

Translator's Note

At the very heart of the Essays, and of Evola's philosophical writings in general, are three key terms: 'Io,' 'individuo,' and 'punto.'

'Io' can be translated as both 'I' and 'self.' Both terms refer to the subjective experience of the individual and are commonly used in discussions about identity, consciousness, and subjectivity. While 'I' emphasises the first-person perspective, 'self' often refers to the broader notion of one's identity or essence. The specific philosophical discourse determines the appropriate term to use. In Evola's work, 'Io' is often best translated as 'Self,' as he explores the nature of individual identity, consciousness, and the concept of the higher self. The term 'Self' aligns with his emphasis on the inner essence and the spiritual dimension of individuality, making it a fitting translation within his thought. Since he capitalises the word, it is appropriate to maintain that capitalisation in translation as 'Self.' This reflects his philosophical emphasis and denotes the significance of the concept in his writings. Capitalisation can indicate a specific, elevated meaning, particularly in discussions of identity and spirituality.

'Individuo' refers to the individual as a distinct entity, often highlighting the notion of personal identity and the unique essence of a person. This term is used to contrast the idea of the individual with broader collective identities or social constructs. Evola emphasises the importance of the 'individuo' in the context of spiritual development and self-realisation, asserting that true individuality arises from an inner awakening and the pursuit of higher values. This concept is crucial in his discussions about the path towards self-actualisation and the realisation of one's potential beyond societal limitations.

The term 'punto' (which translates to 'point' in English), in a philosophical context, does not refer to a physical point; it is used metaphorically to describe a conceptual state or condition. In Evola's philosophy, 'punto' refers to a critical juncture or focal point in the process of individual development and self-realisation. It signifies a moment of clarity or insight where an individual can transcend ordinary existence and engage with higher realities or spiritual truths. The concept emphasises the importance of these pivotal moments in one's journey towards understanding the self and the cosmos. Evola often uses 'punto' in relation to the awakening of consciousness and the realisation of one's true nature. It embodies the idea that true transformation occurs at specific points in one's life, where the individual can break free from societal constraints and pursue a higher purpose or meaning. Thus, 'punto' is central to understanding the dynamics of personal growth and spiritual evolution in Evola's work.

The Speculative Period: Magical Idealism and the Theory of the Absolute Individual

Following the ‘artistic’ period, there came the philosophical one, which lasted from roughly 1921 to 1927, although some works written during this time were only published later, up until 1930. For me, just as art was more than merely the artwork itself, philosophy extended beyond abstract ideas and logical arguments. I previously mentioned that my interest in philosophy began in my early adolescence. However, during this period, my fascination increasingly intertwined with doctrines concerning what is suprarational and transcendent. Even as a young boy, I was profoundly impacted by several novels by Merezhkovsky, such as *The Death of the Gods* and *The Resurrection of the Gods*, which were set against a backdrop of Gnostic ideas and pagan wisdom. Immediately after World War I, my attention shifted directly to wisdom traditions, particularly those from the East. Initially, these were often presented through contemporary spurious movements, such as Theosophy and other ‘occultist’ currents, which claimed to draw upon ancient wisdom as an antidote to modern materialism and the limitations of dogmatic or devotional religion. However, their concepts were often confused amalgamations, heavily influenced by biases, incoherent reasoning, and substandard content derived from supposed revelations and claims of clairvoyance. Despite this, I also had the opportunity to meet several individuals of genuine worth, whose value transcended the theories they espoused. I recall figures like Decio Calvari, president of the Independent Theosophical League of Rome; Giovanni Colazza, who led an anthroposophical (Steinerian) centre in Rome; the poet Arturo Onofri, who, after being part of the avant-garde art movement, experienced a spiritual crisis and adopted a similar orientation; the Dutch orientalist Bernard Jasink; and the painter and ‘occultist’ Raul dal Molin Ferenzona. Due to my insufficient preparation, my early philosophical works, especially *Essays on Magical Idealism*, incorporated references influenced by these questionable sources, necessitating caution and a clear distinction from what is truly essential. Nevertheless, I maintained my independence, and my attitude towards modern ‘occultism’ was often critical and negative. In my experience during that period, these movements primarily served the incidental function of being mere starting points. An individual’s internal disposition ultimately determines whether he becomes mired in the often confused and rambling teachings of these movements or finds his way back, in one form or another, to the authentic sources of traditional wisdom, recognising the numerous instances in which ‘occultist,’ anthroposophical, and theosophical speculations have done more to discredit than uplift that wisdom. For me, the second alternative was clearly the case. For example, I credit Decio Calvari with my initial insights into Tantrism. However, I soon established direct contact with Sir John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalon), a leading and respected scholar of this tradition. Through his works and the original Hindu texts he published, I found the material that would serve as the foundation for my book *L'uomo come potenza*. From an objective standpoint, my early writings during the philosophical period—encompassing essays and lectures—were influenced by a blend of philosophy and the aforementioned doctrines. This blending sometimes appeared as a contamination—not of philosophy itself but rather of the doctrines, which, as I would later recognise, experienced forced and external rationalisation. On the other hand, it became evident that such transpositions offered valuable contributions towards addressing speculative problems inherent in contemporary thought and provided an essential broadening of horizons. It was along these lines that I developed the system I referred to as ‘Magical Idealism’ and ‘The Theory of the Absolute Individual.’ While the term ‘magical’ was already used by Novalis, one of my favourite authors whose insights I deeply value, the orientation of my system was quite different. The precedence, indeed the priority, of the non-philosophical background over the speculative elaborations is evident in the fact that my first book, published immediately after my artistic period, was a presentation of the *Tao Te Ching* by Lao Tzu. Through this reference—sometimes debatable—to this ancient master of Far Eastern Taoism, I anticipated several essential ideas of my system. At the same time, the book served as a link between my two

phases, as certain anti-rationalistic and paradoxical aspects of Lao Tzu resonate with the positions of Dadaism, despite their different backgrounds. The booklet was published in 1923 by Carabba under the title *Il Libro della Via e della Virtù*. The version I worked from was primarily based on A. Ular's translation and left much to be desired. However, it is important to highlight the 'meanings' I attributed to the text. My then-claim to evaluate it 'critically' in terms of 'modern thought' using some clichés from Western idealistic philosophy should be dismissed as frivolous. In the Chinese master, I admired 'the calm and clarity of thought that remains untainted by emotion.' He outlines a metaphysics of the divine, exemplifying a model of a superior being—the Completed One—free from any mysticism or faith, existing in a magical and radiant state of detachment. I identified the essence of this metaphysics in the concept of the Way, or Tao, understood as the process by which a 'being' is fulfilled through the realisation of 'non-being.' The world and creation represent an eternal flow and continuous production, generated by the atemporal act through which the Principle distances itself from itself, 'empties' itself, thereby realising itself in a super-substantiality (the symbol of 'emptiness'), which serves as the substrate, foundation, and meaning of all existence—much like the empty central space of a wheel represents its essence and centre of gravity. Naturally, there was a strong temptation to relate these concepts from a wisdom framework to modern absolute idealism. However, even though I had not yet distinctly articulated it at that time, a fundamental orientation emerged, mediated by Lao Tzu, which differentiated the system I later constructed from idealistic philosophy. In fact, Lao Tzu's concept of 'non-action' stands in stark contrast to the intrinsic identification of the subject with the act and the act with the fact—an identification I would vehemently oppose in both its essence and historical applications. The principle, fundamentally aristocratic, of detachment and impassibility was thus brought to the forefront. By emulating the divine model, the Perfect One, the Taoist 'real man' or 'transcendent man' does not identify with the external, does not intervene directly, and does not externalise his Self through self-assertion. Instead, he actively renounces 'being' and 'acting' in a direct and conditioned sense. In doing so, he realises the essential element, enters the Way, and becomes elusive, inexhaustible, invulnerable, and incapable of being bent or reduced to impotence. He can also exercise a subtle, invisible, and magical action (the *wei-wu-wei*, or 'acting without acting,' the sovereign and irresistible spontaneity), which is the action or virtue—*té*—of the Way, the Tao. I later presented these themes with greater accuracy, purity, and fidelity to the sources in a second version of the same text, compiled approximately thirty-six years later at a friend's request, in 1959. This version was published by Ceschina under a different title, *Il Libro del Principio e della sua azione*. It is preceded by a comprehensive essay on Taoism in general. The text itself has been significantly revised and aligned better with scientific standards. Most importantly, the interpretation has eliminated idealistic philosophical insights and any references to modern Western thought. Instead, it is integrated into the context of Eastern spirituality and is clarified and interpreted in traditional terms, consistent with the orientation of my third period, the post-philosophical phase. Regarding my presentation from 1923, at that time I had not yet experienced a direct and authentic sensation of the spiritual climate of that wisdom. While it is true that I avoided the blatant clichés of those who spoke of the 'passivity' and 'quietism' of Taoism and that I fundamentally grasped its higher, metaphysical dimension, there were still distortions in my understanding. I had spoken before about the exclusion of transcendence, particularly in relation to the hypostatic transcendence found in certain philosophies or theologies. However, in my second presentation, I clarified that, in Taoism, we are dealing with an 'immanent transcendence'—the direct presence of non-being (in a positive sense, as superontological essence) within being. This concept captures the infinitely distant (the 'Heaven') in the near and the beyond of nature within nature, maintaining an equal distance from both pantheistic immanence and transcendence, which are merely speculative concepts. This understanding is rooted in a direct experience that arises from the specific existential structure of the primordial man. In that youthful work, I established the opposition between the common Self and the Absolute Individual. However, despite referencing Matjoi, who interprets Eastern doctrines in esoteric terms, I did not sufficiently emphasise the initiatory dimension of Taoism or its ideal of the 'real man' and the 'transcendent man.' At that

time, I wrote: ‘Having torn through the dense, opaque clouds of anguish, doubt, and passion that obscure our external human condition, he (Lao Tzu) depicts the anatomy and internal logic of the divine in a cool, calm atmosphere, revealing it as the very rationality of reality. He thereby presents it as truth in spirit, identifying it with the nature of man as the Absolute Individual, the Perfect Being. Every subsequent religion or philosophy, far from surpassing his positions, has rarely grasped them in the clear and pure simplicity that existed in the mind of the great Chinese thinker. Beyond these, history retains only scattered and uncertain sparks of various mysticisms.’ The one-sidedness of this statement is evident; aside from the vague reference to ‘various mysticisms,’ it did not acknowledge other equally significant metaphysical traditions that I would later explore in more detail. Additionally, presenting this transcendent wisdom as a remedy for the crisis of modern consciousness was naive. I stated, ‘Most religions and moralities have only succeeded in insulting man, as they have considered him to be what he is not—a creature.’ However, this perspective has become inadequate for modern consciousness, which has begun to realise the meaning of absolute reality and the solitude of the individual. The cost of this realisation has been the loss of everything that once constituted his life and faith: his illusions. Today, man appears as a castaway clinging to a Self that he still cannot fully comprehend without distorting it, yet intuitively senses that it is his only certainty. Without religion, faith, or enthusiasm, he finds himself caught between a science that is unravelling and a philosophy that has grown hollow and self-sufficient, yearning for freedom while being rigidly opposed to a nature, society, and culture in which he can no longer recognise himself. In this context, I sought to highlight the relevance of Lao Tzu’s teachings. A similar theme was also explored in my lectures and the early sections of my *Essays on Magical Idealism*. I asserted that ‘the modern man must learn about the Self that he still struggles to articulate, which manifests in distorted images represented by Stirner’s Unique One, the social man of Marx and Lenin, the absolute Self of idealism, or the lyrical subject of avant-garde aesthetics’ (notably, I omitted Nietzsche’s superman, one of his most flawed concepts, from this list).

As a positive point of reference, I indicated the path outlined by Lao Tzu, interpreted as that of the Absolute Individual. While the theme of the crisis of modern humanity was valid—and I would later develop it extensively in other works—there was a misunderstanding in attempting to situate an initiatory ideal within a historical context and reduce it to a nearly universal formula. This ideal is essentially atemporal and has no direct connection to any specific society or culture; in terms of practical realisation, it is more distant from ‘modern man’ than from individuals of any other era. At that time, I could not see these nuances clearly. I had not yet liberated myself from the influences of modern culture and mentality. However, my encounter with Lao Tzu already awakened certain elective affinities, and the ideal of Olympic superiority—opposed to any Western activism and vitalism—was beginning to take shape.

It is now necessary to discuss the systematic philosophical works I wrote after my initial anticipations.

My motivation to express my worldview and values in a systematic manner, complete with the appropriate scholarly apparatus and academic jargon, arose partially from a contentious situation. During my philosophical studies, my interest shifted towards post-Kantian transcendental idealism. Unlike most followers of this school, I recognised the non-philosophical, prerational foundation of this preference. For me, that foundation was the will to dominate. An author from that period, Grünbaum, distinctly acknowledged this in his essay *Love and Domination as Fundamental Themes of Philosophical Worldviews*. Later, existentialist analysis—foreshadowed by Nietzsche—or even psychoanalytic interpretations of philosophical systems would gain popularity, while the professional idealist philosophers remained oblivious, believing they were pursuing a purely ‘objective’ line of speculation. This preference reflected one aspect of my ‘personal equation,’ as I mentioned earlier. Simultaneously, I was convinced that the current of transcendental idealism represented a critical stage in examining issues of certainty and knowledge (the gnoseological issue). I felt it was almost a mission to revisit the positions reached along this line and to advance further while adhering rigorously to the original impetus that had given rise to that philosophy. Ultimately, this path would emerge as a means of achieving an immanent self-transcendence for

philosophy itself. I viewed my philosophical works as a preparatory stage for accessing a domain beyond mere discursive thought and speculation—one focused on inner, realisational action aimed at surpassing human limits, informed by the teachings I had come to know. It was not by chance that I chose the following words from J. Lagneau as the motto for my essays: ‘Philosophy is the reflection that ultimately recognises its insufficiency and the necessity of absolute action arising from within.’

The conviction that this further step had to be taken impersonally ran so deep in me that, despite the considerable effort involved and the extensive specialised preparation required, I proposed to a wealthy friend that he publish my main work, *Teoria e Fenomenologia dell’Individuo Assoluto*, under his name. My primary concern was establishing the boundaries of modern thought rather than asserting my identity as the author. However, the proposal did not materialise, as this individual insisted on making additions and modifications that I could not accept.

The previously mentioned polemical incentive arose from the dominance of neo-Hegelianism in Italy, particularly in the forms expressed by Croce and, above all, Gentile. After interacting with some representatives of this movement, I became irritated by their outrageous presumption. As mere intellectuals, they presented themselves as the pontiffs of critical thought, proclaiming the message of the Absolute Spirit while looking down upon and dismissing esteemed thinkers of mine as dilettantes for their refusal to systematise deeply lived intuitions and visions of much greater dignity according to the rules—using Schopenhauer’s phrase—of ‘philosophy for professors of philosophy.’ It was truly a world filled with pompous rhetoric. What repelled me even further was the coexistence of the petty-bourgeois type—salary-earning, married, and conformist—with the theory that he embraced: the absolute, free Self as the creator of the world and history.

Unsurprisingly, for these individuals, the wisdom doctrines I had begun to explore were merely ‘superstitions,’ relics long surpassed by the unfolding of ‘critical awareness.’ This perspective was to be expected, as secular ‘Enlightenment’ was their true intellectual foundation.

I felt compelled to set the record straight. To that end, I began systematically studying the original texts of classic idealist thinkers, ranging from Kant to Hegel and on to the later Schelling. This required me to learn German, as most of their works had not yet been translated at that time. After these studies, it became evident to me how utterly impoverished and vacuous the Italian epigones of this philosophy were; they had absurdly reduced its original demands to a contrived game of dialectics consisting of merely a few scant categories. In Gentile’s case, this was compounded by vague grandiosity and unbearable paternalistic pedagogism. Regardless of its intrinsic solidity, the classic works of idealism—such as Schelling’s philosophy of nature and mythology, Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* and *Encyclopaedia*, and Fichte’s various doctrines of science—far surpassed the Italian interpretations in terms of genius, inventiveness, creative impulse, and the powerful endeavour to encompass the diverse realities and materials of experience. Croce, in a letter, honoured me by describing one of my subsequent books as ‘well-framed and reasoned with precision.’ While I recognised in him (whom I also met personally) greater ethical qualities and intellectual acuity than in Gentile, I could not overlook the low level of purely discursive thought that ultimately abandoned significant speculative problems to scatter into essays, literary criticism, and secular-liberal historiography.

Nonetheless, my studies equipped me to challenge them on their own turf. I had mastered their jargon, which they regarded as a mark of seriousness and modern ‘scientific’ thought.

However, my intellectual horizons extended beyond the confines of strictly idealistic themes. In addition to the non-discursive knowledge I previously mentioned, Nietzsche and Michelstaedter significantly shaped the foundational orientation of my speculative constructions. Furthermore, my understanding of French ‘personalism’—including thinkers like Lachelier, Secrétan, Boutroux, Lagneau, Renouvier, Hamelin, and Blondel—played a significant role, especially in relation to the concept of true freedom. These thinkers were largely overlooked or barely acknowledged by Italian idealists, whose cultural perspective was typically narrow and insular, often confined to the antecedents of the Hegelian tradition and frequently not even known in the original texts.

The *Essays on Magical Idealism*, published in 1925 by the 'Atanor' editions, served as a preview of the content of *Teoria e fenomenologia dell'Individuo Assoluto*, which, while nearly completed, I was uncertain when I would be able to publish. Thus, there is little need to discuss that book separately here. Aside from its critical and constructive core, two aspects warrant attention. The first pertains to the extensive references to wisdom and initiatory doctrines, which may strike a common reader—particularly one familiar with mainstream philosophy—as strange and unusual. In one regard, this was a prefiguration of what I would later present ex professo, eliminating irrelevant material and questionable or indirect sources in subsequent post-philosophical works, in a form suitable for the content. Indeed, this involved a profound effort to systematise and present, in their immanent logic, the experiences, disciplines, and achievements of high asceticism, yoga, magic, and initiation. It culminated in a lengthy chapter titled 'The Essence of Magical Development,' which would later be revisited and expanded in the final part of *Fenomenologia dell'Individuo Assoluto*. Other essays published separately, such as *La purità come valore metafisico* (ed. Bilychnis), also fall within this rationalising and systematising approach. Collectively, they represent an almost unprecedented effort; few had previously engaged in systematically and dialectically exploring such unconventional and, for many, discredited subjects, except for figures like Marcus, von Baader, Haman, and Schopenhauer in some of his essays.

In the final chapter of the book, titled 'Contemporary Demands for Magical Idealism,' I examined a group of significant modern thinkers 'to identify the deeper motive that informs their conceptions'. I aimed 'to demonstrate how, when this motive is allowed to operate freely within their systems [...], it inevitably leads to the positions of magical idealism outlined in the other essays of the book.' This group included C. Michelstaedter, O. Braun—whose sparse diary entries provide glimpses of a lived experience cut short by his untimely death in World War I—G. Gentile, H. Hamelin, and H. Keyserling. It represented a kind of immanent critique, necessitating a transition to the conceptions I defended, as well as the separation and collection of valid elements that could be utilised from my perspective. Naturally, these authors (the list could have been considerably extended) did not exemplify mere critical idealism. H. Keyserling's contributions did not warrant the attention they received. Knowing him personally made it clear to me that I was in the presence of a mere 'salon philosopher'—vain, self-absorbed, and incredibly pretentious. In his writings, I was drawn to the concept of 'creative knowledge,' which involves changing one's state of consciousness to activate the function of 'meaning.' This meaning engages with things and facts, animating them and employing them as material for free expression within a framework that is not merely subjective, as in lyricism and art; rather, it engages the very substratum of reality to remove its necessity and opacity. Referring to certain Eastern doctrines, Keyserling established a 'School of Wisdom' in Darmstadt that, after a brief and ephemeral existence, vanished without a trace. In truth, he was the last person capable of embodying the dignity of a Master. Everything in him reduced to sporadic intuitions, reminiscent of those common among Slavs (Keyserling was of Baltic descent), devoid of any solid foundation.

Turning to my own system, it began with an immanent critique of transcendental idealism, particularly its claim to represent the ultimate boundary of modern 'critical' thought (later, I would refine this to describe it as reflecting the mindset of the contemporary crisis). I accepted Hegel's assertion that 'every philosophy is idealism, and when it appears as non-idealism, it is merely an idealism that is not fully aware of itself.' At the same time, I highlighted the hidden meaning and irrational root of idealism, which I argued is a will to be and to dominate; therefore, according to the specific meaning I attribute to this term (which I will address later), it embodies an essentially 'magical' impulse. I noted that the demand for absolute certainty as immanent had been the centre and driving force of all developments in transcendental critical philosophy. 'In the negation of any "other" as a result of the logical investigation into the possibility of knowledge—and as a necessary condition for a system of absolute certainty—there emerges, reflected in the world of ideas, a profound drive for self-affirmation and domination.' Therefore, it was a type of existential analysis of idealism, addressing the very core of the gnoseological problem. I concluded by stating that 'it is

thinkers like Nietzsche, Weininger, and Michelstaedter who add depth to the works of Descartes, Berkeley, Kant, and Fichte.’

However, the driving force behind idealism has experienced a kind of syncope, even a reversal. In this context, I could have discussed a process of dissociation and self-alienation. The ideals cherished by these philosophers have been projected and ‘realised’—in the sense that psychiatrists use the term regarding hallucinatory experiences—on an abstract and speculative level, becoming detached from the real individual and the living totality of a person. As a result, the individual was increasingly marginalised and degraded. I illustrated that idealism has made progress through various stages in addressing its speculative problem—specifically, in terms of immanence and the elimination of transcendence—allowing it to move further away from such alienation.

There is no need to reiterate all my arguments; I will provide a brief overview. In many ways, idealism is encapsulated in Berkeley’s formula: ‘*esse est percipi*,’ which means that the only being I can concretely and sensibly address is that which corresponds to my perception, thought, or representation. Of any other being, I know nothing; therefore, it is as if it does not exist. This position has been broadened—an expansion to which I have personally contributed—to refer not only to perception but also to a common foundation for every faculty, grounded in an elementary act of consciousness. Absolute idealists attributed a ‘positing’ character to this ‘act.’ While Schopenhauer stated, following Kant, that ‘the world is my representation,’ these idealists, following Fichte, asserted that ‘the world is my positing.’ Meanwhile, some later thinkers even spoke of ‘creation.’

With a certain level of skill, one can effectively understand everything that the Self knows only indirectly—through other subjects, social life, culture, history, and so on. The basic, and ultimately mundane, fact remains: if all these mediated aspects were stripped of their role as contents of my consciousness, thought, and experience—regardless of how one might refer to the function of ‘being-for-itself’—they would simply vanish into nothingness. The circle is complete.

On one point, nearly all idealists have struggled to fully follow through, driven less by theoretical reasons and more by moral and ‘human’ concerns, specifically, regarding the denial of any independent reality to other subjects and other Selves. Various speculative devices were employed to sidestep this challenging issue and to avoid the unsettling idea of the Unique One’s cosmic solitude within a world (referred to here as the Maya world) that encompasses not only nature, objects, and the heavens but also other beings. However, I did not shy away from this challenge and demonstrated the impossibility of avoiding what is often termed ‘solipsism’ (a rather inadequate term) when one adheres firmly to idealistic epistemology. Moreover, beyond speculative arguments, do dreams not illustrate how other beings can appear real, act unpredictably, and even terrify us while they remain mere projections of our imagination? It is even more troubling when we consider the characteristics of coherence and logic that, unlike those of dreams, the so-called real world presents. All of this relies on the conditioning use of categories of reason, which shape our understanding and, as Kant pointed out, exist only within us, in the transcendental subject. Without these categories, everything would remain in an incoherent state akin to madness or dreaming. Thus, on a purely gnoseological level—meaning in a critical and cognitive sense—the circle is also complete here.

The world can only be ‘my’ world. Even if there were something beyond this—something ‘objective’—I could never truly know it. At the moment of knowing it—much like how objects turned to gold when touched by Midas—it would transform into my thought, my experience, or my representation; it would thus, in one way or another, submit to my conditions. Based on this understanding, every doubt seems eliminated, the door to the mystery is closed, and the Self finds itself in a solid and inaccessible fortress, where it can feel safe, free, and in control.

However, a sufficiently rigorous—and honest—examination reveals a profound flaw within this entire system. To claim that ‘the world is my representation,’ my experience, or my ‘thought’ is one thing; to assert instead that ‘the world is my positing,’ or ‘creation,’ is quite another. Moreover, a distinction exists between the Self as posited by idealists and the concrete Self to which each individual can refer—not theoretically or philosophically, but practically. Once the world—not

merely the realm of true ideas and emotions but also that of things and beings in space and time—is deemed real and certain solely as thought and a system of thought, we must ask: in what situation does the Self ultimately find itself in such an ‘immanentised’ world, and how does this relate to the function that ‘posits’? If the Self were to possess only the abstract capacity for thought, it might still be possible to overcome the difficulties that arise. We could envision the Self as a kind of impersonal, transcendental machine that presents everything known and experienced before us—similar to what happens in a dream, in which one often does not recognise oneself as both the spectator and creator of what unfolds through the automatism of imagination. However, it is impossible to reduce the Self to this, even when considering the psyche of the most dazed and stunned individuals. It had happened, then, that like Atlas shedding its cosmic weight, idealists had detachment from the real Self, seeking refuge in the so-called ‘transcendental Self’ or ‘Absolute Spirit,’ which is also referred to as Logos, Idea, or Pure Act. They ascribed to this entity a cosmogonic activity and declared that, in the presence of such a Self, the concrete personality of individuals is nothing but an illusion and fiction—a ‘puppet of the imagination,’ as Gentile boldly termed it. According to this view, one could only partake in truth, certainty, reality, ethics, spirituality, and historicity to the extent that one identifies with that transcendental entity. This perspective prompted my critique. I argued that the Self cannot be adequately defined merely in terms of simple ‘thought,’ ‘representation,’ or ‘gnoseological subject,’ but rather in terms of freedom, action, and will. By placing these values at the centre of the discussion, the entire construct of abstract idealism begins to falter. If the ‘transcendental Self’ proposed by idealists were not merely another term for a creator God in the heavens—whom these philosophers regarded as a superstitious and uncritical hypostasis, a mere ‘position’ of thought—and if it had any relationship to our real being, it would lead to a paradoxical regression.

To begin with, I can attribute a large part of thought to myself—though not in the strict sense, but in the ‘transcendental’ sense (that which corresponds to the world of objective ‘appearances’)—only if I regard it as an unconscious function. This had already been highlighted by E. von Hartmann through a rigorous, realistic critique, which idealists naturally dismissed as irrelevant. The characteristics of this unconscious function must also incorporate non-intentionality, non-predictability, and contingency, as no idealist can foresee what ‘his’ thought will ‘posit’ regarding the people he encounters or the words his interlocutor will say. Another characteristic is passivity. Here, I included my critique of the well-known Hegelian formula asserting the identity of the real and the rational (‘everything real is rational, and everything rational is real’), as well as its post-Hegelian counterpart connecting the real with the willed, the fact with the act, alongside the ensuing theory of the so-called ‘concrete will,’ which I will elaborate on further. It is crucial to question whether what is considered real is deemed so because it is rational, just as whether occurrences are labelled real because they are willed (thus only being real to the extent they can be said to be willed, otherwise being unreal as a result of a deprivation of will). Alternately, could it be that what is considered willed (as ‘made real through an act of willing,’ as ‘posited,’ etc.) is simply a designation attributed to it because it is real—based solely on the irrational fact of its existence or occurrence? It becomes evident that, for the vast majority of what the transcendental Self ‘posits’ or ‘creates,’ only the second alternative applies: in the case of absolute idealists, reality dictates what they presume to be rational and willed. This effectively amounts to acknowledging a fundamental passivity of the true Self, allowing external factors, history, and contingencies to dictate what it would have ‘freely’ willed. To challenge the previously mentioned formulas, I presented a stark argument: an idealist subjected to torture should perceive his situation as ‘rational’ and ‘willed by him’ (by the ‘true’ Self) simply because it is ‘real.’ In this light, he should view his resistance and suffering as mere fixation and irrational desire of the empirical subject—a ‘puppet of imagination.’ A similar situation arose concerning a significant portion of the contents of experience, both in theoretical and practical contexts. In a later chapter of my book, *Men and the Ruins*, I specifically highlighted the immorality of such doctrines in their historicist and political applications. More broadly, I established a fundamental distinction between a truly free act and a ‘passive’ act, which I also referred to as ‘spontaneity.’ In a free act, there is an interval between what is possible

and what is real; the realm of possibilities is broader than the actual occurrences. This indicates that a power precedes and governs the act, serving as the ultimate reason for its occurrence or non-occurrence and determining it as this action rather than another. In contrast, in a passive or spontaneous act, this interval is absent; there is a direct and compelling transition to action (or perception, representation, etc.), reminiscent of automatism, in which the possible is fully exhausted in the real—in what occurs, is felt, is seen, etc. When discussing ‘spontaneity,’ I can refer to something that is truly ‘mine’ but not ‘me,’ because, as is the case with emotions and passions, I cannot claim to provoke it directly, nor am I the unconditional cause of its determinations or in control of them. Thus, I established this key point: not being determined by something external is one thing, while being truly, positively free is another. In *Teoria dell’Individuo Assoluto*, a lengthy chapter critiques all concepts of false freedom, a critique I believe has been conducted more radically than by anyone else.

Therefore, the conclusion of my entire argument was this: the idealistic reduction of nature and much of the world of real experience to the Self succeeds only ‘insofar as the Self itself is reduced to nature. This reduction leads to a situation in which nothing is known of that Self, which is freedom; it is as if nothing were known, and through a clear paralogism, the concept of the Self is identified with that of the principle of spontaneity, which ultimately equates to nature.’

Consequently, concerning the true Self, the transcendent cosmogonic activity must be judged either entirely unconscious or characterised by passive, unintended, unpredictable, and non-teleological activity—merely ‘spontaneous.’ It then appeared that, had the idealists seriously followed, in practice and not merely in abstract philosophy, the principle of conformity of the real person with the transcendental Self (with pure act or what they otherwise referred to as their new deity), they would have embarked on a path of absolute regression into the sub-personal, even more so than the various philosophers of ‘Life’ and the irrational, whom the idealists regarded with disdain. I indicated, in the various stages of transcendental philosophy—from Kant to Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Weber, and Gentile—a progressive escape from the real Self. I argued that ‘the Self does not constitute the form that gnoseologically dominates the contingency of phenomena—Schlegel’s “chaos outside the system”—except as Gentile’s actual consciousness, that is, in the absolute adherence to the spontaneous (representative) act through which things come into being and affirm themselves in the consciousness of the Self. This leads to a form of passive mysticism that, in concrete terms, equates to an absolute, stupefied phenomenalism [...]. The individual does not hold firm but yields; it does not dominate things but dissolves into them. It represents a path of decline.’ This concluded the critical part of my system and paved the way for the constructive phase. What remained to be done once one acknowledged this state of affairs with honesty and courage? For those who had seriously engaged with the idealist experience, rather than merely practicing philosophy for academic purposes, the only recourse was to dismiss it as a kind of delusion or to find a loophole to introduce a form of religious transcendence. However, if one remained steadfast, the only option was to tread the perilous path I sought to outline.

Here, I must limit myself to a few remarks. The positive aspect of my system began with the postulation of the experience of the pure Self—the detached Self, a centre unto itself, pure being, and absolute self-evidence—preceding any determined content of consciousness and even the faculty of thought. Thus, while Descartes argued that ‘I think, therefore I am,’ I asserted the opposite: ‘I am, therefore I think,’ framing thought solely as a faculty or possibility of the Self. This experience is merely postulated; it is contingent, may or may not occur, is underived, and serves as an absolute principle unto itself. In a similar vein, Weininger spoke of the ‘event of the Self,’ Rimbaud referred to the ‘Self that is another,’ and Hindu metaphysics considers the Self (ātman) as pure light; classical antiquity recognised it as *voûç*. Later, Husserlian phenomenology—which I was then entirely unfamiliar with—would pursue a similar approach (though it discarded it shortly after attempting it) in describing the phenomenological reduction or destruction intended to reveal, as foundational evidence, a Self—a ‘pure, unmoving centre of light.’ Importantly, this is not a theoretical concept but rather a pure fact of experience, albeit not of everyday experience.

During that period, I aimed to define the concept of value, giving it a specific meaning. I described it as the unique relationship, 'grounded in justice,' that the Self could have with the 'determinations,' a term I used to refer to all aspects of lived experience. This relationship comprised three elements: the transparency of meaning (a lived meaning, not an abstract, intellectual one) within the determinations; a direct connection of unity between the Self and the determination (in terms of possession or dominion); and, finally, the character of what pertains to a bare and free will.

However, adhering to the notion of the Self and the principle, or imperative, of 'value' as a condition for a higher form of 'rationality' in existence means facing, on a different level, challenges similar to those found in abstract idealism. Indeed, just as the reality of that Self is clear and absolute (as it must appear once one experiences what I have postulated), it is equally clear, in what I referred to as 'the empirical state of existence,' that there exists a matter and experience whose relationship with me does not align with what 'value' truly entails.

At that time, I knew nothing of existentialism; many years would pass before this philosophy, alongside Husserlian phenomenology, gained traction due to shifts in the general climate of contemporary civilisation. Yet, fundamentally, I was already reproducing its essential themes: the paradoxical and irrational coexistence and mutual implications, in real existence, of the finite and the infinite, the conditioned and the unconditioned. I have previously mentioned the crisis I experienced years earlier in response to such a situation.

While existentialism would stop at merely acknowledging this paradox and irrationality—indulging in the resulting state of crisis or seeking ways out that come at the cost of an internal concession (something I highlighted in one of my later books, *Riding the Tiger*, which critically examines existentialism)—I made that very structure of existence the starting point for my theory of the Absolute Individual.

In this context, the concept of absolute freedom re-emerged. In my critique of idealism, I pointed out how, in one way or another, idealism consistently introduced an initial dogmatic formula by sleight of hand. For example, the notion of the 'dialectic of concrete logos' suggested that the spirit must disrupt its pure identity by distinguishing itself through 'self-positing' (which was taken to be synonymous with positing the determined object, or the non-Self) to subsequently recognise itself in it. This implies a process of becoming. But why must the spirit do this? If the response is that otherwise, the spirit would cease to be spirit and instead be akin to nature, one could counter: why should spirit not be primary? 'Freedom must be.' Likewise, thinkers such as Hamelin reduced the entire development of categories—through which they attempted to explain and justify the given world idealistically, or at least its fundamental aspects—to the process of spirit 'constructing its own freedom.' But again, the question arises: does it construct this freedom freely or out of necessity? In the latter case, it would be absurd to speak of freedom, as it would mean being subject to a given law, just like any other.

I then sought to defend the concept of absolute freedom, which exists, in a sense, before itself (as realised freedom)—a freedom understood as pure will that can unconditionally choose both itself and its opposite, namely, the negation of itself. This means that the Self should have access to both the path of 'value' (in the sense previously indicated) and the path of non-value, as two compatible options.

In this way, the paradoxical and irrational situation of the 'empirical state of existence' seemed to find resolution in a higher meaning. The concrete coexistence of the finite and the infinite, the conditioned and the unconditioned, dramatically highlights the dual possibilities and calls for a fundamental decision. 'As fire can reclaim the essence of its fuel through its profound will to actualise and blaze forth, so the Self, aspiring to be self-sufficient, can reintegrate its non-being, serving as the very matter from which it can manifest the splendour of absolute life and activity.' Doctrinally, this leads to the definition of two paths: the 'path of the other' on one side and the 'path of the Absolute Individual' on the other. In this regard, I drew some points of reference from Michelstaedter and later developed them in more detail. Michelstaedter referred to the 'path of persuasion,' understood as the path of being that is self-sufficient, possessing within itself its

principle and value. This path does not dismiss its existential deficiency but rather embraces and resolves it. In contrast, the 'path of rhetoric' is that of the individual who escapes genuine possession of the self, relying instead on external sources, seeking the other, and submitting to outside influences in order to 'persuade' himself. This constitutes a flight into time, driven by dark necessity and relentless craving, indefinitely deferring the longing for a state of authentic selfhood and excluding the possibility of achieving true self-possession. Michelstaedter probably did not realise that this conception essentially corresponds to that of Buddhism and ancient mystical philosophy. The 'path of the other' (which I also refer to as the 'path of the object') parallels in Buddhism the samsāra, the lower world of becoming driven by desire and craving, and in ancient mystical philosophy, the 'circle of generation,' also known as the cycle of necessity. The other path aligns with that of the Enlightened and Liberated One in Buddhism, as well as the initiated of the ancient Mysteries.

