world of ‘natures’, and encompassing within itself Yes and No. Thus, by engaging with that which properly belongs to the next category, it becomes clear that this ‘experience of evil’ is also that of ‘purification from evil’. For – as has also been said here and elsewhere – the character of

wickedness in an act stems from the inability to assume it absolutely, from the state of contradiction determined by the presence of an internal limit or restraint which it fails to overcome.

Whoever, on the other hand, succeeds in organising and mastering such a limit and such a contradiction has put an end to 'guilt': their 'conscience' will invariably remain pure, in a state of absolute resolve, whatever act they may perform.

Let us add a few specific considerations on the meaning of corruption.

We have said that in the power which sustains and unfolds the system of personal determinations, the individual as such no longer recognises himself, but instead experiences a passion and an antithesis. Let us apply this to a person – then we have concepts, the characteristic type of which is that of Schopenhauer's 'Wille' [will]; and the point which was previously one of identity appears as a point of subordination. In every act, the 'I' has the sense of being swept along by a transcendent power, which carries it beyond itself, into outcomes different from what it wills – for which, therefore, as an autarch, it possesses no reason.

Whilst acting under the guise of intentionality and autonomy, in this situation, recognises itself rather as the eternal laughing-stock of a 'cunning of nature', the principle of which lies within that power. – Corruption is a value where it aims to overturn this relationship, to in turn appropriate the transcendent power, with the interplay of its determinisms, into a 'cunning' whose guiding principle and end is, instead, the individual will. This movement, which has already emerged within form through modern art (which, therefore, fully justifies the aversion harboured towards it by decadent figures, such as Tolstoy), can be illustrated here by

reference to affectivity.

There is a pleasure whose primary condition is activity; it is the blossom that springs from the fulfilment of every affirmation insofar as it is self-sufficient, perfect and successful. Since, moreover, every position, in its becoming, is an interval – that is to say, a distinction from its opposite – every pleasure, in realising itself, distinguishes itself, as from a dialectical antecedent, from a pain, according to a relationship which remains the actual prior of the two terms, to the extent that it denies pain that real precedence, by virtue of which it might appear as the determining condition of the activity (as an escape from pain), and reduces pleasure itself to a negative (the cessation of pain). Transcendentally, every affective element is instead conditioned by an act, and not the other way round.

However, in light of the distinction now imposed upon the world of the person—whereby the actuality proper to it is transformed into privation and all its reality into an empty form—the situation appears in a different light. Pleasure and pain – the affectivity relating to the various directions towards which the person originally willed themselves – are experienced as if they were determining factors: and one feels that the activity of fleeing the latter and seeking the former, as they flash before one's eyes in the course of events in the distanced world, is like an instrument that brings about determinations in no way encompassed by conscious will. This is typically evident, for example, in the case of sexual relations, in which Schopenhauer rightly understood sensual pleasure as a lure through which the 'genius of the species' subjugates the individual to its own ends². – In corruption, faced with the correlation between a certain determinism and a certain pleasure—as presented in a relatively stable manner by experience

—the relationship is instead turned on its head, and the transcendent purpose is thwarted: pleasure is not made to serve ‘nature’, but ‘nature’ is made to serve pleasure. Pleasure is thus rendered sterile; it is no longer experienced within a meaning, but for its own sake; ceasing to be an end of the action, it becomes an instrument of self-consumption and of freeing oneself from it. The ego cannot yet master its own affections to the extent of arbitrarily setting the criteria for what is to be pleasant or painful; instead, it is given certain correlations, representing, as it were, the traces of its previous activity.

What it can do with regard to them at this stage is to turn them in on themselves and cause them to be consumed within themselves, alienating them from the deep root of life in which they originally unfolded – a life which has now become the irrational, transcendent ‘will of nature’ – and dissolving them in the sterile fire of pure, inorganic enjoyment. Such is the role of corruption as a discipline of power. It should be borne in mind, however, that what may be the object of negation at this stage is solely the peripheral aspect of that which, in things, has been determined by the categories of the second epoch: both their other aspects or modes of being, and that which in them corresponds to the universal determinations of the first epoch, fall, for the time being, outside the scope of the negating power. For things to be otherwise, it is necessary, as will be seen, for the ‘I’ not to assume the personal world antithetically merely as a phenomenon, but rather in the various metaphysical powers from which it was produced (‘Gods of the Underworld’) and on these it reassert itself in function of dominance until the point corresponding to the element of personal value – beyond which the eonic world unfolds (‘Superior Gods’).

§ 24 – SUFFERING AND LOVE

According to the preceding category, a power of negation engulfs the distinct determinations of form which the formless value of the individual found set against itself. At the same point, it was seen that, owing to the plane on which these determinations appear, the negation is extrinsic; it engulfs their exteriority, not their deep root. But then the moment of determination of the negating activity can only fall outside the principle of autarchy.

Generally speaking, the undifferentiated basis of an antithesis (§ 21) and, furthermore, that of action (§ 23) has already been justified in the value of the individual – though action is understood here only as a genus, as an indefinite possibility in which the object, the ‘what’, remains entirely undetermined. Now, with the transition from negation in general to the act of a particular, determined negation (and this is in fact what emerges at the end of the category), the sphere of what has hitherto been justified by the value of the individual is transcended: here, negation, insofar as it is negation in general, is freedom and value; yet insofar as it is a particular negation – that is, one directed at an object or law which, whilst it may be driven into indeterminacy by a disturbance in which other directions are equally possible, is nonetheless *ab initio* a given, a presence, a presupposition – it incorporates a principle of necessity, and thus realises a new instance of deprivation against the individual. At the stage which is, for the time being, the most advanced, the individual is confirmed by virtue of a subsistence within a negativity: but this negativity is not a simple, empty negativity; it remains, in any case, determined by the fact that it is the negativity of a specific positive – of those elements which the person encounters in their own experience and which are precisely those, and no others. The

moment of the given thus echoes within the negative power and, as it were reacting upon it, renders it hostile and contradictory in relation to itself.

Here, then, that in end, or reflection, of previous experience, the Ego distances itself from its own negative power and turns it into an antithetical principle, a negation of itself that must be negated, that must be exhausted if it is to be truly detached from the given: autonomous. The value thus shifts to a negativity of negation as the Ego actualises the 'experience of Fire'. Consequently, this has as its inseparable correlate the very same negative activity; not the pure power of negation, but a specific negation in action, which is now what violates the self's autarchy. The possibility of a new task, of a new synthesis, is then opened up: to reduce the antecedent to material for the *τέλος* of the consequent – that is: that the negative power should invest the very form of negation (antithetical, violent, destructive, struggling-against-hostile-forces) proper to the experience of fire; that it should thus create a new dissolution as the locus for a new generation and subsistence of the Self. It is a negation that intensifies by distancing itself from negation, that twists it and reflects it back upon itself, detaching it, strongly enough to subsist without reference to it; neutralised, action passes into inaction, willing into non-willing, as in a higher, more perfect, purified activity; and then the very power of the 'other' against which the 'I' had lashed out in the function of negation – this power, liberated, endured, indeed sought and desired in its very otherness, in its transcendent and unpredictable violence which engraves an absolute, painful non-being into the very depths of individual substance – embodies it; it itself becomes the manifestation of the further, more perfect power of this very function of negation.

It is, therefore, the trial of passion, of suffering, of renunciation, of mortification as known to the path of autarchy. To break, to humble the will – this proud, indomitable will, Mistress of Fire – indeed, to allow it to be broken, to allow it to be humbled – to permit, to will, this – is it perhaps possible except through an even higher will, even more inner, cruel, hard and certain, whose cold splendour bewilders and confounds ‘nature’ and, by comparison, overshadows that which demands the most extreme straining struggle and madness of destruction?

At its limit, the experience of suffering gives way to that of love. That self-denial, that violation, which is the supreme reaffirmation of the negating power inherent in enduring, in desiring one’s own non-being— which, in suffering, unpredictably and independently of us, overwhelms us in the varied vicissitudes of a world left to its own devices—of this, to accept and desire the existence of a thing in itself—that is: loving it – is the deepest, subtlest, cruellest form. To love is an active, purified, intrepid suffering – a suffering that gives itself to itself; it is, on the other hand, the element of a perfect act, of the act par excellence, for such is the act of one who knows how to abolish oneself utterly, to attribute nothing to oneself, to be solely in the ‘emptiness’ of an inexhaustible giving of everything, saying yes to everything, abandoning oneself in a devotion that asks for nothing, that is moved by nothing and never ends in itself. To be in all this, to consist of all this. The ‘fire’ here is tempered and becomes ‘light’ – a freshness that is freedom from the ego and the freedom of things. And so the dependence that rages within the bosom of violent and antithetically negative action is resolved. That which is ‘given’, as such, immediately and in its entirety, is now a self-negation in action, and therefore an act of a higher freedom, of a power no longer dependent on relationships. This

liberated action thus breaks free from the plane in which the particular world exists merely in the form of a pure, external appearance, or being, of its phenomenological-ideal caput mortuum; it generates an organ, a possibility in which the deepest powers lying beneath that very world can be evoked.

Titanic and destructive violence, whilst constituting a necessary phase – for it is through this that the inner Fire is initially kindled, and the sense of audacious indomitability and superiority awakened – could not in itself attain the order of true domination. In the face of this, it represents rather a negative. Indeed, true power can have no enemies, can fight no battles, can have no ‘opposite’. Through struggle, intolerance and violence, on the other hand, a state of particularity is confirmed: a restlessness chained to the very same level as that which is denied—a will that is as absurdly capable of becoming mistress of the whole as a single hand is of the entire organism: here the ‘I’ is not yet free from things; it confirms that they can resist, and all the more so the more it seeks to deny them whilst suffering them – it thus bears witness to a powerlessness, an extrinsic and dependent relationship: ultimately, through its very recklessness, it betrays fear. He who is truly free does not struggle, does not destroy, has no need of violence. He asserts himself directly, without action, through his inner, individual superiority over that which he commands. But this superiority implies precisely freedom from things; it implies the abolition of their antithetical otherness, which, on the contrary, remains rigid and fixed as long as the ‘I’ polarises itself against them, affirming its own limitation as a person. But when the ‘I’ frees itself from itself, when it awakens with sufficient strength to abandon its own assertion, to exalt dominion to the point of self-renunciation and self-death, the antithesis collapses – its foundation having failed; and not only do

things cease to have any power over it – it can no longer be offended, in an imperturbability that is not indifference but real superiority; it can offer itself to every blow without it succeeding in reaching it – but they also remain defenceless before it, before the act that proceeds from such a superior level.

Thus: whilst in the ‘experience of Fire’ the Self drew its superiority from power, here it will turn to drawing power from superiority, and this from the exasperating harshness of suffering, of renunciation, of self-sacrifice, where a monstrous force would instead tend towards self-assertion. And the cessation of ‘opposition’, the annihilation of the self, the acceptance of things, the ability to will them in their own will and even more than they themselves can – this is love, purified fire. One cannot truly master something that one has not first loved, that is, with which one has not entered into a relationship of true identity. To love is to realise, within a relationship of understanding, that with which one was previously in a relationship of antithesis, coexistence or correlation – it is therefore to organise, to organise internally, to organise within freedom, for the hidden principle does not affect the diversity and autonomy of beings, but merely extends them, making the ‘I’ their deepest dimension, the root to which they cannot reach and in which, nevertheless, a higher unity reclaims them: a subtle force in relation to which nothing exists that cannot be dominated or broken, for it acts from within things, assuming their very nature, which is thus at the mercy of a command that will not appear to them as such, but rather as their deepest and truest will. – This serves as a general indication of the true place of magic, which nevertheless refers to a sphere that is not yet precisely that of the present experience. But even from this point, in this concept of love and sympathetic identification as a magical instrument, one is led to suspect, in the various practices governed

by the so-called ‘principle of imitation’, something more serious than is apparent to that positive investigation which, in modern times, has noted its uniform recurrence in the magic of primitive cultures.

We need only pause briefly to consider the contrast between this love—which consists of pure activity and freedom—and that which is desire, solidarity, and the need for others to exist. It is a well-known magical principle that desire kills power. For how could a being possess power when, by desiring, it declares itself insufficient, in need of something else and therefore dependent on the other – the being which, failing to act, asks, and, in a relationship analogous to that of violence, seeks to absorb the other in order to affirm its own particular individuality? All this is still self-reference, fear. But he who

Through calm renunciation and detachment, he has created for himself a life in which he lacks nothing; he who has broken the craving within himself, he who has made himself capable of desiring things not for his own sake, but for their own sake – of desiring in a pure manner – he holds in his grasp the principle of power and dominion: his self-being attracts infinite dependent things; it creates a vortex which they cannot resist, for in him they find that which, whether they realise it or not, conditions them in their need. Love here is therefore not need, it is not abandonment, it is not ‘altruism’ – nothing sentimental, nothing ‘moral’, ‘beautiful’, ‘noble’, or the like; nothing, in short, of all that men – or, rather, women – call by that name – it is something pure, terrifying, transcendent: it is the freedom of a life possessed so fully and so loftily that one can give oneself entirely, cast oneself entirely without a thought for oneself. One might therefore liken it to the Indian concept of *nishkāma-karma*, which precisely embodies the

idea of an action devoid of desire, an action which, not performed for its fruits, detached from all interest or attraction, can will without simultaneously being willed by anything; victorious over karma (the immanent law of retribution for conformity or non-conformity to the natural order = dharma) – as the texts state – since the egoic centre, bound by interdependencies, upon which karma might take hold, ceases to exist.

What might one say of a being who can say ‘yes’ to everything? Who places the act beyond both gain and loss, beyond both pleasure and pain – a motive in itself?³

In Western esoteric traditions, there are allusions to this state in a particular interpretation of the symbol of ‘air’: the subtle principle carried by the Lord, beyond wind, fire and earthquake (Book of Kings, I, IX, 11–12); the ‘wind’ that ‘blows where it wills, and you hear its sound but do not know where it comes from or where it is going’ – connected to the one who is ‘born again in spirit’ (John, III, 8); ‘wind’ in whose bosom the telesma is carried, the principle destined to take within itself ‘the power of all things, both lower and higher’ (The Emerald Tablet) and which fuels the flames from which the Mithraic Aeon is drawn.

§ 25 – DYNAMIC EVOCATION

Let us now examine the experience as it has been brought to its conclusion. On the one hand, there is the act of love in which the various antithetical formations come to life again; to tell the truth, precisely and solely as antithetical, as mere negations of the Self which, desiring them in and for themselves, becomes a pure void: as autonomous entities, he thus liberates from himself the things of his own experience – his bodily self – and endures them; but he suffers them in an act, not in a fact, in a reality that is merely a symbol of a self-transcendence of powers, of a negation which, from being external and extrinsic, has become internal to the things themselves. Thus, whilst on the one hand form subsists, on the other it has as its correlative its absolute negativity in the ‘I’ or as the ‘I’, and it hangs upon this as upon a disembodied activity, as upon a fervour that has now consumed all its material and has liberated itself into pure actuality, into light.

This correlative, which stands as the condition of the phenomenon and the image, and which is nevertheless their excess, the inner resolution of their artificial and immediate being, can only be the principle of an order of formative forces, which the elementary mediation of a dynamism. And if this—as living meaning within the Self—remains opposed to the pure existence of external things not yet otherwise affirmed by love, in this may be understood the interval that distances the potential from the act of a new synthesis, to be unfolded according to the familiar dialectic of the abstract principle of the consequents, which consume within their expressive body the substance of the antecedents. Here, then, exteriority will be taken up and actualised, regenerated, within this subtle dynamic order which, as a consequent, is still a pure, undifferentiated meaning; so that this,

in turn, may find in it act, form and concreteness. To actualise the experience of a dynamic world as the direct transparency of that of sensible images, through a gesture in which the mode of love is prolonged – this is the point at which the preceding experience can transcend and attain its perfection.

Now, if the consequent in itself is a pure, unbound interiority, entirely conditioned and materialised by the absolute spontaneity of the ego's self-transcendence – it – at the moment of opposite, objective transcendence, equally encompassed within love as that which, precisely in the absolute given, perceives the absolute act – in the phantoms of images subsisting as negation of negation, which it encounters in the antecedent – it possesses a principle whereby the synthesis will not be a pure, transcendent formation of dynamism, but rather a formation of dynamism projected in a certain way, becoming an inner objectivity, in a supersensible visibility of 'powers' flashing forth as trans-formations of forms, of images, of things. The Self evokes these powers: their entire reality is drawn forth, materialised, from this evocative gesture of the Self – and yet the Self remains distinct from them. Indeed, it brings them into being only by distinguishing itself from them, almost by hurling out of itself – precisely through the mode of love – something with which it was identical, and which only in this way takes on a perceptible form capable of being known visually. And it acquires this in the form of a physical object whose exterior – as if unable to bear the new power that it assumes absolutely – pales, withers, yields and dies, and is kindled, transcending itself into the very transparency of a dynamic entity, whose objectivity is an interiority.

The 'I' therefore attains such an experience only through an active dissolving and expanding of its own centre, in accordance

with the desireless gesture of an intrepid leaping that transfers its own interiority to the 'outside'; and this very gesture does not produce, but is immediately a luminous force, a dynamic spiritual ether, which is the substance in which the entire realm of phenomena is recreated, in which it is reborn, integrated and purified in activity – that is to say: not merely the physical determinations, but also the very world of thoughts, feelings and forces; for even of these – as has been said – the person perceives only abstract and particular sensations. The object of the new experience is nothing other than a 'rhythm', as it were the form of the gesture caught on the fly, before it precipitates into a thing: it is not a new kind of phenomenon, but rather the resolution of what is phenomenal in general in the sense of a particular quality of spiritual movement – almost an immaterial, synthetic 'sensation' of its process.