The innovative and audacious aspect of my conception was to regard both paths as equally valid. Each path should be as possible and legitimate as the other, in the name of supreme freedom. The true absolute must encompass the possibility of both the absolute and the non-absolute.

Due to its very nature, the 'path of the other' can only be subjected to schematic structural determination, wherein a basic situation is uniformly reiterated. In contrast, only the 'path of the Absolute Individual' can be partially defined; describing it became the task I set for myself in the second part of the *Teoria* and later in the entire *Fenomenologia*.

I will refrain from discussing the new theory of certainty that could be formulated here, as it had already been the subject of an essay, 'The Three Epochs of the Problem of Certainty,' published in German in the journal *Logos* and later reproduced as the first part of my *L'individuo e il divenire del mondo* (Libreria di Scienze e Lettere, 1926). Instead, I will briefly outline the overall framework.

I began from the idealist positions that my previous critique had clarified. The world is 'posited' by the Self. However, in most cases, my powerlessness and the lack of 'value' in relation to this 'positing' become evident. To pave the way, I turned to a critique of philosophical realism: to explain the impotence of the Self, the realist introduces a real being that reveals itself to us through representation, imagery, or perception, thereby determining those elements. Yet, this inference is not only epistemologically invalid (it is a 'transcendental use of the principle of causality,' as Kant noted), but it is also unnecessary. It suffices to refer to an activity that, while belonging to the Self, possesses a character of necessity—specifically, to a 'spontaneity' that reflects a 'privation' of will and the relationship inherent to 'value.' This observation could and should have been sufficient. On the path of the Absolute Individual, the imperative is not to flee from this deficiency, 'not to concede it a reality of its own' (by attributing it to a distinct reality—nature, 'thing-in-itself,' God)—but, after recognising it, to become sufficient unto this insufficiency, to take it entirely upon oneself and remain steadfast: to be (the privation) and to perceive everything that cannot be controlled not as reality and as value (as in the tendency to conflate the rational with the real, the willed with the real) but as negativity. Furthermore, one must affirm the act that consumes this deficiency, 'so that what previously did not exist—due to the deficiency in the central activity of the Self—can come to be in absolute, complete being.' In essence, non-being (the privation) should not be confused with being. This process reflects, on a cosmic-gnoseological or ontological-gnoseological scale, the transformation of resisting a passion or instinct—breaking free from its compulsion and transmuting it into a true act. Here, ethics and ontology are interconnected. This perspective also carries an eschatological backdrop: nature, seen as 'privation' or non-being, achieves redemption at the moment the Absolute Individual realises itself, transforming into a state of absolute being that encompasses its own origin and end (the 'final consummation' or *ekpyrosis*). This approach implies a movement beyond an intensified form of Stoicism and offers a critique of Michelstaedter's position. The idealist premise—retained here—binds the Self irrevocably to the world; I cannot escape the world, as it is my representation. The 'path of the other,' yearning for identification that places reality and meaning beyond myself, remains an option. However, on the path of the Absolute Individual, I cannot isolate myself in abstract self-sufficiency, opposing the

Self as value to the world as non-value. Although I may deny the world's reality, it nonetheless exists. Since I posit it (not through free will, but as 'spontaneity'), I am responsible for it. To avoid being torn at my core, it must be integrated into 'value.' This conception closely resembles the Gnostic-Manichean idea of a Cosmic One crucified within the world, representing the meaning of being-in-the-world—but without embracing dualism or pessimism—creating a closed circle that allows neither excuse nor escape. The Stoic Self and Stirner's Unique One must evolve into the form of Aristotle's pure act, resolving the realms of necessity and the intertwining of life with non-life. As a synthesis of this vision, it may be best to reproduce a passage from the *Essays on Magical Idealism*:

'The mere representational activity is a necessary condition but not a sufficient one for things to be real, as these things relate to a Self. I can claim to have posited things, but inasmuch as they are spontaneity—not as they are a Self, that is, freedom. To say that I, as the Self or sufficient principle (autarkês), cannot recognise myself as the unconditional cause of representations (e.g., of nature) does not imply that these representations are caused by something "other" (by real things or existing entities in themselves). Rather, it means that I am insufficient for a part of my activity, which remains spontaneity—that such a part is not yet "moralised" and that the Self, as freedom, experiences a "privation" in this context. Hence, realism, as noted, must be rejected tout court. When can one truly affirm the principle of idealism—that the Self posits things? When the individual has transformed the obscure passion of the world into a body of freedom—that is, when he has shifted the form by which he experiences representational activity from spontaneity—a mere coincidence of reality and possibility—to unconditional, arbitrary causality—into power. Before this task, the idealist instead flees: he replaces the real act, which, possessing things, nullifies them, with a discursive act that recognises and relies on them. He calls his non-being "being," labelling "real" that which, being a deprivation of his power, should justly be termed "unreal." In doing so, he validates this deprivation, flatters it, and feeds on it incestuously. Inadequate to the essence of the Self, he renounces and dissolves into things; terms like "rationality," "ideality," "historicity," "concrete freedom," and "transcendental Self" are simply different names for this flight; they symbolise his impotence, the value assigned—forcefully—to what, in relation to the point of the Self or morality (in the Weiningerian and Michelstaedterian sense of the term), is non-value—death and darkness: nature.'

A flaw seemed to exist within the system of this new absolute immanentism. Even if one were to accept the development inherent in the path of the Absolute Individual, the state of 'privation' was initially recognised as an unexplained mystery. I denied the problem itself, first noting the conditioned nature of this darkness, as it only appears in relation to the positing of the absolute Self. In the absence of this positing, that characteristic is nonexistent—similar to those who merely let life happen or who, in a Dionysian manner, identify with 'life' itself. Secondly, I questioned why the starting point should be full and perfect. The concept of 'privation,' which was key to explaining the supposed non-Self, could instead be viewed as something that naturally pertains to everything that is potential but can develop into the completeness of a perfect act. This allowed me to dwell on a fixation I had not yet fully liberated myself from at that time, namely the notion of 'value.' Here, 'value' is understood not in the previously mentioned specific sense but rather in a moral idealistic context. If perfection existed from the outset, what would be the purpose of activity, effort, or struggle for the Self? I asserted that being, truth, and certainty do not reside 'behind' but rather 'ahead'; they are tasks to be accomplished. There is no distinct separation between the individual and the universal subject; rather, there is a sense of progressivity: the individual is the universal subject in potency, and the universal subject is the individual in act. I stated, 'If God exists, the Self does not,' referring to the 'creation of God' as merely a possibility of the Self. Later, I refrained from insisting on this sentiment and attributed my fixations on 'value' and 'creation' to the common ideology of the self-made man, placing these perspectives in their correct context and thereby relativising them.

However, the notion of an autonomous and free development from a lesser state to a greater one remained valid, with an ontological foundation—almost in an Aristotelian sense—culminating in a

pure act, a ‘monad of monads,’ or a ‘god’ positioned at its end. The dialectical method I employed in outlining the ‘phenomenology’ was not aligned with Hegelian dialectics, which involves transitions between opposites and the denial of the finite. Instead, it was a ‘dialectic of the distinct,’ signifying a progression from the formless to the formed and individuated, in increasingly higher degrees of integration, completeness, and freedom. From this perspective, it should also be stated that the absolute Self does not exist; rather, there is a contingent possibility of the Self making itself absolute.

I addressed various speculative technical problems, particularly the relationship between essence and existence, which poses an additional challenge for abstract idealism. This philosophy has historically struggled to adequately distinguish between a represented thing (or its concept—the essence) and a real thing. This distinction inevitably arises within the same closed circle of immanentism. In searching for a solution, I revisited the concepts of potency and intensive degrees. The notion of an idea can be seen as a weak reality, while reality itself is a powerful idea—or a more powerful version of that idea. There is no gap between the two; rather, there is only a difference in intensity. For instance, Taine defined perception as a ‘true hallucination,’ while Berkeley differentiated between ‘real’ representations and merely mental ones by attributing the former to ‘a more powerful spirit,’ which reflects an intensive difference. I proposed that an idea is a reality in potency, whereas reality is an idea in act. This theory is audacious and potentially dangerous, as it leads inexorably to action. Paradoxically, one might consider this gradual process of the Self, in which its power ranges from mere thinking to magical imagining, then to self-suggestion, the suggestion of others, and ultimately to suggesting and modifying reality itself. In light of such ideas, one might find them almost deliriously odd. However, a simple shift in the framework could render them more plausible. I also questioned the traditional concepts surrounding the relationships between the macrocosm and the microcosm. It is particularly relevant to mention the idea of ‘intellectual intuition,’ which is found in Scholasticism and invoked by Kant to contrast this form of knowledge with ordinary, sensitive, and passive perceptions. I did not, however, oppose the two modes of perception. Here again, a relationship between potency and act is indicated, suggesting a development beyond human limitations. In Scholasticism, intellectual intuition was associated more with angelic entities than with humanity. Certain traditions, especially in Yoga, have examined phases of the active process of creating or realising intellectual intuition, culminating in an active and metaphysical union with the object—one that encompasses both magical and noetic possibilities, discussed in a chapter of the Essays and in *L’Uomo come potenza*. I will highlight two additional points concerning the general theory of the Absolute Individual. The first involves resolving the antithesis between rationalism and irrationalism. The rational does not exist independently in a way that puts it in conflict with the irrational. Under the rational, one invariably finds its foundational root and determining principle: the non-rational. The Sollen, that is, the imperative character of specific laws of reason (and logic itself—without even touching upon the ‘autonomous’ ethics of the categorical imperative), is merely a manifestation of the müssen, that is, of a condition in which one feels compelled to act in a certain way, therefore of a passivity, of an impotence linked to a kind of *vis a tergo*. Equally decadent and foreign to the path of the Absolute Individual is to consider the irrational as an unyielding reality, in terms of ‘life,’ ‘becoming,’ and similar notions. This perspective reveals an externalisation of the Self; in contrast, the integrated Self acknowledges the irrational as its own intrinsic substance or power, whose authentic expression is found in rationality. The more complete the power, the more coherent its manifestations will be, presenting an absolute form or law—what can be termed ‘rationality’ across all dimensions. Consequently, ‘truth’ is also a reflection of power. Paradoxically, I would assert, ‘Truth is a powerful error; error is a weak truth.’ From the viewpoint of the integrated Self, something is not willed merely because it is recognised as just, rational, or true; it appears just, rational, or true only because it is willed. Thus, the ‘aseity’ of values is excluded. Upon recognising this, I identified a key distinction: on one side, there is being centred within oneself, which corresponds, on an objective level, to power; on the other side, there is being not centred within oneself, resulting in an internal throne that is either empty or occupied by illusions. The concept of voluntarism, previously

articulated in theology regarding a non-rationalistic view of the divine (as expressed by Duns Scotus: God does not will something because it is good; rather, it is good because He wills it), was thus ‘immanentised’ and applied to man. However, as is common in such contexts, it became clear that anyone who abruptly adopted such a dangerous doctrine risked a catastrophic failure.

The second point concerned the realm of the extranormal, as the path of the Absolute Individual was one where the collapse of abstract idealism was avoided. The rhetoric and fiction surrounding the ‘universal subject’ were exposed as illusory constructs, but this critique relied on the premise that possibilities extend beyond the typical limits of human existence. Initially, in the *Essays*—particularly in the chapter on the ‘supernormal Self’—and later in a section of *Teoria*, I addressed and re-evaluated the Kantian problem of ‘possible experience’ (*mögliche Erfahrung*) and its transcendental assumptions. Kant began with the idea that human experience could be understood within a single, universal framework defined by rational structures that endowed it with necessity and constancy, thus making ‘synthetic a priori judgments’ possible, which he considered the foundation of all positive, universally valid scientific knowledge. To support this, he traced back to the ‘categories’ and the transcendental function of the Self, resulting in characteristics of necessity and clarity similar to those assumed in empirical reality. However, the development of modern science has already undermined Kant’s premise: the supposed connections of necessity in nature have diminished, as Boutroux discussed in a groundbreaking essay on the ‘contingency of the laws of nature.’ Euclidean geometry appeared merely as one of many possible geometries, and in subatomic physics, scientists discovered that events at this level are often not deterministic but rather probabilistic.

If Kant’s methodology were applied within this changed context, the result would be a ‘transcendental loosening,’ suggesting a new, flexible, and evolving system of categories that more accurately reflects the complexity and variability observed in nature. Furthermore, Kant’s concept of ‘possible experience’ was largely trivial and ordinary, as the corresponding transcendental presuppositions (or possibilities) related to equally real forms of experience—such as sleep, dreams, states of madness, and hypnosis—had not been considered, alongside extranormal experiences recently established by positive metapsychics and *Psychic Research*. Finally, it was necessary to consider what could be gleaned from ethnology and the concordant testimonies of various traditions regarding the phenomenology of the extranormal. The sporadic and exceptional nature of these phenomena did not, however, justify their exclusion from the ‘possible experience,’ which, in its entirety, appeared quite different from that explored in the Critique of Pure Reason, which represented merely an arbitrarily absolutised portion of the broader spectrum of possible experiences. I referred, among other things, to the depiction by d’Osty, director of a parapsychology institute, of an individual who hypothetically possessed the combined potentialities of experience and powers that had been positively verified in separate cases and under diverse circumstances. This leaves ample room for opening up transcendental horizons and removes, in principle, any barriers that might undermine the theory of the Absolute Individual from the outset.

Naturally, a distinction and reservation were necessary regarding the entirety of the latent potentialities derived from the global ‘possible experience.’ Some of these potentialities were marked not by ‘freedom’ and ‘value,’ but rather by ‘spontaneity’ and passive activity. This was true not only for the transcendental correlate of the zone of contingency presented by the physical world but also for many overlooked psychic phenomena (such as dreams: one does not actively dream but is almost ‘dreamed’). Those recorded solely by metapsychics often possess an unintentional character and are linked to states of trance and lowered consciousness. In this context, I outlined a fundamental distinction that would guide me in the area where, after the philosophical phase, I became more decisively involved: there is a regressive extranormal experience achieved through a passage into the subpersonal, the vital, and the unconscious, which I refer to as ‘descending self-transcendence.’ In contrast, there is a positive extranormal experience that is genuinely supernormal. This experience, contingent upon rising beyond the common human personality, enhances everything related to clear consciousness, will, and inner freedom, which I call ‘ascending

self-transcendence.’ After identifying and exploring the vast realm of ‘possible experience,’ the issue of realisation, shaped by the Self and its vocation, remains open.

In my books from the philosophical period, these topics were addressed only incidentally to reinforce the framework of the system of ‘magical idealism. In *Teoria*, several other problems were examined, but it is unnecessary to focus on them here. Instead, I will briefly mention *Fenomenologia*, which was originally intended to be the second part of a single volume, with the first part being *Teoria*. Due to editorial constraints, however, it was published as a separate book in 1930 by Bocca.

I employed the term ‘phenomenology’ in the Hegelian sense rather than in the Husserlian one (as I was not familiar with Husserl, and I am unsure whether he had published his main works by the time I wrote that book in 1924). It referred to a determination of the ‘epochs’ and categories that define the path of the Absolute Individual. This addressed a need related to my further critique of absolute idealism: In the development of this philosophy, it was evident that the Idea, the Act, or whatever else it called its supreme principle, could only ‘immanently’ encompass the totality of experience by becoming increasingly indeterminate—essentially reducing itself to the universal void or the a priori of Gentile’s pure act or Weber’s ‘knowledge,’ articulated in a weak and impoverished dialectic. In this form, it appeared as a container capable of holding anything, or like the night in which all cows are black (where everything is reduced to mere ‘thought’ or ‘act.’ Hegel used this second metaphor to describe the so-called ‘philosophy of identity’ of the early Schelling). I have already expressed the dismal impression left on me by the Italian neo-Hegelian epigones. By taking up, fearlessly, the demands of the doctrine of categories and, in part, the ‘philosophy of nature’ of classical idealists, I aimed to construct a system in which the immanent principle would account for the essential elements of our actual experience and indeed of ‘possible experience’ in the broader sense mentioned before, articulated in a coherent set of distinct meanings and values. The realm of primordial spontaneity, human personality, reflective thought, and the realm beyond these—all needed to be integrated and ‘deduced’ in relation to the process of the Absolute Individual striving for its own realisation or manifestation. The emphasis on ‘striving’ is crucial here, as it has been demonstrated that the opposite path—the ‘path of the object,’ the cycle of samsāra, or the circle of necessity and meaninglessness—also remains open as an identical possibility, and its choice is genuinely free.

The endeavour was bold, and similar to the constructions of classical idealism, my *Fenomenologia* could be accused of a degree of ‘arbitrariness.’ However, could such an objection truly concern a theory whose principle is absolute freedom; thus, in a certain sense, precisely arbitrariness—a theory that proclaims the primacy of will over ‘truth’? In practice, this involved a personal effort to encompass both the possible and the real within a satisfying worldview. I recognised that my reasoning was both logically rigorous and dialectically organised. Throughout my challenging work, I validated this theory, noting how often a fundamental mental effort was sufficient to provide basic meanings with the ‘rational’ foundation necessary for systematic unity. I can confidently say that I never allowed myself to be ‘played’ by ‘thought,’ as happens to those who accept it without realising the nonrational and existential basis of the rational—those who, therefore, are thought more than they think.

In the introduction to *Fenomenologia*, I pointed out to those who had engaged with my recent work the congruence between various views of the system and the insights of nonphilosophical traditional wisdom, often conveyed through symbols and myths. Furthermore, the term ‘phenomenology’ was used not to determine simple logical forms, ‘categories,’ or even transcendental conditions of experience, but primarily to address actual experiences.

The distinctive feature of my system, unlike similar ones, lies in its ability to broaden perspectives. Within the scope of these experiences, what is typically regarded as ordinary human experience is considered merely a specific case. It is important to share a passage from the preface: ‘We view human condition in its entirety as just one of many possible conditions of individual existence, and it is by no means privileged compared to the others. Human experience does not begin or end with man, even if modern individuals—aside from the illusions of faith and the constructs of the

intellect, which still form part of what is merely human—have become incapable of recognising anything beyond this. We have reinstated the human condition as a mere episode or possibility, identifying two significant periods, which we term the epoch of “spontaneity” and the epoch of “domination.” These periods are considered as potential experiences and possible modes of existence, both within and beyond humanity.’ Furthermore, I added: ‘The viewpoint of idealists, who assert that the process of spirit reaches its zenith and comes to a halt when it culminates in philosophy, art, religion, or the ethics of the absolute State (the “objective spirit”)—primarily referencing Hegel and his followers—reveals a limitation and a lack of metaphysical depth that is particularly notable in modernity. Furthermore, the “modern world” does not represent a privileged state; rather, it is merely an illusion, one of many cultures. The very capacity to find oneself in such surprising—and, dare I say, childish—illusions paradoxically attests to the absolute freedom of spirit.’

From a deductive and constructive perspective, the framework of Fenomenologia can be summarised as follows: the Individual has posited itself as freedom and dominion. However, for the Self to truly possess itself, it must, in an initial ideal moment, be—meaning it must posit itself in accordance with immediacy or spontaneity, which I refer to as ‘passive activity.’ This leads to a series of determinations or ‘positions,’ with the ultimate limit being the perfection of ‘being.’ On one hand, this work defines the essential elements of sensory experience; on the other hand, it makes a posteriori references to the residual fragments of primordial states of consciousness found within the mentality and experiences of so-called ‘primitives,’ as well as in regressive forms that converge with them. Simple designations may convey little, especially given the specific meanings I attribute to various terms. Nonetheless, the epoch of spontaneity is structured as follows: First Section: quality, feeling, act, difference, causality, substantiality, and otherness (which includes perception, affection, recognition, expression, and revelation). Second Section: powers of existence and powers of organisation—biologism, as well as the powers of the person. At this point, at the conclusion of the first epoch, the person appears not in an ethical sense but merely as human individuality—a sort of boundary and point of crisis marking the transition from the naturalistic world.

The force behind the transition from one form to another arises from the fact that all aspects of this ‘being’ and positing unfold in keeping with spontaneity, relying solely on the aforementioned higher instance. In this way, the Self transcends the limits of ‘being,’ affirming itself within the ‘nonbeing’ that corresponds to being-for-itself, which manifests, through a process of self-distinction, as the world of things, or more broadly, as the non-Self, that with which it had previously united in keeping with ‘spontaneity’ (whether in perception, living, or motion). Thus began a second epoch, referred to as the epoch of reflection or personality in its true, self-conscious form, yet also as the epoch of image. This is because existence grounded in reflective consciousness comes at the cost of self-alienation. The Self now exists within a world of images and thoughts, confined within the dual forms of existence (subject versus object).

The entirety of the second epoch corresponds to the activities through which the subject seeks to resolve the world of externalised being, which has become that of the ‘object,’ within the frameworks of reflective consciousness. In this framework, the first section encompasses finite experience, the acting personality, self-preservation, cooperation, sexuality, and morality. The second section includes scientific consciousness, philosophical consciousness, mystical consciousness, pure art, and finally, as the constitutive limit-form—again a point of crisis marking the transition of the entire epoch—the Individual. Just as the self-consciousness of the principle of the person asserts itself by detaching from being and opposing it, so too does the principle of the Individual—the first emergence of the absolute Individual in its own form—entail a self-distinction and a confrontation with the entire world of reflection and image, which at that time was perceived as empty and unreal. Thus, there is a return to being, but to a being that signifies true freedom and power: not prepersonal, but transpersonal.

In this new epoch, the movement of resumption, elevation, and transformation is renewed: the world of image and the dual reflective consciousness, which has become an unnecessary

scaffolding, is swept away; the individual re-establishes contact with the elemental world that has descended into the deep layers of the spirit to transmute it in function of 'value' (as specifically defined earlier in terms of absolute meaning, autarchy, freedom, and domination). The entirety of this third epoch aligns with the pursuit of 'magical idealism' and encompasses transcendent experiences. These experiences draw from disciplines and wisdom traditions, including initiatory and esoteric knowledge, which I have dialectically elaborated and deduced. The structure of this exploration is as follows: 1. First Section: the experience of Fire, suffering and love, dynamic evocation, the world of the Word, and the individual as a self-determining entity. 2. Second Section: the Lord of the Limit, the Lord of the Vortex, and the Absolute Individual. Towards the end of the *Fenomenologia*, I prioritised dramatic expression over philosophical and dialectical exposition, using surreal images and a near-hymnic outpouring to convey the sensation of reaching the pinnacle of development—a concept that seems both like the principle and the immutable, unnamed substrate of all phenomenology. In conclusion, I intended to articulate the utmost peak of absolute freedom, highlighting a plurality of subjects, each possessing its own differentiated experiences, paths, and movements.

Although the various forms were speculatively presented according to the structure I have outlined, each carried only a formal character. They did not represent a continuous, obligatory journey but rather a collection of possibilities—distinct and discontinuous modalities for experiencing the value and power of the Absolute Individual. Within each category, the Absolute Individual is fully manifested as absolute freedom. I elaborated on this specific concept in my presentation of the pinnacle of my theory, ensuring that even the slightest remnants of necessity were eliminated. In the preface to *Teoria*, I wrote, 'Our claim may undoubtedly seem audacious: we assert that philosophy, in general, culminates in transcendental idealism, which, in turn, necessarily leads to magical idealism. Beyond this, there is nothing more to achieve in philosophy—at least if philosophy is not to go bankrupt, becoming ensnared in mere opinion, bound by the contingencies of the moment. If we consider any further development beyond magical idealism, it must be entrusted to action rather than theory. Our task has been to guide Western speculation towards this final step. We do not claim our work is the ultimate achievement in this field, but this is of secondary importance. What we have presented in our three works offers substantial material for anyone who wishes to understand. As for those who refuse to understand, even if we dedicated our remaining time to perfecting, consolidating, and developing the system—which we would not do under any circumstances—they would still find grounds for criticism and denial. What matters is that our demand is recognised and that some people understand the meaning and necessity of this final step and, once understood, are willing to move forward. With those who truly desire this, we shall certainly meet again.'

Just as I had concluded my brief artistic exploration, I was now concluding my philosophical journey in the strictest sense. Having set aside painting, abstract art, and the 'alchemy of the verb,' I was now definitively putting aside the activity of pure speculation. I had fulfilled that impersonal task that I felt obligated to undertake in this field.

What impact did my doctrine of the Absolute Individual have at the time? Little, as could be expected for any thought that diverges decisively from established paths. Most references came from non-specialised writers. I recall a few, preserved only because they were contained in a contemporary editorial notice. Nicola Moscardelli, a poet whom I deeply respected, wrote: 'In Evola, one encounters one of those types who embody the character of an era: types so strongly shaped that few dare approach them, not because they feel too distant, but rather because they feel too close and fear that.' The psychologist Roberto Assagioli remarked: 'An indeed original and audacious work, profoundly conceived, which cannot be ignored nor easily dismissed. While it may unsettle and disturb those not accustomed to this kind of spiritual sustenance, it opens a path for the willing towards the beginning of the most audacious and noble adventure—the most dangerous and fascinating that the human spirit can engage in.' The Catholic writer F. Aquilanti stated: 'In Evola's system, the individual is a blazing reality. Everything has become action, power, and control. Barriers fall... God is not in the infinite; the infinite has realised itself in us, and we, in darkness, are

the creators of God.' Professor A. Belluigi wrote: 'In the grey production of pseudo-philosophy, the thought of J. Evola rises audaciously, renewing and rich with promises—free yet strong. Evola articulates demands strongly felt by all truly modern spirits, demonstrating an ability to walk upon the peaks and lead his companions along.' Finally, the idealist L. Grassi commented: 'In Evola's work and efforts, there is an irresistible attraction that binds us. The sharpness of his thought is remarkable, the Eastern and magical elements of his doctrine are formidable, and his writing style is clear, like a sword that cuts through the dense foliage of rhetoric. At that time, I received particular attention from the educator Gino Ferretti and the critic Adriano Tilgher, who was shaped by transcendental idealism. He later shared my critique against the then-dominant Gentilianism and included my writings in an anthology of post-war Italian philosophers. However, he would later lament that I had 'lost myself' when I moved away from speculative forms and ventured into areas where, due to his intellectualistic perspective, he could not follow me.

However, the 'mainstream press' and official culture remained, and even afterward, were to remain unresponsive. What could I expect? Aside from a few amateurish essays in cultural sections of newspapers, philosophy in Italy was primarily a profession—the profession of university teachers with their related cliques and factions. To gain recognition, one had to enter that environment, where works served mainly as credentials for competitions and promotions and where thought was subservient to teaching. I found myself completely outside of all that.

Moreover, could a theory of the Absolute Individual be developed from a university chair? Did I really believe that some of those petty-bourgeois professional philosophers would detach themselves from their familiar thoughts to embark on unconventional pursuits, merely due to the rigour of certain deductions? All the extraphilosophical references that enriched my philosophical system provided a convenient pretext for ostracism. My system, which included aspects like initiation and 'magic' along with other remnants of superstitious beliefs, could be easily dismissed with a shrug, even if I articulated it through rigorous speculative thought.

However, I also misunderstood the situation; I misinterpreted how my speculative efforts might be practically useful to others. My work served as a philosophical introduction to a nonphilosophical world, which could only resonate in rare instances in which ultimate philosophy triggered a deep existential crisis. I later realised that philosophical precedents—specifically, the habit of abstract discursive thinking—were the least suitable qualification for overcoming such crises in the positive sense I intended—through a transition to realisational disciplines. For those already on the other side, this foundational philosophical preparation for understanding 'modern thought' became entirely unnecessary. Therefore, I not only did not recommend but actively discouraged those who followed me from reading my three earlier books. In the domain in which I operated, the focus was not on 'proving,' 'deducing,' or even 'discussing.' It was about recognising or ignoring certain principles and truths based on one's vocation, innate sensitivity, or inner awakening.

Nevertheless, I eventually accomplished what I believed should be done. Many years later—twenty-five years later—I re-read those books of mine. Approaching them almost as the works of a stranger, I assessed them with a fair degree of objectivity. I could not help but notice within them a vigour of thought, thematic richness, and boldness in confronting challenges with innovative and potentially transformative ideas, qualities that are often absent in the works of my contemporaries. Furthermore, there were clear anticipations of positions that would later gain significant popularity, particularly regarding existentialism. In fact, the path of the Absolute Individual emerged as a form of 'positive existentialism'—the existentialism of a man not broken by his metaphysical 'situation,' especially in light of its intensification in our current era.

Thus, within the realm of profane culture, perhaps those works do not deserve complete oblivion. In 1949, with some free time on my hands, I revised *Teoria dell'Individuo Assoluto*, correcting, refining, and enhancing it in certain areas—substituting less profound formulations with others that were more mature and insightful. Since the first edition had long been sold out and was no longer available, a reprint of the new version (which had not yet occurred by the time I write this) could potentially provide documentary and testimonial value. However, in practical terms, this value may

manifest in very few instances unless a representative from that culture, from which I have deliberately distanced myself, draws attention to the book.

Overview

I. The Challenge of the Modern Spirit and the Shift Away from Idealism

This section discusses the crisis facing Western civilisation across various domains, including religion, art, science, and ethics, questioning whether these issues signify a singular decline or potential for renewal. It highlights the central epistemological challenge in philosophy regarding the relationship between the subject and object, emphasising the implications of uncertainty in knowledge and the resultant scepticism. Idealism is presented as a philosophical solution that views reality as dependent on the Self, yet it faces objections concerning the existence of an external world. The paradox of the Self as both creator and prisoner of its constructs is explored, along with the tension between common sense and scientific abstraction. The text argues for the inevitability of idealism in all human activities, suggesting that the truth must be realised through action. It highlights the complexity of idealism, the cultural crisis arising from declining transcendental ideals, and the need for concrete engagement with personal limitations. Finally, it critiques static notions in occultism while advocating for a dynamic understanding of idealism that fosters individual agency and self-realisation through active engagement with higher principles.

- **Crisis in Western Civilisation:** The essay opens by addressing a profound crisis affecting various aspects of life, including religion, art, science, and ethics. Traditional beliefs are failing, leading to feelings of inadequacy.
 - **Key Questions:**
 1. Are the problems across different fields interconnected, signifying a singular crisis of the human spirit?
 2. Is this crisis indicative of decline, or does it hold the potential for new beginnings and growth?
 - **Exploration of Philosophy:** Understanding philosophy is presented as crucial for illuminating contemporary challenges, with idealism identified as a central philosophical approach that reflects this crisis.
 - **Magical Idealism:** This concept links modern thought with spiritual and mystical elements, particularly occultism.
1. The Fundamental Problem of Modern Philosophy: The Gnoseological Question
 - **Gnoseological Issue:** The relationship between the subject (the knower) and the object (the known) is central, raising questions about the nature and validity of knowledge.
 - **Implications:** Knowledge is foundational to understanding reality. If certainty in knowledge is unattainable, all experiences may appear meaningless, giving rise to scepticism, which itself is self-defeating.
 2. The Solution of Idealism to the Gnoseological Problem
 - **Idealism Defined:** It posits that reality exists only as a system of knowing, reliant on the Self. The existence of an external world is questioned.
 - **Objections to Idealism:**
 1. Just because something is not known does not negate its existence.
 2. Perceptions of others validate reality, yet this remains subjective.
 - **Kant and Fichte:** Their works highlight that knowledge is a construct of the Self, not a reflection of an independent reality.
 3. The Idealist Worldview and Its Paradox

- **Self as Creator:** The Self is depicted as the originator of reality, yet this creates a paradox in which the Self feels imprisoned by its own constructs.
- **Common Sense vs. Science:** Both challenge the notion of objective reality; science reduces tangible reality to abstract concepts, relying on idealistic principles for validity.
- **Mathematical Idealism:** Modern science reflects a shift towards viewing reality as a complex of algebraic functions rather than a tangible world.

4. The Inevitability of Idealism in Knowledge Foundations

- **Universal Presence of Idealism:** All human activities contain elements of idealism, whether crude or conscious.
- **Ambiguity of the Self:** Philosophers struggle with the nature of the 'absolute Self,' leading to tensions between the real Self and the concept of a transcendent God.
- **Theoretical Indeterminacy:** The truth of idealism must be realised through action, not solely through intellectual inquiry.

5. The Complexity of Idealism and the Reality of Self-Activity

- **Distinction in Activity:** There are different degrees of self-sufficiency in activities, with the objective world presenting limitations.
- **Cultural Crisis:** The decline of transcendental ideals and the rise of individualistic modernism reflects a deeper cultural self-opposition, demanding the recognition of the individual's value.

6. The Development of Concrete or Magical Idealism

- **Engagement with Insufficiency:** Embracing personal limitations is essential for transforming abstract idealism into concrete reality.
- **Realism vs. Idealism:** Viewing the world as a demand for self-actualisation inspires transformative action rather than passive acceptance.
- **Limitations as Initial Stages:** The absolute emerges through the synthesis of limitations, reflecting a process of development.

7. Overview of Occultism and Idealism: Bridging Tradition and Transformation

- **Critique of Occultism:** Occultism's static notions of an Absolute undermine the dynamic nature of existence and individual development.
- **Idealism as a Stepping Stone:** Engagement with idealism must evolve to acknowledge individual power and the significance of the evolving world.
- **Self-Realisation:** The path to self-realisation involves active engagement with higher principles and genuine self-development.
- **Role of Personal Agency:** The potential for spiritual fulfilment lies in the individual's belief in his capacity for transformation.

II. On the Concept of Power

This section examines the foundations of magical idealism and epistemology, arguing that knowledge gains certainty through the active engagement of the Self in shaping both itself and its environment, drawing on Vico's principle that links truth to the Self's activity. It critiques the pursuit of absolute knowledge as an illusion, emphasising the dynamic nature of the Self and the tension between agency and inertia. The paradoxical nature of will is explored, highlighting the conflict between individual will and external circumstances. The text redefines knowledge as arising from self-affirmation and activity rather than passive acceptance, differentiating between self-centred and alienated consciousness. It discusses morality's relationship to will and value, positing that individuals can create values independent of divine authority. Additionally, it critiques the notion of power derived from manipulating natural forces, advocating for an understanding of true power as arising from within the individual. Ultimately, the section defines the Self as the

central object of power, in which true existence transcends mere being, asserting that power and individuality stem from self-affirmation and spiritual energy.

1. Foundations of Magical Idealism and Epistemology:

- Knowledge gains certainty when thought actively shapes both itself and objects.
- Vico's principle connects truth to the activity of the Self.
- Subsequent philosophies expanded knowledge's reach beyond Vico's limits, highlighting that true knowledge requires the Self to encompass its entire experience.
- Mathematical and historical domains reveal issues of absolute certainty due to their reliance on external factors.

2. The Illusion of Absolute Knowledge:

- The Self's dynamic nature complicates the pursuit of absolute knowledge, which requires engagement with the world.
- The tension between active Self and inertia leads to the notion of the transcendental Self.
- The idealised Self often feels constrained by representations, revealing the limitations of absolute knowledge.

3. The Paradox of Will:

- Royce suggests that actual beings reflect the affirmation of individual will, yet often external circumstances oppose this will.
- Gentile introduces 'concrete freedom,' in which true freedom is bound by external determinism, resulting in a paradox of impotence.