As such, it is nothing other than the object of a productive perception, like the individuality of a gesture in which the 'I' itself expresses itself, as it were, expressing a deeper, buried aspect of its own life. The 'I' is therefore truly the demiurge of such a world, which exists only insofar as it becomes the 'I' itself. On the other hand, this reality is also objective: it is experienced as the resolution of a real object, not as an 'other world', but rather as something to which the character attributed to natural things is not only transferred but also enhanced, so that, by comparison, they become shadows devoid of life and substance. The 'thing' is no longer perceived as such: the act of perceiving it, transformed into an act of loving it, of desiring it, consumes and regenerates it, presenting it as a dynamic entity; hence, whilst the predicates of 'real' and 'objective' were generally attributed to a formal determination, they can now only apply to this entity into which it has been transformed.

In reality, here we have the first form of that identity-difference which is characteristic of the state of autarchy. The internalisation of the external – characteristic of this category and those that follow – is, at the same time, a projecting, a detaching and distinguishing oneself from what was internal, from that with which, in a spontaneity in act, one stood in a relationship of tetic identity, of freedom-necessity: a distinguishing, however, that is no longer that of reflection, but that of potency. Dynamic nature, insofar as it relates to an objective, is distinguished from the Self, so that in the new world the exteriorisation of the very transcendental body of the samskâras is expressed in its primary potency of simple dynamism. Beyond the phenomenon and the ‘passion’ of the world, the Self thus generates from within itself what, to use a mathematical image, we might call the ‘first integral’ of that – the dynamic formations from which it derives: but by freely producing and objectifying itself in the dynamic world – insofar as it constructs itself as the power capable of doing so – the Self creates itself, on the plane of the formative powers of its samskâras, as a magical principle, that is, as a principle that is internally superior to them. In this, that distinctive law—upon which the value of the person was based—is preserved, albeit transformed; it is therefore not abolished, but developed: in the first epoch, the ‘I’ is the power; in the second, it is the distinct from power as ideality; in the third, it is the distinct from power as dominion.

The aeonic powers, lying dormant in the guise of various bodily functions, come into play here once more, though no longer in a relationship of mere identity, but rather in a relationship that is also one of distinction and which renders them objectively intuitable beings – yet as creatures of a real and sufficient possibility. Such is the hidden meaning of magical and

theurgical evocations: to creatively externalise the inner, to actualise the cosmic principles or 'Gods' that lie in potential within – or as – the body. Since every object corresponds to a subject, every objectification or externalisation stimulates a higher, deeper power of the Self. By projecting its dynamism into an inner objectivity – that is, by bringing the elemental world into being – the Self thereby purifies itself of it and, simultaneously, becomes its Lord. The power by which it is possible to bring things into perceptibility, to evoke the 'Gods', is the very same power that raises the Self above them and enables it to command them. However, in relation to what is apparent only to immediate experience, for the time being we are concerned solely with those powers upon which the world of particularity—the world of the second epoch—depends.

From this point onwards, phenomenology extends into experiences which, whilst no less real for that, lie beyond the scope of what may be apparent to those who remain confined to the human state of existence; and thus also beyond the usual objects of philosophy. The fact is that philosophy, by virtue of its hierarchical position, falls precisely within this realm; indeed, in its 'a priori' principles and its 'necessities of right', it is irresistibly inclined to hypostatise the elements into indispensable measures of every possible experience.

Fichte noted this in reference to Kant⁴: the thought in question in speculation is that linked to the physical senses, and so it is no wonder that the supersensible must be denied on the basis of it. The fact, however, that the supersensible reality can be explained precisely by a mode of that very same dialectic of self-objectification, to which the idealists resort in order to give a 'rational' account of nature, confirms the utter irrationality of this

‘rationality’, which has as the foundation of its *Sollen* [(possible) ought] a crude *Müssen* [(necessary) ought].

One should recall Schelling’s critique: there is no nature because it is an intrinsic necessity of the Idea to pass into it; rather, the concept of a rational necessity for the Idea to pass into nature is a construct of speculation in the face of the fact of the actual existence of nature. And since philosophical consciousness is not immediately compelled by the supersensible order in the same way as it is by the sensible order; since the supersensible order does not exist unless man creates it in the proper sense by turning away from himself – thus it must always be infinitely more difficult for the philosopher to discover the ‘rationality’, rather than the ‘irrationality’ and unreality, of that very order.

As for us, it suffices to accept from philosophy the principle of the ideality and relativity of the sensible mode of perception: the autonomous and external existence of objects, and likewise the passive and sensible form in which they are habitually perceived by human beings, is a contingent mode of possible experience, which is tied to a certain transcendental attitude of the ‘I’; so that, once this is transformed, it cannot cease to exist. In due course, we compelled absolute idealism to acknowledge the fact that the ‘I’ is insufficient for part of its activity, and we showed that the world, as a sensible, external, self-contained existence, is nothing but the reflection of such a deficiency. It can therefore be anticipated that from that intensification of possession and inner energy which the ‘I’ imposes upon itself in order to overcome the ‘trials’ described above, a renewed, transformed mode of the world’s appearance must arise of its own accord.

This is a fundamental requirement of the initiatory path in every age: the submergence of the passive, peripheral, sensory-

discursive form of perception and its transmutation into another that is active, positive, central and creative. This – bearing in mind that anything which is not self-existent and which comes into being only through its relation to something else is deemed impure – is referred to in certain occult traditions as ‘purification of the senses’; a purification which is the subject of precise and entirely positive disciplines.

On this subject, within the limits permitted to us, we have written elsewhere⁵, and there is no need to dwell on it here. We shall merely mention that, in practice, two phases can be distinguished. The first is summarised in the bulk of the Platonic καθαρσις: ‘Detach, turn away your eyes and, in general, your soul, from sensible things’ – when taken not in an ethical-metaphorical sense, but literally, in the crudest positivity. It involves immersing oneself in the powers of the senses and mastering them to the point where – dissolved, no longer identified with that towards which they previously rushed and with which they identified – the ‘violence’ of sensory impressions no longer has any power over them; to turn them in on themselves, therefore, and fix them: to suspend them at will in a whole, unaltered – pure – state: ‘hearing without sound’, ‘sight without the object’ – as certain Taoist texts put it. This discipline unfolds progressively through various stages, which have been studied in detail in Indian yoga treatises – particularly in Patanjali’s classical text – and culminates in a limit-state in which every modification, whether mental or sensory, is eliminated, and only the mind remains, one, united with its bare power alone (samadhi, kaivalya) – the summit beneath which the whole of itself is gathered.

In the second stage, this stillness gives rise to a projective expansion, an ‘ex-stasis’, and objects return, but are perceived no

longer through space, but rather 'passing from within'. Certainly, it is particularly difficult to convey the meaning of such experiences to those who do not already have at least a faint inkling of them for themselves. We might try to say that it is like renouncing all solid ground and 'slinging oneself outwards': that limit and that support which the visual and sensory perception of things in general represent are first taken as absolute, and then abolished by an internal act, so that one's own activity is projected into the corresponding 'void'. From and within this – almost forming itself there, reflecting itself there – the thing manifests itself, re-emerges, blossoms, but no longer as a thing but rather as a freedom, as a form of motion.

The obstacle here is the emergence of an instinctive, organic terror at such an act, as one might feel at the prospect of death and dissolution.

And whoever, striving in these directions, experiences the speed and force with which, at the slightest hint, one's deepest being recoils, also realises the doctrine, set out by us elsewhere⁶, that the visibility of a thing is a creature of terror for that thing; its solidity is almost the very syncope of this fear which halts and suspends the insufficient being on the brink of the abyss of Dionysian power. And one then understands the full necessity, within the framework of a still-moral preparatory stage, of the 'test of love': in the petty selfishness of a greedy 'I', all contracted and clinging to itself, there is expressed precisely the fear of spiritual power, of that absolute act in which the sensible world would turn towards its transfiguration into that of freedom. And for those who cannot break free from such selfishness, finite and mortal nature will remain the ultimate limit.

We might therefore describe the organ of further experience as

a synthesis of faith and perception. Faith is the audacity of pure initiative, the certainty of a will capable of casting itself beyond itself, creating an active certainty outside all those points of reference and pairs of opposites within which the senses, desire and reason move.

On the other hand, such certainty here is not something incorporeal or abstractly ideal – but is also the concrete, direct evidence of a ‘this’: faith here carries with it the perceptive faculties freed from the sensory organs and activates them, realising them in the actual vision of a supersensible object. It is therefore a matter of genuine experience: only that this has the character of a purely spiritual initiative, whereas sensory experience is conditioned by the passivity of the stimulation of external sensory impressions. Thus, elsewhere, by way of analogy, we have referred to the centrifugal mode characteristic of visualisations through the imagination, whether spontaneous (dreams, hallucinations) or induced (suggestion); whilst noting that this must not lead one to think that it leads into a world of fantasies and illusions, for it is, rather, merely a new mode in which the same objective content is experienced. Just as external things are not realities in themselves, but phenomena determined – through the category of the possibility of experience in the sensible or ‘impure’ mode – by causes residing within the inner self – in the deep complex of tendencies, impulses, activities, etc., in which the particular essence of the person (= *samskâra*) has been formed – so the dynamic or ‘subtle’ world expresses these very same causes, which manifest themselves through the new, positive and active mode of perception. In other words, there remains an ‘invariant’, an elementary body of *λογοι οπερματικοι* as the identical principium individuationis which, lying latent in the state of *samadhî*, reasserts itself in the new possibility of experience and

determines it in a manner corresponding to that which it has replaced. Naturally, this presupposes that the mind reaches the new state purified and 'transparent' as crystal, absolutely neutral with regard to every kind of subjective impulse and desire; for these, now that the form of perception is freedom, would possess unconditional efficacy – in a fantastical agitation, in a perturbation and distortion of the world springing from the latent body of samskâra, rather than as an exact correlate of the objective world, they would generate a chaos from which the path to any higher realisation would be precluded. It will be recalled that in this category essentially concerns the power to rise above one's own samskâra by disidentifying with it and projecting it objectively; now, due to an arbitrary disturbance of one's own experience – the possibility of which therefore remains open to a certain extent here – such a distinction would not truly take place; the existing samskâras would be replaced by others, producing a new 'mixture', not the 'separation of the volatile', nor the state of true superiority. And whilst projection generally implies power over that which is projected, in the world generated by an impure mind it will not be possible to realise to what extent that control extends to objective elements rather than mere creations of desire and subjective fantasy⁷. Therefore, those who sincerely aspire to absolute power will avoid exploiting the magical possibilities offered by this and the following stages, which pertain solely to personal samskâra (second epoch), and which they will instead traverse in a state of pure knowledge – grasping only the moment of transcendental catharsis and superiority that these stages bring about; reserving the state of power for that point where, in correspondence with the evocation of the cosmic, universal strata of samskâra (first epoch), it may truly be unconditional – by virtue of an internal and absolute relationship with the ultimate root of

entities, and no longer through imposition and command upon their particular projected emanations. – Moreover, in the present order, the protection of the imaginative faculty from subjugation to an unrefined subjectivity is guaranteed both by the preceding phase, which leads up to a culmination of abstraction and detachment; and by the hierarchical precedence of the category, where one is required to accustom oneself to denying all arbitrary will, to desiring things for their own sake whilst subsisting solely as their ‘empty’ or non-being counterpart.

The technique of magic here would, in any case, take the following form: to give substance to the command through the act by which a given being is evoked and mentally transcended or suggested in its ‘mode’, in its subtle form consisting of activity. The presupposition, which can be discerned quite easily in the various evocative or ritual procedures, is the so-called magical principle of analogy, from which is postulated the sympathy of objective reality with a form that extends it and to which, through living identification, the centre of the Self is transferred: the action on the subtle image of a thing, the mode of which has been inwardly reconstructed or actualised, is action upon the thing itself. As for the additional maxim of ‘modelling one’s own imagination on the “cosmic imagination”’, this must be understood in the light of what has been said above regarding the condition of purity of the mind: for to speak of an ‘imagination of nature’ that already exists as a transcendent model (for example, in a divine mind) of phenomena makes no sense – it is, in fact, something generated by the process itself; it is the comprehension of experience in a more perfect form, which stands to the sensible form as actuality stands to potentiality. The supersensible reality is a genuine synthetic integration of the phenomenon, an integration that exists solely by virtue of the inner energy of the

‘I’, within the ‘I’ and as the ‘I’.

The dynamic world itself, therefore, already constitutes a first mediation between the ideal and the real – between the two terms of the person’s antithesis: it is the world of ‘illumination’, of the Neoplatonic *ελλαμψις*; it is the ‘subtle’ (*sûkshma*, *linga*) of the Indian traditions, the world ‘reborn in the mind’ or from the ‘magnesia of the philosophers’ (Hermeticism) or from the ‘diaphanous’ (Kabbalah, Martinism); its substance or abstract possibility – called ‘astral light’, ‘great magical agent’, *aour*, etc. – is like a luminous spiritual ether (*cidâkâsha*), as the counterpart of what, in sensory experience, is spatiality and, on the other hand, as the resolution of the state of sleep. These processes involve a gradual reactivation of consciousness in those areas that have been obscured in the service of personal affirmation: it is like a rebirth that goes ever further back and deeper within – the luminous centre of the Self draws ever more deeply from the depths (that is to say: it mediates, it creates a will where there was previously only spontaneity) that which it simply observed, those powers that manifested themselves to it only as immediate images externalised by the law of reflection. These powers sink into the dark waters of dream, sleep and death, on the surface of which alone float the fragmentary patches of light that constitute personal consciousness. Already in sleep, everything that comes from the realm of the senses disappears, but at the same time so does the presence of a consciousness which, like that of the human state of existence, is subject to the condition of correlation precisely with the sensible, with the external. It is therefore understandable therefore that matters are different for one who has attained that detachment, that purification and stabilisation of the mind, as mentioned above. Such a person, whilst still alive, already to a certain extent crosses the ‘threshold of Proserpina’; to a certain

extent, they already participate in a life unbound from the immediate bodily vehicle. This life is released in the state of sleep like a luminous ether, in whose initial differentiation the world subsequently re-emerges and takes shape—in a sort of new, active and purified dream⁸—transfigured into a dynamic or ‘subtle’ world. Indeed, the state of sleep is the one in which, in general, the first realisations occur, inasmuch as it naturally protects, in a certain way, the nascent formations from the violence of sensory impressions, the intensity of which the former would not be able to match all at once.

However, this is only provisional: active perception must not, in fact, be another faculty, limited to particular moments and juxtaposed with sensory perception, but rather the complete transformation of the latter.

Let the powers of the senses, therefore, be able to tear themselves away, to turn away from the objective world, to which they remain as if spellbound and enchanted; let the power of ‘imagination’ become stronger than that which corresponds to the objective world itself. From the physical, sensually conditioned world of wakefulness, one must be able to abstract through an internal act that strips it down to intellectual essences: into entities of rhythm and harmony⁹.

In principle, freedom must certainly reassert itself not only in form (transformed from passive to active perception) but also in content – yet this is not yet possible at this stage, where the dominant dimension is the indeterminate, immediate, indifferent formative power of the phenomenon; rather, it will be possible once the ‘I’ has resolved the mediated, individuated and individuating power of the phenomenon itself. Just as the world of form, in relation to the principle of the individual, becomes

entirely indistinct and indifferent, reduced to a single dimension, so too do analogous characteristics pertain to the dynamic world, which is simply its conversion into the active. In this world, or in this essence of it consisting of activity, the 'I' cannot perceive any internal distinction: it is entirely dissolved, and everything, however dissimilar, is similar to it. If, beyond the Schwelgen [silence], in this radiating outwards into liberation, a need arises within the individual analogous, for example, to that which, in sensory experience, led him to distinguish an appearance from reality, its fulfilment is to be sought solely in a moving forward, in a further power of self-sufficiency – in a transition to a new category.

§ 26 – THE WORLD OF THE ‘WORD’

With the category now established, the ‘I’ thus transcends the phenomenon and makes the transcendental formative powers—which constitute the world of the person in their moment of pure dynamism—the subject of objective experience; whereby it is no longer the metaphysical dynamism of the self as a person. It distinguishes itself from it and, consequently, transcends it in the superior power that makes possible, and effectively brings about, this externalising distinction. A self-conquest arising from such an expansion and projection beyond the sensible, in an inner conception of the external according to dynamic formations, is therefore the value that underlies the preceding category and governs its movement. However, this experience, upon reaching its conclusion, leads to a new distance, providing the basis for a further synthesis.

Does not the possibility of the dynamic – which is its very principle – in fact, properly and essentially, stem from a dynamic element, defined above as an expansion beyond the limits of the sensible? This means that, of the postulated objectification, that relating to the dynamic world proper is but a partial form: it requires that the ‘I’ be capable of detaching from itself, of liberating in a higher evocation, this very power by which the elemental aspect of the *samskāra* has made itself the object of supersensible experience. The value of mediation thus stands apart from the movement proper to the category: it presides over it, shapes it and is expressed within it, but, moreover, transcends it. By objectifying its own immediacy, the individual mediates itself; but the perfection of such mediation is to be attained by overcoming the immediacy of the power by virtue of which the immediate distinguishes itself. It remains only to clarify the

possibility of such a requirement, that is to say: how distinguishing the power of distinguishing does not imply this very power, and therefore how one might have something other than a vicious circle.

Certainly, nothing exists that is not for the 'I' and, therefore, that does not have as its basis a certain act of positing – an elementary activity must be a condition of this, just as it is of any other form. The question will therefore not concern such a generic activity, but rather the manner, the meaning that must characterise it in relation to the aforementioned requirement; a meaning which, in a certain sense, should elevate the act of distinguishing to a new power and, as it were, distance it from itself.