4. Reconceiving Knowledge and Freedom:

- Traditional notions of pure knowledge are critiqued; knowledge arises from individual activity and self-affirmation.
- Absolute certainty reflects the Self's power, requiring mastery over one's surroundings.

5. Two Attitudes Towards Consciousness:

- Consciousness can be either self-centred or alienated, shaping the way individuals engage with their reality.
- The positive attitude embodies self-affirmation, while the negative attitude leads to dependence.

6. Distinction in Power:

- A distinction exists between actions driven by desires and those rooted in unconditional self-affirmation.
- True freedom arises from actions not dictated by external motivations, highlighting the importance of self-determined pleasure.

7. Morality and the Dichotomy of Will and Value:

- The relationship between will and value raises critical questions about moral obligations.
- Duns Scotus's view allows for values to be created by an individual's will, separating morality from divine legislation.

8. The Illusion of Power Through Natural Sciences:

- True power cannot stem from manipulating natural forces; real autonomy emerges from within.
- Emphasis on external factors in science limits genuine action and overlooks the interiority of existence.

9. The Individual as Lord:

- True power requires absolute knowledge and freedom, yet concrete existence faces limitations.
 - Freedom involves recognising one's deficiencies, which further affirms the Self's absoluteness.
10. **The Central Concept of Magical Idealism:**
- The Self is the primary object of power; true existence transcends mere existence into the nonbeing of freedom.
 - Power and individuality derive from self-affirmation and negation, with spirit as the energy that defines the individual.

III. The Supernormal Self

This section critiques Kant's assertion that universal knowledge and absolute certainty are prerequisites for understanding the Self, arguing these notions are arbitrary and not factual. It discusses cultural developments that emphasise the impossibility of a singular experience or universal knowledge, presenting universality as a demand rather than a truth. The text explores supernatural phenomena, highlighting experimental science's investigations into human potential and the influence of mental forces like self-suggestion and hypnosis. It reevaluates occult sciences and traditional doctrines, suggesting that rigid definitions of reality fail to account for supranormal experiences. A new form of magical idealism emerges, recognising contingency as a basis for certainty and underscoring the Self's inherent power. The section warns against the dangers of a passive, dream-like consciousness that hinders individual development and promotes a return to a less differentiated state, advocating for an enhancement of consciousness in alignment with idealism.

1. Critique of Kant's Assertions:

- Kant's claim that universal knowledge and absolute certainty are prerequisites for the Self is critiqued.
- These concepts, while interdependent, are not necessarily factual.
- The idea that an absolute system of certainty supports positive sciences is considered arbitrary.

2. Cultural Developments:

- No singular experience or universal knowledge can exclude other possibilities.
- Universality and absolute certainty are presented as demands rather than established truths.

3. Engagement with Absolute Idealism:

- Absolute idealists are criticised for failing to address fundamental issues.
- Thinkers like Hartmann and Rougier argue that the finite Self undermines the idealist view of human thought as a universal principle.
- The conclusion is drawn that absolute knowledge is unattainable, leading to a probabilistic understanding of science.

4. Exploration of Supernatural Phenomena:

- Recent experimental science investigates phenomena previously dismissed, uncovering human potential.
- Dr. Osty's *La connaissance supranormale* describes individuals whose consciousness transcends ordinary boundaries, accessing extraordinary thoughts and events.

5. Influence of Mental Forces:

- Studies in self-suggestion, hypnosis, and mediumship confirm that mental forces can impact the self and external reality.

- This suggests an inherent creative power and knowledge in humans, often seen as divine.
- 6. Reevaluation of Occult Sciences:**
 - Mystical experiences and ordinary phenomena (like sleep and dreams) should be reevaluated for their potential transcendental significance.
 - This adds layers of freedom and potential to the understanding of the Self.
 - 7. Interplay of Experience and Rationalism:**
 - Traditional doctrines rigidly define time, space, and causality, failing to account for supranormal experiences.
 - Idolising absolute truths in mathematics weakens when confronted with new theories, allowing for a more flexible reality.
 - 8. Blurred Distinctions:**
 - The rigid boundaries between Self/non-Self and spirit/matter begin to blur, offering insights into freedom and will.
 - Experience acts as a corrective to rationalism, prompting acknowledgment of the Self's inherent power.
 - 9. Emergence of Magical Idealism:**
 - A form of magical idealism emerges in which contingency, rather than necessity, defines certainty.
 - The self, upon realising its power, integrates contingent life aspects into a cohesive understanding.
 - 10. Scientific Engagement with the Supernormal:**
 - The relationship between positive science and supranormal phenomena necessitates deeper understanding beyond observation.
 - Scientists should explore the internal dynamics of how individuals can manifest these experiences.
 - 11. Challenges of Consciousness:**
 - Many paranormal phenomena diminish the conscious self, giving rise to an alternate entity.
 - This lack of control contrasts with personal development, suggesting a regression to a primitive state of consciousness.
 - 12. Forms of the Supernatural:**
 - Two forms of the supernatural are identified: one that transcends normality and another that regresses below it.
 - Observed phenomena are remnants of a past state of being, often linked to individuals lacking inner development.
 - 13. Caution Against Regression:**
 - A passive, dream-like consciousness is deemed detrimental and incompatible with idealism principles.
 - True magical idealism should enhance individual consciousness rather than revert to a less differentiated state.

IV. The Construction of Immortality

This section explores magical idealism's view on immortality, emphasising its connection to the individual's concrete essence. The Self is presented as a living reality intertwined with the body, experiences, and culture, rather than as an abstract concept. It critiques the notion of a 'general spirit' that grants immortality, instead framing it as a privilege earned through effort and will,

supported by teachings from traditions like Taoism and Stoicism. The relationship between the Self and the body is crucial, as a diminished connection weakens the sense of Self. The journey towards immortality requires proactive mastery over the body, symbolising autonomy and existence. Understanding the methodology of magic, particularly through paths like Kundalini yoga, is essential for achieving immortality, though risks exist if one engages without preparation. Ultimately, the text suggests that true immortality is attainable through self-creation and recognises the body as a potentiality for spiritual transformation, aligning with various esoteric practices.

1. Magical Idealism and Immortality:

- This section introduces magical idealism's perspective on immortality, connecting theoretical concepts to practical applications.
- Immortality is portrayed as elusive when viewed apart from the individual's concrete essence.

2. Definition of the Self:

- The Self is defined as a living reality intertwined with the body, experiences, and culture, rather than as an abstract concept.

3. Critique of the 'General Spirit' Concept:

- Attributing immortality to a 'general spirit' undermines true immortality for both individuals and the collective.
- The belief that immortality is universally granted is criticised; instead, it is framed as a privilege earned through effort and will.

4. Historical Perspectives:

- Teachings from traditions like Taoism and Stoicism support the idea that only those with inner development achieve immortality.
- Aimless individuals face rebirth or dissolution instead of immortality.

5. Connection Between Self and Body:

- Immortality as a construct necessitates understanding the relationship between the Self and the body.
- A diminished connection between the Self and the body weakens the sense of Self, raising questions about the pursuit of immortality amidst physical influences.

6. Proactive Journey Towards Immortality:

- The path to immortality requires a proactive stance in which the Self masters the body rather than being controlled by it.
- Immortality is manifested through tangible existence, likened to the alchemical transformation of base metal into gold.

7. Autonomy and Existence:

- Immortal bodies symbolise autonomy and the ability to shape one's existence, reflecting principles from various spiritual traditions.

8. Methodology of Magic:

- Understanding the methodology of magic is crucial for overcoming heterogeneration and achieving immortality.
- Kundalini yoga is utilised as a framework for this transformative process, highlighting the importance of harnessing latent creative power.

9. Risks of Engaging with Kundalini Power:

- Engaging with Kundalini power without preparation can be risky; an unready Self may face annihilation.
- A clear outline of magical idealism's method is essential for safely navigating the journey towards immortality.

10. **Scepticism and Self-Realisation:**
 - Despite scientific evidence supporting the mind's influence over the physical realm, scepticism about self-realisation remains.
 - Those who cling to the illusion of immortality must acknowledge that it belongs to those who can self-create as absolute Individuals through will.
11. **Future Studies on Tantra-yoga:**
 - Future studies on Tantra-yoga are expected to illuminate how the Absolute is associated with Shakti, the dynamic principle of the universe.
 - This framework connects the subtle to the dense forms of reality, reflecting the cosmic structure within the human body.
12. **Tantra and the Body:**
 - In Tantra, the body is viewed as potentiality, with the goal of actualising deities through the Kundalini force, leading to the embodiment of Mahashakti.
 - Purification and self-sufficiency are essential for this transformation, aligning with various esoteric practices.

V. The Essence of Magic Development

Magical idealism merges theory and practice, emphasising that true understanding arises from experiential connections with magic. It identifies a deficiency in the Self as the root of a fragmented reality, which can be rectified through magical practice. The development process unfolds in phases: cultivation of essential qualities, integration of the Self, and realisation of power. The 'trial of autonomy' encourages active self-sufficiency, while the purification phase transforms passive perception into an active, imaginative process. Ultimately, this transformative journey leads to the reclamation of transcendent identity and liberation beyond mere existence.

1. Overview of Magical Idealism:

- Magical idealism brings to the fore a practical approach to enriching life, merging theoretical understanding with practical application.
- It critiques the simplistic division between theory and practice, asserting that true understanding arises from experiential connections to magic.
- A deficiency in the Self results in a fragmented experience of reality, which can be remedied through magical practice to restore autonomy and power.
- Parallels are drawn with spiritual traditions such as Indian Yoga and Western esotericism, distilling essential meanings into a coherent system.

2. Methodological Premises:

- Magical idealism begins by acknowledging a deficiency in the Self, which forms the basis of power.
- This deficiency is structured within a system that correlates with individual values and experiences.
- The ideal moment for the Self is characterised by authentic existence and reflection of capabilities across diverse domains, including science and art.

3. Magical Development:

- The process of magical development unfolds through several phases:
 1. **Preliminary Phase:** Cultivating essential qualities for deeper engagement with magic.
 2. **Integration Phase:** Differentiating the Self from the dynamic forces that shape personality.

3. **Realisation Phase:** Reaffirming power and freedom, culminating in a magical realisation that integrates personal experience with the universal realm.
4. **The Trial of Autonomy:**
 - This phase emphasises the autonomy of the Self through negation, dismantling dependence on external influences.
 - The ‘trial by fire’ transforms the Self from passive reliance to active self-sufficiency, highlighting the distinction between the mystic (who seeks elevation) and the magician (who commands existence).
5. **The Purification Phase:**
 - This phase focuses on transforming sensory perception into an active process, recognising the limitations of passive perception.
 - Imagination is harnessed as an active power, leading to conscious control over dreams and the formation of a new worldview through creative engagement.
6. **The Process of Catharsis and Magical Realisation:**
 - This transformative journey reclaims transcendent identity (*samskāra*) and fosters freedom through self-affirmation.
 - The magician recognises the non-necessity of nature, achieving liberation and self-realisation that transcends mere existence.

VI. Contemporary Demands for Magical Idealism

This section examines magical idealism’s historical context, contrasting it with deterministic views of history. It highlights Carlo Michelstaedter’s advocacy for absolute value and self-sufficiency, Otto Braun’s emphasis on practical engagement with power, and Giovanni Gentile’s focus on self-realisation despite coherence challenges. Octave Hamelin explores the Self as an absolute freedom principle, while Hermann Keyserling critiques the independence of meaning from the Self, promoting a synthesis of life and knowledge. Together, these thinkers illuminate the pathways towards a new spiritual era rooted in individual agency and autonomy.

1. Historical Context and Philosophical Arguments:

- Understanding magical idealism requires grasping its historical context, which contrasts with the deterministic view of history as a force dictating the present.
- By viewing time as an ideal construct, as Kant suggests, history can be redefined as a canvas for the Self’s expression, supporting the necessity of magical idealism as a synthesis of romantic rationalism and materialism.

2. Carlo Michelstaedter:

- Michelstaedter articulates the demand for absolute value, critiquing societal compromises that obscure the Self’s true nature.
- He emphasises ‘persuasion’ as vital for self-sufficiency, encouraging individuals to affirm their value independent of external influences.
- His concept of ‘persuasion’ challenges the Self’s tendency to defer existence, promoting a dynamic understanding of autonomy and moral imperative rooted in self-mastery.
- Michelstaedter’s work establishes a foundation for magical idealism, advocating for a deeper engagement with existence beyond mere negation.

3. Otto Braun:

- Braun focuses on practical engagement with power, viewing value as an absolute force in the struggle against reality.

- He argues that philosophy should transform value into life, highlighting the modern Hero's role in realising potential.
- Braun's emphasis on mastery over the earthly realm rejects mysticism, advocating for the alignment of real and spiritual value.
- He presents a conflict between reality and absolute will, although his later thought adds layers of complexity to this dynamic. He introduces the idea that self-recognition—one's understanding of one's identity, desires, and motivations—becomes more intricate when will is subordinated to a higher obligation.
- complicates self-recognition by subordinating will to a higher obligation.
- Integrating Braun's ideas on power with Michelstaedter's emphasis on persuasion could illuminate pathways towards a new spiritual era.

4. **Giovanni Gentile:**

- Gentile's modern idealism emphasises the need for absolute self-realisation, but it focuses externally rather than on individual power.
- His philosophy struggles with coherence, complicating the distinction between the Self and the 'other.'
- Gentile's emphasis on spontaneity and passive mysticism raises questions about the nature of will and reality, risking misidentification of the Self's essence.
- His ideas present contradictions that necessitate a shift from first to second idealism to resolve dilemmas in self-identity and engagement with the world.

5. **Octave Hamelin:**

- Hamelin aims to reestablish the world within an immanent rational principle, positioning the Self as a metarational principle of absolute freedom.
- He posits that understanding emerges through relational distinctions, intertwining moral imperatives with self-actualisation.
- His hesitance to fully explore the implications of his morality prompts questions about freedom and determinism.
- A deeper exploration of freedom's realisation could develop the concept of the 'magical Self,' linking being with the absolute Individual.

6. **Hermann Keyserling:**

- Keyserling emphasises transforming intellectual synthesis into a principle of freedom, critiquing the idea of meaning as independent of the Self.
- He argues that understanding generates meaning, making reality a canvas for the Self's creative expression.
- He advocates for a synthesis of life and knowledge, promoting autonomy and responsibility.
- Despite his advancements, his oscillation between historical determinism and meaning raises deeper questions about the relationship between freedom and necessity, encouraging profound engagement with existence.

I. The Challenge of the Modern Spirit and the Shift Away From Idealism.

‘La philosophie, c’est la réflexion aboutissant à reconnaître sa propre insuffisance et la nécessité d’une action absolue partant du dedans.’ (1)

It is evident, even from a superficial consideration, that Western civilisation is currently undergoing a period of crisis. Expressions such as 'turning point in history,' *Sturm und Drang*, have become commonplace and are repeated everywhere to the point of tedium. It is equally clear that the current crisis far surpasses any other encountered in the past. This results from the modern spirit's expansion into new and varied fields, in which the critical moment emerges across all areas almost equally: it shifts from rational consciousness to religious awareness, from art to economics, and from the natural sciences to ethics. In all these fields, the ancient principles falter, the old certainties no longer satisfy, and the heat of criticism and negation barely conceals a general sense of inadequacy and discomfort. In such a state of affairs, two problems almost naturally arise: first, to see whether the various critical moments within the individual disciplines are interconnected as manifestations of a single crisis of the spirit, presenting themselves in forms that correspond to the specific nature of each discipline; and, if so, to determine the nature and reason of this single element, which would constitute the central motif of the era. The second problem would be to ascertain whether this crisis is purely negative, heralding the dissolution, the *pralaya* of an entire cycle of civilisation (Spengler) (2), or whether it conceals the awakening and blossoming of a new life or positivity; in which case, it would be necessary to determine its nature so that it can illuminate the path that our will and our very dissatisfaction must create, beyond the ruins and anguish.

Regarding the first point, since an inductive investigation—which seeks to determine the particular nature and reason of the critical moment in each individual discipline, according to its own categories—cannot be outlined even in general terms, one must resort to another, much simpler approach, whose legitimacy could be based on the following observations. Ultimately, in any field of activity, the spirit only engages with itself, and in any problem, insofar as it is a human problem, there is always an underlying motivation and an intrinsic interest, which ultimately points to a single issue: the certainty of the self. If this is true, it can be assumed that the significance of the development characteristic of an era can be directly derived from an examination of the problems and needs that appear within that discipline, in which the spirit no longer finds itself refracted in partial manifestations and forms but stands immediately and with full awareness before itself, making itself the sole object of its knowledge. In other words, if in philosophy one must recognise, with Hegel, the form in which the needs that operate obscurely in various fields of culture and activity of an era come to self-awareness, then in examining the characteristic situation of modern philosophy, one might perhaps presume to encounter directly the centre and foundation of the crisis of contemporary spirit. What this hypothetical presumption implies could be resolved by demonstrating that the identified principle is indeed capable of explaining the particular negative moments of the individual disciplines, even though such verification can only be alluded to here. Through this second perspective, the first of the problems previously formulated naturally leads to the other. In fact, the course of the present discussion can be outlined as follows: the characteristic of modern philosophy will be recognised in idealism; then, idealism will be examined, revealing the internal conflict and the further issue it contains. At this point, by connecting it to the crisis of the current era, the first problem will be exhausted. Subsequently, by establishing the nature of the antithesis contained in idealism, whether it exists, and, if so, how it can be resolved into further affirmation, the second problem will also be addressed. This second problem, as recalled, consisted of determining whether the negativity of the crisis was merely the most superficial manifestation or, on the other hand, the ferment of a new development. In this second phase of the discussion, the concept of magical idealism will almost automatically emerge as a logical consequence of the premises and, consequently, of history, of which this first essay will limit itself to studying the relationship with the positions of so-called occultism.

1. The fundamental problem of modern philosophy is the gnoseological problem, or the problem of knowledge, which can be expressed briefly and somewhat exoterically as follows: every experience consists of the conjunction of a subject and an object, of a knower and a known. Now, how is the relationship that binds these two principles possible, and what is the meaning of their conjunction in which human experience develops? The importance of this problem and, consequently, the justification for the interest that modern philosophy places in it can be elucidated as follows: through knowledge, understood in a broad sense, one affirms the reality of nature, of other consciousnesses, and also of a spiritual world. Now, without a preliminary examination of the nature of knowledge, its presuppositions, and its validity, no serious foundation can be given to those assertions; and since the natural sciences, moral and social disciplines, religions, and theories of values all start from them—naively assumed as facts without any critical reflection—if one cannot guarantee certainty to everything posited as true by this knowledge, if one cannot show the conditions under which truth is inherent to human thought and, in connection, confirm the validity and define the meaning of the various fundamental principles, the entire world, not only of culture but of common consciousness itself, must appear hypothetical and devoid of significance: the formal or aesthetic value that would then apply to it would in no way prevent scepticism from dissolving its intrinsic essence. Moreover, if one were to seriously assert that knowledge is incapable of justifying itself, scepticism itself would become untenable; in fact, it cannot uphold its principle that there is no certainty in knowledge without attaching a certainty to it, which contradicts the very content of the principle that denies any form of knowledge (including sceptical knowledge) the possibility of certainty. It would then follow that all experience, even in its most radiant forms, becomes a kind of incomprehensible dream, in which the Self must passively allow itself to be dreamt; for if it were to reflect upon itself, it would immediately be torn apart by an internal contradiction. One cannot emphasise enough the importance of this consideration and thus the necessity of the gnoseological problem as the foundation for all other enquiries, especially against many currents that, with a boldness that may well exceed their naivety, still today attempt to assert as absolute truths the fruits of unchecked dogmatism and fanciful theorising, while remaining powerless to explain the basis of their methods and the very meaning of the words and concepts they employ.

2. Now, the solution provided by modern speculation to the gnoseological problem is, in essence, idealism, or more precisely, within the worldview of idealism, the recognition of conditionality is essential for establishing a system of absolute certainty. Idealism, as is well known, consists in the assertion that an external world, existing in itself independently of knowledge and, therefore, of the Self, cannot be coherently affirmed in any way; thus, the entire universe is nothing but a system of our knowing, namely, it exists only through the Self and for the Self. A brief summary of the arguments supporting this theory is therefore warranted.

Upon a little reflection, it becomes clear that if something were absolutely outside of me, I would know absolutely nothing about it and therefore could not affirm its existence in any way. I can only affirm the existence of something to the extent— and only to that extent— that I know it, that is, insofar as and to the extent that it is encompassed within the sphere of the Self. From this, it immediately follows that the only reality of which I can truly speak concerning something is that which coincides with its being perceived and, therefore, depends on my perception; without my perception, it would exist for me as little as light exists without my visual faculty. Naturally, two objections immediately arise here. First, it should be noted that the fact that something does not exist for me does not necessarily imply that it does not exist in itself; that is, there may be things or aspects of things that I do not know but which nonetheless exist. Naturally, two objections immediately arise here. First, it will be noted that the fact that something does not exist for me does not necessarily mean that it does not exist in itself; that is, there may be things or aspects of things that I do not know but still exist nonetheless. In response, it can be said that these things or aspects

of things that ‘still exist,’ even if I do not know them in any way—neither through reasoning nor as possibilities for future experience—must remain merely a baseless hypothesis and a figment of the imagination. Conversely, they are affected by the argument presented and thus fall back into the realm of the Self in one way or another. The second objection is that not only do the things I perceive exist for me, but also those perceived by others. I do not base my belief in the reality of things solely on my own perceptions or judgments; rather, my perception or judgments are validated through the perceptions and judgments of others. However, this objection turns within a vicious circle: for others, the same reasoning applies as it does for things, meaning that I know nothing of others except through perception, discourse, intuition, or any other means of my knowing that I become aware of, which ultimately brings them back into the sphere of my subjectivity. A sharper objection would be that idealism overlooks the fact that in perception, things are essentially known as ‘others,’ that is, as external and independent of me. A thorough discussion of this point would lead us far afield. In any case, it is clear that for me to speak of such a characteristic of the externality of things, it must be perceived as a certainty within my consciousness. Thus, it manifests only as a particular characteristic that I recognise in the thing; namely, this externality, for me, is conditioned by my act of positing the thing as external. In fact, the argument can be reiterated by asserting that if something were truly external, it would hold no significance for my consciousness, as what is perceived as external is ultimately relative. Everything, therefore, reduces to this situation: within my experience, I posit certain things as relatively external to me or even as existing in themselves. It follows that every reality is merely a determination of my consciousness; the Self, instead of being comprehended by the universe, comprehends it within itself. It is the infinite ether that underlies every determination and development.

This can be linked to Kant’s famous assertion in *Critique of Pure Reason*. From a careful analysis of experience, it becomes clear that the world, as it appears to both science and common consciousness—with characteristics such as externality and objectivity—is not at all the immediate data of consciousness. Rather, it is an entirely subjective complex of sensations that transition chaotically into one another and, in themselves, have no relation to, nor can they justify, the spatial, orderly, and objective world we recognise. Kant, in investigating how a science is possible in general as science (i.e., as a systematically universal and absolutely certain body of knowledge), offers a solution to the difficulty in theory, which is that knowledge does not conform to things, but rather things conform to knowledge in the sense that the knowing subject possesses within itself universal and necessary forms (space, time, causality, etc.), and by organising the chaos of sensation within these forms, derives the objective and regulated world that is the object of our knowledge and which allows for science in general. In other words, knowledge is not, as is commonly believed, a reproduction or a creation of its object; the world, depending on the forms of knowledge, would be different if the Self were otherwise constituted. The difficulty that Kant faced regarding the origin of the raw material of sensations was later resolved by Fichte, who demonstrated that a nonSelf (Kant’s ‘thing-in-itself’) exists only as something posited by the Self, and that the foundation of this law—by which the Self posits a nonSelf—must be sought within the Self itself as the knowing subject.

With this reference to Kantian philosophy, another cornerstone of idealism is introduced: if the object, in general, is nothing but an internal determination of consciousness, it remains nothing if understood merely as a modification of passive receptivity. A wax can indeed bear the imprint of an external object, but nothing exists in consciousness unless it is actively engaged with and processed through reflection. Consciousness, in itself, signifies mediation; thus, it entails both activity and self-consciousness. It follows that the entirety of experience is entirely ideal—not merely a spectacle but a reality posited and created by the Self through the absolute activity of self-consciousness.

3. This, in brief, is the idealist worldview: the Self at the centre of everything, the creator of all reality and all value; beyond it, nothing, since its theory shows it inescapably enclosed in a prison from which it can never escape, for the simple fact that it is a prison without walls.

Before moving on, it is worth demonstrating how this theory, paradoxical at first glance, aligns with the fundamental truth of two attitudes that seem to contradict it most openly: common sense and positive science. Regarding common sense, it should be noted that its truth is what is immediately perceived: as Berkeley observes, it knows nothing of transcendental causes, substances, or *qualitates occultae*; it lives in a sphere of pure subjectivity. To assert that the determinations it gives to things, which constantly contradict one another, actually belong to the things themselves is as absurd as claiming that the sweet taste or the pain caused by a prick essentially belongs respectively, to sugar or a needle. Now, not only idealism but also science is a ‘Scandal of common sense’: what could the everyday knowledge and perceptions that individuals gain through practical, lived experiences, so alive, warm, and resonant, bursting with light and colour, have to do with the dry and abstract world of science, which knows nothing but ether vibrations and atomic interactions? Yet science can demonstrate that truth is on its side and condemns the world of common sense as an appearance, due to its subjectivity, or, in a certain sense, its idealism. However, if we move beyond this field and examine what constitutes the objectivity that science opposes to the idealism of common sense, we see it vanish like a phantom. Even here, the argument can only be touched upon. First of all, Kant already noted that experience cannot establish judgments of necessity; that is, science can know from experience that things are so and have been so in the observed cases, but it cannot assert that they are necessarily and universally so. He demonstrated that whenever science postulates an objective truth, that is, universally valid, it can only be justified by an idealistic theory. Moreover, Lachelier (3) added that the situation regarding the legitimacy of the ‘induction principle’ is no different; without this presupposition, the search for laws, as understood by Millian empiricism (4), is impossible. Furthermore, the fundamental presupposition of science is that nature can be resolved into the intellectual forms of the Self: such is the implicit premise— to mention just two examples— of analytical geometry, which adapts physics to geometry and geometry to algebraic functions, and of the countless mechanical applications of differential calculus, in which the entirely theoretical concept of the infinitesimal is assumed to be relevant to reality. And this is pure idealism. In general, it is a fact that science dissolves reality into quantitative relationships and, through the formulation of principles, formulas, and laws, replaces it with a purely mental world: the atom, described as a mere pragmatic hypothesis (as demonstrated by the profound work of Hannequin) (5); entropy and energy, of which nothing more can be said except that they are simple integrals, that is, abstract algebraic functions; the ether, presented as a hypothetical fluid with incongruous properties; and the hyperspace and non-Euclidean systems with more than three dimensions proposed by Riemann (6) and Lobachevsky (7), to which the latest physics seems to defer, are treated as existences in the realistic and materialist sense of the term— all these concepts of modern physics are blatant absurdities. Yet these elements form the basis of every modern scientific explanation. It is thus that gnoseology has recently shown that science, with its world, is a true and proper creation of the spirit, not only autonomous but also arbitrary, whereby reality is accepted by it only provisionally and almost as a pretext, since it immediately negates and resolves it, through calculation and geometry, into a ‘hypothetical-deductive relational system’ that is self-sufficient and indifferent—just as articulated by Poincaré (8) in his ‘principle of equivalence,’ which Einstein expanded upon in his ‘transformation theory’—to the varied nature of that very reality. The paradoxical teaching of current physics is, in fact, that it is the experience itself that has compelled the scientist to transcend it within the purely intellectual and self-contained system of pure mathematicalism, provided that he wishes to adapt to it and fully grasp it. Thus, ‘mathematical idealism,’ as proposed by Cohen (9) and Cassirer (10), which posits that the world, in its true essence, is merely a complex of algebraic functions, represents not only the current state of science but is also its profound truth—the ideal towards which it tends and to which it increasingly approaches.

4. These recent observations have been presented to support the assertion that idealism is a conception that inevitably imposes itself as one delves into the foundations of knowledge; it can be found, in an unconscious form, at the root of any branch of human activity. Thus, it could be said

that, in reality, in the world of man, nothing else exists except for crude forms of idealism that have not yet attained self-awareness and a conscious idealism, which is the idealism properly articulated by modern gnoseology. This theory is therefore a well-established and consolidated position, and it is in no way permissible to overlook or ignore it: any further development must start from it as a presupposition; otherwise, while one may believe one is moving beyond it, one will actually only be led backward. However, it remains a fact that idealism as it has been presented in philosophy thus far is only partial, and this is precisely the only point from which one can move beyond it.

If one asks the philosopher what the Self is, the creator of the world, of history, and of the heavens, the response is that it is the so-called 'absolute Self' or 'transcendental Self.' Now, this absolute Self is something furiously ambiguous: it oscillates between the real Self (that is, the one that the individual can immediately experience within himself as his most intimate and pure certainty, the original principle by which every experience is lived as distinctly mine) and the God of theism. What makes it so indeterminate is precisely what it originated from—the theory of knowledge: for the latter, if knowing is to be explained and certainty assured, the world must be seen as posited by the activity of the thinking subject. Now, it is evident that neither my power nor that of any other consciousness at the current evolutionary stage can be recognised as truly functioning in alignment with reality and freedom within such a thought; but if the latter cannot therefore find its basis in the real Self, it cannot be referred back either to a transcendent cosmic principle, such as the theistic God. In such a case, knowing cannot be adequately explained, and idealism is legitimate only to the extent that it serves as a system that accounts for our human knowing. His own weapon can be turned against the idealist who seeks to avoid direct confrontation with that dual-natured entity, the transcendental Self, presenting the following dilemma: either the transcendental Self is the real Self—but this is factually false, as the idealist, as will soon be examined in detail, is impotent; or it is not the real Self—then it is either nothing or merely my idea or concept, which is real only by virtue of an activity (philosophising, intuition, etc.) of this real Self, from whose centre it, in any case, falls outside. The fact is that in theoretical terms the question remains indeterminate; the immanence posited theoretically can indeed be in concrete terms both immanence and transcendence, for it is a foolish game to place the Self in the position of God when attributes are given to it such that I can recognise myself in it as little as in the God of the ancient faith. Thus, it results that the truth or falsity of idealism—and this, mind you, means, as will be shown even more thoroughly later on, whether man can or cannot give certainty and meaning to his life and experience—cannot be demonstrated theoretically; it can be decided not through an intellectual act but through concrete realisation.

Idealism, when examined purely from an abstract logical standpoint, is neither true nor false: its truth is contingent upon certain conditions and can only be realised through active engagement, which, to be precise, is unconditional in itself and allows the individual to generate within himself the principle intellectually postulated by transcendental philosophy, which is rooted in a concrete and dynamic reality. That this is the only solution becomes clear when considering the alternative, which would reduce the absolute Self of idealism to God, in line with the perspective of the so-called 'Hegelian right,' which presents idealism as a way to understand or enter into religious discourse. However, this solution, when taken seriously, is not as straightforward as it may seem in the works of Green (11), Caird (12), or Biondel (13): if the God into which the idealistic Self is transformed is merely the God of popular religious consciousness—of the *simpliciores* or theologians—then it remains just a state of emotionality or an abstract concept that, in practical terms, inevitably conflicts with the positive determinations of the empirical Self, which ironically maintain all their burdensome reality. There is no state of ecstasy so profound that the ecstatic does not eventually return to his own corporeal existence. In concrete terms, this results in a hollow and contradictory dualism typical of a time long preceding the idealist perspective. Thus, if a religious solution is not understood as the abandonment of all positions and the collapse of coherence and certainty into the meagre Stoicism of faith, it must be seen as a mystical process, or more accurately, a magical one. In this context, God becomes merely a phantom unless generated within ourselves—not through words, concepts, fantasies, or noble sentiments—but through an absolutely

concrete action that truly transforms and resolves empirical existence into divinity. As clearly understood by Eastern thinkers, there is only one way to prove God, and that is: to make oneself God, ἀποθεωθῆναι.

Nonetheless, this criticism also applies to the idealists, who, if they were truly consistent, ought to claim that God is the One university philosophy professor. It becomes evident that if idealism is to continue to be true, the empirical individual must be denied, but only as an inert and rigid entity confined within his artificial limitations. Instead, he should be integrated into a development in which, far from being subordinate or relying on something external, he remains within himself, continuously strengthening and rendering himself sufficient for his own principle (αὐτάρκης). However, this is not the truth of idealists: they contrast the concrete individual with that abstraction, which is their transcendental Self, and in the name of the latter, they dissolve the former. The individual, they say, is an illusion, a nonbeing, μὴ ὄν; what is real, however, is the Idea (Hegel), God (Royce) (14), the Pure Act (Gentile). If one then examines what this Absolute means for them—living individuals—it becomes evident that it is nothing more than a faded idea, a mere explanatory principle, or at most, a lyrical inspiration, an emotion that resides in a corner of their inert, rigid empirical existence. Yet the sterile sacrifice of the individual celebrated in the realm of thought actually conceals the corruption of a concrete Self which—repugnant to any requirement for engagement and true self-actualisation—beyond the harmless curse it generates from within and even protects it, quietly persists in its own inertia. It is in this way that the Self, despite being philosophically elevated to the status of a cosmic creator, is, due to unforeseen circumstances encountered in its ‘overcome’ human existence, inevitably brought back down to the infinite contingencies of life, against which it is as powerless as the peasant who knows nothing of such marvellous elevations. Hence, absolute idealism, inasmuch as it is purely theoretical, ultimately converges with the tendencies of the ‘Hegelian left’ (Strauss, Feuerbach, Stirner) (15) proper, which dissolves the rationalistic and theological beyond only by affirming man in his empirical reality, in respect of whose determinations the Self is passive, which he encounters but neither creates or explains.

5. Let us consider this point more closely. Abstract idealism, as has been seen, can legitimately assert that every reality is conditioned by my activity. However, it cannot equally claim that I can always posit myself as sufficient for this activity. It must, *bon gré mal gré*, acknowledge that, while I can posit myself as a sufficient principle for my own thinking, I cannot posit myself in the same way and to the same extent when it comes to that set of representations through which my thought generally expresses itself, about, for example, a meteorological phenomenon. It can and must be asserted that both a philosophical theory and, for instance, a lightning strike do not exist outside and independently of the activity through which they are generated and posited for the Self. However, it must be acknowledged that the degree to which one is actively present to one’s own activity in the two cases is markedly different. Notably, it is clear that while I can arbitrarily reconstruct my initial thought, I can only do so in the second case in a very incomplete manner—specifically, only concerning the empty and dull image of lightning. There are instances in which the Self, in the current and general state of affairs, is, so to speak, compelled to manifest its activity and create—such as with the representation of the landscape before me at this moment. Meanwhile, I have the power to continue philosophising, to think of a friend, or even not to think at all. Therefore, within my own activity itself, from which I can never truly detach and which remains the substrate or underlying basis of all reality in general, I must distinguish between two kinds of courses: those I can fully direct through my own abilities and those in which my influence is scarce or nonexistent. The so-called objective or external world or the things that exist in themselves corresponds to the latter. Now, it is clear from the above that the two groups differ not in nature but only in degree (16). What distinguishes them is simply the quantity of sufficiency, or, to use a term from Michelstaedter, of persuasion—this is the antithesis of abstract idealism.

To formal or gnoseological sufficiency, an insufficiency—of an intensive kind—stands in opposition. Idealism, as a condition for absolute certainty, is a moral value, an ought to be; it ought

to be; and yet it cannot, in real consciousness, be. To the Self, discursively arrived at self-consciousness as the absolute principle of all that reality in which it lives its life, this very reality (17) opposes itself in concrete terms as something over which it has no power, which it then understands as foreign to itself and which, however, it seeks to negate, dissolve, and therefore re-appropriate within itself to demonstrate to itself in concrete terms that value.