The dynamic supersensible proceeded from an expressive gesture arising from within, directly related to the 'I'. Now, when, within the body of activity that he experiences, such a centrifugal direction is immediately overwhelmed and reversed into its opposite, he will certainly feel himself to be distinct in his former power of distinction.

And so, in the further illuminating flash of a more intense and decisive gesture of evocation-distinction, there is an expansion, a liberation of things: they come to life, move of their own accord, and come, so to speak, to meet the 'I' in an expression, whilst always remaining actively and inwardly experienced, whilst always having creative perception as their substance and condition: as if the freedom of positive perception were merely an instrument lent for the manifestation of an inspiration, of something to which one can no longer creatively refer back to oneself, but which is received, heard, as if it proceeded from cosmic functions existing in their own right within the spiritual void. Such is the 'sound' of

things, the clarity, the act of their 'light' and their silent rhythm; a reflection, in the subtle realities, of the objectification and understanding of that very power which brought them into existence.

And just as productivity adapted to the objective, in accordance with the dynamic formations of the preceding category, had the value of an elementary mediation—as something mediated—so too must the principle of what the 'I' experiences or produces in this further mediation of its own appear as an inner reality: the world will no longer appear as a collection of elementary energies, indifferent in themselves, but rather as a collection of reflections; and just as, in relation to the dynamic 'subtle', the sensible was perceived as a mere shadow and shell, so, in relation to these, it is the dynamic itself that becomes a symbol, an abstract expressive body. We might therefore refer to the idea of meaning: the dynamic, which encompasses within itself the innermost principle by which it may be conditioned, is, strictly speaking, conception; and the world that now resonates within the 'I' is like a living language in which a system of meanings is conceived and expressed. It reveals and embodies the of the samskâra at the moment of its determination as a set of needs, values and original reasons – a set which, owing to the inherent presence of the new mediating element, is, unlike the simple elementary world, something internally distinct and articulated. In such a set, that which was the sensible world appears without residue. The objective thus becomes like a mirror, like the spiritual transparency of the original formation of the person; everything is immediately given in terms of the profound reason by which it was fundamentally brought into existence within the order of the particular, so that the experience of it is now unquestionably that of a metaphysical self-recognition in the act. This self-recognition,

as has been said, is simultaneously a process of distinguishing oneself, of objectifying and liberating from oneself an even deeper inner reality – but in this, in the subject and in the power of such an act, there is an arising within a centre that is, in relation to what is known and within the order of that which is known, intrinsically superior.

At this point we find ourselves in an experience which is the resolution into metaphysical ‘purity’ of that which is a concept linked to physical perception – in the same way that the subtle world is the resolution into metaphysical ‘purity’ of this very perception. We may call this gnosis.

The essence of gnosis lies in directly grasping an object not as an object, nor even as an entity of rhythm, but rather as a meaning. ‘Directly’ – that is to say: not by induction, inference or analogy based on the immediate data of physical perceptions (in the manner of understanding proper to the human plane, for example through the writings or words of others), but by a simple act which is a transformation of the very act of sensory perception itself. In other words, the discursive condition ceases to apply—the Kantian distinction between intellectual forms and the sensibility of which they are a form—and this ceases not in theory but in fact, not within a particular doctrine, but rather in the realm of the immediate data of consciousness: perception is entirely dematerialised, and as such is immediately an act of understanding; yet this understanding is not a cold, abstract judgement or concept, but rather the transparency of living realities, of which every concept is but the ‘corpse’, the dead and external reflection.

Experience is thus illuminated by an intrinsically noetic character: it is the locus of what, in certain esoteric schools, is

called ‘reading of the occult script’; it is the direct realisation of nature as a great symbolism, as a myth in which – to use Olympiodorus’s well-known phrase – ‘the principles and powers of the intelligible world manifest themselves externally and sensibly’ – *κοσμος νοητος* [intelligible cosmos], the world of ‘formative ideas’; the unfolding of things into ‘sounds’ which are their ‘Names’, ‘syllables of wisdom’, *λογοι σπερματικοι* [seminal words], ‘letters of light’, mantras, *mâtrkâ*, *claviculae*, articulations of that ‘objective universal language’ whose concept is so recurrent in initiatory tradition that, in schools such as the Tantric and Kabbalistic traditions, it has given rise to a veritable positive science of power.

The structure of the category, however, is such that this thought— which is living spirit—has an objective character and nothing more than a personal or psychological one. It cannot be attributed to the ‘I’ in a direct relationship as its product, as was the case with that thought which he laboriously elaborated from the material world; rather, he experiences it in the sense of a ‘thought of the world’ that enriches his mind, which almost comes to meet him as in an aspiration and a gift.

This is the second difference between the intellectual act proper to the world of gnosis and that inherent in the world of the person, particularly in reflection.

On the other hand, as we have already said, the objective nature of the content of such categories directly expresses the condition for genuine self-knowledge, for the awareness of oneself as a metaphysical entity.

Let us repeat: this is a form of knowing which is to understand, to possess – but none of this can take place whilst the ‘I’ is immersed, in a relationship of identity in act, in that which it must

know, in its own substance or mediation as a person. Given such a situation, the drive to understand oneself transcendently, far from being satisfied, would only succeed in creating new material, in addition to what already exists, for self-knowledge. Instead, one must free oneself, distinguish oneself, and thus project one's own inner life, making it a reality that is, in a certain sense, external, something that stands before us. But this, on the other hand, implies taking in external reality in such a form of perception that it directly reflects the inner life of the 'I', §10: the process of such knowledge thus goes hand in hand with that of internalising and endowing with subjectivity – in progressive stages – the external world beyond the mere trace of its formal emergence. And things then appear to us as the realisation of what the 'I' has willed and still wills as a person, albeit under the alteration inherent in the law of reflection; it comprehends its own transcendental will, and every determination – those very ones which at another point had the appearance of evidence and intimacy – is for it merely the stuff of myth which, in the new perception, is immediately consumed into a meaning.

Hence, on the whole, we may say that gnosis is a transcendent science of the self identical to a spiritual science of things according to the single phenomenon of an absolute objectivity given in direct, immaterial intuitions of meaning as 'sounds of wisdom'. A science of the self which is not only living reality, but also, simultaneously, realisation – the realisation of mastery, liberation and superiority, in accordance with the aforementioned origin of these values from every active self-projection.

Let us therefore say that, to gnosis, what in previous stages was understood as natural law, physical formation or function, etc., appears as nothing more than the external and phenomenal aspect

of cosmic currents of desires, sensations, will, etc., which various meanings govern. That foundation of affectivity, of will, of immanent teleology animating the physical realm, which in the person remained connected solely to their body and from which the rest of their nature – which is nonetheless a constitutive part of the person – was deprived, determined the person almost as if their limbs were paralysed or had degenerated into an incomprehensible automatism devoid of inner life; that foundation, so to speak, now comes to permeate the entire system of things. Internal experience and external experience thus transmute into one another, becoming coextensive with one another – not in the critical sense, whereby the external itself is nothing more than a systematisation of psychological data, but in the sense that now the whole of nature is understood internally, just as a gesture or a movement is understood within the will, passion and purpose of the one who determines it. It is the very process of the person's self-formation that is now experienced in the events of the world, no longer from a reflective-formal point of view, but from that of an interiority of being of meaning. The whole of nature awakens, comes to life, becomes something living: everything in it comes together to form an organic being whose whole says: I. The 'I' is the supreme meaning received from the whole of the world as from a collection of syllables and sentences.

In this context, we may add a few words regarding what was previously said about the 'Gods'.

A single act determines the person and the particular world they experience; the subjective and the objective are like two refractions of a single ray. When experienced immediately, such an act is the ideal unity, presupposed by the possibility of knowledge in general, the principium relationis of two aspects

which therefore remain extrinsic to one another. When experienced in a mediated way, however, the same act instead establishes the resolution of this extrinsic relationship and purely formal unity in the sense of living correspondences between the macrocosm and the microcosm. Thus, the correspondences between various organs and functions of the body and certain elements and powers of nature are directly revealed to the 'I'; and, beyond this, as a moment of the unity of correspondences—as acts of absolute perception now transcending the law of reflection—the various 'Gods' come into being, precisely in the sense of the simplicity of the very syntheses that constitute the person. And through 'vision' the world of the Gods unfolds precisely as the perfect actuality – no longer experienced in the indifferent dynamic moment as in the previous category, but rather according to the mediated and distinct principle of conception – of the various relationships in which the polarity of sensory perception is characterised – and thus, on the one hand, the organic functions, and on the other, the elemental principles of nature. It has already been noted that what is at issue here are the so-called 'gods of the underworld' or 'lunar gods' proper to the powers that individuate the world of particularity, not the 'gods of the upper world' or 'solar gods' which correspond to the aeonic powers of the first epoch and which will be encountered only, and in a different context, in the following section; just as it has been stated that the individual, by right, is and must be something superior to the various Gods that he gradually brings into being through his experience. We may note that the structure of Gnostic experience, its inspirational and objective form, is such that in those who venture along these paths without the immanent knowledge of what they are doing (and this is the case for the majority of mystics and saints), it may give rise to the conviction of a kind of

experiential confirmation of doctrines such as those of 'grace' or of an eternal, transcendent Wisdom as the ultimate limit. But, in fact, this is not the case at all. We have seen that this particular mode of Gnostic experience arises solely from the self being tempered into a more subtle self-sufficiency (analogous to that of 'love' in relation to the 'trial by fire'): and that the very act of experiencing and embracing this inspired transcendence, precisely as such, without residue, is the act that renders the ego superior and transcendent in relation to this very transcendence itself – superior to the world of Wisdom. A God 'inferior' God is transcended at the very moment he is invoked, whereas for the Gods 'superior' Gods a genuine conquest is required.

Furthermore, with regard to the single personalising act experienced, as was said, first immediately and then medially, and to the corresponding transformation into an intelligible act of that which is mere sensible facticity—whilst anticipating to a certain extent what is proper to the subsequent category—we may offer the following suggestion. In its literal meaning (and even more so in the German terms *begreifen* [to contain], *ergreifen* [to grasp]), which is its most concrete sense, 'comprehending' conveys the idea of containing within oneself, of mediating and mastering. That which I 'comprehend' and which I myself determine is intelligible to me. We have previously set out the reasons that lead us to deduce the world of the non-Self from an activity that is subjective, yes, but spontaneous. Spontaneity, on the other hand, has been described as an identity of the possible and the real, and this can also be understood as follows: a breaking loose from the depths of powers that are too impetuous, but, above all, too rapid for me to grasp, hold back or master them before I simply find myself faced with their fact, with their mere appearance in representation: too rapid for me to comprehend them. But

through a ‘transcendental readiness’, through a lightning-like swiftness in boldly launching and adapting the point of self-sufficiency (the dominion of that ‘ability to say no when a whole prodigious force demands a yes’) to the spontaneities at the subterranean level where they arise and which unfolds to the ‘I’ as it carries itself ever further along – deeper and deeper; it is through such a capacity that sensible reality is understood, conceived – made intelligible: clarity and intimacy arise where there was once the obscurity of natural phenomena. What prevents one from grasping the first metaphysical experiences is, quite rightly, a lack of inner swiftness, linked to that ‘fear’ and that ‘selfishness’ of which we have spoken.

There are also precise methods for the awakening of gnosis, which, given the nature of the present exposition, we shall not dwell upon here; for certain elements, we refer the reader to our previously cited *Man as Power* – where mantras and nyâsa are discussed – and to the practical instructions given in the journal *Ur*, which we edit. In general terms, and following a predominantly intellectual path (dhyâna-yoga), we may say that this involves a rhythm of absorption, intensifying into a dynamic entity, which is suddenly followed by an act of abstraction—a lightning-fast destruction of the subjective energy from which that very entity was taking shape. This evokes, laying bare in a flash, the deepest power, hierarchically prior to the subtle formations.

The world of ‘sound’ is the resolution of the level proper to deep sleep, the locus of what is called in Indian traditions the ‘causal body’ (kârana-sharîra).

§ 27 – THE INDIVIDUATING INDIVIDUAL

Every externalisation of the inner self stirs a deeper inner life; therefore, at the point where the powers of conception become supersensible objectivity, the 'I' – in the corresponding moment of subjectivity – draws upon the level of the principle hierarchically superior to them, the principle that conditions and actualises them. This transcendent and conditioning principle, in relation to the powers of conception, can only be the person in their bare being, in that unnameable, elemental root of theirs upon which the totality of that world—which arose from the mediation of formal freedom throughout the entire second epoch—gravitates. Distinct from the first two powers of the *samskāra* beyond mere phenomenon, the 'I' is not distinct from this third. At the ideal limit of the preceding category, it is, however, undoubtedly awakened and established, but in dialectical correlation with the function, whereby value is derived from liberating from self-reference that which is, nevertheless, nothing other than a productive intuition. Hence the path to a new synthesis: a synthesis in which the very 'I' of the person becomes the subject matter of the projecting function, in which it is invested by this function as by something, and it is only by actualising itself within this that it finds its fulfilment. It is the distinctive power of the individual that takes on the person herself, who is thereby overwhelmed, projected and liberated: she dies in an affirmation that affirms her principle beyond herself—that is, it affirms the distinction of which she is fundamentally constituted; the object of which – that is, that which was projected, externalised, that which is felt as other in absolute spiritual freedom – is the individual itself, the very 'I' as a transcendental personality, as the centre of the world of particularity and reflection. Thus, beyond the world of the senses,

the superior power of an individuating individual, in which this entire phase – which we might call ‘transcendental purification’ or ‘stripping bare’, comes to an end. It is, therefore, the state of an ‘I’ that transcends individuation not negatively, but actively, creatively; of an ‘I’ that no longer simply ‘is’, that is no longer passive with regard to its own existence, but which lives its own existence as a personalised ‘I’ in the capacity of a cause, by virtue of a particular possibility in which an infinite power to personalise may contingently come to be, and in which its centrality now transcends and is transformed. And at such a higher level, to know is precisely to project oneself, to flash forth as the ‘I’ within the various beings, within the various individuations – that is, to actualise the various beings, the various individuations as the ‘I’ from the height of this absolute principle, which now takes on the character of a plastic form, of an indeterminate power capable of arbitrarily assuming the person of any being, even beyond their luminous essence made of motion, even beyond their resonance in names of wisdom – in formless, immobile spiritual simplicity. It is that ‘projection’ – the power to make oneself appear, so to speak, before oneself, to externalise one’s own personal self – which, according to the Hermetic symbol, creates ‘multiplication’ – a multiplication that then reconverges into the transcendent principle of unification: a life that has overcome the necessity of a particular, irreducible individuation, which is, in fact, by right, a superior ‘dimension’ free from the latter; a continuum of an identity, of a ‘same’ (ΤΑΥΤΟΝ) within discontinuity, within the ‘other’ (ΕΤΕΡΟΝ) of infinite individuated beings into which it projects itself: continuing within her as in a higher depth, these beings are thus unified just as, in the of a continent, where the scattered multiplicity of separate islands emerging from the waters continues and unifies.

The 'I', therefore, multiplies, awakens in the various beings co-existing in space; indeed, it resolves space itself, dematerialises it – from its artificial form (a place of the external co-existence of things) – and realises the profound meaning that lies buried within it and in which it consists: indifference, a place of coexistence for multiple meanings that are compatible with freedom, governed by an inner understanding, which is now, through its projective function, given in a 'state of potency'. And in this space that has been resolved and made spirit, in this space that extinguishes every particular or privileged self-reference, knowledge acquires a synthetic, integral character, whereby it is transmuted into gestures of a cosmic consciousness. And just as the many that coexist externally in space find unity in the individuating individual, so too do the many unfolded in time find it, so that time ceases to be a condition; and in that 'eternal memory' which the Book of Psalms associates with the 'Righteous One', the truth of the doctrine of reincarnation is constructed through direct experience – the continuity of personal syntheses, which are discontinuous when, in the immediacy of its function, the individuating being identified itself, plunged itself, into that which was gradually posited by it. And yet the pinnacle from which this glory of omniscience proceeds is an immortal life: for free from death, free from alteration, from generation and from corruption is the *αυτοζων*, the life that is of itself – its being being resolved in the cause of being, its individuated finitude being transcended into the infinity of the individuating principle.

And thus one reaches the threshold of a pure magical realisation.

Through self-projection, the process of autarchy, having been formal, becomes material. Up to this point, the individual asserted

itself by actively assuming the various orders of a reality that was present in immediacy according to the antithesis of a 'given'; but, as regards content, it always obeyed the original individuation of the *samskâra*, which remained unchanged beyond the transformed form of perception. However, within the simple element of the 'I' there is a principle that transcends this individuation, and in which form and matter converge at a single point. It follows that the act which, by carrying the process of disidentification to its conclusion, projects this very element, is an act which simultaneously affects the order of content – of being, of the universal. He who has overcome the principle of being-in-itself and resolved it into freedom has, virtually, resolved it into everything; thus the possibility opens up for him of an act that is absolutely—not merely formally, but also materially—sufficient unto itself, of an act that truly springs from the depths, from absolute purity, yet is capable of commanding and stirring not what is particular in beings, but what is universal and substantial in them. And since metaphysical knowledge implies, as has been said, projection, this, therefore, is the crux of the Gnostic's insight: 'Know thyself, and thou shalt be King'.

Furthermore: since in the 'thus it is' transformed into the 'thus I will', in the very act which, going beyond the rational construction of a thing's essence, also assumes its existence in order to employ it as a power, lies—as was stated in due course¹¹—the condition for that absolute certainty in which absolute reality, reason and the pure state of right of beings are simultaneously kindled; we may say that it is only through and within the life of the individual who discerns that the contingency, the relativity and the oblique uncertainty of things and of the mind are overcome. In it, things are 'transformed according to substance', are 'formed out of potentiality', and open up to the fulfilment of

a magical world – a world in a state of act and self-sufficiency – but, in so doing, they take their place in the ether of a truth and an absolute being.