Now, the hidden and profound meaning of the current crisis can be traced back to such a conjunction. As has been said, the demonstration of this thesis can only be sketched in the main points. In summary, the dissatisfaction with the general forms of culture and the emphasis on the individualistic and activist moment against the dogmatic and universalistic element represent a phenomenon that is both significant and widespread today. In particular: in the decline of transcendental religion, in the so-called 'Twilight of the Gods' and in the birth, beyond it, of modernism and 'immanent religion'; in the increasing perception of science as an essentially arbitrary, subjective, and original construction rather than a reproductive, objective, and necessary one as according to the traditional concept; in the collapse, brought about by intuitionism, pragmatism, relativism, and, in a certain sense, also by neo-Hegelianism, of the idea of an eternal Reason and Truth, established once and for all and indifferent to human evolution; in the negation of all tradition in art, in the advent of the romantic and individualistic instance through a complex and extraordinarily significant development unfolding from symbolism and impressionism to the tendency that the writer has had the honour of affirming in Italy, to Dadaism (18); finally, in the social field, in the anarchic phenomenon and also in the socialist and communist ones if understood in their intimate psychological foundation; in all these points, the aforementioned transcendental situation can also be distinctly recognised: namely, the self-opposing and self-distancing of the Self within the very body of its reality and the relative dissolutive movement, through which emerges the demand for the absolute sufficiency of the real Self—the value of the Individual.

6. Having established this, we return to the philosophical realm to develop the solution that has been identified as the conditionality for the truth of idealism. The Self, as seen, encompasses the entire universe; however, not according to the value of sufficiency and freedom. In a large part and, in a certain way, to the deepest power of its transcendental activity, it is, in a sense, passive; it does not possess its action but, rather, endures it. The point of fundamental importance that must be firmly held here, under penalty of ruining all acquired positions and thus any certainty, and whose highlighting is credited to one of the strongest personalities that contemporary Italy can boast of—Carlo Michelstaedter—is the following: the individual must not flee from his own deficiency; he must not, giving in to the temptation to avoid the burdens and responsibilities associated with recognising it, grant it a reality, a reason, and an identity that it, as mere deprivation, cannot possess in any way. Therefore, he should not attribute or relate the lack of reality within the Self to anything external, such as matter, God, nature, universal Reason, or the transcendental Self. He must take full responsibility for this inadequacy, bearing its weight entirely and remaining steadfast. He must understand that everything that seems to have an independent reality is nothing but an illusion, caused by its own deficiency (19); he must make up for it through an unconditional process that establishes its absolute self-presence to the totality of its activity. Then he will have achieved in itself absolute certainty; he will have 'persuaded the world' and, in doing so, he will have brought to life that reality which idealism has only managed to anticipate as an empty intellectual form and the abstract 'ought to be.' It is in this process, referred to as concrete or magical idealism, that the task of a future civilisation, along with the positive solution to the crisis of the modern spirit, is to be recognised.

The crucial point to consider is that saying something is not caused by me is not the same as saying it is caused by another. The inference from the first proposition to the second is synthetic and cannot be justified in any way. What is not caused by me is nothing more than what is not caused by me, meaning it is simply a deprivation (στέρησις) of my causality—something negative. This nonbeing should not be referred to as being: positivity can only be associated with it through violence and injustice. Now this is precisely what realism does: it only recognises something as real if it stands in

opposition to, or is a negation of, the self. But then it should exclude every activity from its world, since it strips that activity of its intrinsic worth, reducing it to something devoid of purpose or relevance. Activity has meaning and value only where there is something to bring into reality that is currently unreal or incomplete. This situation occurs precisely when the ‘other’ (i.e., that which resists my freedom) is felt as a deprivation: then the world appears as something incomplete, which needs to be integrated through the act of the individual, so that the ἔτερον (necessity) transforms into ταῦτόν (freedom), through a process of self-affirmation in which the individual’s power of causality extends over what was previously deprivation. If, on the other hand, it is posited that the ‘other’ as such is a positivity and a reality—and not a deprivation, a nonbeing—then everything is already perfect and there is no need for further action. Every purpose and every value of activity, every responsibility becomes unnecessary, for the voids of my being are not such; the ‘other’ fills them. In the other case, the whole world is a demand from being to the self, so that the Self, in its power, may actualise it and thereby redeem it from deprivation, making it real.

This relates to another important point, which will be revisited: it is not necessarily the case that the limitation of my causality requires a cause. In other words, what is incomplete and imperfect does not have to be conceived solely as a negation arising from a pre-existing absolute or perfection. Instead, one might conceive that what is limited and imperfect already possesses a degree of positivity and represents an initial stage. Furthermore, the absolute is not its negation; rather, it is the further development, the act, of which the limited and imperfect is a power or elementary degree. Thus, the absolute does not pre-exist this limitation but is derived from it through a synthesis—specifically, through a transition that introduces something new, something that did not exist in the antecedent. This represents the fundamental principle underlying Aristotelianism, which magical idealism reaffirms most clearly.

Furthermore, there arises the issue of the ‘Path of Persuasion’: how can the individual develop his power to reclaim within himself that vast system of reality (or better: of nonreality), which, when opposed to him externally and in the form of unreflectiveness, seems to crush and dissolve him into nothingness? The moment of the revelation of value, of what ought to be, faces the dull, seemingly inexorable rigidity of an existence that, although lacking value and not needing to be, simply is. To claim to fill, immediately, with an instantaneous act of titanic will, the interval that separates the two terms of the antithesis and thereby redeems in pure actuality the infinite deficiency or deprivation that weighs on the concrete individual appears practically impossible and, for reasons that will be discussed elsewhere, logically contradictory. In magical idealism, it is not a matter of action, of immediacy—rather, it is a matter of process, of mediation. It is true that in the face of the demand for sufficiency, the individual, by his very nature, neither is nor possesses anything; he is not endowed with a law, power, or a path: ‘he is alone in the desert and must create life for himself in the darkness, forge his own legs to walk and find a path where there is none’ (20)—he must create his own truth, faith, and substance. Persuasion cannot be communicated; it cannot be provided or taught. But the Self must construct it using its own strength. However, this construction cannot simply resolve into a subjective movement; it must essentially be concrete, as a resolution in the sufficient form of the individual of the various empirical determinations, unfolding correlatively to the process of understanding and consuming these: it is cosmic work. As such, his life, rather than simply a miraculous and unnamable illumination in an abstract interiority, requires its articulation in multiple determinations, a stirring, and a creation of new means and faculties, in short, an entire science and methodology that is absolutely positive even if, in its actual state, it is essentially conditioned by its absolute individuality. The ‘Persuasion,’ while always remaining the prior, when it does not empower and objectify itself through such a spiritual science, remains an empty value, and its demand can only lead to Stoic dualism.

7. At this point in the discussion, attention can return to the topic of occultism, which has seen a resurgence in interest in modern culture, particularly through the work of various theosophical schools (Blavatsky, Steiner). However, it would be difficult to fully appreciate these movements and demonstrate the valuable contributions they offer to achieve the aforementioned task as forces that

could guide the individual towards a new, unprecedented era of history and spirit if some imperfections, by which they are generally afflicted, were not first recognised. These imperfections essentially result from the failure of occultism to settle its accounts with idealism and, more broadly, with modern speculation.

It is important to establish a mutual understanding in this context. That abstract idealism must be transcended has been shown above and with the very words of idealism itself: but to transcend it means to adopt its positions, refute them, or reduce them to mere presuppositions and move beyond; not merely to set it aside, not to ignore that it contains a comprehensive and unavoidable conception of the world, the fruit of a two-thousand-year civilisation, to carelessly return to naive conceptions that it has long refuted and resolved. Occultism primarily accuses idealism of being a product of abstract rational faculties, against which it defends its principles as emanating from superior faculties. Now, it must be granted that the Self should not remain rigidly confined to current categories for eternity; rather, it should regard these categories as entirely provisional and strive to transform them into others that are more comprehensive and responsive to the demands of 'persuasion' in terms of living reality and intensity of power. Moreover, it also appears that, to a certain extent, this is what the Self has done within the very realm of discursiveness since ancient times. For example, it has passed from the Nyāya logic to the Aristotelian ὄργανον and it did not stop there but continued evolving its understanding towards Leibniz's principle of sufficient reason (Leibniz). Nor did it become set in this, but moved on to Kant's logic of a priori synthesis, to Fichte's synthesis-antithesis-synthesis approach, and finally to Hegelian dialectic, the logic of opposites (Hamelin), and to logics (Peano, Russell) (21). In truth, there is no logic; rather, there is a history or a becoming of logic. However, human reason also has to ensure that what is presented to it as its further stage is not, in fact, a point it has already surpassed; therefore, it must demand that the truths attributed to higher faculties, for which it should abandon its positions, be demonstrated as such, that is, it must show where the points it considers to be the most advanced—specifically those of idealism—are insufficient and how the elimination of such deficiencies necessarily leads, in a continuous manner, to those truths. If, however, the faculties that are presumed to be superior prove incapable of such movement, they, beyond the veils of mystery and the initiatory presumption, would have no way to guarantee themselves. In this case, reason has not only the right but also the duty to reject them as fantasies, all in the name of the very principle of development. Now, the points that occultism would likely struggle to support against modern speculation and which it should discard as old ideas from Platonism and Indian philosophy are as follows: firstly, the incomplete immanence: occultism, in essence, opposes the cosmic process by positing the current existence of an Absolute that is already perfect and immobile (the Sat or Parabrahman of the Puranas, analogous to the Platonic One). This position strips that process of all value and renders it entirely incomprehensible, as its potential purpose already exists. Given this premise, occultism cannot justify the need for individual development—something that is, in fact, very vivid within it—without resorting to a theory of the 'Fall,' that is, by understanding the world as something negative, as the consequence of an original error that alienated consciousness from the realm of the Absolute. The process would then take on the meaning of a catharsis, an expiation, and a return to the original principle. However, the Fall, while it explains the process, does not explain itself: compelled to assume a principle distinct from the Absolute (since if the Absolute itself is what determines the 'Fall,' then it is no longer a Fall, with absoluteness understood—not to fall into the most outdated intellectualism—not as a transcendent norm, but as the attribute of what the original principle wills), it does not explain the assumed dualism, but merely displaces it. Certainly, a pure becoming is unintelligible: what conditions becoming and allows its moments to enter into relation cannot itself be a becoming; it must instead be an immobility. However, this immobility cannot exist outside of becoming; it must remain immanent to it. In a word, what is fundamentally lacking in occultism is a distinct understanding of value, in which the immobile and the becoming are synthetically reconciled (22). One cannot separate the process from the immobile Sat; the process is Sat itself; it is the act of its infinity (23). Thus, the pessimistic concept of the world as an illusion—a place of suffering from which one should only flee—loses its validity. The world instead appears

as something positive, something that has value, to be transcended not by withdrawing but by affirming it to the fullest and mastering it. The Absolute does not stand behind but ahead—this is the fundamental conquest that the West, with its activism, has achieved over the East. The second point is the neglect of gnoseology, from which it follows that occultism does not fully concede that the Absolute is nothing other than the very power of the individual—that ‘the Telema, the Father of all things, is here’ (Hermes)—and, beyond it, nothing exists in itself and for itself. Consequently, the ‘supersensibles’ affirmed by this doctrine (bodies, centres, subtle planes, elementary Logoi, etc.) are either ideas and abstract hypotheses or possibilities of the individual, which, however, have reality only when the individual goes to create them in actual experience through an unconditional and synthetic process—from potency to act. Therefore, in truth, there only exists the One, invariably solitary, and its development according to what it wills.

Indeed, it is futile to appeal here to superior faculties that would reveal the existence of things and powers in themselves: common sense, which reflection has refuted, is already capable of this, and therefore, even in the angelic consciousness that might claim to actually know things in themselves through intellectual intuition or any other superior faculty, an additional idealist angelic consciousness could reaffirm itself, demonstrating the naivety of the claim to such knowledge, which is, in reality, conditioned by the very intellectual intuition and, through this, by the very knowing subject that has developed and has wanted to develop itself up to this intuitive insight. When occultism has eliminated these two essential deficiencies, it can, in principle, integrate magical idealism.

It indeed has the merit of insisting that what truly matters is not enriching the mind with new knowledge or theories, indulging in feelings and fantasies, or finding solace in a feminine morality; rather, it is engaging with the deepest power of one’s own life and to develop oneself genuinely. Regarding everything physical—namely, everything that embodies necessity and passivity—the Self must reaffirm itself as a being of freedom and power. To achieve this, it is essential first to master one’s own mental faculties. Despite the paradoxical appearance of such an assertion, it is a fact that more than we actively think the thought, it could be said that, in general, it is thought that thinks us: not only in the unconscious play of associations and in what Ribot called the ‘logic of feelings,’ but also concerning logical thought, the rational evidence reveals, upon careful consideration, that the Self behaves in an essentially passive manner. Now, if the proposition of idealism is true, stating that everything that exists has a purely ideal reality, it is clear that the Self, having come to possess and to know how to master its own thought in accordance with freedom, would, at that very moment, have made itself the master of all the determinations in which it experiences its existence. The possibility of those marvellous phenomena that occur in Indian schools and which tend to confuse Western culture is largely connected to a genuine mastery over one’s own thought. This point is clearly the first step of magical idealism, and occultism, for its part, places, so to speak, the organ for the knowledge and verification of its truths here and studies a methodology aimed precisely at this: that the Self, empowered and enhanced, through concentration, meditation, and special practices, might use its thought to evoke new faculties and new powers.

Secondly, occultism resolves the objectivity studied by the natural sciences abstractly, outside any relation to the spiritual, and metaphysics, understood as the determination of values in a purely ideal context, which is its inner essence, into a third term: the occult conception of the world. What is specific to this and distinguishes it from the rationalistic philosophies of nature, such as those of Schelling or Hegel, is the subordination of the ontological principle to the practical principle. It posits, in fact, beyond the realities of sensitive consciousness, spiritual realities that are occult, resolving the former into increasing degrees of unity and interiority, and connects these principles to higher principles that exist virtually in the Self, that is, to the possibilities of the individual. Thus, it follows that the knowledge, or idealistically, the existence of that occult spiritual reality, is one with the development of these principles; therefore, the phenomenology or occult metaphysics takes on the sense, I would say, of a journey—a mythical description of the stages that mark the steps of spiritual development. Certainly, the occultists and theosophists speak here of the existence in itself

of several elements (for example, they assert, like realism, the existence of what must exist in fact and transcendently, but which remains merely a possibility of the Self), and in doing so, they fall into an illusion. However, it is important to note that such an illusion may be methodologically necessary and, as such, deserving of respect. For instance, it may be useful for the Self, at a certain point in its development, to believe in the existence in itself of evil, even if it theoretically has no consistency; this belief, in certain cases, is necessary and useful so that, in contrast to ‘evil,’ a ‘good’ may arise— that is, in general, to allow for the development of moral consciousness. In truth, it is a fact that the spiritual realities referred to by occultism, rather than existing in the realistic sense of the term, are objectives for self-development—names of possible experiences in which the Self increasingly tends to realise unity and universal ‘persuasion.’ Thus, in the individual who does not genuinely strive to transcend, empower, and develop himself, these realities would amount to nothing more than fantasies, hollow concepts, or, at best, more or less comforting hypotheses and abstract explanatory principles. Moreover, the identification of the triad Manas-Buddhi-Atma of the spiritual Man with the degrees to which the Self realises the power and self-conscious control over its lower body (in technical terms, the astral, etheric, and physical) leads to an elevation to a sufficient principle of the animal, vegetable, and mineral worlds. This includes the overcoming of animal generation or heterogeneration and its replacement, through the previously mentioned mastery of the formative and regulatory principles of the human organism, with self-generation and, subsequently, spiritual creation—thus constructing immortality. Additionally, the establishment of self-consciousness—specifically, the integration of actuality over those dead zones that encompass sleep and the periods before birth and after physical death—along with the consummation of the necessity of space and time in spiritual vision, which is to be developed to the point of cosmic consciousness, constitutes the main points that will be explored in the following pages. Occultism and theosophy direct their efforts, studies, and disciplines towards these points, which, as stages of the ‘path of persuasion,’ unite them with idealism, since a common goal for all three is clearly the fulfilment of the real Self in an absolute existence, in a living and actual eternity—in *interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio*—which represents the unified truth of Stimer’s Unique One and Aristotle’s pure act.

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It will be shown how the generic possibility of the points mentioned above is demonstrated by a complex of phenomena, the positivity of which modern Parapsychology is gradually sanctioning scientifically. However, the real is contingent upon the possible; it is, therefore, of fundamental importance to assert that these points, concerning their actual, current reality, are essentially contingent—that is, conditioned by the Self’s will, belief in them, and its free power to bring them into actual existence. The path, in truth, does not exist for those who do not wish to walk it. If ‘persuasion’ is to hold the value of freedom, if it is not to be a brute and factitious given but rather the absoluteness of a life that is self-realising, it is necessary that, regardless of what may be said or shown, there is the possibility for someone to view the above-mentioned assertions as mere myths and empty dreams—so that the path to perfection does not appear as an inescapable fate. The magical idealist, however, would counter by stating that what he absolutely wills cannot be a dream or fantasy. Others, on the contrary, may claim that the path is long, hard, and bleak and that they would lack the strength to follow it. To them, he would respond, as Fichte said of his moral philosophy: ‘Too bad for you, there is no other.’ Outside the value of persuasion, there is only the horror and curse of nonbeing.

(1) Editor’s note: a professor who left an unforgettable mark on his students, among whom was Alain (see Alain, *Souvenirs concernant Lagneau*, 1925), Jules Lagneau (1851–1894) emphasised the deeply personal nature of philosophical reflection. It is by turning inward that each person can find the light. The starting point lies in psychology. By deepening reflective analysis, it is not an ego that

one discovers, but the one, absolute, and universal Spirit. Reflection occurs through various degrees of depth. To think is to recognise rational necessity, to consent to it passionately, and to approve oneself for accepting it. However, the mind has value only in relation to what has value in itself. This reflection leads us to conceive of an entity that would be both perfect thought and the identity of the real and the ideal. This absolute is God. Starting from spontaneous representation, reflection finds its fulfilment in the act of moral freedom through which we subordinate our nature to the Spirit. Truly moral action does not require a reward. Lagneau teaches an intellectualist idealism in his lectures on perception. The teachings and reflections of Jules Lagneau have been compiled by his disciples, including Michel Alexandre: *Écrits* (1924), *De l'existence de Dieu* (1925), *Célèbres Leçons et fragments* (1950).

(2) Editor's note: the reference is clearly to *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, published a few years earlier in two volumes (1918 and 1922). It was translated by Evola only thirty years later as *Il tramonto dell'Occidente*, published by Longanesi in Milan in 1957. See also J. Evola, Oswald Spengler, Rome: Fondazione Julius Evola, 2003.

(3) Editor's note: a French academic and philosopher, Jules Lachelier (1832–1918) was inspired by idealism. His main works are: *Du fondement de l'induction* (1871); *Psychologie et métaphysique* (1885); *Études sur le syllogisme*, suivies de *L'Observation de Platner* (1907); *Lettres 1856-1918* (1933). In Lachelier's philosophy, as in Fichte's, reflection proceeds through successive stages. First is individual reflection, through which each of us affirms our own life and thought, distinguishing ourselves by affirming them. This is followed by a second form, namely reflective perception, through which we project the dimension of depth onto extended objects; this represents 'the figurative affirmation of existence.' The third form, namely reason, reflects in turn on individual reflection and on three-dimensional extension, thus becoming the philosophical knowledge of ourselves and the world. This intellectual consciousness is even more 'true' than the previous forms, as it is the consciousness and affirmation of their truth. In it, we experience freedom. It provides us with the key to metaphysical problems: it is properly the Spirit. Lachelier is not, as has been said, a disciple of Kant; his philosophy has a deep connection with Neoplatonism. It is a doctrine and a method of the transformations of the Self. On the other hand, Lachelier studies the syllogism. He shows that induction is based not only on causality but also on the principle of final causes.

(4) Editor's note: in the mid-19th century, John Stuart Mill (1806–1873), an English philosopher and economist, represents both the culmination of liberal thought and the attraction towards the utopian socialism of the time. His philosophy draws from Hume's empiricism, Bentham's utilitarianism, his father James Mill's associationism, as well as the ideas of Saint-Simon and Comte. At the same time, Mill emphasises the limited scope of their theories, as he senses that reality is too complex to be confined to a single explanation. 'He embodies, in a grand synthesis, in all its aspects and in its full breadth, the atomistic conception of man and the world.' (D. Villey) A staunch advocate of parliamentary democracy, he fears that in practice, the conformity of the masses may turn into despotism, crushing individuals. To his philanthropic sentiments towards humanity, one can oppose his pessimistic views of human nature, which he sees as coarse and brutal. His socialism appears reserved for a future in which an elite of superior individuals will emerge once 'the ignorance and brutality of the masses' have disappeared. Regarding utility, the happiness he proposes as the supreme end of human activity is neither base nor sensual; rather, it is a quality of happiness that man must strive to attain.

(5) A. Hannequin, *Essai critique sur l'hypothèse des atomes*, Paris: 1899.

(6) Editor's note: the German mathematician Georg Friedrich Bernhard Riemann (1826–1866), despite his short life, is one of the main researchers dedicated to the construction of non-Euclidean geometries, independent of the studies of N. Lobachevsky. His 1854 studies (the so-called 'Riemannian elliptic geometry') result in alternatives to those of the latter.

(7) Editor's note: a Russian mathematician, Nikolai I. Lobachevsky (1793–1856) studied at Kazan University, where he taught from 1812 and held the chair of pure mathematics from 1822 to 1846. Under the influence of Carl F. Gauss and the Marquis de Laplace, his early works include *Theory of*

the Elliptic Motion of Celestial Bodies (1812) and On the Solution of the Algebraic Equation of the Type $x^n - 1 = 0$ (1813). However, his main research concerns geometry. His first book, *Geometry* (1823), deemed too revolutionary (as it used the metric system), could not be published during his lifetime. In 1826, Lobachevsky presented a paper to his colleagues at the university, demonstrating that he was one of the first mathematicians convinced of the possibility of a geometry different from that of Euclid. Despite the scepticism of his colleagues, he continued the study of this new geometry (in which Euclid's postulate is replaced by Lobachevsky's postulate: through any point outside a line, an infinite number of parallels to that line pass) and dedicated his life as a mathematician to trying to convince the scientific community. He successively published *Elements of Geometry* (1829), *New Elements of Geometry with the Complete Theory of Parallels* (1838), and *Pangeometry* (1855). However, full recognition of the value of his work only came after his death (when Eugenio Beltrami constructed a model of Lobachevsky's geometry, the 'pseudosphere,' in 1868).

(8) Editor's note: considered the greatest mathematician of his time, Henri Poincaré (1854–1922) is one of the last representatives of the field to have had complete mastery over its various domains, including its applications in astronomy and physics. He made essential contributions that opened several new and previously unsuspected fields, selecting problems that presented themselves to his mind as necessary and creatively developing the mathematical tools he needed for their resolution. It is primarily in pure mathematics that he showcased the full measure of his genius, renewing the theory of differential equations and functions with the discovery of Fuchsian functions. His work in celestial mechanics, in which he applied and developed his results from the theory of differential equations, marked an important milestone in this discipline, shedding new light on the stability of the solar system while opening long-range perspectives on the theory of dynamical systems, which have inspired many contemporary works. His studies on mathematical physics encompass the mechanics of solids and fluids, thermodynamics, optics, and electromagnetism. His work in the latter two fields culminated in his 1905 study 'Sur la dynamique de l'électron,' in which he, alongside Einstein, fully acknowledged the principle of relativity for electromagnetism and developed a relativistic (in the narrow sense) theory of gravitation. Through his teaching and the impact of his thought, Poincaré exerted a considerable influence on many generations of mathematicians and physicists, both in France and internationally. He is also the author of an original body of work in the philosophy of science, which has played a significant role in the development of ideas in the 20th century. In the later stages of his life, he developed an interest in gtnoseology. He disagreed with the perspective that mathematical concepts should be defined in purely logical terms. Instead, he championed a form of intuitionism, asserting that its validity is rooted in its ability to be constructed from intuitive data.

(9) Editor's note: Hermann Cohen (1842–1918) was a German Jewish philosopher. He was one of the founders of the Neo-Kantian school of Marburg and, along with Paul Natorp, one of its main members. His philosophy, like that of Kant, revolves around the three traditional domains: 1. A philosophy of knowledge, or more precisely a logic of knowledge (*Logik der reinen Erkenntnis*, partially translated by M. de Launay in *Néo-kantismes et théorie de la connaissance*, Paris, Vrin), which aims to surpass and complete Kant's critique of knowledge (*Critique of Pure Reason*). The two works by Cohen dedicated to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* are *Kant's Theorie der Erfahrung* (Berlin, 1871; 2d ed., 1885) and *Kommentar zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (Erlangen, 1926); 2. An ethical philosophy that seeks to overcome and complete Kantian morality: this is the work *Ethik des reinen Willens*, which essentially serves as Cohen's *Critique of Practical Reason*; 3. An aesthetics: this area is addressed in the work *Ästhetik des reinen Gefühls*, in which Cohen claims to surpass and complete the first part of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*.

(10) Editor's note: Ernst Cassirer (1874–1945) was a German philosopher and historian of philosophy. From 1919 he was a professor and later rector at the University of Hamburg. Later, he taught at Oxford (1934), in Gothenburg (1935) and finally at Yale University (1941) and Columbia University (1944). Trained in the Neo-Kantian school of Marburg, he was influenced by H. Cohen, who interpreted Kantian criticism as a form of logical idealism. Cohen believed that this idealism

was foundational to the legitimacy of science, which he considered the only discipline able to provide a coherent understanding of experience. This influence can be seen in the early period of Cassirer's work. After examining the historical development of the theory of knowledge in philosophical and scientific thought from the Renaissance to Kant (*Leibniz' System in seinen wissenschaftlichen Grundlagen*, 1902; *Das Erkenntnisproblem in der Philosophie und Wissenschaft der neueren Zeit*, 4 vols., 1906, 1907, 1920 and 1950). In his first theoretical work, *Substanzbegriff und Funktionsbegriff* (1910), Cassirer analysed the logical structure of the fundamental domains of contemporary science. This analysis reinterprets the idea of a substance that exists independently of human thought and ensures the objectivity of knowledge—a metaphysical concept that has been central since at least Aristotle. Instead, it introduces the concept of function, which posits that objectivity is formed through the functional relationships that the intellect establishes a priori among the data obtained from observation. To this Kantian foundation, Cassirer subsequently related Einstein's theory of relativity (*Zur Kritik der Einsteinschen Relativitätstheorie*) and quantum mechanics (*Determinismus und Indeterminismus in der modernen Physik*, 1936). At the same time, he extended the Kantian interpretation to other spheres of culture, all understood as autonomous manifestations of the cognitive activity of the spirit. In *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen* (3 vols., 1923, 1925, and 1929), he also conceived myth, language, religion, art, etc., as symbolic forms through which the spirit gives meaning to reality. These forms, differing from one another depending on the spiritual principle operating within them but united by the fact that they are creators of symbols (whether intuitive or conceptual), allow for the elimination of the traditional opposition between historical epochs in favour of a functional continuity between the early mythical-magical phases and the rational ones of contemporary science. In outlining the overall structure of the system of symbolic forms that interact within the unity of the spirit, Cassirer, while maintaining a firm Kantian approach, was significantly influenced by Hegel's phenomenology. The concept of symbolic form remained the fundamental principle of his subsequent theoretical works: *Zur Logik der Kulturwissenschaften* (1942); *An Essay on Man* (1944); *The Myth of the State* (1946). The elaboration of the concept of symbolic form corresponded to an expansion of Cassirer's historiographical interest, which found expression in numerous works: *Freiheit und Form* (1916); *Kants Leben und Lehre* (1918); *Idee und Gestalt* (1921); *Individuum und Kosmos in der Philosophie der Renaissance* (1927); *Die Philosophie der Aufklärung* (1932).

(11) Editor's note: Thomas Hill Green (1836–1882) was a British philosopher and a prominent member of British Idealism, a movement influenced by the metaphysics of Hegel. This philosophical current was influential in the late 19th century, notably through figures such as Francis Herbert Bradley (1846–1924) and Bernard Bosanquet (1848–1923). Green develops his own philosophy, building upon the ideas of Kant and Hegel. He adopts from Kant the notion found in the introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, which asserts that 'although all our knowledge begins with experience, it does not follow that it arises solely from experience.' He also takes from Hegel what he refers to as the divine spirit, meaning 'that there exists a self-conscious Being, of which everything real is the activity or expression; but that, in some measure, this Being participates in a nascent self-consciousness through which it constitutes the world while distinguishing itself from it; that this participation is the source of morality and religion; this, we believe, is the vital truth that Hegel had to teach us.' In fact, Green's Hegelianism resides solely in this idea.

(12) Editor's note: Edward Caird (1835–1908) was an English philosopher. He taught moral philosophy at the University of Glasgow (1866-1893) and later served as master of Balliol College, Oxford (1893-1906). His writing, primarily focused on the history of philosophy, aimed to disseminate knowledge of Kant's and Hegel's thoughts in England while reworking Hegel's religious philosophy; he applied the latter's concept of the absolute to religious experience, which, in its ultimate phase, perceives God as the unity of subject and object, encompassing both the universe and human spirituality. Among his notable works are: *Hegel* (1883-86); *The Critical Philosophy of Kant* (2 vols, 1889); *The Evolution of Religion* (2 vols, 1893); and *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers* (2 vols, 1904).

(13) Editor's note: Maurice Blondel (1861–1949) was a French philosopher. He served as a professor of philosophy at the University of Aix-en-Provence from 1907 to 1927 and became a foreign member of the Lincei Academy in 1947. In his first and foundational work, *Action* (1893), he seeks to provide a comprehensive explanation of reality based on a dialectic in which the opposing terms are 'willing will' and 'willed will,' which represent the act of willing and its concrete realisation. The persistent dissatisfaction of the will, which seeks to go beyond its specific expressions, acts as the driving force behind dialectical development. This process culminates in action, which is a synthesis of spontaneity and reflection, as well as moral personhood and the universal order. Thought is also considered a form of action, particularly as it facilitates the liberation of that action. Both external reality and the organic body are seen as realisations of the will, which creates its own conditions in action. Through its continuous expansion, the will also generates social reality, in which oppositional conflicts arise between duty and fact. Once the dialectical cycle of finite realisations is exhausted, the gap between will and its manifestations remains; thus, according to Blondel, it is essential to transition from the natural to the supernatural realm, which is inherently present in the former as its justification. The demand for the infinite represents the need for the transcendent unity of God. Starting from the intention to grasp the entirety of humanity within action, rather than confining himself to the particular aspect of thought, he later considers thought, being, and action as three autonomous aspects of reality in their interconnectedness in his late trilogy (*La pensée*, 1934; *L'être et les êtres*, 1935; *L'action*, 1936-37), systematised in his final works (*La philosophie et l'esprit chrétien*, 2 vols., 1944-46) and *Exigences philosophiques du christianisme*, posthumously published in 1951). This reveals the theological-ontological problem that the earlier *Action* had attempted to formulate in an original manner. While analysing these moments separately, Blondel applies the same dialectical schema he used previously, identifying particular oppositions within each aspect. His 'philosophy of action,' which has notable connections to modernism until its condemnation, has exerted some influence on modern apologetics, particularly in his early essays, *Lettre sur les exigences de la pensée contemporaine en matière d'apologétique* (1896) and *Histoire et dogme* (1904), in which he aims to transcend both rationalism and fideism.

(14) Editor's note: Josiah Royce (1855–1916), after studying in the United States and Germany (notably with H. Lotze), became a professor at Harvard University in 1882. The dominant concern of his philosophy is the moral problem, particularly the persistence of evil and error in human experience. In his early writings, such as *The Religious Aspect of Philosophy* (1885), the tension between moral ideals and individual needs is more pronounced. However, in his most famous work, *The World and the Individual* (2 vols., 1900-01), he fully asserts his tendency to transfer conflicts previously identified at ethical, and social levels to the metaphysical realm. He becomes the chief advocate of a type of idealism within the American context, influenced by Kantian and post-Kantian philosophical traditions, which sometimes diverge significantly from the empirical and pragmatic views of his contemporaries. Dissatisfied with traditional forms of metaphysics and epistemology, such as realism and critical rationalism (a term under which he also includes contemporary empirical and materialistic positions), he developed his own original conception. He argued that individual realities consist of the fulfilment and explicit realisation of the internal meaning of ideas, that is, the achievement of an intrinsic purpose. More specifically ethical problems are addressed in his *Philosophy of Loyalty* (1908), in which he identifies fidelity, understood as devotion to a freely chosen ethical goal, as the foundational virtue. However, it is in *The Problem of Christianity* (2 vols., 1913) that Royce's metaphysical, logical-methodological, ethical and religious demands find their most persuasive expression. Here, he develops his concept of interpretation, revisiting the 'triadic' scheme of Ch. S. Peirce (the interpretation, as a triadic relationship, requires an interpreter who 'mediates' between the interpreted object and the one in need of interpretation; in extreme cases, the three terms may coincide in a single subject). The human subject, the individual as a person, cannot be 'known' merely perceptually or conceptually but must be understood as the ultimate term in an exhaustively intricate process of 'interpretation,' which compares them with other individuals in the context of a community. Theoretical antitheses are resolved within the

interpretative process, viewed as a series of mediations. The contrast between the absolute and the individual is reconciled through interpretative mediation, allowing Royce to assert that the real world consists precisely in this ‘community of interpretation.’

The work also contains an original reinterpretation of Christianity, focusing on the themes of the Pauline Church, the loss of innocence due to original sin, and atonement-reparation. In his later years, he proposed the theme of the ‘hope of the great community’ (*The Hope of the Great Community*, 1916), in which the diverse ‘interpretative’ communities—economic, political, moral, etc.—of which the individual is a part are synthesised, thus returning more concretely to the religious issues that have always inspired his philosophical reflection. Other notable works include *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy* (1892); *Studies of Good and Evil* (1898); *Outlines of Psychology* (1903); *Race Questions, Provincialism, and Other American Problems* (1908); *The Sources of Religious Insight* (1912); *Lectures on Modern Idealism* (posthumously, 1919); *Fugitive Essays* (posthumously, 1920).

(15) Editor’s note: David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874) was a German theologian. He studied at Tübingen, where he was a student of F. Ch. Baur, and later attended lectures by Hegel and Schleiermacher in Berlin. He applied the principles of Hegelian philosophy to the study of Christian origins, particularly in his work *Das Leben Jesu kritisch bearbeitet* (2 vols., 1835), which, due to its boldness, barred him from an academic career. In this work, he denied the supernatural character of Jesus’s mission and explained miraculous events as myths (according to the Hegelian distinction between ‘myth’ and ‘concept’) that seek to represent the immanence of the divine within the human. According to Strauss, the ‘historical manifestation’ of God is not found in a single individual (Jesus) but in humanity as a whole. In 1837, Strauss addressed the heated controversy surrounding his book, which had sparked debate since its publication in 1835. The book profoundly unsettled the Hegelian School, and in examining the divisions that arose, Strauss identified a ‘left,’ ‘right,’ and ‘centre.’ The key issue at stake was one that deeply concerned Hegel and his followers: the relationship between philosophy and Christian doctrine. Strauss wrote, ‘There are three possible answers to the question of whether and to what extent the idea of the unity of divine and human nature proves the gospel to be history: either the concept proves the entirety of the history, only part of it, or none of it. If each of these answers represents a branch of the Hegelian school, then, using the traditional analogy, the first direction, being closest to the long-established system, could be called the right, the third the left, and the second the centre.’ Initially, Strauss placed himself alone on the left. However, this did not last long. The radicalisation of the Hegelian left advanced so quickly that by 1841, Strauss had severed ties with the *Deutsche Jahrbücher*, the main journal of the Hegelian left, unable to endure the criticisms and jibes of other prominent figures such as Arnold Ruge, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Bruno Bauer. Other notable works include *Die christliche Glaubenslehre in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung und im Kampfe mit der modernen Wissenschaft dargestellt* (2 vols., 1840-41); *Der Christus des Glaubens und der Jesus der Geschichte* (1865); and *Der alte und der neue Glaube* (1872), which celebrates scientific progress as having forever extinguished the Christian faith. Some of his theses regarding ‘myth’ and the figure of Jesus in the Gospels have been adopted by Protestant exegetical schools. Posthumously, his *Gesammelte Schriften* (12 vols., 1876-78) and *Ausgewählte Briefe* (1895) were published.

(16) The difference between a merely thought-of lightning bolt, which an individual can calmly summon at will, and a real lightning bolt, which could incinerate him—that is, the difference between the possible and the real, between the mental and the concrete, between *esse essentiae* and *esse existentiae*—is not qualitative but quantitative, intensive. It pertains to increasingly deeper and more intense degrees of the power of judgment, among which there is continuity. In relation to each of these degrees, freedom can play a varying role.

(17) For the resolution of this dualism, which could be sensed here as a value or ‘ought to be,’ see § 10 of Essay II below. Here, it is important to note the transformation, characteristic of magical idealism, of what constitutes being in the logical and gnoseological order into an ought to be in the practical order.

(18) See below, Appendix.

(19) See note 17 on p. 37. This sheds further light on the meaning of the current crisis. Modern criticism has shattered the state of innocence, revealing things that can no longer be ignored. One cannot rely on the old supports any longer without consciously deceiving oneself, for their unreality is now known. Modern culture has cut all ties behind the individual: if he is to continue living, he must draw life from within himself; if there is to be a fixed point, only his Self can be such. The current crisis has precisely this meaning: on one hand, the clear awareness that the ancient certainty rested on a promissory note and that, now, there is no longer anything to lean on or take refuge in; on the other hand, the hesitation and deficiency of the individual to take the final step—to assume a cosmic responsibility, to declare oneself God; to become sufficient for the solitude of what is absolute, in order to draw the principle through which the entire world can be regenerated and gain substance and certainty.

(20) Carlo Michelstaedter, *La persuasione e la rettorica*, Genoa, 1913, pp. 35-36, 39.

(21) Editor's note: Giuseppe Peano (1858–1932) was a national member of the Lincei Academy (1929); one of the leading modern Italian mathematicians. His name is primarily associated with the development of a useful and rigorous logical formalism; the thorough logical and formal critique of the foundations of arithmetic, projective geometry, and general set theory; the first example of integration through successive approximations in the theory of ordinary differential equations (a method later expanded by Ch.-E. Picard); the statement and initial proof of the existence of integrals for such equations based solely on the continuity of the given data (known as Peano's theorem); and vector calculus, for which he is considered one of the pioneers. He also developed and promoted an international scientific language (Latin sine flexione or interlingua). His notable works include *Calcolo geometrico* (1888), *Principi di logica matematica* (1891), and *Formulario mathematico* (1894-1908).

(22) See below, § 10 of Essay II.

(23) Blavatsky states (in *Abrégé de la doctrine secrète*, Paris, 1923, pp. 463-464) that Sat (being) and Asat (nonbeing) generate each other and that their truth is an eternal circular motion. However, while this idea is extensively developed in Taoism and Tantra, she merely touches on it in her work, and it is, in fact, contradicted by various other positions.

II. On the Concept of Power

I. It has been shown that one of the fundamental principles asserted by magical idealism, concerning the achievements of modern gnoseology, is that knowledge can only be understood as capable of providing a system of absolute certainty insofar as thought is conceived not merely as moulding itself to reality but as actively moulding reality itself. That is, it is not merely a passive reproduction but rather a generating function that brings the object of knowledge into existence at the same moment as knowledge of it. This theory was glimpsed as early as Vico, who articulated it in the well-known formula: 'verum et factum convertuntur'—that is, the true, the unconditionally certain, is convertible with the fact, which is consciously produced by an activity of the Self; there is no absolute knowledge other than where science draws its subject matter from itself (1). This conception, which Vico held, was likely inspired by his study of mathematics, in which the character of apodicticity and universal validity is precisely linked to the fact that they proceed essentially through construction, based on freely chosen principles and rules established before any empirical observations. However, Vico, in adhering to a concrete yet one-sided concept of human possibilities, found himself constrained by this criterion to restrict absolutely certain knowledge for man to the rather limited domains of mathematics and history, believing these to be the only fields in which the Self could truly be said to be a creator. In contrast, regarding nature, he asserted that it could only be known with absolute knowledge by God, its author.

However, subsequent philosophy was not content with this. Through Kant's 'a priori synthesis,' Fichte's and Schelling's 'intellectual intuition,' and Hegel's concept of history—in which history is no longer restricted to the social field but rather takes up in an ideal phenomenology the very process of cosmic construction—finally, with the dialectics of knowledge in action, as developed by

Gentile and, with more positive references, by Weber, it extended the domain of the 'fact' over the entire realm of human experience. Nor could it have been otherwise. As a matter of fact, knowledge, if it is partial, cannot in any way possess the character of absolute knowledge, and splitting the domain of certainty in half actually undermines all certainty, insofar as it is absolute certainty.

Aut Caesar aut nihil: if the Self is incapable of comprehending the entire system of experience as its own product, then it cannot claim unconditional knowledge of any part of it—and thus any demand for absolute certainty must be deemed completely invalid. It can be shown that this is the case by examining the two fields to which Vico restricted himself: mathematics and history. Concerning mathematics, it is now understood that its certainty is merely formal and hypothetical; in practical terms, it is subordinate to the first principles. Such principles, in theoretical terms, cannot guarantee a unique and exclusive determination; to cite a well-known example, Euclidean geometry, Riemann geometry, and Lobachevsky geometry (2) are all a priori valid. What can endow one of these three theoretically compatible geometries with the distinguishing mark of real certainty, as opposed to merely formal certainty, is, in the words of Riemann and Lobachevsky (3), experience. Specifically, the fact that it seems intuitively evident that the sum of the interior angles of a triangle equals 180° , rather than exceeding or falling short of this value, or that $2 + 2$ equals 4, does not derive from assumptions established before experience, nor from a transcendent character of mathematical truth; instead, it arises from the physical world we inhabit, characterised by a certain density index and not another (4), within an experienced based on finite rather than infinite sets. However, as long as this element of experience is something given—independent of our power—there is no assurance of its permanence, and yet the system of mathematical certainty, rooted in this experience, is ultimately influenced and shaped by the contingent. Similarly, in history, while the human factor is indeed quite prominent, it also depends on the environment, physical conditions, and other factors that man, understood in a strict sense, encounters but does not create. Regarding these conditions—precisely because they are not 'created'—one must exclude certain knowledge. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that history contains an obscure principle that undermines any assertion of absolute certainty. Such certainty would require a total understanding of all influencing conditions. Therefore, the demand for philosophy beyond Vico is legitimate: if, in general, there is to be absolute certainty, nothing must exist for the Self that the Self has not posited.

2. On the other hand, if the demand is real, the satisfaction that philosophy provides is illusory. In this context, it is certainly necessary to place the Self in the position of God, since God, for Vico, was seen as the sufficient principle of that part of experience he believed lay beyond human activity. Therefore, it is essential to view the individual not as something rigid, fixed once and for all in certain capacities, but as an infinite potential for development. Moreover, one must assert that absolute knowledge requires the affective extension of a sufficient activity of the Self over all that world, which is its world. Consequently, the point of unconditional certainty transforms into that of self-sufficiency and absolute power, dazzling from a progressive affirmation of the Self that transcends its amorphous and oblique daily life. The theory of absolute knowledge, subsequently developed, must therefore transition into the magical, since, otherwise, it could not maintain even one of its positions.

However, this transition into action, this condition of self-construction leading to the absolute Individual, which logically followed from the demand, was faced with fundamental inertia. Moreover, since the horror brought about by the other alternative remained, which led to the reduction of all knowledge to mere opinion and a problematic state bound by the contingencies of the moment, modern philosophy sought a *modus vivendi*: and it found it with little expense in the concept of the transcendental Self. The ambiguity related to such a notion has already been mentioned. Now, it is crucial to understand the context from which it arose. I can assert that everything, as far as it is known to me, must be incorporated into my cognitive activity. The opposing thesis would lead to the absurd claim that there are things known to me (for they must indeed be known to me, in one way or another, for me to speak of them); and yet, since I place them

outside my cognitive act, I cannot claim to know them. There is no doubt that the question is framed in these terms from the perspective of abstract knowledge; let us reiterate that idealism, in this respect, represents an absolutely unconquerable position. From this perspective, the demand for absolute knowledge would be satisfied since the Self, conceived as the gnoseological subject of idealism, undoubtedly replaces God. But when experience is examined from the perspective of freedom and the concrete individual—beyond the abstract and formal aspects—things appear in a very different light: the power that strikes in the realm of knowledge then transforms, for the most part, into impotence. Concerning the world of representation, the Self indeed appears as chained and necessitated; it is not normally granted the ability to refrain from perceiving or transforming what it perceives, nor to modify the conditions of representation. This includes both the so-called a priori forms (space, time, causality, etc.) and the various physical and physiological determinisms, to which, in one way or another, we must concede a certain reality and consistency, since the physical and physiological sciences are not entirely devoid of meaning, and it essential to explain the possibility of their success, however partial it may be. This issue becomes even more apparent in the realm of the action itself, where the concrete individual finds himself caught in an infinity of contingencies that compel him to do what he least wants. From a gnoseological point of view, nothing exists that is not posited by the Self: just as Midas could not touch anything without immediately transforming it into gold, so knowledge cannot assert itself on anything without thereby reducing it to something conditioned and posited by it. But, from the perspective of freedom, the Self appears in a certain way as a slave to its own cognitive activity; this unfolds in determinations over which it has little or no power, which possess it more than it possesses it. Now, it is very clear what an indifferent individuality, nonetheless stubbornly reliant on the need for absolute certainty, had to do in this situation: to confine itself to an abstract-cognitive perspective and to deny as an illusion all that is freedom and concrete individuality. Thus was born the idea of the transcendental Self, the abstract subject of knowing; note that it is not my knowing or any other actual knowing, but knowing in general—a void form reducing with a devouring force the concrete world into ideal entities, which an incomprehensible activity unfolds, binding freedom and necessity, individuality and universality in a blissful coincidentia oppositorum, in sets that Bradley (5) rightly understood as ‘nonterrestrial ballets of bloodless categories.’ Such a transcendental Self was posited as the ‘true’ Self. With a kind of refined metaphysical masochism, the individual of concrete life and freedom was opposed to it as an abstraction, as a ‘puppet of the imagination,’ as something contradictory, whose only fate—so Hegel expressed it—is ‘the damnation of a cold and dull death.’ Nor could it be otherwise, for everything that falls outside abstract knowledge conveys a testimony of impotence, which would inexorably dissolve the mirage of absolute knowledge. Thus, as Stirner (6) keenly noted, starting from the premise that only what is human is true, it was necessary to assert that the human lives only in the mind of the rationalist, in his fantastic transcendental Self, while the anti-human exists everywhere. Moreover, by delving deeper into this position, one arrives at a true reversal: from the premise that absolute knowledge is conditioned by absolute activity and power, one ends up positing that, in truth, such a condition is instead an absolute passivity and impotence.

3. This can be clarified by demonstrating how such philosophers are led to conceive of the will. Royce, for example, accepts the Vichian principle in a certain way: the actual being of things, he asserts, is tied to an affirmation of individual will; things are the complete incarnations of purposes that, in the ideal realm, have only a partial and indeterminate expression. That is all very well; however, it turns out that things frequently oppose, disappoint, or even defeat the actual and conscious will of the individual. How does he explain this? Royce arrives at this intriguing solution: that such an actual, conscious will is illusory and abstract, and that what the Self ‘truly’ wants in these cases is precisely what does violence to or disappoints it (7). What he believes he wants, he does not truly want—he can recognise his ‘true’ will only in the determinations by which things break his actual will. Conclusion: the ‘true’ will of the Self is the rejection of this and, more precisely, the embodiment of its impotence. There is, therefore, no activity of the Self that, through

absolute, creative power, embodies in things, from the inside out, what it freely and intentionally wills. On the contrary, my will must be dictated to me by things, revealing what it has 'freely' willed; the criterion for my true will is provided by what is given, by the external. As for what I, as a concrete individual, want, it is merely a shadow, an illusion caused by my unconsciousness and finitude. Royce is unwilling to admit that the idea or will aligns with nature, as this is the deeper meaning of his doctrine. He believes he can escape this conclusion by asserting that nature embodies a system of ends of divine order; however, this makes no real difference, for the essence of the process remains equally external to my concrete individuality, which, as a result, is deprived of all power and any real autonomy. It is important to draw the reader's attention to the profound immorality and tragic irony of this doctrine, which, when fully developed, leads to the apotheosis of impotence, the dissolution of the individual into things, and ultimately to nothing more than a refined and enhanced materialism. This development is evident, for instance, in Gentile's philosophy, whose core concept is the so-called 'concrete freedom'—a freedom identical to necessity. This freedom is not the sufficient principle of absolute, arbitrary legislation but rather adheres to the necessity of an 'ultimate and unconditional' (8) rational law. This law turns it into an infinite becoming, of which it therefore does not have the cause within itself (9), and in which, according to the principle that no self-consciousness exists outside the various contents of consciousness, the existential insight and the persuasion of the Self are realised only when the different determinations of experience impose themselves forcefully on the individual, compelling him to conform to them and thereby denying any form of autarchy in the demiurgic nature of the act in which he is engrossed. As is well known, a woman's pleasure lies in being abused; yet here, the philosopher is allowed to choose whichever gender suits him best. It should only be noted that this movement, which culminates in the absolute dissolution of freedom and concrete individuality, logically follows from the condition required to achieve absolute knowledge, especially when this condition asserts itself against the stubborn sloth of the concrete Self. Only such an abdication can create the illusion of power. Clearly, by blinding oneself, one can avoid seeing what, despite its existence, one does not wish to confront: this is the very essence of the shift from the concrete Self to the transcendental Self.

It would, however, be interesting to see if one of these philosophers, when subjected to torture despite all his will, would have the fortitude to uphold the fiction of his doctrine and, accordingly, recognise that his 'concrete freedom,' his true 'historical' and 'rational' 'will,' is that which relates to the 'fact'—namely, to that which tears and torments his person, and yet to those who impose such an unpleasant situation upon him; while that will which internally rebels against violence, suffers impotence, and strives to reaffirm the principle of the individual is instead an illusion, an abstraction—not his real, living will, but rather a 'puppet of the imagination.'

4. If human experience is considered in all its concreteness, the problem presented then leads to a very different solution. It first becomes clear that pure knowledge is an abstraction that has never existed. Any cognitive and logical determination—thought and its laws—are not impersonal elements unfolding automatically according to external norms that are indifferent to the human condition. Instead, they are always the product of individual activity, symbolising profound affirmations of the Self (10). Similarly, the categories are not abstract cognitive forms that the spirit finds within itself, fully formed and well-defined, having mysteriously appeared from nowhere. Rather, as understood by Vedanta and Buddhist philosophy, they are simply modes of activity and freedom that exist as long as they maintain the correlative affirmation of the individual, transforming or vanishing as the individual does. However, if the prior is never abstract knowledge or logical truth, but rather activity, will, and individuality, it becomes clear how absurd it is to settle for the gnoseological perspective of the subject and to dismiss—through a sort of authoritative decree—the profound ensemble of life forces, passions, and efforts that underpin the formation of knowledge. Philosophical activity itself is merely a particular moment propelled by a tumultuous interplay of elements that the individual, as long as he remains confined to abstract reflection, can never hope to master. As a result, the sufficiency of the transcendental Self reveals itself as an

illusion and a rhetorical device, standing in stark contrast to the impotence of the concrete individual. In light of this clear awareness of the antithesis, it must be asserted that certainty and absolute knowledge are meaningless where they fail to reflect the concrete power of a Self that, from the heights of unconditional and arbitrary freedom, might govern the entirety of the conditions and energies that shape the totality of its experience. Absolute certainty extends as far as my power and dominion extend: everything that escapes my will and sovereignty can be said to be unknown to me in terms of a certain knowledge, since its principle, which hypothetically transcends me, is something I can never be sure of—something that can always elude, disappoint, and falsify, with unpredictable variations, the positions I connect to it. In other words, I can consider myself absolutely certain only of those things of which I have the principles and causes within me, as unconditional freedom, i.e., as an expression of my unconditional freedom, specifically in terms of my ability to possess them; for all other things, I can only be certain of what meets this requirement for certainty within them. The process of knowing and that of absolute self-realisation, the elevation of the individual to universal Sovereign, converge at the same point, from which it also appears that the principle of error and darkness is nothing more than that of impotence. The criterion for distinguishing error from truth is merely the degree of intensity of affirmation and possession: a vague, weak, and uncertain affirmation is an error; an absolute affirmation that is entirely sufficient unto itself is truth. Error is a weak truth, while truth is an intense and powerful error. Here, as with the possible and the real, the difference is not qualitative but quantitative; it pertains to degrees within the homogeneous continuum of individual affirmation.

Such a theory, if it sounds bothersome to the European mindset, is fundamentally connected to the principles of Eastern wisdom. According to this perspective, few prejudices are as absurd as the one that has permeated modern Western culture, which holds that anyone, provided he has a certain degree of intellectual clarity, can partake in real certainty through the teachings communicated to him by science or philosophy, regardless of the life along which he allows himself to be carried (11). Let it be clear that on this path, no degree of violence can lead to anything other than the deformed and insubstantial shadow of absolute knowledge. The Eastern view, which resonates in the mysticism of every culture, asserts instead that the process of knowing is conditioned by the process of actual transformation and empowerment of the concrete Self; that absolute knowledge is nothing but empty talk unless it manifests akin to the splendour or the light that radiates from one who, through his power, has achieved absolute self-realisation, such as the Vedic Rishi, the Buddhist Arhat, or the Taoist Phap.

As long as something exists, there can be no absolute certainty. As long as a world exists as a world—that is, as something ‘Other,’ like a collection of impenetrable and resistant powers—the principle of the Absolute, strictly speaking, does not exist. However, this negation of the world as a condition for certainty should not be understood abstractly; that is, it should not be seen as an absolute negation of every form or as an empty and interminable *nirvāna*. On the contrary, it is connected to one who neither yields to the world nor flees from it but rather confronts it face to face, masters it entirely, and, in every determination, recognises himself as an entity of power. In doing so, he demonstrates the non-existence of the world itself as ‘Other,’ just as, at the same point, he recognises the absolute reality of it in the infinity of its forms, simply as a manifestation of the unconditional self-willing of the absolute individual, the Unique.

From this arises a fundamental concept: only in the absolute Individual, only in the wholly sufficient act, does the world become certain and, in this, real. The Autarch is the focal point who imparts to nature the consistency and certainty that it did not possess before he exerted his influence but sought. The world is the process of being that, starting from an ideal intensive limit of deprivation, aims to complete itself in a state of absolute possession and, in doing so, to realise itself and achieve self-certainty. It is absurd to demand certainty and reality from nature, since nature, as such, is deprivation (στέρησις), and certainty and reality are not inherent in it but rather in the individual. Thus, it possesses them only as far as the individual grants them to himself.

Therefore, absolute certainty can only be demonstrated through τῷ ἔργῳ, that is, through action, as a process. Explanation and truth do not lie behind us but ahead of us. Thus, all of nature rests upon

the individual: the focal point at which the individual turns to realise himself per autarchy in the act of power conditions nature, reclaiming both its principle and its end.

Having established the subordination of the gnoseological problem to the principle of power, it remains necessary to develop a distinct understanding of this concept so that it effectively becomes the focal point capable of addressing the demand for absolute certainty. It will be demonstrated how, through such an assumption, it is also possible to determine what should be included in the concept of freedom, ensuring that it does not reduce to an empty sound.

5. Regarding a possible determination of his consciousness, the individual can assume two radically opposing attitudes. Every concrete distinction between nature and spirit, between non-Self and Self, objectivity and subjectivity, etc., can invariably be traced back to the values that respectively arise from each of these two directions. The individual has the choice to opt between them, thereby defining the sphere that will ultimately contain the inner meaning of his life. The first of these attitudes is characterised by the Self's failure to recognise itself as a centre or an absolute principle; instead, it becomes immersed in its determination, which it does not perceive as its own creation or position but to which it ascribes a reality distinct from itself and inherently subsistent. In this way, the individual, in a certain sense, alienates himself from himself, becoming, so to speak, a mere shell, and, in an act of devotion, relinquishes his centrality and reality to an 'Other,' an ἕτερον. Thus, regarding his own determination, he remains essentially passive and insubstantial; in all that he is, he does not possess his life and persuasion within himself but rather outside of himself, in the 'Other,' on which he feels dependent. In contrast to this essentially negative or feminine attitude stands another perspective, in which the individual exists as a principle of absolute centrality, a power before which nothing exists, and from which every determination or object derives its reality. This reality is experienced as that of something posited, freely generated by the Self. According to this view, the Self utterly rejects the Other, negating any reality that exists outside or above itself and asserting that all reality comes from what he draws from within himself. It feels dependent on nothing; it is the ultimate source of justification for his actions and existence and the centre around which every existence gravitates. Within every life, it behaves as the absolute Lord. Thus, there are two distinct planes or levels of consciousness, which fundamentally alter the nature of actions, even if those actions are directed towards the same object. This distinction is crucial because, as a fundamental principle of magical idealism suggests, what truly matters is not the act of doing itself, that is, what is done, but rather how it is done. In other words, the meaning and value attributed to a particular action or experience are paramount. This is what determines everything from a spiritual standpoint. One must decisively eradicate the prejudice, typical of a lower level of consciousness, that the criterion of spirituality, freedom, and so forth resides in the inherent nature of this or that object. In truth, there are no purely material or spiritual things; rather, there exists a mode—whether material or spiritual—of experiencing things, which, in themselves, are neither material nor spiritual; in their value or disvalue, they are determined solely by the level of freedom and centrality, or of necessity and lack, at which the individual posits himself to experience in general. Only the feminine and negative attitude generates the character of materiality. The Other—namely, that reality which the Self distinguishes from itself, in which it does not recognise itself and upon which it becomes dependent—can be referred to as physical matter, nature, the transcendental Self, higher will, Spirit, a supersensible entity, or God. Regardless of the terminology used, it makes no difference; it remains merely a thing, something foreign, a 'puppet of the imagination.' The world that exists through it can only be one of non-centrality, nonbeing, and a consciousness that is impure and deficient in self-awareness—essentially, that of a creature and a slave. Such is the world of matter, of brute and dark entities. In contrast to the negativity of this attitude, which could be described as extroverted in Jungian psychological terms, the point of essential positivity—of absolute, irreducible self-affirmation in every experience—clearly defines the principle of Spirit and provides a fundamental condition for the concept of power. However, it is important to note that it is never the content, but always the form of the act that ultimately decides. The very Absolute can be experienced both passively and materially, as in certain instances of mystical ecstasy. Conversely, it

cannot be claimed that the opposing option excludes the recognition of distinct realities, deficiencies, generosity, love, or selflessness. On the contrary, all of these aspects can indeed serve as the subject of an experience characterised by power and freedom—provided that the Self does not lose itself in the relative act but instead engages with it as the will that has unconditionally willed it. Thus, the Self must not, even for an instant, succumb to the illusion of believing that everything it acknowledges as value or aseity, as a result of its own act, is necessarily so; in other words, it should not assume that such recognition stems from the coercive force of a principle that transcends its own centrality.

6. From this arises an additional distinction that refines the concept of power: the difference between action driven by desire or deficiency and action rooted in autarchy or unconditionality. When observing the life in which the individual typically exists—not only in the amorphous mediocrity of the masses but often also in the profound illuminations of tragic and spiritual humanity—it becomes evident that, for the most part, his actions cannot truly be regarded as determined by him as a sufficient centre; rather, they are influenced by correlations of appetites and motives to which the individual is passive or nearly so. The Self does not possess its action; it desires—and in desire, it is not the Self that seizes the object, but rather the object that seizes the Self, destroying its centrality in a compulsion that hurls it outward, to the periphery of itself. What is quite important to note is that such a situation can encompass not just this or that action but rather the totality of all possible actions. A servant does not cease to be such simply by changing masters and those who believe they have achieved something in terms of individual value and freedom simply by transitioning, for example, from sensual motives to spiritual ones, from love of matter and self to love of the supersensible, of others, or even of freedom itself—those who think there is some difference between the desire of the brute and that of the God conceived by certain cosmogonies, which generates the world allured by the idea of ‘being many,’ are victims of a gross illusion, which can only be understood as stemming from the lack not so much of sufficiently deep philosophical reflection than of an understanding of what constitutes the true value of an action. Within the totality of such a universe, dependence prevails: action invariably manifests per necessity. The Self is not its own author, nor does it have the principle of action within itself; it does not possess its actions but rather endures them. When an individual acts—whether as a result of an internal impulse of his nature, reacting to an inner discomfort or deprivation, or drawn by the allure of an idea, pleasure, or bliss—regardless of whether these are deemed ‘material’ or ‘spiritual,’ (12) he remains inexorably confined within the realm of servitude. Particularly significant is that the enjoyment experienced by individuals represents, in essence, the cost of obedience and abdication. With its ever-changing yet fundamentally identical temptations, enjoyment imposes specific determinations upon the activities that seek it, thereby reducing individuality to a passive instrument in the service of transcendent correlations. This dynamic is strikingly illustrated in Schopenhauer’s analysis of sexuality and, in a much broader context, in Michelstaedter’s concept of *φιοψυχία* (13). It is evident that, from the perspective of power, such a situation must be transcended in the most absolute sense. Value and pleasure should not precede or dictate activity and will; instead, they ought to arise as effects of this unconditional willing—a perfect willing. In the action of the Lord, there must be no trace of desire or internal compulsion; rather, it must express a will that, in its determination, faces nothing—neither its own nature nor the light of pleasure, nor the allure of a motive or ideal. It generates itself absolutely and positively, focusing solely on the cold and solitary love for its own sufficient affirmation. As long as I perform an act to attain pleasure or utility from it, or because it conforms to my being or any law, whether material or ideal, and not simply because it is willed, one should not speak of grace, freedom, or power. However, it should be emphasised that this does not entail the negation of all pleasure in a dreary asceticism, but the enjoyment of it as a possession, as something of which one has the principle within oneself: one no longer engages in an activity bound to unfold in a fixed, unalterable way to attain enjoyment, but rather in an activity that allows no external conditions to dictate what is pleasurable or painful; further, at the point of determination, it remains entirely indifferent to the

lure of pleasure or the aversion of pain, willing itself purely for its own sake and generating pleasure arbitrarily, drawn from the perfection of its own affirmation, radiant with power. Only when pleasure—and, with it, value in general—can be experienced not as the determinant of activity but as the blossoming and creation of that activity, (14) which in turn arises from a will unguided by any stimulus, appetite, motive, or idea, does the act cease to derive pleasure, value, or reason from outside itself and instead recognise them within, as an intrinsic possession. Only then does the servant cease to change masters, truly elevating himself to autonomy and freedom. In this light, pleasure, no longer a mark of passivity, transforms into the very brilliance of the absolute positive.

Therefore, the concept of power at issue here cannot be properly grasped without linking it to an attitude of positivity and central affirmation—a clear negation of the illusion of an ‘Other’ present in any experience and ultimately a bare will free from the constraints of appetites or external stimuli, transcending every desire and appetite. Indeed, in all other cases, there exists an unwavering dependence of the individual on something external to himself, whose determinations he can never fully ascertain per absolute knowledge. It may be beneficial to illuminate these findings by reaffirming them in relation to the concepts of morality, logic, and the very notion of power as it pertains to applied natural sciences.

7. Morality fundamentally revolves around the feeling of duty, which emerges from a specific system of values under which the will—conceived as moral will—subsumes itself. It is crucial to clarify the essence of the relationship between will and value: does the will unconditionally determine values, or are values perceived by it as something given, which it simply recognises and accepts? This dichotomy is illustrated in the contrasting doctrines of Plato and Duns Scotus (15). In the *Euthyphro*, Plato posed the critical question of whether certain determinations are willed by the gods because they are recognised as good, or whether they are deemed good solely because they are willed by the gods. In the first scenario, there exists an eternal and intrinsically valid norm under which the will of the gods subsumes itself. In the latter, will or freedom comes first, and the reason a thing appears good is simply that it expresses an unconditional affirmation of the gods. Plato, like Thomas Aquinas after him, favoured the first position, asserting that things are willed by the gods because they are intrinsically good. However, he failed to recognise that those he continued to call gods were reduced to mere creatures who must learn from a higher norm what constitutes good and evil—the true God is, in essence, the legislator, the one who, as the creator of the law, cannot be subject to any law. Duns Scotus, on the other hand, grasped this distinction and affirmed the alternative view: that the bare power of God—absolute freedom deriving its criteria, judgments, and decisions from itself—serves as the sole criterion from which the value or disvalue of certain actions or things subsequently arises (16). The God of Duns Scotus is thus the Lord and creator of good and evil, while the Platonic God is merely a slave to good or evil, existing as a shadow of the true divine essence. That said, it is unnecessary to elaborate further on the need to choose between morality and freedom, as they represent two dimensions of consciousness that are fundamentally incompatible. Morality, by its very nature, invariably implies dependence and a lack of individual autonomy concerning absolute legislation, thereby being most distinctly excluded from the concept of power. The spirit lies beyond all morality. The self-sufficient one recognises no other criterion of value beyond that which emanates from his own unconditional, arbitrary will; the intrinsic imperative of any external element is, for him, nothing more than an empty phrase. What possesses value for him is solely what he chooses to will, and only because he wills it: to employ an Indian term, it is the *svechchhāchari*.

What has been articulated regarding good and evil can be equally applied to logical truth and the broader concept of nature. It is only in recent times, particularly with thinkers such as Rickert (17) and Windelband (18), that the inherently moral character of logical truth has been recognised. What appears to us as logically evident possesses an intrinsic quality of absolute imperative, effectively nullifying any flexibility of subjective will. It manifests in an eternal order that asserts itself upon the Self as soon as it is comprehended. Logical truth is not perceived by the Self as an absolute

position that, inasmuch as it arises from its will, suggests that if it is thus, it could also be otherwise at its discretion; rather, it is experienced as something imperative—an entity that unequivocally binds freedom, allowing for no alternative whatsoever. As Bossuet (19) aptly stated, the truths, whenever they manifest in the human intellect, will indeed be recognised; however, in recognising them, the intellect does not create them as truths but rather discovers them to be so. This is the form through which, in the logical realm, the Self engages in its own activity. But what does this mean, if not that the Self does not possess the truth but rather is possessed by it? In other words, it is not the legislator but a subject in the realm of rationality. In this domain—perhaps more than in any other—the centre does not lie within the individual but outside of him. The fundamental attitude remains always that of a passive and negative creature, in no way that of the Lord (20). A dilemma similar to that presented regarding morality thus arises, which has already sparked famous questions in scholasticism about God: are the so-called eternal truths truths because God knows them to be true, or does God know them as such because they are already true in themselves? Is truth, then, independent and indifferent to the act of knowing it, or does it arise from the unconditional self-determination of the subject? As long as the Self engages in logical judgment rooted in a *sollen* or an imperative, instead of an arbitrary will—a mere contingent affirmation of its volition—the first alternative holds, and thus Platonic exemplarism remains its final word. However, in this case, power, along with absolute certainty, is reduced to an empty sound. Furthermore, it should not be contended that it is illegitimate to establish a distinction and a hierarchy between freedom and necessity, for, in reality, the identification of freedom and necessity merely reflects a sophisticated means of denying freedom itself. Those who maintain this position would ultimately arrive at an explicit admission that their perspective is constrained by the concept of nature. In nature, freedom is fundamentally intertwined with necessity, in the sense that every activity conforms to an initial determination that is unchangeable, even though, on the other hand, it is only through this activity that it can achieve its concrete realisation. According to such a concept, one can become only what one inherently is: thus, a plant can never be anything other than a plant, a creature can only be a creature, and God can only be God. The relative differences—such as those between man and plant, or between God and creature—should not create illusions, as they exist outside the relationship of entities to themselves, which must be the sole focus of any concrete reflection on freedom. To clarify further: a plant eternally compelled to grow would differ in no meaningful way from a thought that is eternally constrained to be rational or from an absolute being that is eternally bound to be absolute. The certainty of rationality, perfection, and even freedom is no less inescapable than that of gravitation, vegetative growth, or sensual appetites. Those who fail to grasp the deeper aspects of freedom remain trapped in a limited perspective akin to that of a mere creature. Whether their ultimate truth is the unfolding of the Idea rather than matter, the divine providential order rather than the chaos of conflicting powers, the development of a logical structure rather than the incoercibility of an irrational *élan vital* that morphs into ever-new and unpredictable forms—this makes no difference. What requires transformation is not the content itself but rather the fundamental form of the activity, which operates in an inherently self-referential way. In all the above-mentioned situations, there remains, at the core, an unyielding brute fact, a destiny—something beyond the Self's grasp, over which it has no control, rendering it fundamentally passive. Against this notion, the Gnostics, followed by Plotinus, Eckhart, Schelling, and Secrétan (21), put forth the idea of the spirit as absolute, undetermined freedom—unconstrained by any law or nature, be it rational, moral, or material—arbitrarily creating its own nature and being. In truth, spirit exists solely as freedom, and freedom exists solely as *causa sui*, namely *causa sui ex nihilo* (22). Outside of this concept, all is nature and necessity—opaque, deficient matter. Thus, there are two possibilities: either there exists an initial condition that univocally determines freedom, beyond which the Self cannot penetrate or reaffirm itself; or the *prius* is an absolute, unconditional freedom from which all nature, law, and rationality proceed. In the first case, there is analyticity: I am what I am, subject to the inexorable fate of my nature. In the second, there is synthetic autonomy: I am what I will, governed by a will that creates itself absolutely out of nothing. These two realms are divided by an abyss, and one must choose between them to define

the orientation that will illuminate the entirety of one's life and experience—whether one rises as the Master of Yes and No, an Autarch, or sinks into the oblique and accursed existence of the creature and the feminine.

It follows that one cannot genuinely speak of power as long as any law or norm—whether it be rational, moral, or natural—is acknowledged to take precedence over freedom and, by extension, over the Self. This remains true as long as concepts of good and evil, truth and falsehood, rationality and irrationality, being and nonbeing are not exclusively determined by the absolute affirmation of the individual and nothing else.

8. Finally, it remains to disillusion those who dream of achieving any form of power by exploiting natural forces through the applications of physical and chemical sciences. Bacon aptly observed that one cannot command nature in this manner without first serving and acknowledging it. Man's boundless affirmation through an array of mechanisms, technical devices, and similar means amounts to little more than a *marché de dupes*; at its core, this pursuit reveals an absolute submission to servitude and obedience, fundamentally negating the principle of individuality. Indeed, one does not achieve the central affirmation, which involves dominating unconditionally, relying solely on one's own power to succeed, without accepting laws but imposing them, subduing them, or violating them. Conversely, every aspect of that situation reveals an acknowledgment of one's own nonreality and the existence of an external power, to which one begs for the success of the action. For example, the discussion will not centre on the mere physical act of moving a stone itself; instead, the focus will be exclusively on how such movement can be executed in alignment with objective laws recognised *a priori*. The act is not straightforward; it does not intrinsically possess the necessary conditions for its execution but depends on external factors that enable its success. Its effectiveness is not intrinsic but rather accidental; it is contingent upon fulfilling certain conditions or agreements that are not inherent to the act itself. This is because the foundation of technique lies in positive science, which is fundamentally 'extroverted.' It neglects to consider things in their profound interiority—the very root that would enable them to reconnect with the Self and to depend directly upon it—but instead approaches them from the outside, focusing solely on their phenomenal appearance. Only this extroverted and separative attitude has bestowed upon nature an autonomous reality, establishing a brute fate within the framework of the mechanical laws that govern it, thereby dissolving into nothingness every genuine consistency and the freedom of the individual. By abstracting the phenomenon from its spiritual principle, the natural sciences have *a priori* excluded any possibility of offering a positive solution to the problem of power. This problem, in essence, demands that it is not knowledge that precedes and conditions the act, but rather that the act precedes and conditions knowledge—that, once the relationship of externality is abolished, action is taken from within, from the level of that metaphysical productivity upon which the phenomenon or the physical depends (23). Nevertheless, these considerations—although it may be unpleasant and mortifying for many to acknowledge it—extend well beyond the realm of mere praxeology. They pertain not solely to the Self, as an absolute affirmation emanating from the centre, but rather to something 'other.' Whether this 'other' is the elemental force of a certain magic within the framework of natural laws, the supersensible entities of a specific occultism, the grace of the mystic, the subconscious in the modern method of conscious autosuggestion proposed by Coué (24), the divine, and so forth, it makes no difference to the matter. Wherever one does not ask of oneself, in an absolute affirmation emanating from the centre, but rather of something 'other,' the success of one's actions, as encapsulated by the phrase 'not I, but the Father acts in me,' one is not engaged with power but rather faced with powerlessness.