Within this category, therefore, the very interval that separates the first epoch from the second is re-generated – an interval bounded on the one hand by the power of being, and on the other by the absolute freedom that grafts, onto the universality of such a being, the contingent factor relating to a particular possibility. Except that the meaning of this interval is here reversed: the value shifts from personally experiencing being to experiencing the person from the level of the principle of being, which has thus been transformed by the intermediate process into that of a ‘state of potency’. And if such a re-generation of the interval from which the person emerged had already come to the fore at the beginning of the epoch, then the ‘I’ was sufficient only for the antithesis of the abstract principle of being of a particular world, and precisely as an antithesis. Now, however, it is sufficient for the complete mediation of that principle, correlative to the totality of the second epoch and, at the same time, to the abstract principle of being of the universal. To master, then, not that abstract principle in a mere sufficiency, but its complete mediation (correlative to the totality of the first epoch) – constitutes a further task, from which one is led to the following second section.

In the West, particularly within various theosophical currents, a completely erroneous conception has arisen regarding the doctrine of reincarnation, due to the failure to recognise that it is a doctrine which is justified solely within esoteric wisdom; that it cannot be said to be true for the layman, for the common man, but only for the ‘initiate’, for the siddha, for the sadhu, for the rishi – as the Indian texts put it. For beyond the second epoch

there is no valid truth, except as the evidence of a realisation, of a present, direct experience. Now, a personal being has absolutely no reason to believe either that they have lived other lives, or that they are yet to live any more – not only that, but they know with certainty that their sense of self, their sense of their own individuality, is inseparably linked to the specific unity of that concrete embodiment in which they find themselves living; hence, to say that they themselves have lived in other bodies clearly has no meaning whatsoever. It will only have meaning when the ‘I’ can disidentify itself from the individuated and realise itself as the individuating principle: then it will effectively possess itself in something which, being superior to any particular individuation, will be able to bring about a continuity of consciousness and a memory in the transition from body to body. But this means: having conquered death.

Against the concept of immortality as a given rather than as something to be constructed, the argument is, in fact, the very same one that undermines the doctrine of reincarnation as applied to the realm of finite beings: for the path which alone human beings can experience within themselves – encompassing all the ‘high’ and the ‘low’, the ‘material’ and ‘spiritual’ and the rest of the categories of reflection – is inextricably bound by its correlation with the unity of a bodily substrate (an injury can disrupt or sever the consciousness of a ‘genius’ just as much as that of the humblest peasant), there is absolutely no basis for presuming the persistence of the conscious identity of the ‘I’ when that unity ceases to exist. It must therefore be concluded that, by its very nature, the human soul is not immortal, but mortal. It is immortal only insofar as it becomes so – that is to say: insofar as it is capable of regenerating itself according to a life that subsists independently of the condition of the body. But – and this is the

essential point – this is not in an absolutely positive sense. It is a matter of addressing, according to precise and orderly methods provided by esotericism, and independent of any belief, faith, philosophy or morality, stages in which, due to the loss of support, due to the dissolution of the ‘compound’ (as the Hermeticists call the state of an ‘I’ in blind sympathy with the corporeal nature), the consciousness of a finite being would cease – this, right up to the limit of reabsorption, of death: thus to voluntarily arouse the very blaze of death but, nevertheless, to be able to endure it, to identify with it instantly and actively, so that, not overcome but overcoming, one perceives in it not death, but the very act of the individuating individual; in it one finds that which transforms, which brings about a reaffirmation of the ‘I’ beyond itself, beyond form, beyond its particularity¹².

Beyond the particular – but, likewise, beyond the universal.

This is a fundamental point. Whilst the aim of certain schools – which, rather than esoteric, we might call mystical – is to dissolve the individual into the non-individual – be it an undifferentiated infinity, such as the Vedantic nirguna-brahman, or a transcendent order or harmony – in the magical direction which alone befits this hierarchical position, it remains steadfast at the point of the Self, at the point of a self-sufficient autonomy lying beyond all ‘dissolution’ which, in fact, will serve it only to dissolve itself and re-affirm itself even higher, in the world beyond the human, beyond the finite. And yet the man who has crossed the ‘threshold of Proserpina’, who has passed through the ‘underworld’, will present himself not as a God, but as a ruler of the Gods. But for this to happen, it is first necessary that this identification with the power of death—which is the element of the universal—be merely a point of passage, beyond which a superiority is re-affirmed; it is

necessary that, even with mortal nature, this power be overcome, broken, torn from the original form in which it immediately bursts forth – which is the spontaneity, the ‘nature’ of the first age – and subdued under the Ego.

Such is the ‘escape from the waters’, the ‘fixation of mercury’, the ‘struggle with the dragon’ or the ‘Bull’, the ‘incest’. Death is that life which is mortal to the absolute Individual.

Thus, in the very act of projecting this category, the ‘heavens collapse’ – the supersensible worlds dissolve into the terrifying vision of a savage, chaotic, voracious activity, of an activity unleashed in a ‘flow’, in a radical craving which, consumed by eternal thirst and eternal disgust, rushes in the perpetual generation and destruction of its forms, in a destiny of rebirths that are ever-changing in their identical insubstantiality and transience. Tañha, the ocean of samsāra, māyā-shakti, Typhon, Jaldabaoth, the ‘wet principle’ or ‘lunar’, ‘Earthly Venus’, ‘Great Jordan flowing downwards’, ‘Great Magical Agent’, ‘Astral Serpent’ – so many names from Eastern and Western traditions, symbols of this experience, of this sense in which, in contrast to the value of the individual, the pure, evocative, thetic power is laid bare. Such are the ‘waters’ – and a Self which, freed from its bodily life, can ‘gaze upon them’, is one ‘saved from the waters’ (cf. the connection of this symbol to the legend of Moses), is one ‘who walks upon the waters’ (hence the symbolic meaning of the well-known Christic ‘miracle’). And one understands how the ‘memory’ of infinite rebirths and the terrible vision of samsāra, flashing at the very point of that bodhi—which is transcendent liberation, the actual possibility of nirvāṇa—are elements present simultaneously in the well-known episode from the Buddha’s life.

In this regard: for ‘sublunar’ beings (that is, for beings who dwell beneath the ‘wet principle’, who are dominated by it in the deepest substratum of their personal lives) there is no immortality, but only a remnant of larval life amongst the realms of the underworld gods, which gradually reveal themselves and flash before them through and in the very act of a progressive disintegration and sinking – for him, on the other hand, who has faced the onslaught of the ‘waters’, who has offered them ever-greater resistance until he has broken the law and overwhelmed them, causing them all to gravitate towards him as towards something that has proved stronger than they are – for him, a twofold possibility opens up. On the one hand, *nirvāṇa*, as the power to grasp the supreme act in the destruction of the root of *samsāra-moksha*, liberation as a reabsorption that does not mean annihilation (as per the common understanding of the term *nirvāṇa*), but rather a transformation into the pure essence of the Self, the self-sufficiency of a universal that possesses itself in the state of a contained, detached, unmanifested possibility. On the other hand, an autarchy not as suspension or destruction, but rather as mastery over unleashed force: the power to seize it, to relentlessly fold it back upon itself and, through this purification (symbolised by the ‘Virgin’ who holds the lunar serpent beneath her), to kill its spontaneity, its ‘craving’, and then to regenerate and organise it beneath itself as a ‘body of power’¹³. Such is the ‘conversion of the lower waters into upper waters’, such is the equivalent of the *ΕΝΩΣΙΣ*, of the ‘union with the Father’, such is the ‘incest’ – the act of the son who reaches and possesses the one from whom he was born¹⁴ – such, finally, is the Gnostic and Buddhist ‘flow of the waters upwards’, the transformation of the *kundalinî* and its ascent along the ‘Royal Path’ of *sushumnâ*, of which the *Shâkta yoga* speaks¹⁵.

And so a further phase unfolds, the development of which gives rise to the remaining categories. The ‘dragon’ or ‘bull’ is the ‘guardian of the threshold’ of the magical world – only at the hands of those who have been able to conquer and subjugate the wild force of spontaneity does the ‘kingdom of the heavens’, the world of the Higher Gods or Aeons, suffer violence. And such a kingdom, such violence, is his further task.

The higher gods are the enemies of the initiate, of the ‘one saved from the waters’; inasmuch as they are the powers of spontaneity of that primordial nature of his, only after which the ‘I’—the value of the person—was born, each of them, when unleashed, tends to overwhelm such a value, to submerge it, to reabsorb it into its own wild nature¹⁶. Thus, whilst to the one whose ‘I’ tends to dissolve into the universal ‘like a grain of salt in an ocean of water’, the world of the spirit may well appear as the realm of order, of peace, of eternal unity – to the one for whom, on the other hand, the universal is a test, a point of non-difference beyond which, vaster and more intense, renewed, made free and divine, the way of the ‘I’ must be rediscovered – to him, on the other hand, it appears as a collection of powers in a state of freedom, naked, voracious, blissful and terrible powers, once ungoverned by any law, reason or providential plan, but caught up in a play of tensions, in comparison with which all that is struggle on the material plane is but a reflection; without, therefore, hatred, destructive violence, or will in the—so to speak—‘muscular’ sense of the word, find any place here. Here, the struggle is like a calm coming face to face of ‘presences’, like a meeting of degrees of being, of varying intensities. No power, strictly speaking, seeks to overwhelm and dominate the others, but this proceeds naturally, by virtue of the higher degree of being that is proper to it—a voracious whirlpool into which the lesser powers

that enter into relation with it are irresistibly drawn, absorbed and subordinated. To triumph – that is, to maintain one's autonomy and, in so doing, the summit of the hierarchy – here means to hold firm. That which assails an entity and fails to overwhelm it is itself fatally overwhelmed by it and subsumed into its law. There is no gap in this materialised world of tension: not to subordinate is to be subordinated.

Such is the realm into which the individual is drawn by the 'serpentine force'. And to maintain its quality within it, the individual must here become the highest quantity: its value does not endure in the face of the aeonic powers unless it overcomes them, wresting from them the quantum of 'fate' they uphold, in order to assume upon itself—as if upon a vaster substance—the weight and responsibility thereof. In its ascent along the sushumnâ, it is taught that the kundalinî awakens the various tattvas, which are precisely the planetary Gods, the 'rulers of the spheres of Fate'¹⁷, the hierarchy of moments into which the demiurgic power is articulated and within which one naturally encounters a mediation that intensifies and, ever more profoundly, restrains, burns and transforms it from within. The rhythm is: to evoke – to enter into a relationship – to identify – to transcend. Projecting the Self into a given element now excites its universal nature, unleashing monstrous and instantaneous vortices that carry it away: one must transform oneself into them, let oneself go fearlessly but, at the limit, where their power is exhausted, re-assert oneself: to make the 'I' that which continues them, that which carries them even further, to where they dare not, cannot reach – which therefore transcends and overwhelms them, in that it proves itself to be something which, within the very order of their quality, of what they are, is more than them and stronger than them. And such a 'stronger' is the 'more than strong', such a 'power of

more' and the 'more than power' – it is the transcendence of power, it is the value: domination.

In this extremely dangerous life, terrifyingly tossed between abysses, cyclones, and spiritual flashes of light that grow ever more intense, ever more lightning-like and overwhelming, upwards, from sphere to sphere, from harshness to hardness that is even harder, stronger, more irresistible – in such a life, the ΕΚΠΥΡΩΣΙΣ is progressively kindled – the consummation, the act, the ΤΕΛΟΣ of the worlds. The Self which at no point falters under the strain, which at no point lags behind the dizzying tide of the unleashing of its entire nature – of an entire infinity – but simultaneously creates itself in an exact, coextensive measure of sufficiency that chains it and 'fixes' it, such an 'I' transforms chaos into order, into logic, into absolute, unequivocal law: it organises a world in a state of absolute reason.

This, in terms of the general meaning of the remainder of the process, can be summarised as follows: to transform the unity of mere understanding, or Apollonian unity (characteristic of a consciousness capable of extending to any content), into a unity of domination, or Dionysian unity (characteristic of entities considered no longer in terms of consciousness, but rather in terms of power – and this properly means: to organise). Returning, however, to the present point, we wish to add a few considerations from a more exoteric level.

[On cosmic consciousness.] – The individuating individual is defined by a freedom from the 'I' (in the personal sense), which, however, does not signify a deprivation of the 'I', but rather the power to manifest or project an 'I'. Whatever he directs his attention towards, that is what he becomes – his thought of a place or moment is his presence in that place or moment. Thus, things

are grasped as certainly and absolutely as the 'I', in the very evidence of the Cartesian 'cogito', is certain and absolute. We note, however, that this power of transformation is here restricted to a psychic, cognitive sphere: in order to be able to transform oneself entirely—that is, not only in consciousness, but also in the 'nature' and 'bodies' of a being (which, in fact, amounts to creating that being)—one must go even further, reabsorbing the various powers of the universal and of spontaneity (the state of the first epoch).

[On the androgyne.] – The power of transition appears as death and also appears as a force of sexual generation – for in such generation there is precisely the passing of life into something else – an act that severs the individual's continuity and casts it back into the transcendence of the species. Hence the connection between the Tantric kundalinî, the Gnostic and Kabbalistic 'serpent', and the Hermetic 'mercury' (as well as various related practices) to sexual energy – and, from another perspective, the importance attached to virginity and chastity in many magical operations. It is clear, then, that to overcome death is also to overcome the law of generation – and to transform heterogenesis into autogenesis. The individuating individual, the conqueror of the Dragon, the one reborn in spirit (the 'spirit' that hovers above the waters) has life within himself; he is *αυτοζωον*, and is therefore androgynous. He has slain alteration, impurity and lust: he has 'put an end to the work of woman'. He gives himself his own life, which does not pass away, but subsists in and of itself, immortal.

[On the rule of law.] – In light of what was set out in the first book concerning the problem of essence and existence¹⁸, we stated a little earlier that in the transformation of the elementary

principle of spontaneity, the first element of the transformation of the irrational into absolute rationality also comes into play. If, in contrast to what the thing is (τι ἐστίν [what is it?], Wesen, what, essentia) – which the concept can master – there is the being-there of things (το ὅτι [the quod], Dasein, that, existentia) which, being contingent upon the former, eludes such domination (the deduction—that is, the determination—of the concept can, at most, arrive at the idea of existence, but existence as such eludes it), such a heterological element may appear either as the inexplicable absolute or as the absolute explanation, depending on whether it is experienced as something one is subjected to (the sensible ‘given’, that which is and yet cannot be thought – hence the profound meaning of negative moral characteristics, such as violence, ‘injustice’, imperfection, etc., attributed to it by ancient Greek doctrines); or as something that presents itself and for which no reason can be given simply because none ought to be given, power being in itself the ultimate reason. The rebirth of the will in the ‘virgin’ through the mediation of the unleashed force brings about precisely the transition of the irrational from the first to the second of these forms – and in the active relationship with that point upon which essences depend both in terms of their existence and in terms of their existence as these particular powers and not others, it determines precisely the pure state of law or ‘justice’ which, however, for the time being merely reflects a generic, undifferentiated substratum of things. And such absolute evidence, which does not proceed from ‘reasons’ but rather from the sense of a state of power, redeems, first and foremost, myself: existence, the experience of myself precisely as such a life, determined in this and that way, ceases to be an eternal mystery to me – not because I have ‘known’ the ‘wherefrom’, the ‘why’, the ‘where’, the cause or the end, etc.—vain semblances of reasons

devised to make up for the deficiency of the central reason—but because I can take it upon myself and say: ‘This is how I want myself to be—this is my absolute will!’.

Here we find one of the meanings of the alchemical maxim: ‘With mercury, dissolve the fixed’: being, at these stages, is effectively dissolved, torn from necessity, made free in relation to itself. It is resolved: as a being, it is not – except as an appearance, and hence the concept of *māyā* – which in various Indian schools expresses precisely both ‘illusion’ and creative power, magic – and the consequent insight into the truth of Mahayana *Mi-rtog-pahi-yeshes* (gnosis) and Taoism, both of which assert that the true substance of things is ‘emptiness’ (*shūnyatā*).

This view, which does not contradict the other one set out above— namely, that in the individual who discerns it, what flows is ‘fixed’—but rather integrates it into a complementary aspect in a manner typical of initiatory teachings, and of Eastern thought in general, which certainly causes serious confusion for the layman. This has already been clarified where it was stated that the process towards contingency may also be that of a progressive individuation¹⁹. When one speaks of dissolving being, by ‘being’ one means the mode of being-bound-to-oneself, of the identity of the possible and the real, proper to spontaneous activity: whereas when we speak of fixing the volatile or fluid (‘freezing the waters’), by ‘volatile’ we mean the contingency proper to that which is subject to necessity, which has no principle within itself, and therefore ‘goes’, in an unpredictable course that at every point eludes possession. Autarchy fixes such a contingency, even if it will subsequently regenerate it, transformed (conversion into ‘superior waters’).

1 It should be noted that what now falls under negation is solely that which the individual, in the previous category, opposes—that is, everything in the realm of pure being of reflection or abstract form. Every determination is affected by the negating power, yet only insofar as there is pure formality within it, that is to say, insofar as it is taken up by consciousness in the guise of pure formality. This negation therefore remains, in a certain sense, peripheral and phenomenal; it stops at the level of completed, exhausted formations without penetrating the deep, actual roots from which these arose as moments of value. It is therefore abstract: corresponding to the individual's first gesture, the sphere in which it can manifest itself reflects the immediacy and elementarity of that gesture. Just as the relative matter is uniform—all the various articulations of value being obliterated in the single character of pure formality—so too is the negation that unfolds within a value uniformly uniform; it remains identical and undifferentiated in contrast to the diversity of the transcendental moments from which the formations proceeded, and against which it is directed. This is why there is here a single category and not as many as there are forms of the second epoch.