9. However, the notion of the individual as Lord—acting as the centre of waves of power that do not stop at the realm of mere discursive form, as in philosophical disciplines, nor at that of sentimental and lyrical expression, as in art, or even at the domain of social communities, as Nietzsche suggests, but rather penetrates to the very heart of physical reality and the realms of supersensible entities, which remain so little understood—faces a significant objection. It can

indeed be stated:—Let it be acknowledged that absolute knowledge requires power as its condition and that genuine power cannot exist without being connected to an unconditional freedom that transcends all laws and nature. However, can the concrete truly assert itself in such a situation? You have acknowledged, in your critique of abstract idealism, that the individual, in various contexts, is powerless and deficient. What does this signify, if not that the Self is compelled to recognise autonomous powers that it did not establish, which instead impose upon it the conditions necessary for the development of absolute knowledge? But if that were the case, it should never again be claimed that the Self possesses the value of true power: the necessary acknowledgment of deficiency requires accepting an intrinsic darkness and inevitability that will weigh like a curse on everything that may later be realised against it. For if certain fundamental truths, principles, or conditions are established from the very beginning, and if autarchy is not the governing principle at that origin, then at no later stage—except at the outset, which depends on that origin in one way or another—can it be recognised as actual autarchy, that is, as unconditionality.

In response to this point, it is important to highlight that, within this context, no inference can be drawn from the deficiency that is inherent to the existence of an ‘Other.’ This tendency to escape, which generates the world of autonomous entities as understood within the philosophical framework of realism, is unequivocally excluded by the present doctrine. As previously stated, this doctrine does not attribute to anything external what the Self lacks, in contrast to a naive and ‘transcendent’ interpretation of the principle of causality. Instead, it recognises everything over which the Self lacks power as its own nonbeing or deprivation. Consequently, the entire world is thus resolved into a body divided and articulated in terms of sufficiency and deficiency. The fundamental principle of this theory aligns with the insight that Michelstaedter derived from the ancient Greek wisdom: do not allow your deficiency to define who you are, nor should you equate your nonbeing with ‘being.’ Additionally, it is firmly asserted that deficiency is not an inherent condition imposed upon the Self by a harsh inevitability; it indeed arises only in relation to the emergence of a specific necessity and is therefore conditioned by the act of freedom that brought that very necessity into existence. Just as certain elements of desire are perceived as evil only when a moral will detaches from them and contrasts with them, that universal whole may appear as nonbeing and deprivation to one who ascends to the sense of the absolute Individual. In contrast, from another perspective—specifically, that of Indian *sādhana*, which echoes through various pantheistic mysticisms—it may indeed

appear as a vibrant and complete existence in the here and now. Once again, the given does not impose any immutable determinations; instead, it represents a malleable substance whose form is shaped solely by the attitudes that the individual assumes in relation to it. Ultimately, it is freedom that dictates the outcome (25). With this in mind, let us reflect on the final observation from Kant’s *Critique of Practical Reason* (26), namely that the very obscurity and indecision of nature should indeed be regarded as a providential disposition. For if the universe were to clearly reveal the path that man ought to follow, individuals would be stripped of genuine spontaneity and autonomy, reduced from a state of vibrant life and free will to a mere automatism, deriving their determinations not from within but from without, driven by an inescapable, almost mechanical force stemming from knowledge.

This means that to posit an autonomous will, one must also acknowledge a corresponding darkness, an indeterminacy, and an absence of predetermined guidelines that would otherwise dictate its actions. Now, this concept can be expanded. Let us assume that what the absolute freedom of the Self affirms as value is the brilliance of that activity through which a subject liberates itself from certain determinations, to which this liberation stands in opposition, serving as their negation, from which it subsequently emerges and generates itself in entirely new forms. For such a value to be realised, it is evidently necessary that at a certain point freedom posits as its negation that which, with respect to another, previous stage, was instead an affirmation of its power. Now that in which the Self, which is the principle of positing, negates itself, it is clear that it cannot, as such, appear to it except as not posited by it, that is, as given, and only in this appearance of a nonbeing, which, although felt as such by the Self, does not result as posited by it, will the further affirmation of the

Self in terms of absoluteness, as mentioned above, be possible. The concept of magical idealism, therefore, can in no way be negated by the acknowledgment of privation; it suffices for the individual to adopt a positive attitude towards it. The individual must not escape from his deficiency but instead take on its burden and strive to become sufficient unto to it. It is necessary to recognise this deficiency as a pivotal moment that is integral to the framework of what has been freely chosen. At this juncture, practical reason remains paramount. As fire could resume the essence of fuel in its profound will to actualise itself, to blaze, so the Self, which wants itself as autarchic, can take back into itself its nonbeing and, indeed, as the matter from which alone it will be able to bring forth the splendour of absolute life and activity. Furthermore, just as fuel exists solely as something to be consumed by the flame, the nonbeing—or the antithesis of deprivation and impotence—that the Self perceives welling up within itself, in relation to and as a result of its elevation to a certain value, is posited only inasmuch as it must be negated: it exists only not to exist. For the individual who knows how to make himself sufficient at this juncture, the essence of absolute dominion resumes the totality of experience in its concrete form. It is not confined to any particular privileged stage; rather, it manifests in every phenomenon, integrated as an infinite transcendent power. For the individual who can attain sufficiency at this point, the form of absolute dominion reclaims the entirety of experience in its concrete reality; it is not confined to this or that privileged stage but is instead lived through every phenomenon, gathered as an infinite transcendent power

10. Such a consideration leads to a final and conclusive point. If nothing exists but the Self, what can ever be the object of power if not the Self itself? And what else, in accordance with the situation presented above, could what must be denied ever be if not once again the Self itself, its own substance? Hence, the central concept of magical idealism: in contrast to what is mere nature, the individual or spirit is defined not as that which is, but as that which has itself. To have oneself is to deny oneself as mere existence or position, to nullify oneself; and precisely through this negative act, which transcends every being in the non-being of infinite freedom, one dominates one's own substance and, within that substance, every substance, enjoying oneself as the principle eternally irreducible to any form or law. In this sense, as the profound intuition of the Tantras suggests, the function of power is a negation: Nishedha—Vyāpāra-rūpā Shaktih (27). As distinctly noted by Lao Tzu (28), the individual, in being, is not; in not being, consuming itself and eternally tearing itself away from itself, he exists, and he exists consistent with absolute being. The principle of power and dominion thus defines and realises, beyond the indeterminate nature of absolute unmanifested freedom, the very act of individuality and is, therefore, both means and end to itself.

Spirit is nothing other than the infinite energy that reaffirms itself over all those forms in which it coagulates and determines its power; it is nothing but the Heraclitean πῦρ, the creative and dissolving flame that resolves every reality into the absolute, unnameable splendour of the centre that possesses itself entirely, of the one who is the being of power. Insofar as it has been demonstrated that everything can be considered known in accordance with an absolute form of knowledge only to the extent that it reflects an expression of a powerful gesture, the entire system of the world, in both its radiant manifestations and its miseries, unfolds within the infinity of its becoming, continually assuming new forms beyond the confines of space and time. In this regard, it signifies nothing less than the phenomenon of the absolute point of freedom, which has sought its essence in autarchy. Such is the Absolute Individual, the Persuaded: enclosed within his simple and unchanging unity, he finds delight and rest, loving only himself and creating all that he creates out of this solitary love: *ὁ δ' εἰς τὸ εἶσον οἶον φέρεται, αὐτοῦ οἶον, ἑαυτὸν ἀγαπήσας, ἀγῆν καθαρὰν, αὐτὸς ὢν τοῦτο, ὅπερ ἠγάπησε* [*He is borne, so to speak, to the inmost of Himself in love of that pure radiance which He is, He Himself being that which He Loves*] (29). Every phenomenon proceeds from him and is consumed within him, like a transcendent power that, as unconditional negativity, strikes in the eternal synthesis of absolute possession (30).

This illumination is nothing other than the individual, from which man, inadequate to the terrible brilliance of his own centre, feels compelled to flee, as if from the point of absolute death.

(1) This position is also found in Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, XII, 1075a, 1.

(2) Editor's note: See notes 6 and 7 on p. 33 of the previous essay.

(3) B. Riemann, *Über die Hypothesen, welche der Geometrie zu Grunde liegen*, Abh. d. K. Gesellschaft, Göttingen, 1854, p. 148. N. J. Lobatschevsky, *Pangeometria*, vol. II, p. 618.

(4) Cf. Louis Rougier, *Les Paralogismes du rationalisme*, Paris, 1920, pp. 281-284. [Editor's note: Louis Rougier (1889–1982) was a prominent French academic known for his contributions to various fields, including philosophy, the history of religions, epistemology, linguistics, economics, and constitutional law. He served as a professor of philosophy at the University of Besançon, where he influenced many students and scholars. Initially, Rougier was a fierce critic of liberalism and capitalism, advocating for more traditional or conservative viewpoints. However, over time, he shifted his stance and became a notable advocate for liberalism. This ideological transformation reflected his engagement with contemporary political and economic thought. In 1938, Rougier organised the Walter Lippmann colloquium, a significant event that brought together a group of intellectuals and thinkers who aimed to discuss and promote liberal ideas. This colloquium is noteworthy as it marked an important moment in the intellectual history of liberalism in France, focusing on the challenges of modern democracy and the role of individual freedom in society. Rougier wrote extensively on various topics, contributing to debates in philosophy and political theory. His works often reflected a rigorous analytical approach, and he sought to bridge the gap between different fields of study.]

(5) Editor's note: Francis Herbert Bradley (1846–1924) was a significant British philosopher, known primarily for his work in idealism and his influence on 20th-century philosophy. After completing his education, he became a tutor at Oxford and eventually a fellow of Merton College. He spent most of his academic career at Oxford, where he taught until his retirement. Bradley was one of the leading figures in British idealism, a movement that emphasised the primacy of the mind or spirit in understanding reality. He was influenced by German idealists such as Hegel and Kant, but he developed his own unique perspective. Bradley's most famous work is *Appearance and Reality* (1893), in which he critiques the distinction between appearance and reality. He argues that reality is not simply composed of individual objects but is a unified whole. Bradley famously contended that ordinary experience is filled with contradictions, leading to the conclusion that reality is a single, comprehensive entity rather than a collection of separate things. In *Ethical Studies* (1876), he explores moral philosophy and the nature of ethical values, advocating for a more integrated approach to ethics that reflects the complexities of human life. In *Principles of Logic* (1883), he examines the nature of logical reasoning, arguing for the interconnectedness of knowledge and experience. Bradley's work significantly influenced later philosophers, particularly in the realms of metaphysics, ethics, and epistemology. He helped to shape the development of British idealism, influencing figures like Bernard Bosanquet and T.H. Green. While influential, Bradley's ideas have also faced criticism, particularly from empiricists and analytical philosophers who questioned the validity of his idealist framework and his rejection of empirical evidence. He remains a pivotal figure in philosophy, known for his rigorous exploration of idealism and the nature of reality. His ideas continue to be studied and debated in contemporary philosophical discourse, particularly concerning the relationships between mind, experience, and the nature of existence.

(6) M. Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigenem*, Recl. Bibl., p. 172; see p. 207. [Editor's note: Max Stirner (1806–1856) was a German philosopher known for his provocative ideas regarding individuality, egoism, and the critique of societal norms and institutions. Born as Johann Caspar Schmidt in Bayreuth, Stirner studied at the University of Berlin, where he was exposed to the philosophical ideas of Hegel and the Young Hegelians. He worked as a teacher and a writer, but he struggled to gain recognition during his lifetime. Stirner's main philosophical work was published in 1844, and he remained relatively obscure until his ideas gained traction in later philosophical discussions. In *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (1844), his most famous and foundational text for egoism and individualism, he argues for the supremacy of the individual self over societal norms,

institutions, and ideologies. His central thesis is that individuals should prioritise their own desires and interests, which he refers to as the 'ego.' He critiques various social and political ideologies, including religion, the state, and moral frameworks, arguing that they limit individual freedom and creativity. He advocates for the concept of self-ownership, suggesting that individuals must claim ownership of their own lives and desires, free from external constraints. He introduces the concept of the 'Unique One' (Der Einzige), emphasising the importance of individuality and the rejection of any universal truths or values that impose limitations on the self. Stirner's ideas have influenced a range of philosophical movements, including existentialism, anarchism, and individualist anarchism. His emphasis on individuality and self-empowerment resonates with thinkers like Friedrich Nietzsche and various anarchist theorists. While Stirner's work is celebrated for its radical critique of authority and conformity, it has also been criticised for its perceived nihilism and potential to justify selfishness and disregard for communal responsibilities. After his death, Stirner's work fell into obscurity but was rediscovered in the 20th century, particularly among anarchists and individualists. His writings continue to inspire discussions about the nature of self, freedom, the role of the individual in society, autonomy, power, and identity. In *The Way of Cinnabar*, Julius Evola briefly discusses Stirner in relation to his own early intellectual journey. While Evola acknowledges Stirner's influence, particularly during his younger years, he ultimately distances himself from Stirner's philosophy of radical individualism. Both Evola and Stirner were critical of modernity, rejecting its moral, political, and ideological structures. Stirner's egoism, with its rejection of all forms of authority and collective identity, resonated with the early phase of Evola's intellectual life, particularly when he was involved in avant-garde movements like Dadaism, which shared Stirner's anticonventional spirit. Both thinkers critiqued external ideals that they felt imposed on individual autonomy. Stirner famously rejected all 'spooks' or abstractions that governed people's lives, whether religious, social, or political. Evola, too, was critical of mass ideologies like liberalism, democracy, and communism, all of which he saw as symptoms of the decadent modern world. As Evola evolved beyond his early intellectual experimentation, he grew increasingly critical of Stirner's philosophy; he ultimately rejected Stirner's focus on the individual ego, which he saw as insufficient for true spiritual development. For Evola, the ego was something to be transcended, not celebrated. His philosophy sought not the affirmation of the ego, but the alignment with a higher, metaphysical reality. Evola believed that Stirner's egoism lacked the spiritual dimension necessary for true liberation. Unlike Stirner, who advocated for an anarchistic rejection of all structures, Evola was a proponent of hierarchy and tradition. He believed that spiritual growth required discipline and alignment with traditional, aristocratic values, which he saw as eternal. Evola's vision was grounded in the restoration of a sacred order, with a spiritual elite leading society—not the kind of radical individualism Stirner espoused. In *The Way of Cinnabar*, Evola explicitly addresses the limitations he found in Stirner's philosophy. Evola saw Stirner's egoism as a superficial form of freedom, one that was bound to the contingencies of the material world and the personal will. In contrast, Evola sought a higher form of freedom that transcended the individual and connected to the divine or metaphysical order. Evola also criticised Stirner for neglecting the spiritual dimension of life. For Evola, Stirner's emphasis on the ego ignored the possibility of spiritual transcendence, which Evola considered the ultimate goal of human existence. Thus, while Stirner's influence is acknowledged, Evola moved far beyond his anarchistic ideas in pursuit of a deeper, metaphysical understanding of freedom and power.]

(7) Josiah Royce, *The World and the Individual*, Italian translation, Bari, 1914, vol. II, p. 129; see also p. 121.

(8) G. Gentile, *Logica*, Bari, 1923, vol. II, p. 68. [Editor's note: Giovanni Gentile (1875–1944) was an Italian philosopher and politician, best known for developing the philosophy of *Actual Idealism* (also known as *Attualismo*), which he considered a culmination of Hegelian idealism. *Actual Idealism* sought to emphasise the primacy of the thinking subject. According to this philosophy, reality only exists insofar as it is thought. In other words, reality is not an external entity but is shaped by the continuous process of thought. This is a significant development of Hegelian idealism; Gentile goes even further by claiming that the act of thinking is the only true reality. For

Gentile, the thinking subject is not separate from the world; rather, thinking itself creates the world in the present, moment by moment. This differs from other idealist philosophers, who may have posited the existence of some objective reality external to thought. In his work, Gentile famously formulated the idea of the pure act (*l'atto puro*), which represents the notion that thinking itself is a self-generating and self-validating process. The 'pure act' refers to the continual process of thinking, which he believed underpins and constitutes all reality. For Gentile, reality does not exist as a static or pre-existing entity, but is constantly being re-created by the thinking subject. Thus, only the act of thinking in the present is real, not the objects of thought or any external world. While inspired by Hegel and Fichte, Gentile went further in his criticism of any dualism in idealism that separates the subject (the thinker) from the object (the thought-about world). Gentile's monistic form of idealism erases this distinction, asserting that there is only the act of thinking itself. This philosophical stance led him to reject any distinction between theory and practice. For Gentile, to think is to act, and the two are inseparable. Gentile was an intellectual supporter of Italian Fascism under Benito Mussolini, and his philosophy was integral to the fascist educational reforms. He believed that Fascism, as an ideology, could serve as a practical expression of his philosophical principles, particularly in terms of the collective over the individual. Gentile worked to align his views on freedom with Fascism, arguing that freedom is not individual autonomy but the recognition of one's identity with the collective state, achieved through active participation in national life. He played a significant role in shaping the educational system under Mussolini, advocating for reforms based on philosophical idealism. He believed that education was key to forming individuals who would fully integrate their personal identity with the fascist state. His reforms aimed at instilling a sense of duty to the collective. Though Gentile and Julius Evola were both influential figures in Italian intellectual circles and both contributed to the Fascist regime, they held very different philosophical views. Gentile's *Actual Idealism* was deeply rooted in Hegelian thought, while Evola's Traditionalism was influenced by Eastern spirituality, mysticism, and esotericism. Evola criticised Gentile's idealism for being too focused on human subjectivity and rationalism. Evola's worldview focused on the transcendence of the individual beyond the confines of history and politics, whereas Gentile's focus was on engagement with the world through the act of thinking. While both contributed to the intellectual underpinnings of Italian Fascism, Evola's anti-modern and elitist views contrasted with Gentile's state-centred vision. Gentile saw Fascism as the embodiment of the state's ethical, and collective will, whereas Evola viewed Fascism more as a tool for the restoration of a spiritual aristocracy. Gentile was more involved in the official philosophical justification of Fascism, while Evola remained a more marginal figure, critical of what he saw as the Fascist regime's insufficient radicalism and its lack of spiritual depth. Gentile was an influential thinker during the early 20th century, particularly in Italy, and was closely associated with Fascism as the regime's official philosopher. His work, however, continues to be studied independently of his political affiliations, especially in relation to idealism.]

(9) There is a distinction between having the principle of action within oneself and truly possessing it. In spontaneity, the Self contains its own principle but does not possess it in a conscious or controlled manner; it is not yet mastered. Likewise, there is a distinction between not being controlled by external forces (i.e., the absence of coercion or external necessity) and being positively free, which involves transcending internal necessity as well. True freedom implies the capacity to fully dominate one's own actions from an unconditioned standpoint, as will be further explained below.

(10) A compelling exposition of this thesis can be found in the work of N. Abbagnano, *Le sorgenti irrazionali del pensiero* (Naples, 1923). This text examines several major philosophical doctrines, including classical realism, English empiricism, Kantian criticism, the philosophy of values, the doctrines of Bradley and Royce, actualism, Aliotta's experimentalism, intuitionism, and neo-realism. Through an internal analysis, it demonstrates that these doctrines derive their foundation and justification not from rationality, but from irrationality. For further elaboration on this point, see below. [Editor's note: Nicola Abbagnano (1901–1990) was an Italian existentialist philosopher and a key figure in 20th-century Italian philosophy. He is best known for his efforts to reconcile

existentialism with a more rational and optimistic outlook compared to the more pessimistic existential philosophies of thinkers like Heidegger or Sartre. Abbagnano's existentialism is sometimes referred to as 'positive existentialism' or 'constructive existentialism,' as he aimed to offer a philosophy of freedom and possibility rather than despair and nihilism. Abbagnano believed that while existentialist thought centres on human freedom, choice, and the individual's confrontation with an often irrational and uncertain world, it does not have to lead to a rejection of rationality. Unlike the more radical existentialists, Abbagnano sought to integrate reason with existential experience, suggesting that humans can meaningfully engage with their freedom within the bounds of rationality. Abbagnano's existentialism focuses on the concept of possibility. He claimed that human life is defined by an ongoing process of making choices among various possible actions. Rather than emphasising angst or dread, he believed that individuals have the potential to make meaningful decisions that shape their existence positively. In works like *Le sorgenti irrazionali del pensiero*, Abbagnano explored how many philosophical traditions—whether realist, empiricist, or idealist—derive elements from irrational foundations. He was critical of the notion that irrationality dominates thought, as seen in various philosophical doctrines. Instead, he attempted to bring existential thought closer to rational inquiry, demonstrating that reason and irrationality coexist but do not necessarily oppose each other. Abbagnano also critiqued nihilism and pessimism, often associated with existentialism. He did not believe that the individual is condemned to a meaningless or absurd existence. Instead, he saw human existence as filled with opportunities for genuine and constructive engagement with the world. Abbagnano's existentialism was influential in Italy, particularly as a response to both the pessimism of existentialism and the dominance of idealism in Italian philosophy. His work aimed at striking a balance between traditional metaphysical doctrines and contemporary existential concerns. His integration of existentialism with elements of rationality influenced both academic philosophy and popular thought in mid-20th century Italy. While both Abbagnano and Evola rejected modernity, their philosophical foundations and aims were entirely different. Abbagnano's rational existentialism sought to balance freedom and reason, aiming to find meaning within the modern world. Evola, by contrast, called for a radical rejection of modernity and a return to ancient, esoteric traditions. Their divergent views on the individual, society, and the nature of existence reflect their respective intellectual traditions, making any direct comparison between the two more a study in contrast than similarity.]

(11) See J. Woodroffe, *The World as Power*, Madras, 1922, Vol. I, *Reality*, pp. 14, 109.

(12) See Meister Eckhart, *Schriften und Predigten*, ed. E. Buttner, Vol. I, p. 121: 'Aus diesem innersten Grunde (in which life lives only for itself, aus seinem eigenen Grunde lebt) heraus sollst du alle deine Werke wirken, ohne eine Warum. Ich behaupte entschieden: solange du deine Werke verrichtest um des Himmelbereichs, um Gottes oder um deiner Soligkeit willen, also von aussen her, sobist du wirklich nicht aus dem Rechten. - Fragman eienen wahr hasten Menschen, einen deraus seinem eigenen Grunde wirkt: "Warum wirkst du deine Werke?" wenn er recht antwortet, würde er auch sagen: "Ich wirke, um zu wirken!"' ['From this innermost ground (in which life lives only for itself—aus seinen eigenen Grunde lebt), you should do all your work without any why. I say verily, as long as you do works not from an inward motive but for the sake of heaven or God, or your eternal salvation, you are acting wrongly. If someone working from his own ground were asked: "Why do you do your works?" he would say, if he answered rightly: "I work because I work."']

(13) C. Michelstaedter, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

(14) See O. Hamelin, *Essai sur les éléments principaux de la représentation*, Paris, 1907, p. 426. This can be linked to the Aristotelian view that pleasure, rather than serving as the motive for action, is more like an additional component that comes into play at the end, akin to an ἐπιγινόμενον τι τέλος—the resonance of the individual act inasmuch it is a perfect act (*Ethica Nicomachea*, X, 4, 1174b.32). However, Aristotle first stipulates that this act must align with a specific nature (*ibid.*, VII, 13 (12), 1153a, 14), a condition that, as we will see, needs to be transcended. Moreover, though in a somewhat vague manner (cf. O. Hamelin, *Le système*

d'Aristote, Paris, 1920, pp. 289-290), one frees activity from pleasure only to make it subservient to intellect by asserting—contrary to what will later be argued, revisiting a pivotal point raised by Fichte (*Sittenlehre*, S.W. ed. E.E. Fichte, vol. IV, p. 124), that our desires are shaped by our ability to envision what is desirable, rather than the reverse (as noted in *Metaphysica*, XXII (A), 7, 1072a, 29).

(15) Editor's note: John Duns Scotus (1270c.–1308) was a significant medieval philosopher and theologian whose ideas contributed to the development of metaphysics and epistemology, particularly in relation to idealism. Scotus emphasised the distinction between essence (what something is) and existence (that something is). This distinction established a foundation for later idealist thinkers who would examine how our understanding of reality is influenced by our concepts and perceptions. While not strictly an idealist in the modern sense, Scotus's conceptualism posits that universals exist, but only in the mind. He argued that while individuals (particulars) exist independently, the universals are abstractions derived from our mental representations. This perspective aligns with certain idealist ideas that prioritise the role of the mind in shaping our understanding of reality. Scotus placed significant emphasis on the intellect's role in knowledge. He believed that human cognition plays a crucial role in comprehending the essence of things, suggesting that knowledge is mediated through mental constructs. This echoes idealist views that assert reality is accessible primarily through intellectual perception. Scotus's doctrine of the univocity of being asserts that existence can be predicated of both God and creatures in the same way, albeit in different modes. This principle has implications for idealism, as it suggests a shared reality that can be comprehended intellectually, paving the way for later philosophical developments. Scotus's work influenced later philosophers, including the idealists of the early modern period, such as Berkeley and Kant. His focus on the interplay between intellect and reality provided a foundation for their explorations into the nature of perception and existence. While Duns Scotus may not be labelled as an idealist in the strictest sense, his philosophical contributions resonate with idealist themes, particularly regarding the nature of knowledge, the role of the intellect, and the relationship between essence and existence. His ideas set the stage for later developments in idealism and metaphysics.

(17) Editor's note: Heinrich Rickert (1863–1936) was a prominent German philosopher associated with the Baden School of Neo-Kantianism, known for his contributions to cultural philosophy and value theory. He distinguished between the objective and subjective aspects of values, asserting that values possess an objective status that transcends mere personal preference. Rickert emphasised the significance of individual experience in interpreting cultural values and advocated for a methodological distinction between the natural sciences (*Naturwissenschaften*) and the human sciences (*Geisteswissenschaften*), focusing on meanings and subjective experiences. His ideas laid the groundwork for later developments in phenomenology and engaged critically with Kantian idealism by highlighting the practical implications of values and human agency.

(18) Editor's note: Wilhelm Windelband (1848–1915) was a German philosopher associated with the Baden School of Neo-Kantianism. He distinguished between the 'Naturwissenschaften' (natural sciences) and the 'Geisteswissenschaften' (human sciences), arguing that the former seeks to explain phenomena through general laws, while the latter aims to understand individual cases within their historical and cultural contexts. Windelband emphasised historicism, positing that values and meanings evolve over time, and introduced the concept of 'Weltanschauung' (worldview), highlighting the subjective experience in interpreting the world. He critiqued positivism for its reductionist approach and influenced later philosophical movements, including phenomenology and hermeneutics. Wilhelm Windelband's contributions to philosophy stress the importance of historicism, the distinction between natural and human sciences, and the role of worldviews in shaping human experience. His critiques of positivism and advocacy for a richer understanding of values and meanings have left a lasting legacy in contemporary philosophy.

(19) J. Bossuet, *Connaissance de Dieu et de soi-même*, ch. IV, § 5.

(20) Understanding, as Spinoza states in reference to such a conjunction, is pure passion ('et Verstaan een pure lijdinge is'): it is not the Self that affirms or denies, but rather the object that

affirms or denies something of itself within the Self (*Korte Verhandeling van God*, ch. XVI, ed. Van Vloten, p. 68 ff).

(21) Editor's note: Charles Secrétan (1815–1895) was a French philosopher known for his critique of positivism and his engagement with idealism. He argued that human consciousness actively shapes reality, emphasising that understanding is intertwined with subjective experience and values. Secrétan, influenced by German idealists like Hegel, argued that reality is not just an external world but is shaped by individual perception. His philosophy underscores the importance of personal experience in ethics and aesthetics, highlighting the creative role of individuals in interpreting existence. In his main work, *Philosophie de la liberté* (1849), he demonstrates that freedom, as a metaphysical principle, is embodied in God Himself through His activity, with the various moments of this action representing successive stages in the realisation of freedom. In his later works, Secrétan emphasises the ethical dimension, placing the 'solidarity of men in Christ' above law as the supreme term of spiritual ascent. He may be regarded as a forerunner of Christian personalism.

(22) Once again, one must guard against the sophistry that infers positive freedom from negative or relative freedom—namely, the absence of external conditions and coercion. Positive freedom involves the absence of any conditions that might limit one's ability to act, even those that arise from within oneself—within one's own nature or rationality—thus leading to the concept of being absolutely free.

(23) Regarding the idea that in order to truly dominate nature, the Self must not merely adapt to its determinisms and exploit them but must instead trace back to the source of freedom; see E. Boutroux, *De la contingence des lois de la nature*, Paris, 1921, pp. 160-162; H. Keyserling, *Die Philosophie als Kunst*, Darmstadt, 1922, ch. XIV. Meister Eckhart (Schriften und Predigten, cited in vol. I, pp. 77-78) already noted that perfect action is that which does not occur through something else, which is simple and arises from a depth that no 'image' has ever penetrated (i.e., which does not stem from any previous knowledge). He states, 'It is impossible to attain possession of a thing through an image' (p. 79), and 'It suffices that a single image exists within the soul for God to depart from it' (p. 128).

(24) Editor's note: Émile Coué (1857–1926) was a French psychologist and pharmacist renowned for developing the technique of autosuggestion; inspired by A.-A. Liébault and H. Bernheim of the Nancy School, he later formulated a psychotherapeutic method based on autosuggestion, whereby the patient learns to convince themselves of the absence of specific symptoms and disorders from which they suffer. Coué's work laid the groundwork for later advancements in self-help psychology and therapeutic practices, emphasising that conscious thought can profoundly affect one's life.

(25) This reaffirms the Aristotelian principle that matter is relative (*Physics*, H. 2, 194b, 9: 'ἔτι τῶν πρὸς τι ἢ ὅλη'); however, the whole Being of that which is relative is properly found in the relation itself (*Categories*, 8, a, 39: 'ἔστι δὲ τὸ εἶναι τοῖς πρὸς τι ταῦτὸ τῷ πρὸς τί πως ἔχειν' ['Those things that are relative per se cannot be defined except by their relation to something else, since every relative term is essentially identical to being in a specific relation to another.']).

(26) E. Kant, *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Part I, Book II, ch. II. Sec. 9.

(27) *Shakti and Shakta: Essays and Addresses on the Shakta Tantrashāstra*, edited by J. Woodroffe, Madras, 1920, p. 210.

(28) Lao Tzu, *Il Libro della Via e della Virtù*, translated by J. Evola, Lanciano, 1923, pp. XIII-XIV.

(29) Plotinus, *Enneads*, VI, VII. 16.

(30) See F. Schlegel, *Ideen*, ed. Minor, no. 131: 'In der Begeisterung des Vernichtens offenbart sich zuerst der Sinn göttlicher Schöpfung. Nur in der Mitte des Todes entzündet sich der Blitz des ewigen Lebens' ['In the enthusiasm of destruction, the sense of divine creation is first revealed. Only amid death does the spark of eternal life ignite']. Novalis, *Schriften*, ed. Heilbom, Vol. II, p. 514: 'Der Prozess der Geschichte ist ein Verbrennen' ['The process of history is a destruction']. It is precisely through this negative that the positive is realised by progressivity. For a more extensive discussion of this crucial point, see *Teoria dell'Individuo Assoluto*, I. I, § 5; I. II, § 31. [Editor's note: regarding Book I, see *Teoria*: pp. 75-96 of the 1927 edition and pp. 67-76 of the 1998 edition.

For Book II, see *Fenomenologia*: pp. 334-337 of the 1930 edition and pp. 289-292 of the 1974 edition.]

III. The Supernormal Self

In the preceding discussion, particular emphasis was placed on one key point: the hypothetical or problematic nature of Kant's solution to the question of the possibility of science. This solution, when properly understood, can be articulated as follows: if universal knowledge and absolute certainty must exist for the Self, then the Self must be seen as a power of cosmic construction. In other words, these two terms are mutually dependent—one is posited only if the other is. But one might ask, is either of the two truly posited? Kant started from the assumption that there exists a system of absolute certainty provided by the positive sciences, which only required an explanation of its possibility. From this, he deduced the notion of the thinking Self as a cosmic legislator. However, this premise is arbitrary. The further development of culture has demonstrated that there is neither a typical experience that can be framed once and for all within fixed schemas, nor a singular and universal a priori knowledge—one that would not permit other equally possible forms to coexist. Given this, universality and absolute certainty are no longer facts that require explanation but rather mere demands, a Sollen (an 'ought to be'). As a result, instead of their existence establishing the reality of the other term that would render them intelligible (i.e., the Self as a power), they can only be justified and have objective reality under the assumption that this second term itself factually exists. This constitutes the 'gnoseological deduction' of magical idealism. At this point, it becomes clear that a *fin de non recevoir* must be invoked against absolute idealists, as, presenting by a kind of decree which is not, however, legally binding, what exists solely in their minds or aspirations as if it were currently real and thus retreating, much like the believer, into a fantastical transcendental Self, they not only fail to solve the problem but do not even approach it. On the other hand, since normal experience generally reveals a finite, deficient Self, subjected to endless contingencies, another group of thinkers (Hartmann and Rougier, for instance) (1) have declared it factually false that human thought is what, according to idealism, it ought to be (i.e., the principle that gives laws to things). From this, they have concluded that absolute knowledge is impossible for man, and that he must be content with a perpetual promissory note, a science merely probable, conditioned by the contingency of the moment, oscillating between arbitrary principles (H. P. Poincaré) and ambiguous empirical facts, incapable of giving a single, clear answer to the questions they are expected to resolve, as if these facts and principles themselves were supposed to decide the matter (Duhem) (2).

Now, while this latter stance has the merit and honesty of confronting the individual with what truly is, in line with the everyday life into which he typically drifts off, it falls into its own one-sidedness and dogmatism. It claims as impossible, in a general and absolute sense, what is instead only impossible ἐπὶ τὸ πολὺ—in a certain number of cases, here and now. However, experience, when considered in the totality of its possible forms and not within the confines of a mediocre and crystallised generality, decisively refutes that assertion, from which, per logical necessity, the anguish of scepticism regarding knowledge—and, consequently, self-certainty—would follow. What is striking, at least for those who do not grasp the profound dialectic governing the development of various forms throughout history, is that this refutation has been achieved precisely by that discipline which, judging by its intentions, would seem to be the antithesis of idealism: experimental science.

Only recently has official science chosen to explore a complex array of real phenomena that were previously dismissed as absurd and unimaginable without any scrutiny—merely as a result of prejudice. However, the results of the initial investigations, conducted with the utmost objectivity, are such that they establish a notion of human potential that has nothing to do with what the

Germans refer to as the *Durchschnittsmensch* (average person). The shadowy world of occultists, magicians, and clairvoyants is now transforming into a realm that, while as real as that of physics (3), surpasses in its objectivity everything that even the most unrestrained imagination of a poet could have conceived. Consequently, the limits that once seemed to irreversibly undermine the freedom and essence of the real Self are now falling one by one, so that everything previously attributed to the transcendent or transcendental principle now truly aligns with the Self, as a possibility already demonstrated by general experience.