2 Evola moved beyond the German philosopher's adherence to this theory in **Metaphysics of Sex** in 1958 (4th edition: Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 1996) (Editor's note).

3 This is the famous precept recommended by the god Krishna to the hero Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita, which Evola took up, theorising it as way of life, thirty years after **Riding the Tiger**, published in 1961 but written at least ten years earlier (Editor's note).

4 J.G. Fichte, **Transcendental Logic**, op. cit., p. 222.

5 *Essays on Magical Idealism*, op. cit., Chapter V; and especially: *Man as Power*, op. cit., Section III; *Introduction to Magic as the Science of the Self*, op. cit., Volumes I, II and III.

6 *The Individual and the Becoming of the World*, Libreria di Scienze e Lettere, Rome 1926.

7 Here, however, the way remains open to understanding the possibility of certain practices of a particular kind of 'black' or witchcraft-like magic, in which fluidic beings are created precisely through the projection of certain forms of intense passion, so that they may then act upon other beings over whom one is powerless to exercise direct control – in principle, because those who resort to such practices are still subject to the constraints of their personal lives.

8 That is to say: one speaks of dreams in an analogical sense, since it is assumed here that the irrational roots—composed of sensations, residues and desires from one's

personal waking life, from which, under normal circumstances, the dream world is evoked—have by now been destroyed.

9 It is important to note that, just as the given is the antithesis of form in general, indifferent to various individuations, what previously constituted an internal experience now constitutes merely a particular realm, a kind of that external world which must be internalised. The very thoughts and feelings that were habitual to the person and interwoven with them are transcended into particular dynamic beings, in relation to which they appear as mere phenomenal and unilluminated reflections: they are no longer thought or felt, but the 'I', having detached itself and freed itself from them, comes to intuit them as elements of a unique objective reality, as 'things', and can therefore move amongst them, observe them, act upon them, attract them or project them at a distance (telepathy), as well as 'imbuing' objects with them; this enables one to understand a host of magical practices which, certainly, at the level of normal consciousness must appear superstitious and 'materialising' the 'spiritual'. And, in truth, this is indeed a genuine materialisation, a materialisation which therefore implies the fulfilment of a spirituality that rises and detaches itself as much from that of human beings as the latter does from the things of nature which, nevertheless, at least according to the idealists, are themselves a projected spirituality, amongst which it is no wonder that one can move freely and dominantly: just as the magician does with regard to his own thoughts and feelings. In this context, another occult practice is the extraction or construction of a 'subtle double' from one's own physical body as a vehicle for operations, which are not subject to the conditions of the former. Cf. *Dīghanikāya*, II, 85: 'When the monk's mind is thus concentrated, purified, transparent, free from desire, unblemished, pliable, skilful, steady, unshakeable, he directs and turns it towards the production of a body made of spirit. And so he draws from this [physical] body another body, which has all the organs and faculties, which has a form, but which consists of spirit'.

10 The more profound and inner the powers are in their origin, the more objective they appear when externalised. This characteristic must not, therefore, preclude recognition: the Self must not regard the beings of the new world as something alien, but rather as the reflection of what it itself is, so that knowledge of them may be liberating through self-knowledge and, simultaneously, through superiority and detachment. 'This is you' and 'This, after all, is another', such are the principles that must simultaneously permeate the new experience. The act of recognising oneself in the various meanings within which these things are expressed in objectivity is precisely what brings to perfection that value of active assumption and self-liberation which underlies such experiences.

11 Book I, § 5; § 7 [Theory of the Absolute Individual, op. cit., pp. 161–166 and 174–179].

12 This process, to tell the truth, is already unfolding in the disidentification characteristic of the preceding categories, beginning with the ‘trial by fire’: yet it only reaches its zenith now – and the projection of the root of the world of the second epoch, taken in its entirety, is the equivalent of death. The dynamic world of ‘sense’ and the ‘I’ nevertheless always remain objects of extracorporeal experience, realised outside bodily conditions.

13 From the wound of the bull ‘slaughtered’ by Mithra, it is not blood that flows, but grain, ‘bread of life’: on the earth, it brings forth a whole new vegetation – a symbol in the worldview of the Aeons (cf. F. Cumont, *Les Mystères de Mithra*, Brussels 1913, p. 137). And the ear of corn, once again, was associated in the Mysteries with the ‘Virgin’ (cf. Eratosthenes, *Catasterisms*, 9), that is, with the ‘unaltered’ power, free from the impurity of the dyad (i.e. from the duality inherent in the craving for a life that is not of itself, and from the law of reflection in the human world). The meaning of all those myths, in which a ‘hero’ slays a ‘dragon’ to ‘free’ a ‘virgin’ from it, whom he then ‘marries’, is the same. Similarly, in an alchemical hieroglyph at Notre Dame, one sees a Dragon whose tail emerges from a man (from the person, from the ‘rough stone’), encircles the ‘atanor’ to show that it must be placed there for ‘digestion’, and places its head beneath the foot of a ‘bishop’: this is the autarch, born of fire, who, whilst having mercury or the dragon as his substance, is nevertheless its ‘digestion’—that is to say, the transcendence of elemental (thetic) power into a state of possession. – Cf. J.W. Schelling, *Darstellung des philosophischen Empirismus*: a ‘Being’ is presupposed in the concept of ‘being Lord’ (p. 260), and such is the power and magic of God. Schelling derives ‘power’ (Macht) from ‘mögen’, and ‘mögen’, in turn, from ‘Magie’; and since ‘power’ is also expressed as ‘können’, this suggests a verbal connection between ‘knowing’ (kennen) – understood as the extroverted, phenomenal aspect of power – and ‘power’ (können). Thus this power or knowledge or ‘substantiality’ of God is, at the same time, the ‘magician’ whom God draws from himself and binds, since he would not be God – that is, the Lord of being, and therefore the one who is free with respect to being – had he not subdued this magician, who is his original power (p. 265).

14 Zeus, according to the myth recounted by Athenagoras (XX, 292), after dismembering his father (a transition into the era of individuation and finitude), assumes the ‘kingdom’ (a form of dominion proper to the person), pursues his mother, Rhea (‘she who flows’, the ‘going’ proper to the nature of the tetic moment), who eludes him through various transformations, until, in ‘serpentine’ form, she is seized and possessed. Throughout a whole variety of Hellenistic-Gnostic myths of the early centuries, the doctrine likewise shines through, according to which earthly man, descended from heavenly man, is called to return to such a stage through his dominion over the powers of the cosmos (cf. G.R.S. Mead, *Thrice Greatest Hermes*, London-Benares 1906, vol. I, p. 196 and chap. VII passim).

15 For the doctrine of kundalini and the related practices, see our **Man as Power**, op. cit., section III [Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 1988, pp. 147–292].

16 Such submersion, such a failure to cope with unbridled spontaneity, leads back beyond the personality, to what Indian esotericism calls the ‘path of the ancestors’ (pitṛāna) or the ‘path of the Moon’.

17 The ‘waters’ – the first power to be overcome – correspond in symbolism to the ‘Earth’: it is from the ‘mineral’ that the androgynous germ (see post) of ‘mercury’ is extracted; it is in the ‘earth’ chakra (pṛthivī) that kundalinī ‘sleeps’; it is from the ‘rock’ or ‘stone’ that Mithra (θεός εκ πέτρας) is drawn, etc. After the Earth come the various planets, to which are associated with ‘celestial’ hierarchies, or archangels, genii, logoi, etc.

18 See *Theory of the Absolute Individual*, op. cit., pp. 31–34 (Editor’s note).

19 Book I, Section VI, p. 155 [*Theory of the Absolute Individual*, op. cit., pp. 77–94].

SECTION TWO

§ 28 – THE LORD OF THE LIMIT

At the conclusion of the preceding category, the unconditional function is thus realised, which, in general, resolves the element of being or of content. A further stage would consist in actualising, within a concrete and mediated body – in correspondence with the other powers of the content – the new principle of the individual relating to that function; a principle which, for the time being, is entirely indeterminate, being merely the abstract genus of power.

Consequently, like every other transition, this passage beyond the forms of the first section is not governed by any necessity. The individual now realises the contingency of its own individuation as well as that of nature in general and, as has been said, may make of such a point – the abstract, formless power of autarchy – the ultimate instance (*nirvāṇa*). The term, then, would be the pure distinctive-dominative act, which is, however, indifferent – and therefore inadequate – to the varied material individuation of the distinct or dominated. To transcend the mere point of potency and launch oneself into the unleashing and conquest of precisely those energies that are exactly congruent with such an individuation, and thereby to construct oneself as a body (the ‘cosmic’ or ‘magical’ or ‘power’ body, ‘the flaming mantle’ in which ‘he who is naked’ wraps himself) of which they are limbs – is, instead, the further possible perfection in which the individual can be conceived.

This may be called the ‘redemption’ or ‘liberation’ or ‘regeneration’ of the ‘world’: once the naked Self has been renewed, ‘reborn from above’ – and, in it, things are now Self – the entire system of reality – things as they are, in their specific

being – must be regenerated, made to be ‘reborn from above’ – and the two points stand to one another as the potency (in the Aristotelian sense) of the autarch to its actuality. Only where the entire infinite quality of the ‘waters’ as it is can be absolutely willed, can be realised as a potency that possesses itself and which is founded and rests solely upon its own pure essence – ‘all in all, composed of all powers’ – do principle and end resolve into a flash of insight that is none other than that of value itself.

Now, the possibility of reality is organised according to three hierarchies parallel to the varying depths of the transcendental function that defined the three worlds of the externalisation of the samskâra, namely the dynamic world (sûkshma, *linga*), the world of conception (*kârana*) and the world of the Self (*para*). Just as this tripartite division defined the formal mediation of autarchy, so too does it define its material mediation. Within the power of the unconditional that has descended into the existential, and amidst a simultaneous multitude of real and distinct possibilities, the quality—the ‘matter’—of the universe must gradually be renewed in its three powers: a dynamism, a function of conception and one of pure determination—bursting forth from ‘illusion’ as forces no longer of the particular but of the universal—must be fixed, frozen, into entities literally made of freedom and dominion, into transfigured, immaterial, eternal essences through an immobility that is the self-transcendence of power, the flower, the apex of the most extreme tension. – It remains to mention a dialectical construction of these last three phases.

The preceding category develops from that disidentification, in which the ego constructs for itself a power to project itself and distance itself: it bears the value which, taken to the extreme, is a purified form of domination. Now, on the one hand, the

elementary law of the distinctive and disidentifying act implies, justifies and demands a certain subsistence of the distinct, a certain reality of its own. On the other hand, the form of domination reaffirmed by the function would annul the distinct, demonstrating in practice that it is contingent upon itself, that, ultimately, it exists only as a mere semblance. Before the end – that is, in the interval – of the preceding category, where the function is struggle, transformative tension, an endeavour at regeneration through the derealisation of the fabricated, individuated ego, this antinomy, to tell the truth, remains reconciled; that is to say: it has not yet been laid bare. But where the category has attained its ideal fulfilment, this derealisation is to be understood as exhausted – to the extent that the possibility of nirvāṇa arises; and if the value is to be maintained, it is necessary that within the distinctive function itself a transcendence be established with respect to that which it resolves, that is, that it be underpinned by a which its gradual fulfilment lays bare and into which, in the *τελος*, it is transferred.

Now, if what appears in that term, *ο τελος*, is existence as pure fact, dissolved into pure activity, it is nowhere else but in that very activity that the locus of that transcendent can be found—in function of which, through the arousal of new powers of transformation, the act of dominion may continue when, precisely, there is no longer ‘being’, but everything, in its entirety, is *māyā*, a magical reality. In the positive—not suspensive but affirmative—purity of being, the individual does not, in fact, realise ‘nothingness’, but rather a being of activity.

Gradually, he becomes, he is (identity) that very activity; but precisely thereby his freedom and his power transcend themselves; in this identity, in this boundless freedom, spontaneity itself is

unleashed—the universal itself that corresponds to such a plane: the ‘Gods’ of dynamic powers draw him to themselves through his very conquest, taking his very conquest as the instrument for their manifestation. ‘Existence’ is thus transposed, so to speak, to another octave – that of a cosmos as force – and must be overcome within it: it must be conquered by the very excess of this freedom, insofar as precise, determined, absolute, individual entities of energy, in absolute positions, within limits where the voracious activity almost shatters and swirls in upon itself, subjugated to the various units of the many – to the infinite beings – in which the central function is kindled. These are the ‘assignments’ (tanmâtra), the ‘measure’ of the entities of motion from the heights of unity which, by vibrating within them creatively, transcends them and transcends itself.

Thus: a further category, according to which the power by which the individual comes to possess itself in being comes to possess itself, now comes to will only itself and to become the interval and dominion of itself. And the function by which being has been resolved in its fulfilment now appears to be conditioned precisely by a hidden fertilisation brought about by this further function, in which the activity pertaining to it becomes the cause of itself, and in which it ultimately, in its ‘act’, passes through.

Just as, at the same time, the individuating principle is both identical to and distinct from itself, so too is the individual here both one and many – and the transcendence, the dominion of the wave of spontaneity is precisely a will to the many, the power of individuation at work in many dynamic bodies of beings, which have overcome being.

Much has already been said, on several occasions, about the metaphysical imperfection of the ascetic-cathartic vision: it is

confronted with a 'given' that it cannot explain, a non-value in relation to which it is capable only of the violence of the powerless, of the mere negation of one who cannot persuade. But the severed knot is not an untied knot; on the contrary, the act of severing is a reaffirmation of insufficiency, of dualism. That no residue remains, no dualism, nothing that I cannot assume – this, on the other hand, is what a 'state of justice' demands. The very reduction of the 'waters', then, could be nothing more than a provisional stage. Does not the act of reducing, struggling, transforming— however it may be— ultimately imply a lack of security, a fear? A doubt within the state of absolute power? Does not domination itself, in that immediate form in which it appeared, ultimately reveal, deep down, a concern, a need for proof, a desire to persuade rather than to be persuasion? An act, therefore, whose value lies not in actual possession or immanent quality, but rather in transcendence and dependence?

Is this why a further power sets the waters free, why a fearlessness plunges into them to confirm their very nature, awakening and regenerating within the new principle the subterranean power of spontaneity which now, precisely, takes the form of the 'subtle', of that 'breath' that hovered over the waters. But this gesture, by bearing witness precisely to the dying away of the need to dominate, to the test of the dominator, bears witness to a dominion that has become immanence, a category, certainty—something that Is without needing the act—at the same time, immediately, it is a virtue of conversion, a communication of persuasion and liberation: it is the power to fix, to 'measure' within the ocean of universal energy. It triumphs over the Gods in beings who awaken from spontaneity, who free themselves, regenerate and are transfigured as beings in their own right, distinct and volitional: it is the very power of their liberation that accomplishes

within itself a possession which reflects that which the individual previously attributed to himself but which he can now, in his highest dominion, bestow. And here lies one of the meanings – the highest – of what appears exoterically in the myth of the Saviours and the Gods who ‘sacrifice’ themselves. In particular: beyond the Hînayâna Buddha, the ideal of an abstract individual liberation through a detachment which, in truth, is a ‘nirvāṇa with residue’ (sopadhisesanirvāṇa), lies the Mahâyâna Buddha, a cosmic being who ‘returns to the world’, who ‘sacrifices’ himself for the world, which the world itself regards as his task, and who draws from a multifaceted, transmuting body that ignites in the liberation of all those who strive for liberation. Not desiring liberation from the world but the world as liberation, renunciation as absolute security, from which the very ‘power’ of such renunciation – absolute freedom, absolute formative expansion – is irresistibly transformed; such is the meaning of the God who crucifies himself on the ‘wood of the world’, who, by sacrificing everything to it and killing the ‘kingdom of heaven’ therein, redeems it and purifies himself – moves towards the terrifying purity of absolute justice¹. Naturally, here the ‘sacrifice’ – like the ‘return’ and the ‘redemption’ – is a mere allusion to a mode in which, in a certain sense, the very nature of the ‘test of love’ is reflected, transposed onto the universal plane; but, in their own form, these are metaphysical, not human, experiences, entirely transcending the world of sentiment; and so this ‘manner’ must be understood as that of the passage from a certain hierarchy of ‘spheres’ to a further one. And one might rather refer to that phase of the ‘formations’ discussed in the Sepher J’sirâ (II): Elohim (‘He-the-Gods’ – note the idea of the multiplicity of the ‘one-many’ which, in the specific usage of this divine name, is simultaneously linked to an idea of power). ‘Living Lord and King’ engraves itself

in the voice, carves itself into the breath, purifies, and weighs the 'foundational signs' – 'carves great columns into the breath that cannot be understood (or grasped)'. – And note once more the recurring expression: 'he bound a crown to every sign and purified this with this and formed' the elements corresponding to the signs themselves – where the central idea of a dominion, to which the dynamic powers (the 'signs' are carved into the 'breath') are bound and sealed, is made clear in the symbol of the 'crown'; which is connected to their self-purification ('he purified this with this' – which in turn corresponds to the Hermetic saying that nothing else should be added to 'mercury', for the 'bride' of mercury is mercury itself, which is at once the matter and the instrument of the Work) – which ultimately leads to determination, in the fixation of the natural element.