The realm of the supernatural can be divided into two fields, depending on whether the focus is on the factor of knowledge or the factor of action. What can be done best to provide a comprehensive overview of the findings from the investigation into supranormal knowledge is to cite a passage from the most recent work on the subject, *La connaissance supranormale* (Paris, 1923) by Dr. Osty (4)—a valuable fruit of over ten years of research grounded in the strictest positivism. In this passage, an attempt is made to suggest what that individual might be like, whose power would embody the full and actual possibility of various phenomena, sporadically verified across different subjects: ‘His body would be permeable to his consciousness, even to the very depths of its tissues and in the vicissitudes of its becoming. At every moment, the unfolding sequence of events that weaves the tapestry of his individual life, both past and future relative to the present moment, would be representable in a way consistent with typical human memory processes. Birth and death would no longer confine his sensory perception, whether direct or indirect, within the boundaries of space and time. He would be aware of certain aspects of the ground he walked upon: the people he encountered, merely by their presence, would reveal to him their thoughts of the moment, the secrets of their intellectual, moral, and organic personalities, as well as the intricacies of their relationships and the knowledge of their surroundings—both beings and objects. Depending on the circumstances and the flow of his thoughts or those of others, he would reconnect in space with both familiar and unfamiliar individuals, gaining insight into their personalities and lives. He would be informed of the details of a scene unfolding far away. By applying his strange psychic power to what we call time, he could reach back across the span of human generations, accessing any era or scene from the past... He would know the specific potentials that the future will actually turn into reality’ (5) (pp. 263-264). ‘Such a man,’ the author continues, ‘is a logical possibility, for he would ultimately be nothing more than the multifaceted manifestation of latent psychic potential, which has been observed scattered in various phenomenological forms’ (*id.*). Hence, the conclusion that when speaking of thought, we speak of an unknown power, one that must not be confined by the conceptions and doctrines of the day (p. 225).

On the other hand, in the realm of predominantly dynamic phenomena, a series of studies on self-suggestion, hypnosis, and mediumship—familiar to all are the names Baudoin, Bernheim, Richet, Schrenck-Notzing, de Rochas (6), etc.—has confirmed the actual existence of the ability to act through mental forces not only on one’s own body and that of others, to the point of controlling and commanding the various unconscious organic processes that govern it, as well as to dominate, transform, or arbitrarily provoke various emotional responses (pleasures, pains, etc.), but also on external matter in ways that defy the determinisms known to physics. Additionally, it is possible to produce plastic-like substance, condense it, and shape it into forms that exhibit characteristics of life. Finally, the ability to dissociate and reintegrate elements of matter, to split one’s personality into two distinct entities both psychically and spatially (bilocation), to overcome the law of gravity (levitation), etc., has also been observed. This undoubtedly provides a positive foundation for Osty’s assertion that ‘at the core of the human being are discovered the attributes with which philosophies have adorned the concept of God: creative power and knowledge beyond space and time,’ and that ‘no one is authorised to presume what a methodical, progressive investigation may yet uncover’ (*op. cit.*, p. 224). In fact, beyond the studied phenomena, there exists a series of others of a very different nature and of far greater significance: those specifically related to occult sciences—such as magical phenomena (fakirism, yogism, mantrism), theurgical, and soteric practices—and mystical experiences, along with the diverse ‘miraculous phenomena associated with the lives of saints and various founders of religions worldwide. The accounts of so many

seemingly fantastic traditions and personalities, so easily dismissed, truly require a reevaluation. Finally, it is essential not to overlook, as many philosophers have done, normal phenomena such as sleep and dreams, or subnormal occurrences like hallucinations, hysteria, certain forms of degeneration and madness, etc. When studied in their transcendental—rather than merely physiological or psychological—possibilities they enrich the power of the real Self with additional degrees of contingency and freedom.

There exists, therefore, a collection of facts demonstrating a possible experience that shatters the rigid necessity and lifeless eternity that various doctrines of abstract categories have dogmatically sought to establish in their obsession with absolute evil. Space, time, physical causality, and the laws of nature no longer appear, in the study of the supranormal, as indispensable conditions for any human experience. On the other, the idol of the Absolute in mathematics collapses as it shifts from an 'apodictic-deductive' system to a 'hypothetical-deductive' one. With non-Euclidean geometries, non-Archimedean arithmetic, and the theory of the transfinite, the spirit regains its original flexibility, even within the realm of the a priori. Everywhere, the supremacy of freedom and the unconditionally possible reassert themselves over the necessary and the *gesetzmäßig* [lawful]. The rigid opposition between Self and non-Self, spirit and matter, diminishes, and the very framework of natural laws disintegrates under analysis, revealing areas of indeterminacy where the individual can assert his unconditional will (7).

By abstracting from the deep centre of the Self, rationalism anchored the spirit in a brutal necessity, reducing it to a mere fetish—a lifeless entity opaque to itself. The experience served as a corrective to rationalism, and by shattering every established framework and rigid requirements and imposing the painful and austere experiment of action, compels the Self, which survives in a specular void, to sense its own freedom and concreteness. Beyond this antithesis lies the synthesis of magical idealism, in which the criterion of absolute certainty is contingency—if not the very contingency found in empiricism and scepticism. The Self, estranged from its concrete power, experiences the freedom inherent to it as a form of violence, akin to the uncontrollable madness of phenomena—this constitutes the adverse contingency connected to both empiricism and scepticism. In response to this adverse contingency and the fragmentation that arises from it, the Self reacts and reaffirms its persuasion, attempting to dominate the phenomenon within an abstract rational necessity, so that reduction to the necessary becomes a criterion of certainty for it. The Self, in realising its absolute and concrete power, integrates the contingent aspects of existence into its being, allowing it to assert itself unconditionally and establish a foundational basis for existence and reality that is so solid it cannot be surpassed, becoming the ultimate reference point for understanding reality (8).

To positive science, beyond the elementary task of simply verifying the reality of supranormal facts, there would fall a second task: to uncover the internal determinism of such phenomena and to study how the individual can strengthen himself to the point of being able to produce them voluntarily, with full awareness and adequacy. However, the scientist will never truly be able to fulfill this further task unless he generates within himself the object of his science—in which knowledge and the internal act of constructing knowledge truly converge into a single point. A brief note on this science, which is akin to magical development, will be presented next. For now, it is worth making an observation that is of paramount importance from the individual's perspective.

It is a fact that many of the paranormal phenomena that modern science has had the opportunity to observe occur alongside a kind of 'diminution' of the conscious personality, correlating with the emergence of another entity, of which the former becomes an insubstantial shadow. The characteristics of intentionality, conscious construction, and control are almost entirely absent in such phenomena. The subjects—Osty notes (p. 253)—speak as if driven by an uncontrollable inner

force, and they barely become aware of the paranormal knowledge until after they have expressed it; their perception, he adds elsewhere, is primarily shaped by sudden images, which they then attempt to interpret and articulate. The same holds for many cases of paranormal dynamism. Now, a development designed to establish certainty as an absolute affirmation of the Self could not possibly adjust to such a situation, in which the sufficient centre of the individual is quite abolished. One participates in paranormal faculties to the extent that one becomes, in a certain sense, subnormal, that is, to the degree that one returns to a kind of undifferentiated cosmic consciousness, a coalescence of object and subject, which likely defined an ancient form of existence before the individual consciousness emerged as a self-sufficient centre, characterised by control, self-awareness, and will. In a certain sense, there are two forms of the supernatural: one on this side of the normal and the other beyond it; the former precedes the value of what is individual and the latter embodies its absolute concreteness and perfection. The supernatural observed by science thus far is, for the most part, a remnant of the past, a survival, as evidenced by its presence in beings entirely uncultivated and devoid of any inner formation. However, it is clear that a broader realm of knowledge and power, if achieved at the expense of the individual principle—if it did not signify the development of the individual's self-sufficiency across the entirety of his experience, as proposed by the concept of magical idealism—but rather a regression to a universal naturalistic state and a submersion in a dream-like consciousness, passive in relation to itself, should indeed be viewed as part of a degenerative and regressive process, and could not in any way be associated with the position of idealism, from which this discussion originates and upon which it relies for its justification.

(1) Louis Rougier, *op. cit.*, pp. 433 ff. E. von Hartmann, *Geschichte der Metaphysik*, Leipzig, 1900. vol. II, passim, pp. 94. 589, 591. [Editor's note: Eduard von Hartmann (1842–1906) offers a distinctive perspective within the idealist tradition, particularly through his emphasis on the role of the unconscious in shaping consciousness and experience. In his principal work, *Philosophie des Unbewußten*, Hartmann integrates Hegelian idealism with Schopenhauerian pessimism, asserting that while reality is fundamentally spiritual, it is also marked by suffering and irrationality. Born in Berlin on February 23, 1842, he died on June 5, 1906, in the suburb of Gross-Lichterfelde, where, far from any academic ties, he developed the principles of his philosophical system, clearly outlined as early as 1868. This system aims to be 'the speculative result of a scientific-inductive method'; in reality, it presents itself as the development, in terms of biological vitalism concepts, of a metaphysical view that incorporates elements from Hegel, Schelling, and Schopenhauer. It signifies a neo-romantic reaction against the materialistic realism of the natural sciences and the optimistic idea of progress. The absolute principle of reality can only be conceived as the Unconscious, in which the moments of will and intelligence merge and oppose each other. The irrational existence of the world arises from the former, representing the evil and pain inherent in the finitude of every being. In contrast, the latter brings forth aspects of the teleological harmony of reality and a unified sense of its development. This development aims to dissolve the existence of finite beings into a state of non-existence, free from all pain, which we can only describe in negative terms. This liberation unfolds within reality itself through consciousness, particularly human consciousness, and the cultural life that stems from it. Ethics, as the overcoming of individual ends; aesthetic contemplation, as the certainty of the principles of ideal harmony of reality over the irrational power of will; religion, as the aspiration of consciousness to free itself from the bonds of finite existence; philosophy, as the attained universal freedom of consciousness itself, freed from the deceptions of existence and aware of the purpose of all reality, operating in it and for itself—these are the stages of the process of redemption, in which, through the drama of individual existences, the Absolute, God Himself, liberates Himself from the irrational principle that has dragged Him into the creation of the world and of suffering, which is His own suffering, and finds peace in the reclaimed absolute unity. Hartmann's research is guided by a comprehensive framework that influences various specific studies. This includes significant work in the history of philosophy, logic, and epistemology, all rooted in transcendental realism. He also examines the philosophy of religion,

taking a critical stance towards Christianity. Additionally, he critiques mechanistic views within the theory of sciences and conducts studies on spiritism and mediumship. Among the thinkers inspired by Hartmann's ideas are Max Schneidewin, Arthur Drews, and Leopold Ziegler.]

(2) Editor's note: Pierre Duhem (1861–1916) was a French physicist and philosopher of science known for his contributions to the understanding of scientific theories and their historical development. His formulation of the Duhem-Quine thesis highlights the interdependence of scientific theories and their auxiliary hypotheses, emphasising that experimental tests cannot isolate a single theory from its supporting assumptions. Duhem's work, particularly in *La Théorie physique: son objet et sa structure* (1914), advocates for a historical approach to the philosophy of science, positing that scientific knowledge is cumulative and that the coherence of a theory within its broader context is crucial for its evaluation. His influence extends to prominent philosophers such as Karl Popper and Thomas Kuhn.

(3) If one were to question the reality of the phenomena observed in parapsychology, as recently noted by the respected physiologist Charles Richet, one would also have reason to doubt the findings in the laboratories of physicists or physiologists. [Editor's note: Charles Richet (1850–1935) was a French Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1913 for his discovery of anaphylaxis, contributing significantly to immunology. His comprehensive studies on respiration and the nervous system laid crucial groundwork for modern physiological understanding. In addition to his physiological research, Richet explored psychic phenomena, coining the term 'metapsychics' to advocate for their scientific investigation. In his seminal work, *La Métapsychique* (1922), he employed empirical methods to investigate these phenomena, aiming to establish them as legitimate subjects of study. While his contributions significantly influenced parapsychology, they also faced criticism regarding their scientific validity. In 1919, he was appointed honorary president of the International Metapsychic Institute established in Paris. Richet's dual focus on physiology and psychic research reflects his belief in the potential for expanding scientific inquiry beyond traditional boundaries.]

(4) Editor's note: Eugène Osty (1884–1938) was a French psychologist and parapsychologist known for his research in psychic phenomena and his role in the development of metapsychics, a field he helped to establish. He worked alongside other notable figures, including Charles Richet, to legitimise the study of the paranormal within a scientific framework. He conducted extensive research on mediums and their abilities. Osty aimed to understand the mechanisms behind purported psychic phenomena and sought to differentiate between genuine abilities and fraudulent claims. His investigations included both experimental and observational studies of mediumistic practices. He wrote several important works that contributed to the discourse on psychic phenomena and parapsychology. His writings focused on the methodologies for studying these phenomena and the implications of his findings for understanding consciousness and the nature of reality. He was director (from 1924) of the Institut métapsychique international in Paris. Like many researchers in the field of parapsychology, he faced scepticism from the broader scientific community. Critics often questioned the validity of his methods and the interpretations of his findings, emphasising the need for a rigorous approach to studying phenomena that defy conventional scientific explanation. Osty's work contributed to the ongoing discourse around parapsychology and the scientific study of psychic phenomena. His efforts to apply scientific rigour to the exploration of these topics paved the way for future researchers interested in the intersection of psychology and the paranormal.

(5) The issue of freedom inevitably arises in this context: since prediction implies predetermination, if what is to happen is predictable, then it is not possible but necessary. This issue cannot be explored further here. It suffices to refer to the results of a study by Osty on this matter: prediction is more certain when it concerns events governed by external forces—whether natural or collective—and by influences of habits, interests, and passions. Conversely, when a deeper affirmation is at play, namely the spontaneity of a pure will, prediction is only probable, if not altogether impossible. In general, the elements that are predictable are not deterministic; they only determine outcomes when the Self adheres to a consistent pattern of behavior, to that 'bundle of habits' referred to by James. [Editor's note: William James (1842–1910) was an influential

American philosopher and psychologist, often considered one of the founding figures of modern psychology and a key proponent of pragmatism and functionalism. His works explore various philosophical topics, including the nature of consciousness, belief, and religious experience. James is primarily recognised for his development of pragmatism, a philosophical doctrine asserting that the truth of beliefs is determined by their practical consequences. In his seminal work *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking* (1907), he argues that ideas must be tested through their application in real life, emphasising that the meaning of any concept lies in its practical implications. In *The Principles of Psychology* (1890), a book that is considered one of the first comprehensive texts on psychology. James introduced concepts such as the stream of consciousness and the self, discussing how personal experiences shape identity and thought processes. His approach laid the groundwork for later psychological theories and methodologies. James's ideas have had a lasting impact on various fields, including psychology, philosophy, education, and religious studies. His work influenced key figures in psychology, such as Carl Rogers and John Dewey, and continues to be relevant in contemporary discussions on consciousness, belief, and human experience.]

(6) Editor's note: Hippolyte Bernheim (1840–1919) was a French physician and one of the founding figures in the field of hypnosis and suggestibility. His work significantly contributed to the understanding of the psychological mechanisms underlying hypnosis and the therapeutic applications of suggestion. He believed that hypnosis was primarily a form of heightened suggestibility rather than a mysterious or mystical state. His approach underscored the role of suggestion in therapeutic contexts, arguing that patients could be treated effectively through verbal suggestion alone. He posited that the subconscious mind plays a crucial role in human behaviour and that suggestion can directly influence this part of the mind. He argued that the subconscious is capable of taking in suggestions and acting on them, which laid the groundwork for later developments in psychology, particularly in areas related to therapy and behavioural change. He critiqued the ideas of his contemporaries, such as Jean-Martin Charcot, who viewed hypnosis as a pathological state linked to neurological conditions. Instead, Bernheim maintained that hypnosis could be induced in healthy individuals through suggestion and that it had valuable therapeutic potential. He published several works, including *De la Suggestion et de ses Applications à la Thérapeutique* (1886), in which he outlined his theories and clinical practices. His writings helped to popularise hypnosis and suggestive therapy in medical circles, influencing both practitioners and researchers. Bernheim's ideas about suggestion and its therapeutic effects have had a lasting impact on psychology and psychiatry. His emphasis on the power of suggestion influenced various therapeutic techniques, including cognitive behavioural therapy and modern hypnotherapy. His work remains relevant in contemporary discussions about the mind's influence on health and behaviour. Albert von Schrenck-Notzing (1862–1929) was a German physician and parapsychologist known for his research into hypnosis, psychical phenomena, and mediumship. His work sought to bridge the gap between scientific inquiry and the study of paranormal experiences, particularly focusing on physical mediumship. Schrenck-Notzing was notably involved in studying mediums who claimed to produce physical phenomena during séances, such as materialisations and ectoplasmic manifestations. He conducted rigorous investigations, aiming to document these phenomena under controlled conditions. He explored the role of hypnosis in facilitating psychic experiences; he believed that understanding the suggestibility of individuals could shed light on the mechanisms behind mediumistic phenomena. His most significant work, *Materialisations-Phänomene* (1914), detailed his findings and observations from his experiments with mediums. In this book, he analysed the nature of the phenomena observed and discussed their implications for understanding human consciousness. While Schrenck-Notzing's work was groundbreaking in some circles, it also faced scepticism from the scientific community. Critics questioned the validity of his findings and the methods employed in his research, highlighting the challenges of studying phenomena that lack empirical support. Despite the criticism, Schrenck-Notzing's contributions helped establish a framework for the study of paranormal phenomena, influencing later researchers in parapsychology. His approach to studying the intersection of psychology and paranormal claims

remains relevant in contemporary discussions about consciousness and the nature of reality. Albert de Rochas d'Aiglun (1837–1914) was a French physician, psychologist, and parapsychologist known for his studies on hypnosis, telepathy, and psychical research. He is particularly recognised for his efforts to investigate and document psychic phenomena scientifically. De Rochas was involved in the study of various psychic phenomena, including telepathy and mediumship. He sought to explore these phenomena through controlled experiments and rigorous documentation, aiming to provide a scientific basis for understanding the paranormal. His work often intersected with the field of hypnosis. De Rochas believed that hypnosis could facilitate the expression of psychic abilities and that understanding suggestibility was crucial for studying these phenomena. He authored several works on psychic phenomena, including *Les Expériences de Télépathie* (1893) and *L'Hypnotisme et les Phénomènes de Suggestion* (1905). In these texts, he documented his findings and discussed the implications of his research for psychology and parapsychology. De Rochas was one of the founding members of the Société de Psychologie, an organisation dedicated to the scientific study of psychological phenomena. This organisation played a significant role in promoting research in psychical studies during his time. Though his work was met with scepticism, especially from the mainstream scientific community, de Rochas's contributions to the field of psychical research laid the groundwork for future studies in parapsychology. His emphasis on empirical investigation and documentation of psychic phenomena continues to influence contemporary research.]

(7) See the critical contributions of Boutroux and Bergson and the perspectives offered by contemporary subatomic physics in relation to their work.

(8) It is therefore clear how the present theory relates to empiricism: like empiricism, it denies all a priori knowledge and any rational necessity, grounding itself in experience. It asserts that the criterion of the possible is the real, the fact. However, for empiricism, the reference to experience is passive; the experiment serves as a sanction from something other than the central will. In contrast, within this perspective, experience is active, and 'verification' is merely the affirmation of power—i.e., the assertion that within itself, in its own intensity, it possesses the principle of its own demonstration and truth. See W. James, *The Will to Believe*, Longmans, 1897, p. 170: 'The truths cannot become true till our faith has made them so.'

IV. The Construction of Immortality

From what has been discussed previously, particularly in the essay on power, it is somewhat clear what the perspective of magical idealism might be regarding the problem of immortality.

Nevertheless, we wish to dwell on the question not so much to provide a new application of the principles already outlined, but rather because the topic serves as a middle term that connects the theoretical position of magical idealism to its methodological and pragmatic side, which will be the subject of the next essay.

The premise is that discussing immortality in general is akin to chasing rainbows. Whether matter, Spirit, the transcendental Self, or something else is immortal, this can only hold scant interest for the individual if such notions are understood to be something distinct from the concrete essence of the individual. The Self—what I can only refer to as such—is not a concept, a metaphysical abstraction, or a hypothesis but rather a living reality and, κατ' ἄριστον [in the highest sense], an experience; that which truly 'has no plural.' Yet, it cannot be classified as either universal or particular but is instead unique—such a Self is this one, the individual one, my own, i.e. a principle whose absolute nature, inherent to it as a thinker—that is, as one who, according to the saying of the Brihadāranyaka Upanishad (II, IV, 14), as the knower can never truly be known, but only internally possessed—evaporates into nothingness when detached from the ensemble of determinations—my body, my experiences, culture, etc.—in which it is intricately embedded.

The question of immortality arises concerning such a real Self: to concede that spirit or the 'general Self' is immortal while remaining distinct from the individual Self is, in effect, to deny any immortality not only to the latter but also to the former. Indeed, assuming that such a 'general spirit'

does not completely coincide with the essence and centre of concrete experience, it can only exist as a construct of my perception—that is, a determination, a peripheral accident of my own consciousness. Therefore, the very immortality attributed to it could only be an aspect relative to me, a specific trait I associate with a particular content of my experience (specifically: my thinking), but one I am in no way able to guarantee—unless I resort to the outdated argument of *a constantia subjecti*—lest I already presuppose that I, as the foundation of all that is contingent upon my perception, am immortal.

* * *

Now, for those capable of a cold, objective consideration, none of the beliefs of any era appears as absurd and unjust as the one, that has taken root, especially in Europe during modern times, largely due to Christianity, that immortality is something that inherently belongs to man, of which anyone, regardless of the life into which he drifts off, may partake indiscriminately. In this experience, in which nothing is given unless it is earned and constructed—in which any form of existence is merely the result of effort, persistent will, and painful creation reasserting itself amid the tumultuous interplay of elemental forces—immortality—this supreme value—would instead be granted to man artificially, as if it were an object, in an unmerited manner, as a sort of supernatural gift bestowed before and independent of any of his activities. This conception, whose convenience indeed flatters the apathy and insubstantial life of the masses, stands in contrast to the teachings of the highest wisdom of all time: from Taoism to the Egyptian doctrines, from Vedic and Buddhist positions to Greek thought, from Ecclesiastes to Stoicism and St. Paul, and from Babylonian beliefs to Gnostic teachings (not to mention the mysticism and esotericism of all ages) (1), these teachings more or less explicitly convey the idea that immortality is a privilege granted to a select few (2), who, through their greatness, have been able to rise to it, and who, with their strength, have managed to shape themselves within it. The shapeless and errant mass of the weak—those who drift aimlessly, swayed by chance and external forces—possess neither immortality nor absolute knowledge. Insubstantial shadows, the darkness and oblivion of Hades is their place; the cycle of rebirths, always different yet always the same in their insignificance, or dissolution into the universal forces, or an indistinct becoming, is their fate.

To provide a concrete understanding of immortality as something to be constructed, the observations mentioned earlier can be revisited. For the ordinary man, there is no awareness of the Self except in correlation to the body; there is no subject except in correlation to an object (i.e., sensory perceptions) and based on a substrate of organic determinations. This correlation is the condition of self-consciousness for the ordinary man: as it ceases, and the realm of sensory and organic impressions recedes, one experiences sleep or similar states of nonbeing of the Self. In many cases, this correlation also conceals a subtle subordination: the conscious Self is often alien to much of its own life. As the well-known saying by William James suggests, one lives on the surface of oneself. The entirety of those organic systems (lymphatic, circulatory, etc.) that permanently condition the use of conscious faculties—those very faculties that play a role in determining physical actions or behaviours (a brain injury can obliterate the consciousness of the highest philosopher or action-oriented individual just as easily as that of the most common person)—the deep root of his being falls almost entirely beyond his control and power. What governs it is not the individual, but a dark entity, amalgamating with the deep ensemble of his passions, over which the individual itself has little or no control. Now, the bodily unity, which is the inseparable correlate of any conscious life that can concretely be spoken of in the ordinary man, is subject to such laws that, at a certain point, it is inevitably swept away into the whirlwind of the elements; and just as the will of the Self remains external to the principle of said organic unity, so it has no power over these laws, and therefore, no ability to escape its inevitable dissolution. How, then, can man logically

aspire to immortality, as long as the only life he is capable of is one that is at every moment conditioned not only by a physical correlate but by a fundamental attitude of passivity towards it? Anyone who can wrap one's head around the thoughts outlined here will immediately grasp two key points: man is only immortal insofar as he makes himself so, and this is accomplished by transforming what is mortal. This transformation cannot take place until the Self, still bound to the physical and emotional realms, learns to adopt an attitude of positivity, becoming an entity that determines itself rather than being determined—essentially living within the body in such a way that its formation is independent of the body and all its influences. This is the foundation for the essential work, which consists of gradually bringing that dark entity governing all its organic functions and emotional powers under the control of the conscious Self, ultimately allowing it to master the body; only then can it truly claim the body as its own. Only one who is not passive towards his own life, but is capable of reasserting control over it independently—not by escaping into a fantastical world (such as that of art, philosophy, religion, or visionaries), which is detached from and juxtaposed against his physical reality, but by reasserting himself over that reality through an existence so infinite that it completely dominates it, making it a pliable and obedient instrument of the spirit or the individual, thereby defying the laws of life and death, which he has mastered—only such a person is truly immortal (3). In truth, the 'kingdom of heaven' exists only to the extent that it is brought into being here on Earth. True immortality is not about fleeing from the realities of mortal life but rather triumphing over it, within it; it is the flower of mortality that is not bestowed but must be created and constructed concretely to be realised in the self-sufficiency of that passive and material nature, which is the body of the ἄβιος (without life) of the individual. This concept is what the alchemists referred to when they spoke of the transmutation of base metal into gold (4); such an individual, who is the Absolute Individual as an immortal body, is associated, beyond the general and elementary theory of the 'second birth' or 'birth from above,' with the Taoist concept of the Chénrén, as well as the aforementioned Vedic and Buddhist ideas of the Rishi and the Ahrá—beings with incorruptible, self-generating bodies—along with the Gnostic and Docetic notions regarding the 'spiritual body' of Christ and the 'garment of glory,' and finally, Fichte's ideas related to the term in his *Bestimmung des Menschen*.

It goes without saying that the 'Immortal Body' should not be taken naively as just a privileged material formation. The character of immortality does not properly belong to the body itself, but rather to a distinct function—which is the capacity of an entity to act autonomously and to shape its own existence—in which it is fully realised. This explains why various esoteric schools refer to such a body as the 'body of activity,' the 'body of freedom,' or the 'seminarium of countless bodies.' The infinite, unconditional potential to create one's own body, one's own pure power (ἄνθρωπος ἄρρητος [ineffable man]) gathered within itself and persuaded of its own potential and significance, is what constitutes it. In this sense, the body is no longer merely material; it is, instead, spiritual. However, this does not arise from it being constituted of subtler elements, as some theosophical perspectives rooted in naive materialism might suggest. Instead, it is because the Self is no longer passive towards the various elements; rather, it experiences their formation as an expression of its unconditional will, which therefore can not only eternally maintain the same body but can also transform it infinitely, all the while preserving a singular consciousness or individual identity—just as the hidden truth beneath the myth of transformations and transmigration suggests. This body should be understood not as a body of matter but, literally, of freedom and power. Thus, the immortal body is the body of the magical Self. Its essence cannot be deeply explored without first outlining the methodology of magic, which, therefore, is focused on the 'construction of immortality,' as well as that of absolute knowledge. For now, only a specific aspect of the problem will be presented, specifically concerning the overcoming of heterogeneration. To this end, it is pertinent to refer to the Kundalini yoga of the Indian Shakti tantra system, which Sir John Woodroffe introduced to Europe through a series of translations and studies. The fundamental premise of these disciplines can be linked to the Platonic theory of the Androgyne (5). The individual's inadequacy to himself, whereby his centre falls outside the profound organic power of his own body, is concretely expressed as the inevitability of heterogeneration, meaning the

incapacity of the Self to give itself a body. In woman, the individual perceives, in a certain sense, the incarnation of what transcends his power, and only by connecting with her can he achieve a creation (hence the profound truth in the assertion of those eschatological doctrines that see in the very existence—Dasein—of the feminine principle the root of injustice and inherent evil, the violence of what should not be). Thus, the fundamental limitation that every individual faces due to his mortality, the necessity of heterogeneration, and the splitting of generative power in sexual relations can be viewed as three interconnected aspects of the same logical situation. The Tantrahastra asserts that what the ordinary man calls will is merely a dull and impotent reflection of the true nature of will, which is a concrete power of creation (kriyashakti) present within him in the form of generative power. It offers a discipline—its extraordinary phenomena in yogism lend it some validation—through which the conscious Self asserts itself in generative power, coiled deep within its organic being. This Self takes possession of that power, no longer resonating with an external principle—an ἔτερος—but instead folding back into itself, becoming the instrument for conquering and resolving the various centr/es that govern and shape the organism in terms of consciousness and freedom. When the generative power shifts from an outward-directed state to an inward one, when, to borrow a phrase from Western esotericism, the ‘waters of the Great Jordan’ no longer flow ‘downward’ but rise ‘upward,’ then the human or animal generation gives way to the divine or spiritual generation. It is said that the individual who has fully undergone the process of Kundalini yoga has transcended heterogeneration on his path to achieving autogeneration and self-creation. Self-sufficient, he possesses the power to freely create his own body—thereby living within the mortal confines of this body the very essence of the infinite and the immortal (6). It must therefore be noted that such disciplines are extremely dangerous, indeed absolutely to be discouraged, when the Self, through adequate preparation, has not entirely rendered itself sufficient to its own cosmic power, so that it can persist where this power consumes within itself the various formations correlated to its normal and finite existence: the Self, which still grounds its essence in passive life within the sensible and particular, would be burned and annihilated by the unleashed power of the Kundalini. The transition into the absolute life of life—which is not life—can only mean death for such a Self. Hence, it is said that no man, as such, can endure the presence of God without dying. At this point, it therefore becomes necessary to provide a concise account of the entire method of magical idealism.

It has already been mentioned why, despite the scientific evidence of the concrete influence of the mind on the physical and the organic, one must grant the right to consider these and similar horizons of self-realisation as mere chimeras, myths, and fantasies. There is no doubt that many are tempted to exercise such a right extensively at this point. However, these individuals ought to be sufficiently honest with themselves to recognise that all those conceptions that cradle and flatter their own nullity with the allure of those supreme values—such as immortality—which rightfully pertain only to the power and self-sufficiency of the one who, through unwavering will, has managed to create himself to the point of becoming the absolute Individual, are, in fact, also, and to an even greater extent, chimeras, myths, and fantasies.

[A study on the system of Tantra-yoga is forthcoming (7), to which the reader is referred. For the Tantras, the principle of the Absolute is the power (Shakti—one with Shiva), of which the world is the act. In this act, a series of degrees are distinguished, and hierarchically arranged from the most subtle to the most dense; this order could ultimately be equivalent to that from the most abstract and formless to the most intense. These degrees represent the various ‘elemental’ components, the transcendent principles of distinct cosmic planes, and are designated by the Tantras with a series of Deities. There exists a perfect correspondence between the human body and the structure of the cosmos: the principles that govern what appears phenomenally as nature (i.e., the Deities) are present, albeit in a veiled and dormant form, in a series of centres (chakras) that mirror the order of

manifestation and govern various organic functions. The limit of the act, which macrocosmically symbolises the 'earth,' corresponds in the body to the generative force. The goal of Tantra-yoga is to actualise (bhava) those deities of which the human body can be considered, in a certain Aristotelian sense, as the potential. The force of Kundalini, detached from heterogeneration and grasped, is the organ through which this work is accomplished. The individual, whose body is fully alive in this force, is indistinguishable from the Mahashakti, whereby power is the function through which he experiences the entire world.

To be precise, every deity in Tantra is a dual, possessing both a positive and a passive aspect (masculine and feminine). However, these aspects are simplified and unified in a certain state of being when they are awakened by Kundalini. This leads to the general theory of the purification of elements (bhuta shuddi), which encapsulates all initiatory wisdom. This purification is an entirely metaphysical concept; it is important to separate it from any moralistic connotations. An element is deemed impure if it is not only itself but is also contaminated by an 'other.' It is what does not exist $\chi\alpha\theta'$ $\alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron$, what is not a perfect act, but what requires correlation with another to reach actuality—like the sight of an object or the animal generation of the feminine principle—is considered impure. To purify means to eliminate the 'other' with which the act is infused and from which, in its deprivation, it suffers violence (the object, for example, does violence to life). In other words, it means to render the act entirely self-sufficient (pūrṇa) and affirmative, that is, to wholly surrender oneself to oneself without conditions. Thus, the purification in the realm of generation relates to self-generation and the functioning of the immortal body (Kundalini-yoga); in the realm of perception, it pertains to productive intuition, which will be discussed later (Jnana-yoga); and in the realm of breathing, it involves a series of practices aimed at retaining carbon to construct the body (Prana-yoga) autonomously. When alchemists speak of dissolving the 'earth' with 'mercury,' they refer precisely to this consumption of passivity and deprivation in the active principle of an adequate affirmation. Purity, the intangible simplicity of being that is whole because it possesses its own principle in itself, is the ultimate requirement of all initiation. It is important to note that most people who speak of esoteric sciences today do not perfectly comprehend these concepts].

(1) For relevant citations, see, for example, A. Reghini, *Le Parole Sacre e di Passo e il Massimo Mistero Massonico*, Todi: Atanòr, 1922, pp. 58-80, 197 ff.

(2) Thus, the concept of the 'few' is ultimately distilled into a singular 'one' in the current doctrine

(3) It is important to note that the locus of the process towards concrete self-realisation exists in a higher 'dimension' that is entirely indifferent to the set of pseudovalues characteristic of ordinary humanity. Noble sentiments, morality, culture, intellectual acumen, artistic genius, devotion, etc., are largely irrelevant to the task at hand since it is not a matter of transitioning from one species to another within the same genus of humanity, but rather of moving from one genus to another.

Anyone who suspects the absolute positivity and syntheticity of the work is well aware of this and does not express indignation, as Diogenes did, at the assertion that a completely immoral man, having been initiated at Eleusis, has a better fate after death than Agesilaus or Epaminondas.

(4) In alchemical symbolism, which is so profound yet still somewhat unexplored, the phase of achieving a point of autonomy in relation to sensible correlations is indicated as the 'dissociation of the mixture and the separation of the subtle from the dense,' or 'extraction of mercury.' The other phase, which reaffirms this autonomy over the organic whole, corresponds to the 'solution or reduction of the dense and the earths by means of mercury.' This constitutes the process for 'first-degree medicine'; that of 'second degree' involves the transition from affirmation within the microcosmic order to affirmation within the macrocosmic order, according to the rhythm that will be outlined in the subsequent essay.

(5) See specifically A. Avalon, *The Serpent Power*, London, 1919.