This is a central idea, for, as has been stated on several occasions, this is neither a matter of identification nor of mere 'knowledge' of the world of the aeons, but rather of the task of their substantial transformation: from their being overwhelmed and perishing to their nature of spontaneity through the work of a higher power, which now takes them in and transforms their act into its own act². Hence, in other traditions—Egyptian and Gnostic—there is talk of the adept who 'marries' the 'sacred animals' (sometimes the four elements corresponding to the four 'beasts' of Ezekiel's vision and the Johannine Apocalypse, at other times the twelve 'beasts' of the Zodiac, etc.), that is, unites with, and enters into a relationship of possession and fertilising act with, the primordial passivity of the principles that constitute the cosmic ocean of elemental vitality. And the same idea is found further east, in the Kali and shaivite schools, where the sole adornment to the 'nakedness' of the goddess Kali emerging from the flames is a necklace of fifty severed heads, representing precisely the

articulations of the 'supreme sound' (which, in turn, correspond, according to the symbolism of the mantra-shastras, to the fifty 'letters' of the Sanskrit alphabet) insofar as they have been torn from their creative, demiurgic, extroverted (bahirmukhî) nature and reduced to this 'purity' of Kali, identical to the 'Virgin' and the 'Empress' of other traditions.

We might add – albeit in passing, given the nature of the present exposition – that there would be a way to provide a foundation for the correspondence between the four dimensions of the transcendental function – the phenomenal, the dynamic, the causal, the Self (sthûla, sûkshma, kârana, âtmâ) – with that which, in the realm of sensory perception, appears to humankind as the mineral, vegetable, animal and personal kingdoms of 'nature'. On this basis, the view of certain esoteric schools becomes clear: they compose the 'magical body' of three elements or 'depths', which correspond to that which arises from the successive reabsorption – or hierarchical resolution through fixation within a domain – of the principles of each of these realms into the higher one. To clarify, let us not forget that we are here in the realm of Novalis's 'active empiricism', in which reality is meaning and meaning is reality; the transcendental is the empirical and the empirical is the transcendental: and it should therefore be understood that the 'mineral', taken as an expression of solidity, resistance and impenetrability, is the objectivity of that 'being' and of that 'matter', in which mystical philosophy and the ancient philosophers of Greece, through an interplay of interests that may seem capricious to the abstraction of modern culture and to the oblivion of the concrete and original meaning of things, saw the 'unjust', the principle of evil and impurity³. In such a case, the individuating individual, as the one who has conquered 'being', is likewise the one who has conquered 'matter', who has resolved the

diabolus – but this in its concreteness, in its minerality: the lowest level of experience would become that of a function in which everything that is a source of resistance, of rigid, precipitated and dead form, is transformed and maintained in plastic dynamism, in an inner function of agility. And that further world, made up of signs and bodies inscribed in this very matter of activity – ‘wind’ and ‘flame’ – is the equivalent of an experience in which the mineral no longer exists, of a world formed by the assumption, in a state of self-sufficiency, of that which internally may correspond to the plant world.

And one then understands, from this level, how in Taoist esotericism the possibility of *s’ikiai* is affirmed – that is, of making one’s own physical body (or ‘mineral’ body); one understands the Mahayana doctrine that the Buddha’s body after bodhi is ‘boneless’ (the mineral principle of the organism) and that the bodies with which he appears whilst remaining in the world ‘out of compassion for sentient beings’ – and which he may assume at will (*nirmānakāya*) – are non-material and ‘apparent’ (*manomayakāya*, which is *māyāvî-rûpa*); this ties in perfectly with the Alexandrian Gnostic doctrine, which asserts that the ‘resurrection body’, whilst being as ‘real’ as any other, is a body ‘made of spirit’⁵; and, even more so, the Rosicrucian elaboration of this very view, which asserts that the descent of the ‘Holy Spirit’ or ‘Principle of Fire’ upon a physical body overcomes and resolves the ‘bones’, that is to say, precisely that which represents the mineral nature within it.

And many other insights could still be offered on this subject. In alchemical Hermeticism, the ‘earth’ or ‘salt’ (a symbol for the body, and defined precisely as that which resists Fire), mercury—exalted and ‘baked’ in the blaze of sulphur (Θειον

[divine] = sulphur = divine)—produces a ‘philosopher’s stone’ which is the ‘medicine (= principle of regeneration) of the three kingdoms’ and which will lead to the ‘phoenix’, to a life that generates itself from a body of pure flame. With regard to the first of these realms, it is, in the literal sense, the philosopher’s stone, that is to say, ‘magical realisation applied to the mineral world’⁶. This sheds light on how, in the terms Vâjra (Sanskrit) and Dorje (Tibetan)⁷ – corresponding to the *αυγοειδης*, which is the ‘radiant or fiery body’ of Hellenistic gnosis – the idea of a bolt of lightning is also combined with that of adamantine hardness and indestructibility⁸: this is an allusion to that power to magically endow bodies – even the human body itself – with the instantaneous properties of resistance and incorruptibility of the hardest metal⁹, a power which, in nocturnal reflection, already echoes, for example, in the phenomena of rigidity accompanying certain states of catalepsy. – These and similar references, which we could multiply at will from the treasure trove of an entire hidden science stronger than any contingency of history or place – whilst, on the one hand, they are dangerous in the sense that they encourage the ‘reification’ of the immateriality inherent in all that is meaning, on the other hand they have the merit of drawing attention to the fundamental point, namely: that development is an illusion unless it engages with and acts upon the corporeal reality in which people actually live; that the material world is not something to be set aside, forgotten or masked by mental constructs, beliefs and subjective digressions layered upon it, but rather the locus of the sole action to which the predicate of individuality applies: action that is absolutely positive, empirical and concrete – transcendental only insofar as it is real, and actually transforms and stirs up the reality of the matter.

One final observation, which is, after all, more than obvious.

The particular, here, of bodies – ‘magical body’, ‘body of freedom’, etc., especially: an ‘immortal’ body, for such is a body in which what is ‘matter’ is resolved into the form of activity – must not be thought of as a particular living body amongst many others, which would not be immortal. Rather, it is essentially a matter of functions—and functions that transcend all particularity. The ‘immortal body’ is like the possibility of infinite bodies: the very multitude of bodies is contained within the immortal point of a creatively free function in which they are immediately¹⁰. Just as, whilst possessing the faculty of speech, I may or may not express myself, and in these or other words, so the Self now stands as a power to manifest itself bodily, which is the immortal body and the ‘freedom’¹¹. In this sense, the first of the bodies of the Mahayana Buddha, as mentioned above – the *nirmânakâya* (note also that *kâya* in Pali means not only ‘body’ but also ‘faculty’ or ‘mode of action’), that is, the ‘body of transformation’ – is like a malleable and manifold possibility (He-the-Gods) of appearing, of taking form in the various ‘saviours’, in the *bodhisattvas*, beings whose substance (*sattva*) is not made of matter, but of ‘enlightenment’ (*bodhi*). – A resurrected body is no longer a body, nor merely a body, but a centre in which the various powers and entities of the cosmos are kindled, towards which they gravitate, and from which they derive command and confirmation. The universe is, in fact, to be regarded as the body of the Absolute Individual, gradually manifesting in the various functions in which autarchy, in relation to the various realms of nature, is mediated, through an act which is none other than that of transcendental becoming, of the world’s fulfilment.

§ 29 – THE LORD OF THE VORTEX

It is easy to see that at the end of the category constructed above, a situation arises analogous to that which, at the end of the previous category, opened up the possibility of raising the rhythm of the process even higher: that is to say, there is a gradual dissolution of the distance of an identity. This identity is the very same as that with the 'sign', with measure, with form, with that which bends the entities of force and flame – and through it, a new 'nature' awakens and bursts forth: the universal no longer as a dynamic function, but rather as a function of conception and qualification. The possession which, within the body of 'signs' and dizzying fixities, is relentlessly seized upon, breaking things at the root, shaping, liberating, and stirring within mediating beings that which was power in its purest state – intensifying itself, driving itself to its very zenith – until a world is reached in which all that is motion exists in the form of its transcendence, in an immobility supersaturated with terrifying tension, in blazes of frost, in chasms enchanted within magical spatialities; such a zenith, in which all the power of the antecedent is consumed – and, insofar as it is consumed, completely – such a zenith feels its mediation dissolve, break free, turn upside down, becoming an instrument no longer of possession, but of appearance, of the all-encompassing flash of the realm of 'those-who-are' – the universals correlative precisely to the new order – terrible powers that fix the individual in their gaze, almost like immense weights on the verge of plummeting.

And when the individual reasserts itself, resists, breaks free from the power that has become deadly to it – then a new relationship of instability, of interval, of danger, is instantly created in this world of potential immobility; and it is called, in order to survive, to an even higher value, to an even more

prodigious force.

Such can only be the power of the 'other', the continuum of alteration as value. If the world of forces and dynamic transformations is overcome by that function which is force—free liberty transcending itself into the power of quantity, of discretion, of fixity—the world of 'those-who-are', of the Lords of Forms—can in turn be overcome only by an 'I' that knows how to take them on in order to carry them to where they do not reach, to the transition—and this precisely in accordance with the general law of dialectics, whereby the antecedent is the consequent matter for its own act, for its own purity. And just as, for the consequent, immanence is the point of an activity active upon itself, having become possession, the cause of itself; so, in the synthesis, the element of difference or mutation proper to the antecedent becomes that supreme difference, constituting the very value of the Way of the Self: being-non-being, identity-difference – that is, identity as an identity that conquers and confirms itself solely through the act by which identities and fixities are overcome, through the act of one who, in excess, in the elusive moment of alteration, lives – and holds fast to – the infinity of the deepest nature.

This is the new persuasion – 'persuasion according to the infinite' – in which the eons are swept away and reborn: and they are reborn organised, resolved into moments of a continuum – for now their stability consists of difference, of a distancing, of a passing and transforming; their unity lies in gestures of communication, as qualities of leaps, of illuminating transformations, of natures that ignite, flash forth in elements of simultaneity, and exist not at this or that point of being, but rather in the non-being that separates the various points – no longer this,

not yet that. In such intervals, the central power is thus transmuted and recreated: it sets the multiplicity free in a circulation made up of acts and novelties, in a continuity of flames that hurl themselves towards one another in a gesture that transcends them, yet which, in this very transcendence, causes them to live even higher, in the supreme being of non-being – a gesture that is their total unity but, nevertheless, also its own gesture, the gesture of the central power of the individual, which now takes the form of self-giving. This life, which is all an overflowing, all an incessant stepping outside of itself in an inexhaustible wealth of unexpected leaps, of surges beyond form and identity in the intoxication of ecstasy, of change, of ubiquity like flashes of lightning in which, nevertheless, an eternal essence is laid bare and fixed; this life, now devoid of weight, place or support, entirely new, made up of simultaneous acts – an immense current of spirit that captivates and carries beings almost into an exaltation that both affirms and negates them – this life is the body of the Lord of formative fixities. He draws himself from the moment of his highest vertigo, there where the vortex becomes centre, axis, an immobile, detached act, identical as extreme intensity, self-transcendence of his very movement, of mutation itself.

Attempting to make sense of these experiences – which are so far removed from everything pertaining to that human state of existence, upon which language was developed – is, of course, an extremely arduous and perilous task. In this context, intuitive allusions – such as those found in certain semi-illuminative poetry, for example that of Rimbaud – may prove more useful than strictly logical constructions. In any case, for the purposes of this point, we might refer to what is known in Indian traditions as the *cakravartî* – ‘the Lord of the Wheel’ – of the Wheel, that is, of *samsâra*, of the cosmic becoming which, in him, is renewed at its

deepest root, is transfigured, becomes value, and acquires confirmation, justification and rightful being. It is therefore that 'blessing of the circle' in Dionysus whereby, in the first book, we referred to Nietzsche – the change which, in the cyclical course, is united with identity reflects the simultaneous stepping outside oneself and reconverging, remaining, precisely in this life which is grasped in excess, in non-being, in non-this, according to a passing that is not one of deprivation but of abundance, which is not craving but creative positivity and actual enjoyment¹². Thus, self-contained and self-sustaining, this cosmic circulation is identical to the Gnostic pleroma – as well as to the sambhogakâya (lit.: 'mode of enjoyment' or 'riches'), the second 'body' of the Mahayana Buddha, superior to the world of desire and, at the same time, to both the world of form and the formless world in its simultaneity as rupârûpa—that is, as both form-and-formless—as this transience, as this power of transformation, of passing from every form to every form; a body that is both one and manifold, as is explicitly stated in a stanza attributed to Nâyârjuna, preserved through Fat'in's Chinese translation, which speaks precisely of a manifold, supernatural, uninterrupted action of the sambhogakâya unfolding within an 'assembly'¹³. Further west, the sambhogakâya, the body of the 'Lord of the Law' (dharmarajah), reappears in that 'fiery nature' (πυρ) 'Lady of mixtures' or 'transformations', which in Heraclitus is transcendent 'rationality' in action (λογος) – and, finally, we allude to the Sephirotic world of the Kabbalah, quoting from the Sepher J'sirâ (I, 5–6): 'Ten sephirot, suspended, made of nothing (belinâ), their sight like a flash of lightning, and as for an end, nothing is their end. And His word is within them as they proceed and converge; at His command they whirl like whirlwinds and bow before His throne. Ten sephirot (ten and not nine, ten and not eleven): their end is

embedded in the beginning and their beginning in the end, just as the flame is bound to the burning coal'¹⁴.

On the other hand, taking up the concept as it was explored and reformulated in our first book, we might say that here the life of the individual is elevated to the experience of the Aristotelian 'pure act' in its proper form. Let us recall that, for Aristotle, purity signifies the absence of matter and that, for him, matter, being in potentiality and, furthermore (given the negative concept of *δυναμις* = *στερησις*), being powerless are one and the same. However, this 'purity' – as has been said – must not be hypostatised into an identity devoid of motion; rather, it must be understood as the mode, as the meaning of an infinite function, of a freedom, of a life whose unity is justified only in the multiplicity of its simultaneous acts.

Materialiter: the infinite as a value, an immanent quality of the act; necessity as a non-value, a quality not of the act but of impotency; contingency as a positive thing, as the real power of 'the other' – such are the principles of difference from Aristotelian doctrine. Potency, in Aristotle, is 'desiri'¹⁵; it does not possess within itself but in another the principle of its act (*nihil reducitur de potentia ad actum nisi per aliquod ens in actu*) – in God, to whom it is passively drawn; and the contingency and infinity attributed to them as matter lie in their power to resist, to diverge, to alter – but not positively, by virtue of a principle of their own autonomy, but negatively through inertia, through a dull, obtuse incapacity for act, through murky chaos. Hence it is said that the infinite is imperfection, evil, the quality of that which is not fulfilled¹⁶. But this power of the 'other', this power of diversion or *clinanem* turned into the positive, experienced as a victory over necessity and identity, experienced as the autonomy of a freedom

that possesses itself and, indeed, is always and eternally an act of 'other', destruction, disidentification, passing, never being but always breaking free, leaping, seizing possession of oneself in the destructive instant of transitions and creations into signs of being, of limit, struck by flashes in a swirling tide – such, on the other hand, is the value.

But, on the other hand, formally speaking: the pure act is finite; the Greek ideal of perfection within the limit (περὸς) is value, insofar as it reflects a sense of self-sufficiency, of self-mastery within the act; in the act which, therefore, materially speaking, is bound to nothing, is devoid of measure, is alone – an absolute power to will everything in an identical manner, in justice – everything – and is thus also infinite and contingent¹⁷. A positive power, therefore, in whose life the finite and the infinite are united: indeterminacy (arûpa, contingency) which manifests itself in determination, in multiplicity (rûpa), and determination which manifests itself, which reconverges, into indeterminacy (as transition, communication). Above, the circle, the law of the two laws. At the centre, its unity, the Absolute Individual – 'Dragon in the Universe like a King on his throne'.

§ 30 – THE ABSOLUTE INDIVIDUAL

Thus: on the one hand, dominion, centred in a centrality; on the other, simultaneously, an infinite outflow and flow that moves entities, animates them, enlivens them, exalts them, and causes them to vibrate in the cyclical vortex of transformations. This is the supreme correlation that comes into being with the act, with the *τελος* of the final category; and this is the subject matter for yet another synthesis, for a synthesis that is the ultimate pinnacle of the entire hierarchy, its beginning and its end.

Indeed, it is within that autarchy drawn from the vortex that rules over form that the ultimate manifestation of the enemy's power strikes. It is self-sufficiency – it is value and freedom – in relation to the many, but it is not so in relation to itself: in relation to itself it is passive; in relation to itself it is that being of value which is the supreme negation of value; it is that act which is the supreme negation of the 'act'. Self-sufficiency still rests upon something – in that relationship of distance which nothing can now reach, it has a body and, within it, a privation. This body, in truth, is made of its own freedom; it is excess, richness, overflow – yet, nevertheless, this very manifestation in itself realises a being, which serves as its support and confirmation: that is to say, absolute freedom itself is not resolved, not consumed; it is not transparency to itself, it is not free in relation to itself – it is not an act of itself: rather, in its being-in-itself, it rests upon itself, it savours itself, it delights in itself. Thus the self-sufficiency attested to by the pleromatic vortex, the transcendent act of acts, is transformed into insufficiency, the mere 'potency' of the true act.

The rhythm of the dialectic, according to the option of the 'I', thus awakens to a final synthesis. The consequent – domination, the immovable axis of the vortex – takes on the antecedent – the

power of excess, of transgression – takes it on, and through it frees itself and actualises itself. It ‘makes itself a flame’, that is to say, it becomes a self-consumptive act, an absolute flash of light. To be able to shatter itself, to be able to go beyond itself, to be able to dissolve itself – this is the extreme perfection of autarchy; this is its limit, the infinite act, affirmation and negation, Yes and No – abyss, ultimate vertigo, a terrifying, total blaze, in which the absolute Individual is evoked in its very own unnameable nakedness.

Such is the Black God: God’s violence upon himself – creation, and his being creation: a free world, given to itself, suspended in nothingness: absolute immanence as absolute self-transcendence. And autarchy, thus liberated, becomes a category; that is to say, it becomes an immanent quality of objects, of the many – and behold, the cyclical fluidity breaks into anew; behold, from the vortex of beings in act arises a world of beings, each of which is in itself an ‘I’, a dominion, an autarchy – hurled into this blazing, transmuting universe, each an extreme reason unto itself, without any law whatsoever, without any transcendent principle, without any order save that which they themselves create in their clash, in their tension in great waves of light and darkness, in catastrophes and glories, in transfigurations and precipitations, in peaks of ecstasy amidst deserts and suns of atrocity.

That, on the one hand. On the other, in a single act, as immateriality, spirit, meaning, immanent reason in this voracious world of dominions – in identity – a bare simplicity, a nature in which there is no longer either a ‘here’ or a ‘not-here’, which is silence and illumination and solitude as in an infinite ocean. It is the essentiality of the individual emerging from its own sacrifice – like a ‘distillate’ from that ‘precipitate’; an unnameable, occult

essentiality, without beginning or end, an eternal meaning beyond 'before' and 'after', beyond the transmuting and the immobile, beyond the one and the many, beyond being and non-being. Perfection of perfection, possession of possession; within it the entire hierarchy is consumed and purified without residue, as in the ultimate grasping of its own principle; in it lies the very act of the process, that is, the entire process as act, for in it lives and burns absolute transcendence, the ineffable and homogeneous moment of the generative interval which, as the foundation of the various distinctions, is now merely itself in extreme self-liberation, at the apex of a possession substantiated solely by itself, enjoying only itself, perfect. And this is the point of supreme redemption, of the supreme justification of all elements and all beings, of the entire development and multitude of forms of the hierarchy of value, which now manifest themselves as the body in which he generates, dominates and transcends himself – and this domination of his own self is their freedom, the world renewed and confirmed, the world merely as world – without God, in a desert: devoid of purpose, for it is an end in itself; devoid of reason, for it is its own reason; devoid of criterion, devoid of value, for there is nothing outside it that can measure it, for there is nothing outside the whole that is concluded within it, in this finite and immobile mass, whirling, and battered, furrowed and fixed by dominations.

Cosmic crucifixion, here all is consumed: now, in its deepest nature, the 'moist 'wet' has assumed, is purified. In the simple, desolate summit, in the 'void' of the absolute Individual, it exists, just as it is, in all its differences, in its unbridled, indomitable contingency, is carved into eternal eternal, identical, terrifying in its state of self-sufficiency, of value, of absolute justice. Here, becoming is not becoming, but being; difference is not difference;

the irrational is not irrational, but rational; evil, insufficiency, contingency – all that which, in the three realms and according to the three times, was, is or will be, in light as in misfortune – all is in an eternal ‘Yes’ that affirms itself to infinity, that justifies and liberates all, not as something different from what is, but precisely as it is – yet, in this, composed solely of self-sufficiency, of its metallic, atrocious purity. This Is, this unadulterated nakedness – absolute relationship, value – in every thing, or as every thing – such is the absolute Individual. Thus: a single act – an infinite identity and an infinite difference: an abyss of flames and lightning bolts in constant flux and intensification upon a lake of ice, identical and desolate; the dance of Shakti, intoxicated and wild, upon the motionless body of the eternal Shiva; the deserted throne and dominion as the dominion of dominions – in identity – sufficiency as the self-sufficiency of the world, the law, as chaos purified into a symbol of the unconditional, of absolute reason; extreme possession and extreme renunciation – such is the *τελειον*, the *εκπυροσις*, the limit. Beginning and end.

A certain connection to this latter realisation can be found in the concept of the supreme body of the Mahayana Buddha, which a commentator on the *Bodhicaryâvatâra* calls ‘absolute reality, empty of all essence, neither born nor extinguished, neither perishable nor permanent – which, as a gesture (lit.: as a practical virtue) is the actual summit, the element of existence¹ and to which the stanza translated by Fat’in pays homage as the ‘incomparable Dharma-body of the conquerors, neither one nor many, which neither exists nor does not exist, which is transcendent and a great blessing of salvation for oneself and for many’. And from the *Mahâyâna* we might also take up the view that *nirvāṇa* and *samsâra*, *vidyâ* and *avidyâ* – that is, the absolute and the contingent, transcendence and becoming – are nothing

but two coexisting aspects or moments of a single and that very same, supreme reality – *shûnyatâ*¹⁹. On the other hand, we have already drawn attention to the well-known discourse of the Buddha, in which he contrasts himself with Brahman and compels it to confess its hierarchical inferiority by reaffirming, in its presence, the power to vanish, to be able to refrain from relying on that very positivity and, therefore, not to depend on it²⁰. The same meaning is embodied in that moment of the Egyptian mysteries in which the initiate, having endured the most gruelling trials and reached the realisation of Osiris – the universal light – was told the terrifying revelation that Osiris himself is a ‘black god’ (i.e. a non-value; in this lies the final transition to be accomplished, in which the antecedent becomes a deprivation), and he was called upon to endure the collapse of the supreme splendour and to adapt to the shadow of the great, indefinable Isis²¹. – Patañjali, too, explicitly states that supreme realisation entails ‘renunciation’ of the cosmic powers to which the yogi has risen²². However, it should be noted that, given the dualistic nature of Sâmkhya philosophy upon which Patañjali’s doctrine is essentially founded, it is not clearly established whether this refers to the perfect act in both a formal and material sense, or merely to the act in which the Self, sufficient in its pure principle, detaches itself from *prakṛti*, which it has not yet set out to resolve. The enumeration of the various powers of the yogi, given in the second book of the *Yoga-sûtras*, as it precedes the passage in question, would nevertheless suggest the first interpretation, and only in this case is the reference justified. Here, in fact, we are dealing with a form of ‘renunciation’ which is effectively the pinnacle of mastery; but such is only that which has previously ‘known’ all power, which has resolved everything, which has everything solely under its control, without any residue.

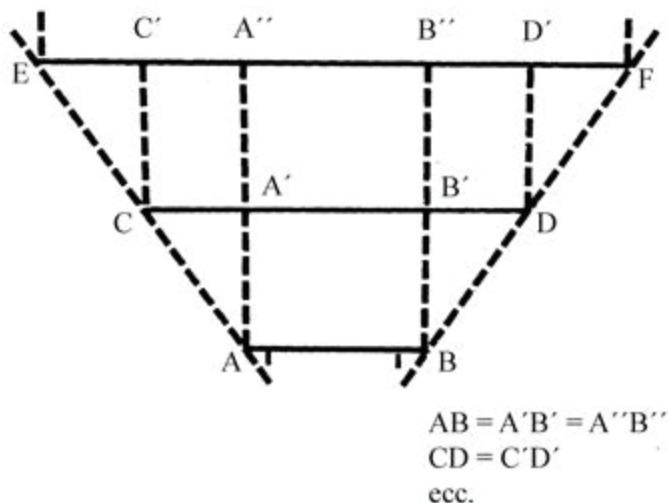
And now a final return to the general principles of the entire phenomenology.

One must not conceive of the process, with the various categories in which it unfolds, as standing on one side, and the pure act on the other, outside it or as a resolution of it: rather, the supreme category contains all the others; these are like its body, which finds in it its absolute unity, its act, which burns within it in spirit. Similarly, it cannot be said that this category comes after or at the end of the others. – The sequence of forms in the process of value is, in fact, not temporal nor, in a certain sense, dialectical: it is rather an order of dignity, of perfection, and that which is highest is that which is most complete, so that in itself as such, without presupposing them, it bears its elementary or less perfect powers. Thus, the act within the perfect act is not the final act, but rather the entire actuality of the process— though not articulated, but given in the form of purity and total possession at once: in it, the tetic power is simultaneously and perfectly united with its own negation and ‘fixation’. To anyone who were to ask what came before or what will come after this act of the autarch, one must therefore reply: ‘nothing’; or rather: ‘this very act’.

On the other hand, it must not be said that, in general, the various categories – the term ‘category’ in the theory of the Absolute Individual, being used in an entirely formal sense, signifies value, the immanent meaning of an experience – are already encompassed within the eternal synthesis, which would then already be presupposed by it.

Certainly, this is how things stand from the point of view of the supreme category; but beyond that, as has been repeatedly pointed out, every category may stand on its own as the ultimate instance of a distinct option of unconditional freedom, and have

itself as its sole presupposition. It therefore represents an original and irreducible synthesis, adequate, in its own way, to the totality of possible experience, that is to say, to the infinite; it does indeed contain the other categories, specifically those hierarchically prior – but these, insofar as they are contained within it and subsumed under its own synthesis, are negated as ‘others’, as those that might represent autonomous directions of freedom; that is to say, precisely as categories, values, distinct and absolute modes of apprehending the totality. And this also applies to the antecedent categories that are hierarchically encompassed by a subsequent one. The ‘superior’ is not added to the ‘inferior’ from outside, as it were by stratification, but rather to a broader depth of the creative synthesis, from within which (that is, from the superior) the inferior is originally generated. This can be illustrated graphically. Let AB, CD and EF represent three levels of consciousness or categories. As such, each stands entirely on its own: a higher level, for example EF, does indeed contain the lower ones, but only as C’D’ and A’’B’’, that is, not as the original elements AB and CD, but as their resolutions within the element EF, entirely internal to it even though they express the former. And the transition from one category to another is entirely contingent: it is not the extension of a previous position, but a leap, an entirely original, discontinuous projection, preceded by nothing, since the interval is the prius of its terms, of both the antecedent and the consequent.



In other words, each category creates the world anew out of nothing and, to tell the truth, a new, unique, unrelated world without equal, since every relation is not external but internal to it. It sets out alone from the unnameable creative centre, without a second and without a first. It is solely on the basis of this unconditional synthetic nature that the various relationships between potentiality and actuality are justified; their consideration and reality thus remain possible only a posteriori, within the order of a particular plane, once that plane has been established.

In other words: between AB, CD, EF, etc., that is, between the various categories as values, there is no possible relationship: in no way can it be said that AB is the power of CD, EF the act of CD, and so on. What can be said, however, is that A''B'' is the potential of C'D', EF the actuality of C'D', etc., and this connection between the three forms is, in truth, precisely what defines and identifies the very actuality, the very synthesis of EF. Likewise, it cannot be said that any category in itself or as such is

more or less perfect than another, has more or less value, expresses a greater or lesser degree of freedom, etc.; for in the present order there are no transcendent criteria, and value is simply what the act wills, insofar as it wills it; hence any category, insofar as it is an affirmation of that original power—which has its own limit within itself by virtue of possession and unconditionality—is, in the same way, perfection, value, freedom: the various distinctions arise only afterwards, depending on what has been affirmed and the frame of reference that follows from it.

Hence, one must not presuppose the absolute point as a prerequisite for the various forms, as though it were a necessary condition for them and their development. A single power of positive self-determination, freely setting its own limit, is what determines them: and at the very level of the absolute Individual, in which all forms find their essential life, the character of pure actuality does not negate the synthetic moment—of progress from the lesser to the greater, from the poorer to the richer and more complex—but rather enhances it and brings it to the extreme perfection inherent in the interval which, as an act in itself, kindles all ‘power’ and, in a flash of insight, reveals the totality of the processions.

This resolution of the successive is at the same time the resolution of the manifold. And here too, the synthetic moment must be held fast.

The notion that there exist multiple autonomous centres of consciousness – and this outside any higher foundation of relation – is certainly contradictory. It has already been said, and repeatedly, that the manifold is inconceivable without unity; that two subjects and consciousnesses which were absolutely two would not even be two, but one subject and one subject—that is to say,

from an immanent point of view, a single subject. Insofar as one speaks of two or more subjects, it makes sense only insofar as a single subject is presupposed, by which they are encompassed and within which they enter into relation. Multiple experiences can therefore only be particular manifestations of a single consciousness, even if each possesses its own individuality and relative autonomy, just as the various limbs and functions of a living body do. Now, at this point, monadism must be corrected: certainly, one can conceive of multiple monads, each with its own experience and, it must also be added, radically irreducible to any other – but not as actual, coexisting entities, rather as ideal co-possibilities of a single power. They can be truly co-existent not in themselves, but as the content of a particular monadic experience – that which Leibniz called the ‘monad of the monads’; which nevertheless always remains a monad, that is, an experience that may well have the other monads—hierarchically inferior to it—as members of its unitary body, but not insofar as they are monads—that is, not with reference to those irreducible values that each may represent in and of itself—but rather as monads of the monad of the monads. The ultimate instance, wherever one may stand, is therefore always unity, the monad, the One.

It has also been stated previously that, given the hypothetical ‘*fundamentum relationis*’ of an adequate synthesis, one may conceive of a development of the finite monad up to the monad of monads – a progressive development, that is to say, such that between the former and the latter there is no coexistence, but rather continuity, a relation of potency to act. The finitude of the terminus a quo may be that inherent in the sensible experience of a personal centre, where to speak of other ‘I’s’ is to utter empty sounds, to such an extent that the other ‘I’s’ are nothing more than mere hypotheses, abstract explanatory principles to which I resort

in order to account for particular phenomena: as 'I's' (where 'I' means actual experience) do not exist here: they do not exist, and cannot exist, because the present experience of another is a contradiction in terms, for an 'I' experienced as an 'I' would cease to be another and would be the very one who experiences it. Discursive judgement is therefore in no way justified in positing 'I's' beyond the ideas of 'I's', in presuming the fullness of another subject as a subject within the void of representations (even if these are determined by the fact that they are representations of other distinct and personal beings) which are the only thing that concretely and actually presents itself to me here.

The void, that is to say, remains a void, a privation: its filling does not already exist, but is synthetic and contingent, and must be sought in the power of a deeper affirmation of the single subject, so that the latter may transcend the form of personal or finite consciousness, and become capable of multiplying itself and remaining one within the present experiences of multiple individualities, into which it flows like the life of the entelechy into that of the various limbs and cells²³. Thus, monadism is founded solely from the perspective of a monad of monads, and, pre-eminently, in correspondence with the supreme category of the process of value. Just as, in the act of the autarch, the successive are consumed in simultaneity, so too do the many merge into organic unity within it. Yet the two points remain synthetically reconciled. This opens the way for a final, fundamental observation.

Namely, Leibniz's 'principle of the indiscernibles' must be given its due.

Two individuals are not two unless they differ in some respect: now, this respect, within the realm of value, can only refer to the

principle of hierarchical differentiation, which here—given the foundation of relation proper to the point of the Absolute Individual—it is legitimate to assume. ‘Two individuals’ therefore means nothing other than two moments of the process; the infinite individuals are nothing but the same categories or values in the infinite degrees in which, as an interval, they unfold or may unfold. Thus the apex of the monad of monads, in which the multiplicity of individuals is consummated or realised, is also immediately, at the very same point, the *tota simul* actuality, the simultaneity of the procession.

An intuitive representation of this can be provided by developing an image devised by Bhagavân Dâs²⁴, albeit from a somewhat different perspective. This image also clarifies the solution to the fundamental problem of the coexistence of the attributes of freedom and absoluteness in the act.

A free act is a particular act, since without an ideal multiplicity of compossibles there is no choice, no agility, no arbitrariness, no pure self-determination. Where the object of the act is univocal, where it is everything that can generally be – as in Spinoza’s divinity – to speak of freedom makes no sense whatsoever. This is the point established in the second epoch, which cannot be disregarded whilst still avoiding a descent into the world of being.

On the other hand, the act must be absolute. This means that within it, the totality of compossibility must be realised in its entirety, without residue, in the present, in a single flash of insight: but then there is no longer a particular object set against other non-actual compossibilities – and the ideal condition of freedom is contradicted.

Nevertheless, the act must be both perfect and free. The

concept of multiplicity resolves the antinomy. Let us therefore consider the image mentioned above.

Imagine a gallery of paintings (symbolising the various categories or distinct values) shrouded in darkness, and a person with a lamp capable of illuminating only one at a time. This would embody the condition of freedom: this single person may choose at will the painting (i.e. the experience) they wish, whilst paying for this power of choice with the deprivation of seeing the other paintings, which they may, if at all, see subsequently, casting into darkness what was previously in the light²⁵. – Now, however, let us imagine that there are as many individuals with lamps as there are paintings, moving freely and each swapping places with the others. The entire gallery will then be illuminated and present, although from the point of view of each individual, only their own painting is illuminated and the others appear to them as if they were in darkness. The quantic articulation of actuality and possibility – the condition of freedom – in individual beings is thus reconciled with perfect, total actuality through the multiplication of finite centres, each of which possesses that of which the totality of the others is deprived, and vice versa. This single flash of light that shines forth from the individual instances (the fully illuminated gallery) is the experience, the act of the Absolute Individual: the act of the Absolute Individual precisely because it requires the multiplication of value, absolute immanence, that absolute assumption, that absolute being – in identity, in perfect justice – of the individual, free, distinct forms, each self-sufficient in itself, from which alone absolute transcendence is liberated.

The Absolute Individual is immediately itself in the infinite individual affirmations – that is to say, according to the degree

attained in the final category, in the individual beings, in the individual values – and in each of them it is experienced as freedom, as unconditional agility and absolute arbitrariness, flashing in various ways and circulating across the canvas of the multum. But, on the other hand, whilst it produces and affirms itself in every individuation, at the very same point, according to the principle of self-consuming actuality, it takes it back into itself and causes it to communicate within the unnameable transcendent, in that absolute combustion to which it is not the particular individuated that is suited, but rather the infinity of individuation as unity, simplicity or simultaneity of an infinite circulation.

Such is the Absolute, that which, according to mythological parlance, is, was and will be. – Now the question may arise: ‘There is a level at which such an Absolute can only be conceived as a final end. But as a final end, it is not what it is and what it was; therefore, the view is contradictory. The Absolute can only be in the present: it must exclude everything that is process and distance – otherwise it is not absolute’.

This objection is based on confusing the concept of the Absolute with its actual existence. What is the Absolute, on the level to which we are referring? Value, that which I wish to be. Now I may wish to be precisely that which was, is and will be. This remark, however, refers to an idea of mine, not to something that already exists at present: it refers to an object of possible realisation. As the content of what is to be, I may posit what was, is and will be. Is this a contradictory concept?

Only when one has failed to grasp the relative nature of the category of time, when one makes time the ultimate authority by placing the end within the category of time. The situation is

different when one considers a progression such that, in one of its transitions, it transcends not this or that temporal moment, but the very category of temporality in general. The result would be an experience in which the last is no longer last and the first is no longer first, an experience no longer conditioned by an antecedent—since the antecedent is no longer an antecedent—nor by becoming, since in it becoming is not as becoming but as being—as the very being of the state of absolute reason. The antinomy arises when one seeks to grasp simultaneously that which proceeds from two distinct points of view, such that one exists only when the other no longer does: the one in which the end is an end, that is, an object of possible realisation – and the other in which the end is not an end, but experience in the act, actuality. From the perspective of the latter, therefore, the antinomy does not exist.

From the other point of view, the meaning will be that what is, was and will be (this expression too is highly inappropriate, for it is always imbued with temporal relations) experiences itself in the form or category of ‘will be’. The ‘will be’ is nothing but a particular mode in which the absolute experiences itself – almost a symbol of the distance of the ‘I’ from itself.

One might then ask for an explanation of this distance. But the explanation, in truth, does not exist. Not in fact, but by right. There must always be a residue of obscurity; there must always be something irrational, something before which explanation comes to a halt – if all that is act, value and freedom is not to plunge into nothingness. As has been said: the very supreme value of the Absolute Individual is derived by negation from the co-possibility of its opposite, and the same applies to the particular values within the hierarchy which it determines. This is the final word of the present doctrine: the absolute explanation of action, of power, of

the act in itself—a measure that does violence to chaos, to the *απειρον*, to the irrational—truth as the substance of practice, as the ‘how’.

But, going even further: the will stands alone, in the midst of a desert, at the origin of origins: nothing outside, nothing above, nothing opposed to it, nothing to look upon, nothing to desire, nothing to lean upon. What, then, will it be, if not that which it wills to be – unconditionally? Nature, man, God – water, blood, flame.

But, then, a single root to absolute reason, to absolute power: persuasion. I can never be anything other than what I will to be, from the infinite. You who do not will yourself, but will ‘God’ and turn towards the ladder of Light – you flee from God, you are terrified of his tremendous purity, you kill yourself, you cut yourself off from being, from the act. Anguish, the problem, powerlessness, finitude do not exist: all this is nothing but a matter of ignorance, a subjective shadow cast by a state of fear, of disharmony, of inadequacy in relation to myself – a state in which, once again, I am neither sufficient nor active, a state which I am incapable of assuming: it is nothing other than the very same infinite power, the very same nature that reigns over ‘yes’ and ‘or’, insofar as it has not yet become self-persuasion. This is the unheard-of word: nowhere to go, nothing to wait for, nothing to fear, nothing to ask for. You yourself, just as you are, are eternity, you are the Lord of the gods, the Aeon of aeons – all in all, composed of all powers. If only for a single instant you could, in a flash, take it all upon yourself – in this being of yours made of metals and wounds, of glory and darkness, of ecstasy and death – if only for a single instant you could be – simply be – absolutely, identically, infinitely – and the entire universe, resolved, would

surge forth in the ultimate pinnacle, in the supreme liberation of the absolute Individual.

§ 31 – SUMMARY

Since domination implies a substrate over which it is precisely exercised, the individual must at first be non-being, that is, be in the sense of simply positing itself or in immediacy; this has led to a body of works whose limit is the perfection of the accomplished being (first epoch). However, the 'I', insofar as it is the superior value that underlies, articulates, supersedes and fertilises the entire development, transcends this limit, thereby immersing itself in that which is not being and actualises the mode of 'for-itself', of reflection, of the person. In the reproduction and idealisation of being through reflection or formal freedom (second epoch), the person then mediates itself, takes shape, and becomes conscious of its own nature. But the perfection of the world of reflection, corresponding in degree to that of being, implies a similar transition: the perfect self-consciousness of reflection is, in fact, the act of distinguishing a reality of which it is precisely the reflection, the ideality. This reality, to which the perfection of reflection leads, then becomes the element, the mode of the individual (transition to the third epoch). Thus, at the end of the world of the person, a bare, as yet formless principle of power and freedom stands in opposition to the articulated world of reflection, which is perceived as a mere phenomenon and, in relation to the new mode of the individual, as a privation. To redeem such a world of phenomenon and necessity into a reality of power and freedom; to integrate the point of self-sufficiency by reaffirming it within those powers of cosmic construction and universality that were submerged at the moment of idealisation, of the 'I' tearing itself away from being – such is the task of the third epoch.

The first stage of development is the immediate affirmation of the principle of the individual in its nature as the negativity of the

negative, that is, of form. Thus, a power of destruction and arbitrary upheaval sweeps through the system of ideal correlations and values proper to the personality: by re-affirming itself within it, and persisting amidst the collapse of such a system, the individual confirms, in a rudimentary form of active mediation, that autonomy or superiority over relation which is its very essence. However, insofar as every immediate negation is preoccupied with the object it sets out to negate, An element of duality is also confirmed, in relation to which the individual can only re-assert itself through the alienation of such a mode of negation. This is followed by the absolute autonomisation of the 'I', firstly as a simple principle (insofar as it consists in suffering and renunciation) and, secondly, as an act or movement – in the 'test of love' and 'willing without willing'. Having thus formed an organ suited to its claim, the individual sets about resolving the antithesis, first formally, then materially.

The first phase is realised through the replacement of passive or sensory perception with active or productive perception, and through the regeneration within it of the world of the person. This regeneration also, at the very same point, takes on the meaning of self-liberation: the nature of this new perception is such that the external is not resolved; rather, by externalising the internal, by projecting into the phenomenon the transcendental powers of the samskâra pertaining to the second epoch – animating it, imbuing it with them – which in turn implies that, in relation to each of these powers, with which it previously stood in a relationship of identity, the 'I' generates itself into a principle that is internally superior to them, in which the principle of dominion is precisely maintained and reaffirmed. In the three resulting experiences of the dynamic world, the world of the senses and that of intuition, the Self's liberation and self-possession are thus realised as

individuality and formally perfect actuality in relation to the three metaphenomenal depths, namely the efficient principle, the principle of conceiving or forming, and the principle of egoity; through these, the world of form is likewise gradually resolved from its deprivation, integrated and restored to the central principle, so that the antithesis is gradually levelled out, and, at the end of this phase (first section), the 'I' in being finds itself reconciled solely with its own power. As the cause of itself, it now realises its contingency to itself, its freedom from the law of individuation. Having freed itself from the necessity of a single, particular individuation, the centre moves on to the function of the universal, understood as the possibility and unity of multiple persons and, therefore, of multiple systems of experience; moreover, as this transition corresponds to the very interval of passage from the first to the second epoch, it also expresses that of power and of freedom from the formal realm to the material realm: that which is an act in relation to form (correlative to the category of the individuating individual) is, in one sense, potency (in the Aristotelian sense) in relation to matter, that is, in relation to the universal elements, to the cosmic spontaneities that determine the content of the form itself; whereby one passes from the order of that which is correlative to the second epoch to that which is correlative to the first epoch (second section).

This potency, in turn, turns towards act, within the order that makes it such, and this occurs through the evocation and domination of precisely that cosmic spontaneity, gradually in its powers, which now regenerate themselves and, within the vaster life by which they are swept away, are transformed according to substance, materialising into possession and self-sufficiency whilst burning within the 'magical body' which, drawn from nothingness – from *māyā*, from 'illusion' – is the act itself, the eternal self-

generation of the absolute Individual, of value.

The first phase is self-sufficiency as an efficient power (or self-sufficiency as an efficient power), the transcendence of this in the 'signs', in the discontinuities of magical equilibria; the second is conception or formation liberated from itself, vibrating in flashes of a transformation, of an absolute, radical transition: this is the pure magical substance, the creative vowel – the Logos, the Om – which has consumed the consonant and which articulates itself, free and naked, launching itself into a voracious whirlwind that gradually stabilises and purifies itself within the immovable axis of pure domination. Finally, in the last category, this very centrality dissolves and frees itself in the self-consumptive flash of an extreme self-sufficiency, of a transcendent possession. It is the absolute negation and the absolute affirmation, the abyss, the eternity from which a free, naked, providential world blossoms, a world of autarchies in light and darkness, like the very gesture of the absolute Individual.

Quota Neutra del Cimone 1917 Rome 1924

1 'The Telesma, the Father of all things – as it is said in the Hermetic *Tabula smaragdina* – is here: its power is complete when converted into earth' – that is to say, the immanent spiritual power attains its perfection where its act is the 'earth', the earth, or 'salt', understood as that which resists fire, that is, the spirit. The 'Work' is precisely divided into two phases: the separation of the subtle from the dense, the extraction of the quintessences and, in this, the awakening of the 'philosophers' mercury', which is subsequently drawn from the raw ore, from silver and then from gold, i.e. from the entirely purified metallic nature (= gold) – which, as has already been said, refers to the gradual process of disidentification, of extricating oneself, through a projective movement, from the bodies of the samskāra into a higher state (quintessence) that culminates in the evocation of the power of the universal or individuating individual (mercury). In the second phase, this power is directed towards volatilising, towards dissolving the 'earth' itself and the metals from which it has detached, until it reaches the blaze of fluid sulphur or Living Gold. Such is the process of the 'generation of the strong force of every force', 'rising from the earth to the heavens (= first phase) and descending once more from the heavens to the earth (= second phase)', 'by which the world is won over to glory' and 'all darkness departs for ever'. On all this, see the journal *Ur*, 1st series (1927) [now, in part, in: *Introduction to Magic*, Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome 1971, vol. I].

2 Dominion, which here consists in chaining cosmic force, articulating it and projecting it within fixed limits, in absolute neutralisations, is expressed by the symbol of the 'Seal of Solomon': two triangles with opposite vertices intertwined – descending power, the feminine demiurgic force (inverted triangle C) which binds itself and finds balance in the ascending, masculine (triangle with the vertex at the top, B) in the magical immobility of a 'sign'.

3 Diabolus, moreover, is the 'opponent', the objectum, that which contrasts, which resists, and which thus bears witness to an imperfect activity—that is, an altered one—that is, impure. See Book I, Section VIII, § 6 [Theory of the Absolute Individual, op. cit., pp. 166–174].

4 Suvarṇaprabhāsa, 8.

5 See G.R.S. Mead, *The Doctrine of the Subtle Body in Western Tradition*, London 1919, p. 110 ff. It should be noted, precisely, that the fact that a thing is reduced to my power does not make it in any way unreal, but, on the contrary, supremely real. A body in which there is no longer any matter simply means a body in which there is no longer anything that resists the spirit—a perfect act. The transformation is substantial, in the sense in which this term was used by the Scholastics when, regarding the Eucharist, they maintained both the identity and preservation of sensible attributes in the host, as well as a transformation. But here, 'substance' is not one thing substituted for another; rather, it is the form or function

according to which that particular set of attributes—constituting, for example, the human body—is experienced. It is not these attributes, but this form that is transmuted—from the ‘garment of bondage’ to the ‘garment of power’ (Pistis Sophia). Even the terms ‘fiery body’, etc., refer to the renewed sense of life in which the body burns, and not necessarily to something visible.

6 See Papus, **Traité élémentaire de la Science Occulte**, Paris 1903, p. 571.

7 From an iconographic point of view, it is represented by two tridents joined at the base. As such, it is used by both Hindus and Buddhists in India, as well as in Tibet and the rest of Asia as far as Japan. Esoterically, it is the diamond-light body, that is, the immortal body which the Buddha attains after enlightenment, as Evola also mentions later. The philosopher drew it on the cover of the 1930 edition of this book, which now reproduces one of Tibetan origin (Editor’s note).

8 See Shricakrasambhâra, ed. Dawa Samdup, London–Calcutta 1919, p. IX. There are references, for example, in Indian yoga texts which speak of the power to create within the body, through mantras, a state such that a projectile hurled at it not only fails to harm it, but rebounds upon the one who hurled it. – And minerality resolved into a ‘power’, contingent upon itself, leads to the real possibility of what was once a disguise of initiatory science in the West: alchemy, the art of transmuting metals, but through a spiritual power (through a ‘projection’ and ‘multiplication’) rather than for the impotent power that today, through physics and chemistry, begs for ‘laws of nature’.

9 On the transformation of the physical body into a ‘metallic’ body by means of a mercurial body, see C.S. Narayanaswami Aiyar, **Ancient Indian Chemistry and Alchemy of the Chemico-Philosophical Siddhânta**, Madras 1925. On the other hand, amongst the siddhas in **prânavidyâ**, it is an experimentally verifiable fact that the course of respiration is changes in such a way that the body retains the carbon which the ordinary person, as a rule, derives from food; and oxygen is exhaled. That is to say, a rhythm of transformation is achieved in which, even externally, the nature of ‘vegetable’ forms is reflected, whilst that of ‘mineral’ forms is resolved.

10 See G.R.S. Mead, **Some Mystical Adventures**, London 1909, Chapter XVI: ‘To be free from form means the possibility of assuming any form at will. True form is this power of freedom; true death is to be bound to a form of body, thought or feeling—that is, to be incapable of change. [...] That which can take all forms is ever-present at every moment in time and is, in itself, immortal’.

11 To be able to comprehend the body – one’s own or that of others – to absorb it, to render it fluid, to ‘vegetalise’ it: to blend and merge until it is fully realised in the mind – and then to conceive of oneself in a place means: to transport oneself – indeed: to be instantly present – in that place, or to project, to cause the other to be found in

that place, and no longer merely in consciousness, as in the previous category, but in real, physical presence.

12 The ‘transformation’, in which the powers of form are subdued, can be understood as the perfection of the element of a faith absolute: absolute faith as the absolute power of impetus, of destroying the ground on which one stands, of instantly becoming a new ‘Is’.

13 See Kazi Dawa Samdup, Commentary on the Shricakrasambhâra, London–Calcutta 1919. P. Masson Oursel, ‘Les trois corps du Bhoudha’, in **Journal Asiatique**, May–June 1913; and especially: L. La Vallée Poussin, ‘Studies in Buddhist Dogma’, in *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 1906, p. 943 ff.

14 This is not the place to explain why the number ten, in esotericism, is a sign of perfection, of completeness (siddi, ΤΕΛΕΙΟΝ): let it be taken, if one wishes, as a symbol; as a symbol in which is also embodied the moment of absolute quantity proper to the dialectical antecedent, a moment which here, however, is joined to that of passing, of continuity (the ‘running forwards and backwards’ or ‘proceeding and converging’ and ‘agitating’ of the sephiroth). The term ‘balimâ’, which we have translated as ‘suspended, made of nothing’, expresses precisely the elusive moment or flash of the ‘no longer, not yet’ in which the essence of ‘those who are’ is fixed and materialised, in their subsequent revolution.

15 Aristotle, *De Anima*, III

16 Nicomachean Ethics, II, 106a, 15: το γὰρ κακὸν τοῦ ἀπειροῦ, τὸ δε ἀγαθοῦ πεπερασμένου [For evil pertains to the unlimited, whilst good pertains to the limited].

17 God as the necessary being, as that in which actuality proceeds ‘analytically’ from possibility – as we have said – is the death of value. – Spinoza’s argument, drawn from the principle of sufficient reason, is inconsistent. For him, the possibility of actualising a given The element is one and the same with the impossibility of failing to bring it about. What, he asks in the *Brief Treatise* (chapters II, IV), would prevent God – who is nothing outside himself – from bringing about everything that he can bring about? Fair enough; but one might just as rightly ask: what could prevent him from failing to bring about that which depends solely on him, whether he exists or not? Indeed, either one strips the concept of ‘power’ of its proper content by identifying it with that of ‘duty’ (müssen), or one must understand it to mean the indifference between ‘Yes’ and ‘No’, which can only be broken by an affirmation that is, as pure contingency, its own sufficient reason. F.W.J. Schelling, *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, op. cit., p. 35 (cf. J. Lagneau, (like Aristotle’s pure act and Spinoza’s substance), excludes all power and all freedom: it is that which exists without power – it is powerless being.

18 Prajñākaramati, Commentary on the Bodhicaryāvatāra, IX, 38.

19 See, for example, SmonLamStobsPoChe, § 1 (English trans. by A.

Avalon, vol. VII of *Tantric Texts*, London–Calcutta, 1919, p. XX).

20 Majhimaniḥāya, I, XLIX.

21 Éliphas Levi, *Histoire de la Magie*, Paris 1922, pp. 29, 532.

22 Patañjali, *Yogasutra*, III, 50.

23 The same applies with regard to power and the degree of organic unity. The fact that I do not yet perfectly dominate other beings, that they may oppose me, resist me, or act independently of me, does not correspond to an inherent necessity of things, but is merely the symbol of the privation naturally inherent in that which is in potentiality insofar as it is in potentiality: at the terminus a quo of a possible development. Full potency and perfect unity refer to the terminus ad quem, to that in which the privation awaits resolution through a free act of the individual.

24 Bhagavân Dâs, *The Science of Peace*, Adyar 1921, pp. 341–342.

25 This zone of obscurity is the virtual, or, to put it more accurately, the ‘ideal’, as opposed to the ‘actual’; it is that which, in present experience, is contained either in the form or condition of ‘possibility’ (which becomes, at a later stage, that which was present experience at a hierarchically earlier level) or of ‘ought-to-be’, the end, ΤΕΛΟΣ. When one sets aside the differences between ideality, actuality and ought-to-be, one has everything at every point.