(6) This sheds light on the meaning of a specific form of chastity. It is evident that, in the one who inwardly makes himself self-sufficient unto the power of his own body, everything associated with heterogenisation loses all necessity. É. Levi rightly states: 'Lutter contre l'attrait de la génération

c'est s'exercer à vaincre la mort, et la suprême chasteté était la plus glorieuse couronne proposée aux hiérophants. Répandre sa vie dans des embrassements humains c'est jeter des racines dans la tombe' (*Histoire de la Magie*, Alcan, Paris, 1892, p. 158) ['To withstand the allure of generation is to practice conquering death, and supreme chastity was the most glorious crown offered to hierophants. To dissipate one's life in human embraces is to take root in the grave.']. Cfr. H. Bergson, *L'évolution créatrice*, Paris, 1923. p. 14: 'On peut dire que, si la tendance à s'individualiser est partout présente dans le monde organisé, elle est partout combattue par la tendance à se reproduire. Pour que l'individualité fût parfaite, il faudrait qu'aucune partie détachée de l'organisme ne pût vivre séparément. Mais la reproduction deviendrait alors impossible. [Sterility is indeed a consistent phenomenon that accompanies progress on the path of initiation.] Qu'est-elle, en effet, sinon la reconstitution d'un organisme nouveau avec un fragment détaché de l'ancien ? L'individualité loge donc son ennemi chez elle. Le besoin même qu'elle éprouve de se perpétuer dans le temps la condamne à n'être jamais complète dans l'espace.' ['It can be said that while the tendency towards individuality is universally present in the organised world, it is constantly opposed by the tendency to reproduce. For individuality to reach its full potential, it would be necessary for no detached part of the organism to exist independently. However, this condition would render reproduction impossible. After all, what is reproduction if not the reconstitution of a new organism from a detached fragment of the old? Therefore, individuality contains an inherent conflict. Its very need for self-perpetuation over time prevents it from ever achieving completeness in space.'] As a result, the meaning and internal rationale behind certain elements have been lost, leading to chastity—once an effect of internal realisation—becoming a goal imposed by stringent external norms. This shift produces only the extensive pathological phenomena illuminated by modern theories of refolement (Freud). As Spinoza astutely observes in his *Short Treatise* (ed. cit., ch. XXVI, p. 93), it is not through the suppression of passions that one attains knowledge of God; rather, it is through the knowledge of God that passions genuinely subside. To deny the negative by affirming the positive, rather than by opposing it, is one of the fundamental maxims of self-realisation.

(7) Editor's note: The 'forthcoming study' is, of course, *L'Uomo come potenza*, published by Atanòr the year following the *Essays*. The text was rewritten in the 1930s and published for the first time in 1949 by Bocca, along with *Lo Yoga della potenza*. The most recent critical edition, featuring an introduction by Pio Filippani-Ronconi, was released in 1994. Additionally, an anastatic reprint of the original *L'Uomo come potenza* was published by Edizioni Mediterranee in 1988. The book reflects Evola's ideas about spirituality, power, and the nature of man; it explores the concept of 'power' not merely in a political or social sense but as a metaphysical and spiritual force. Evola emphasises the importance of inner strength and spiritual realisation. He argues that true power comes from an individual's ability to transcend material existence and connect with higher spiritual realities. The notion of 'power' in this context is linked to the idea of 'being' and the realisation of one's potential. Evola often discusses the concept of the 'initiate'—a person who has undergone spiritual awakening and possesses a deeper understanding of existence. The initiate is seen as someone who can access higher states of consciousness and can influence reality through their will and understanding. The book critiques modern society's materialism and loss of spiritual values. Evola argues that contemporary man has become disconnected from his true nature and potential. He calls for a return to traditional values and ways of life that honour the spiritual and metaphysical aspects of existence. Evola explores the relationship between chastity and spiritual power, positing that true mastery over one's desires leads to greater spiritual strength. This theme is connected to his broader discourse on the significance of sexuality in spiritual development. *L'Uomo come potenza* incorporates ideas from Eastern philosophies, particularly Hinduism and Buddhism, emphasising the importance of meditation, self-discipline, and the quest for enlightenment.

V. The Essence of Magic Development

ὅπ' Ἐγὼ εἶπα ἐστε
[I tell you: You are gods].
JOHN, 10, 34.

What sets magical idealism apart is its fundamentally practical nature: its primary objective is not to replace one intellectual conception of the world with another but to create within the individual a new 'dimension' and depth of life. Certainly, it does not fall into the error of making an abstract contrast between the theoretical and the practical. In the theoretical and the cognitive as such—thus only in those aspects that can be grasped by a reader—it recognises a degree of creative activity. However, it contends that this degree represents merely a preliminary outline, an initial step towards a deeper phase of realisation, which is that of magic or practical application in the strict sense, in which the initial stage must continue and be completed. The lowering of 'being' in ontology and gnoseology to 'ought to be,' and the intensification of the activity of value judgment—which has transformed theoretical judgment into a judgment of existence, a cosmic act of creative faith—is the essence of the present doctrine. Therefore, whoever cannot reduce the principles of magical idealism to active forces within himself, to profound needs that drive him towards a concrete and living realisation, essentially kills this idealism with the most outdated rhetoric. Anyone who can truly say to himself, 'If there were no magic, I must create one for myself today (1),' is warmly welcomed here.

Now, let us address the issue of magical development. The reader is invited to note that what follows serves as its own justification. There is no need to invoke a revelation, personal experience, or the authority of an initiate, a 'master,' or any tradition. An individual can easily grasp the meaning and appropriateness of the various phases on his own, as they naturally arise from the coherence of his will with his deep desire for self-realisation. Conversely, one can be assured that those who feel the need to claim to be initiated—who shroud magical methodology in layers of mystery and the occult, resorting to the 'ineffable' and 'higher faculties,' such as clairvoyance and clairaudience, to justify their teachings—are either deceivers or individuals who, despite having achieved something, have only done so in a limited or confused manner, failing to grasp the immanent meaning and rationale behind their realisations. The reader can expect to identify elements here that are present both in Indian Yoga and in Western esoteric traditions, as well as in modern Theosophy, specifically in the works of Blavatsky and Steiner. However, these elements will be found, in a certain way, purified, reduced to their intrinsic meaning, and bare transcendental logic, so that they connect into an organism that has within itself the principle of its own consistency.

1

Indeed, the methodology of magical idealism is founded on certain premises that establish the terms of the problem it seeks to address. The first of these premises is the actual existence of an antithesis to freedom in general, namely, a deficiency of the Self. It has already been noted how such a de facto or actual existence can transmute into a de jure or conceptual existence, i.e., into a condition encompassed within the very concept of power. The second premise, equally aligned with experience, is that this antithesis is not merely an indeterminate entity; rather, it is articulated in a system of formations. The full justification of this second premise will be presented in the second book of the work *Teoria dell'Individuo Assoluto* (2), in which it is demonstrated how the various categories through which the antithesis is artificially articulated—such as nature and the world of culture—are correlated with the realisation of particular values that are presupposed by the affirmation of the Self as individual. The general sense of this justification is as follows: for the Self to possess itself, it must first, in an ideal moment, simply be—that is, posit itself either in accordance with immediacy or spontaneity. This leads to a set of productions constrained by the perfection of being; however, when the Self goes beyond the limit of perfection, it becomes immersed in nonbeing, thereby realising the principle of being-for-itself—of reflection and of

representation. The consummation of being in reflection (science, philosophy, religion, art, etc.) leads to the concretisation of this principle, leading to a mediated awareness of its own substance, which is properly identified as personhood. However, the perfection of the realm of reflection or personhood, corresponding to that of being, implies a similar transition. The pure self-consciousness of reflection distinguishes itself from a real power and freedom of which it is a reflection. This power is individual. Thus, the demand for the individual manifests itself in the contrast between the pure, still formless principle of power and freedom and the articulated world of reflection, which is experienced as inherently empty, like a phenomenon, and concerning such a principle, as a deprivation. To redeem such a world of phenomena and necessity into a reality characterised by power and freedom—to restore to it, in alignment with the value of the autarch, those cosmic creative powers that were eclipsed at the moment the principle of being-for-itself or reflection was severed from the realm of being—this is the task of magic (3). This confirms the conception of real experience as proposed in the first of the present essays: on one hand, there is a reality for which the Self, from the standpoint of perfect reflection (i.e., according to idealistic gnoseology), is sufficient; on the other hand, the Self exists as a pure principle of persuasion. Lastly, the Self is deficient unto that reality, not from the perspective of reflection but from that of persuasion, i.e., of power and freedom. From this, two important corollaries follow.

1) What appears as a phenomenon and in opposition is an original power of the Self, in which consciousness, from the perspective of ‘being’ and freedom, has become partially obscured. To use a mathematical metaphor: it is a derivative, of which magic must perform the integral, returning it to the function. To use a mathematical analogy: it is a derivative that magic must integrate to recover the original function.

2) The Self is thus internally formed by a set of categories upon which its overall world gravitates, and which, in particular, provides the principium individuationis for the world of reflection. As expressed in the Tantras of the Kashmiri school: ‘*vartamānāvabhāsānām bhāvānām avabhāsanam antahsthitavatām eva ghatete vahirātmanā*’ = what appears externally appears so only because it exists (in a congruent way) internally. These categories should not be interpreted in an intellectual sense; rather, they should be understood actively, as a body of dynamic forces, desires, and profound, obscure wills, which can be referred to by the Indian term *samskāra*.

The fundamental principle of magic is that the way the world presents itself is not an ultimate reference point; it is not an unchangeable in-itself, but rather a phenomenon corresponding to the pure power of the Self. Acting on the transcendental plane allows for the removal of the conditions under which reality appears, thereby altering the concrete experience of the universe. Finally, it should be noted that the *samskāra* itself consists of two principles that are correlated respectively to the world of being and that of the person: the former is absolute, while the latter is particular or finite. The reason for this, which can only be briefly mentioned here, is that the principle of reflection gives rise to freedom, and with it, to a principle of divisibility: freedom, to be such, fragments the organic unity of perfect being into a multiplicity—a system of possibilities, each of which—including that which is actually willed and will establish the personal *samskāra*—is, therefore, a distinct particular. In this way, it introduces a deformative and finitising principle into the universal aspect of being. It is crucial to keep in mind this point.

The magical or individual Self is the principle of absolute, unconditional being. Its deficiency in relation to the world reflects the fact that it experiences its *samskāra* as immediacy, as a phenomenon—therefore, as something that, in contrast to the character of absolute mediation that informs such a Self, it endures as a form of nonbeing. The essence of the preliminary phase of magical development is this: to recreate from nothing, through an act of conscious and unconditional freedom, the various powers of *samskāra*, of which the sensible world is an appearance. However, this is not about identifying with these powers—as occurred in the realm of being or spontaneity—but rather distinguishing oneself from each of them or liberating oneself in line with a higher capacity for autarchy. This also means resolving the phenomenon into its various

transcendental causes through a creative act that allows these causes to be perceived as external, distant, and separate from a deeper dimension of the Self. This deeper dimension comes into existence through this very act, in relation to each of those causes (4). Alternatively, it involves externalising the internal in alignment with freedom, while integrating, mediating, and internalising the external.

This phase can be described as cathartic: indeed, through this movement, the Self distinguishes itself from the various particular formations of *samskāra* that constitute its personality, thus reconstructing itself in alignment with the absolute or cosmic power of being. Now, since the pure phenomenological appearance of a given thing can be understood through three levels or depths of the principle that manifests within it—namely, the simple dynamic power, the concept that shapes that power, and finally, the absolute freedom from which this concept arises—this process of integration, which also involves distinction and elimination, will consist of three phases. At the end of this process, the individual fully resolves the formal antithesis related to his personality, and as the self-sufficient source of objective power, can reaffirm his mediation within the universal realm as a being of pure power or pure magical realisation. However, before these two phases, there is an initial preparatory phase. This phase does not induce any magical agitation; rather, it facilitates the cultivation of the qualities necessary for the genuine development of the Self. Let us commence by examining this preliminary phase.

2

The purpose of the preparatory phase is twofold: to affirm the absolute autonomy of the centre of the Self and to establish the principle of entirely active agency. Initially, this involves undergoing the experience of negation, or what can be termed the ‘trial by fire.’ The Self, in its established state, holds firm to the extent that it draws support and assurance from a range of peripheral elements—such as experience, knowledge, culture, relationships, beliefs, and so forth—on which it depends for its certainty. Now, the Self must be able to guarantee its own consistency even when these external supports are no longer available or are weakened. It must destroy every ‘other’ and, amidst universal disintegration, remain equally firm and whole. It must generate the strength to give itself life through the total upheaval and destruction of everything it has relied upon in its existence, as that existence is connected to an external or ‘other.’ Thus, it must actively engage with and challenge all forms: it must deny every belief, violate every moral and social law, disdain every sentiment of humanity, every expression of love and generosity, and every passion. It must reassert itself against science and speculation with a relentless and all-pervasive active scepticism, ultimately pushing itself to the brink of conscious and reasoned madness. In summary, it owes it to itself to make itself the ultimate reason for itself—transforming the statement, ‘ich habe meine Sache auf nichts gestellt’ [‘I haven’t attached myself to anything’], into a living reality for it (5). Magical idealism asserts that such a trial is absolutely essential for any further development to be experienced in line with the value of autarchy. The innate rejection and devaluation that such a precept may evoke in the depths of one’s being stems only from an unconscious internal fear. This reaction signals to those who experience it that they have not yet become self-sufficient, serving as a form of test for anyone’s level of personal independence. The absence of this specific experience distinguishes the mystical experience from the magical one: the mystic can engage in a process of elevation, through which he resolves the antithesis and subsequently dwells within the universal powers. However, this existence is not experienced within the form of the Lord; he does not reaffirm his individuality or the unconditional within it. Instead, he becomes infused with universal laws, merging with them without asserting himself as a dominator beyond their influence. Thus, while the mystic can deeply engage with and experience the process of becoming of a plant, the magician, in his spiritual practice, possesses the additional capacity to command and manipulate this process at his discretion. This capability is afforded to him solely through the transformative power generated during the trial by fire, which fundamentally shapes the *Tongebung* of the entire development.

However, the individual, through the trial by fire, has only become relatively independent from various determinations; in reality, he still needs them to deny them and thereby reaffirm his own persuasion. This very negating function renders him almost dependent. He can only free himself from this dependency by detaching himself, eliminating the negative force—not by wanting it or claiming it as his own, but by simply enduring it, accepting it as something foreign and transcendent to his will, all while continuously reaffirming his own persistence in opposition to it. This is the ‘trial of suffering’: it entails persisting in confronting the denial of one’s own life.

However, since the negation no longer originates from the Self, the Self is freed from the dependency on the object that it negates. From here comes the value of Stoicism and Christian resignation; from here, a way to understand why various saints saw suffering as a divine grace. Blondel eloquently states: ‘To accept suffering for its own sake, to embrace it, seek it, love it, make it the symbol and very object of generous and selfless love, to place perfect action within painful passion, to remain active even unto death, to turn every act into a kind of death, and to make death itself the supreme act—this is the triumph of the will that still astonishes nature and, indeed, brings forth in man a new and more-than-human life.’ (6)

This leads to the final and most difficult stage of preparation, which pertains to active will. The Self has made itself autonomous as pure essence; now it must also be made so through action. The action motivated by the expectation of achieving a specific outcome—driven by a particular interest of the Self in something, and thus having as its object not the thing in itself, but the thing as it relates to the Self—as desired, testifies to an insufficient centre; it is an action tinged with passion. To want something for personal satisfaction is to let the Self be taken by the object of the will and, therefore, to forgo having it in any real sense. Similarly, violent and passionate action against things shows that, a priori, they possess a reality for the Self, precisely as an antithesis. As such, this kind of action fails to transcend the antithesis, only intensifying and reaffirming it, while denying the possibility of absolute self-determination. By doing violence to things, one is, in reality, only doing violence to the Self, as this action forces the Self out of the position where it stands in balance, without anything opposing it. The fundamental principle of magic is that to genuinely possess something, one must want it not for the Self, but for the thing itself—in other words, one must love it. To want something creates barriers that prevent one from effectively pursuing and achieving it. Violence is the way of the weak and powerless; love and gentleness are the marks of the strong and the master. This reflects the profound teachings of Taoism: not to desire for the sake of possessing, to give in to possess, to yield to gain mastery, and to sacrifice to achieve; (7) it embodies the famous concept of *wei wu wei* or ‘action without action’—the key to supernatural faith in action. This means acting in a way that does not overwhelm or compromise the centrality of the Self, but unfolds within a Self that remains detached and steadfast, like its Master. This Self, therefore, does not truly desire but rather relinquishes and gives. The ‘act’ of giving imparts the sense of absolute action. Love is the magical force that liberates the Self from the rigid and contracted crystal of its particular affirmation, which keeps it caught in the world of the given. It enables the Self to expand outward, creating waves of a new, subtle force through which nothing exists that cannot be dominated or overcome, for this force acts from within things, embodying their very essence while extending it into a principle that is internally superior to it (8). From this arises the profound sense and value of the principles of humility, submission, self-denial, detachment, and surrender of one’s will to ‘God.’ The relinquishment of all pride, a life imbued with true humility and self-denial, and the constant death to one’s own will are tasks to which an individual can truly adapt only when he generates himself through a power infinitely greater than that needed for any act of denial or destruction. This is a harsh trial, yet it serves as the preliminary condition for the path of the dominator: only through the act of bending and mortifying the deepest substance of the will and the Self does the principle of sufficient action emerge—the organ that resolves the universal antithesis within the very body of the autarch, ultimately enabling the Self to achieve a higher purpose than its own as it relates to the antithesis, one that even surpasses the antithesis itself.

The third trial is thus that of ‘love’: it is no longer a matter of persisting in the abstract denial of oneself—which is negativity, the deprivation of something—but rather in a deeper negation of

oneself, which is the existence of a thing in itself, for example, a thing as an object of unconditional love. Here, the aim is not to destroy, restrain, or stir up, but to build oneself at every moment through a renewed act of love and renunciation, on a plane that is higher than oneself; this allows for a state of impassibility akin to that of a mere spectator or, better yet, the Lord, enabling one to remain unaffected by any storm or turmoil, whether it arises internally or externally. It should be noted that this is not the indifference that negates passion, that is a determination that is on the same level as the latter. Rather, it is the indifference that does not need to exclude anything; it maintains itself even in chaotic or stressful situations involving emotional turmoil or significant efforts—especially in this context—because it represents the higher and unmoving dimension of the Self within its general activity. The principle of non-resistance alludes to such a higher realisation: nothing is more yielding and adaptable than water, says Lao Tzu, yet nothing better knows how to overcome the strong and rigid; it is indomitable because it adapts to everything (9). However, one must be wary of the hypostatisation of these trials into self-sufficient goals. It is true that, in the final analysis, the negative moment is that of the Absolute, and it is only within it that the experience of autarchy truly shines forth. As the Gnostic Valentinus expresses, ‘by dissolving all things and yet remaining undissolved yourselves, you are the Lords of all creation and all corruption (10).’ However, the negativity of the ‘trial by fire’ is merely a degree connected to the given world of the individual, and as such, it must be transcended. Likewise, one should not be attracted by the allure of Stoic sufficiency nor by the indifference towards value in the face of pain—the real negation that, while experienced, the Self does not recognise as evil (as moral evil). For, in truth, suffering is always a sign of imperfection, and a judgment of value should not be opposed to a judgment of existence; that is, one should not contrast the subjective firmness of the ‘ought to be’ with the objective reality of an existence that lacks value and on which one cannot act. Rather, one should strive to empower oneself to the extent that the judgment of existence and the judgment of value converge at the same point so that what is reflects immediately what ought to be, in virtue of a normative framework that also serves as a means of creation. Finally, love, respect, devotion, etc., should not be considered as ends in themselves but rather as means to realise a higher power of will. Thus, one must be aware that the object of such dispositions of the mind is always a pretext and a posterius: it is not the existence of value in things and individuals that causes the Self to respect or love them; rather, it is the opposite: such value is produced by these feelings, which, in turn, must be elicited to serve a certain moment of self-realisation (11). Whether there exists something in general that the Self can respect—be it the God of Light, the God of Darkness, or any arbitrary X to which one submits one’s will—does not matter. In discipline, the act is valued not for its content but for its form.

3

Following this, the significance of the purification phase can be articulated. It has previously been established that the antithesis of abstract idealism lies in the insufficiency of the Self unto a portion of its own activity: the existence of a sensible world is a reflection and an effect of such deficiency, which, in this regard, can be described as a category, or more precisely, a condition or form of perception. Empirically, this conjunction manifests in the passivity of sensory perception, characterised as a process of receiving—a movement from the outside to the inside (empfinden)—constrained by the external influence of the sensible object, which presents itself as a given, thereby binding the faculties of the individual and transcending his conscious freedom. As has been reiterated, one cannot avoid perceiving what one does perceive, nor can one perceive that which eludes one’s awareness or arbitrarily alters one’s perception. Thus, the activity of the Self becomes manifest. However, this state of affairs is merely a phenomenon—a contingent configuration of possible experience that depends on a specific will of the Self and, therefore, must inevitably undergo transformation when that will wanes. The essence of magical development lies in substituting passive and receptive sensory perception with a new, active, and affirmative modality. This new form does not merely receive; rather, it generates the object through an affirmation that

emerges from within and projects outward—this is the essential aspect—imbued with freedom. To express this in Aristotelian terms, it involves advancing the function of perception from an imperfect act to a perfect act

Such transformation entails two key moments: the first is the point at which the Self establishes its ability to abstract from sensory perceptions, allowing it to exclude voluntarily these perceptions from consciousness. Despite this exclusion, the Self can persist in conformity with a principle that ensures its existence independently of the fundamental correlation with the object (this refers to the aforementioned separation of the subtle from the dense and impure, as discussed in hermeticism). The second moment is characterised by the release and purification of various sensory powers, which, when turned inwards, become not only organs of reception but also of production of perceptions and, consequently, of things. It is perhaps worth recalling the presupposition of the principle of the ideality of the sensory mode of perception: there are no transcendent causes or entities that affect the faculties; the sensory object is merely a phenomenon. The true *principium individuationis* of the indeterminate possibility of experience, according to the sensory or passive mode, resides within the Self, in the profound body of tendencies, desires, and *samskāra*. This *principium individuationis* remains latent in the initial stage of tension, only to later provide the particular formation and content for the new productive or positive mode of perception.

Subsequently, the absolute abstraction of the *samskāra* occurs, referred to by Patanjali as ‘seedless *samādhi*.’ Thus, the permanence of the unchanging *samskāra* provides, throughout the purification phase, the foundation for material congruence between the contents of the two experiences: the sensory and the magical.

Regarding the first moment, the Self requires significant energy to liberate itself from the force of sensory impressions, and this can only be achieved through patient and orderly discipline. The active moment of the Self in perception must be gradually strengthened. This includes developing the capacity to focus on a single sensation, object, or emotion while excluding everything else from consciousness (*dharana*), as well as the ability to suppress or exclude sensory perceptions and the incidental currents of associations—that think the Self more than it thinks them (*pratyahara*). A higher degree of active power is demanded in the subsequent step, in which the object that must solely inhabit the mind should neither be derived from sensory impressions nor be an image extracted from them; rather, it should possess an ideally pure substance. Moreover, this object must be endowed with as much reality and vitality through the internal energy of the Self as was previously imparted by the sensory stimulus (*dhyāna*). At this point, when the mind has been fortified through the overcoming of preparatory trials, particularly that of detachment, it can find within itself the sufficient energy to accomplish the final moment of abstraction, thereby eliminating even the support of the ideal object and connecting solely with its bare potency (*samādhi*—with ‘seeds’ or with *samskāra* = *chittashuddhi* (12).

Moving on to the second moment of the process, to convey the nature of the organ of the new active form of perception, one can refer to the power of imagination, more specifically, to that of suggestion. In the hypnotic phenomenon, when the subject experiences with a vividness that not only matches but surpasses that of a sensory impression what is imposed by the hypnotist, he exercises an active power in shaping his perceptions and experiences, a new mode of perception permeated by freedom and generated from within—precisely that which corresponds to the aforementioned requirement. Certainly, many view suggested experiences as inherently illusory or deceptive. However, these individuals do not realise that everything boils down to a question of intensity: the very sensible world can be considered a kind of powerful, crystallised, and rigidified hypnosis, and the term ‘true,’ added to ‘hallucination’ in Taine’s famous definition of the world, can be traced back to the degree of intensity and relative persistence of the experience (13). A reality is a powerful and constant hallucination, just as a hallucination is a weak and fleeting reality. This follows directly from the idealistic premise: if the dilemma surrounding the ‘thing-in-itself,’ is done away with, the reality of the world is restored to categorical activity, and the possibility of reaffirming freedom is admitted, then there is no longer any way to relegate the concept of reality to a privileged phenomenon or to devalue the world of imagination. In truth, imagination can be a

force of equal dignity to that of sensitive perception, except that it stands in relation to the latter as the active does to the passive. On the other hand, it should be noted that, for now, this is not about transforming the content of experience—such as perceiving, through the power of suggestion, a donkey instead of a tree. The process leading to *samādhi* is not one of agitation but of retention; the suggestion or imagination that extends it does not introduce new content but rather the same content, corresponding to the *samskāra*, though conditioned by a new form of perception. That is to say, it is not about perceiving a donkey instead of a tree, but rather always perceiving a tree, yet no longer passively, but actively and productively. The tree, in its new form, does not exist for the Self unless it is positively produced from within (just as scientific psychology has confirmed in cases of supranormal knowledge), just as before it did not exist unless it was stimulated by external sensory perceptions (14). An ‘invariant,’ a basic body of λόγοι σπερματικοί (seminal reasons), is maintained through the two forms, and there can be no question of its magical resolution until the *Self* has externalised, eliminated, and distinguished it from itself—and in doing so, has internally and hierarchically transcended—all of its *samskāra*.

Another example of productive perception is found in dreaming. However, the material of the dream is not produced by the Self adequately; more than simply dreaming, it is rather that the Self is dreamed. The causes of dreams are, in fact, either reflections of abnormal organic states, or symbolic transcriptions of sensory impressions, or, as Freud has shown, creations by subconscious affective drives that, simply rejected rather than resolved by the waking Self, create their own satisfaction in the dream world in spite of it. The active form of perception in dreams is primarily utilised by a life that, far from relying on the value of freedom, regresses into what the preparatory discipline of purification and emancipation must transcend. Thus, as the Self progresses into a higher dimension, it gains not only awareness but also the ability to direct and control its experiences in dreams. Initially, dreams exhibit a character of great clarity due to the high internal energy realised by the Self; however, in a subsequent moment, as the Self is confronted with its irrational and oblique roots, this clarity diminishes, culminating in a pure, undifferentiated awareness that correlates with *samādhi*. The Self, having been created on a higher plane that is indifferent to sensory perception, remains conscious even where this perception diminishes, namely in sleep. And this is the first magical realisation. The epithet of the ‘Perfectly Awakened’ applied to the Buddha holds not only symbolic value but also literal significance. In sleep, reduced to a pure, undifferentiated light of consciousness (*ananta-jyotih*), the world subsequently reemerges and takes form—through the effect of *samskāra*—in a new kind of dream that is essentially and entirely active, purified, and autonomous. The state offered by sleep is quite conducive to the initial experiences of the new mode of perception; it, in a certain way, protects the nascent formations from the violence of sensory impressions, which they have not yet fully equalled in force. However, the Self must further integrate the waking physical world into the world emerging from its productive mindset. It must actively recreate the system of the world from within, without any external stimulus, and freely; through this autonomous reproduction, it can supplant the sensibly conditioned reality of the latter. To this end, it is necessary to adjust the subjective power of imagination to the intensity of that which remains hallucinatory and almost captivated by the objective: it is necessary to detach freedom from the latter and to transform imagination from a mere artificer of inconsistent and subjective shadows into an objective power. Or, as paradoxical as this may sound, all reality must be transmuted into a dream after having been denied in sleep; the being of the antithesis must be integrated into a nonbeing and from this must rise again into an entity of pure activity, into a ‘perfect act’: this will then be felt as the absolute reality, against which the sensible is but a lifeless shadow, a kind of shell bark opaque unto itself.

At this point, the necessity for the most absolute preparatory purification becomes evident, ensuring that the world, as it emerges in the *ananta-jyotih* from the latent body of *samskāra*, is not disturbed or deformed by the powers of personal will, which, if unrestrained, would have unconditional efficacy and, in the chaos they would produce, would preclude any path to further dimensions of power. The imagination must here be made as pure and transparent as a crystal. On the other hand, it must be entirely positive. In the hypnotic phenomenon, cited merely for clarification, there exists

a passive imagination; it replicates the situation of sensory perception with the only difference being that, instead of physical stimuli, there is the mental command of the hypnotist. What is necessary is to replace the hypnotist with one's own positive initiative, thereby overcoming that absolute *Empfindung* (absolute sensitivity) articulated by Novalis (15), which also underlies a significant portion of faith phenomena. Those who engage in magic can easily notice, if they reflect (which, to be honest, only happens in exceptional cases), that its primary organ is fundamentally the imagination. The entirety of the ceremonial, the ritual, the symbolism, etc., is merely a *mise en scène*, based on profound laws of the psychology of the subconscious, designed to excite and maximise the power of the imagination. Such a framework represents the necessary substitute for those who cannot invoke the powers of imagination through a positive, central initiative. Instead, they achieve this only indirectly, through the suggestion of a complex of external elements. One should consider how many unstable factors (varying with the era, beliefs, the individual, and his current mental or emotional condition, etc.) influence the suggestive phenomenon; then it will be understood how contingent the success of ceremonial magic is. Thus, the absolute positivity and systematic development of it are conditioned by reducing the heterosuggestive element to the autosuggestive one—that is, to the element that relies on positive self-determination and a faith that is self-created and entirely self-sufficient. Furthermore, heterosuggestion primarily turns towards the individual's own powers, leading to an insurmountable confusion between the objective and the merely fantastic in the related phenomena and invoking blind forces, against which the point of autarchy can only be maintained in exceptional cases. The necessity for imagination to be cleansed and transparent (or, in Kabbalistic terms, 'translucent') is underscored to ensure that, in its engagement with the 'Great Magical Agent,' it does not produce—due to the obstruction caused by its impurities—extravagances and fantasies (16) instead of precise correlates of the objective world. This requirement clashes with the element of heterosuggestion inherent in ceremonial magic, which can only appeal to the imagination as a blind and obscure force of the affective.

Here, the justification for the 'trial of love' becomes most evident. One must learn to assimilate (in *dhāraṇā* and *dhyāna*) into the world of the objective antithetical, shaping one's inner self upon it while excluding any personal affirmation, to maintain objectivity even when the physical world or the realm of phenomena is no longer perceived and the principle of perception instead becomes one of freedom. The magician—like the sage of Aristippus—must be one whose life remains equally regulated even in the absence of any law; otherwise, he becomes imprisoned in a world of appearances that he could not recognise as such, which would hinder his further development, preventing him from truly becoming arbiter of the 'analogy' referred to in magic. The new experience is created by abstracting, through *saṃyama* (which, as Patanjali explains, involves the integration of *dhāraṇā*, *dhyāna*, and *samādhi*), from the sensory object with which one initially formed a sympathetic connection through an act of love. This process allows one to then reproduce the object from within, resulting in something that, while entirely subjective, is also immediately objective.

The pure, undetermined potentiality or substance of the new experience (*ananta-jyotiḥ*) is referred to as 'Astral Light' or 'Great Magical Agent' in Western occultism. This constitutes the elementary substrate in which the various phases of purification and realisation occur, which now need to be briefly addressed.

The world, as it re-emerges into activity within the 'astral light,' presents itself, in its immediacy, as a dynamic or elemental world. In this realm, various determinations are immediately experienced in their transparency within a dynamic function that produces them. This function is woven into the very substance of the Self; it exists only within an act of the Self and as a moment of its interiority. Moreover, in this process, the character of reality and objectivity relative to the sensitive thing or phenomenon it resolves is always recognised. Externality is thus experienced within interiority; indeed, here the Self exists only to the extent that it dynamically realises itself outwardly. The Self transcends and positively resolves its concrete incarnation, which is correlated to sensory determinations, by stepping outside itself and being able to feel internally and productively all that once opposed it as an external world. The more capable it becomes of a kind of sensitivity towards

external things—similar to how a poet dramatises and personifies nature by drawing on his emotional state, yet absolutely objective and referring to things in themselves—the more concrete its autonomy and freedom become. It is now focused within, engaging deeply with its own inner experiences—according to an absolute interiority, redeemed in the value of autarchy and stronger than any contingency—only to the extent that it interiorises the external. To realise this experience, great courage is required; it is akin to renouncing all solid ground and launching oneself into the abyss and darkness—an act that is met with indescribable terror. It becomes clear how necessary the habit of self-denial and dedication is to overcome such a leap. To achieve freedom in the world, one must have the courage to venture outside oneself. The small egoism, contracted and confined within a void centre, expresses nothing but fear of and inadequacy to the creative power of the Self; it neither knows how to create nor how to assert itself in that positive power that would transfigure the sensible world into one of freedom, precisely because of this egoism and the death-like fear of the activity of pure love, which Lao Tzu (17) referred to as radical ‘avarice.’ Active faith, the spiritual creative energy, is essentially about ὑπερήμα—transcending oneself. The courage to leap beyond oneself serves as the generating organ of the dynamic world and of other supersensory realms. Those who cannot achieve self-sufficiency in this regard, who fear losing themselves, remain trapped in an abstract and empty existence or in the realm of ἔκστασις [deprivation]. Here, it is literally true that whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, and only those who give it away will truly make it alive.

Now, internalising the external is also to project, to detach the internal from oneself. Dynamic formations, as they pertain to objective reality, are distinguished from the Self, whereby the new world comes to represent the externalisation of the very transcendental body of the *samskāra*, in its initial capacity for simple efficient dynamism. Beyond the phenomenon, the Self, therefore, creates with its own substance—from within—what might be called the ‘first integral’ of that phenomenon, namely, the various dynamic functions from which it derives. However, by producing and objectifying itself in the dynamic world—as it constructs itself as the energy capable of effecting this—the Self generates itself in relation to the efficient force of its *samskāra* as a magical principle, that is, as a principle that is internally superior to it. Just as every object corresponds to a subject, every objectification of the internal realises a deeper principle than that which has been objectified and from which it is free; it is no longer conditioned by it but instead conditions it. By projecting its own dynamicity and rendering it objective, the Self thus purifies it and becomes its sovereign. The transition to the further experience can be understood as follows: at the previous stage, the Self must project its internal transcendental dynamicity outward—this is the requirement. However, this very projection necessitates a dynamicity that does not remain simply projected. The requirement is that every transcendental dynamicity be externalised if sovereignty over the efficient plane of *samskāra* is to be absolute. It is now evident that this requirement is not fulfilled merely by projecting this faculty, as this leads to a vicious circle; rather, it calls for a new mode of experiencing projection in general. This new mode must elevate the act of distinguishing to a higher level, effectively distancing it from itself. The act of distinguishing that animated the dynamic world was directly tied to the Self and unfolded from within to without. Therefore, when the activity through which the subjective becomes and forms—also being immediately objective—is no longer experienced as a production originating from the Self but rather as an openness to experiences, a deeper interaction with the external world, and an interconnectedness with it, and when the way in which the Self engages with or perceives the external world is reversed to be understood almost as an expression of the objective towards and within the Self, then the act of distinguishing would indeed remain distinct and externalised. The world generated by the ‘great magical agent’ is recognised by certain mystics and neo-Rosicrucians as the ‘world of inspiration,’ while in Indian esotericism, it corresponds to the lower Devachan. In this context, perception shifts from a centrifugal (outward) focus to a centripetal (inward) one, remaining distinct from ordinary sensory perception. This distinction arises because the Self is intimately involved in the entire process, which embodies creative productivity within the dynamic world. However, this experience is perceived almost as if viewed from the outside, lived as a reflection, and thus inverted, like in a

mirror. There is a kind of expression of things within the Self, yet this Self is deeply interwoven with and present at the very source of that expression. This source serves as the central point connecting the Self to the dynamic world, in which its essence is externalised. This connection facilitates further distinction and liberation. In the framework of the new world, the notion of a dynamic function evolves; it is no longer merely a dynamic function. Rather, along with this dynamic function, the superior principle that enables it is both objectified and externalised. As a result, distinct units emerge that are self-contained yet mediated. The mediated efficiency, linked to the deeper principle that conditions this function, constitutes the essence of the concept—as a mode of conception. Thus, the world that now unfolds before the Self resembles a living language, wherein a body of meanings is conceived and expressed. This world reveals and embodies the profound interiority of *samskāra* at the moment of its formation within a complex interplay of needs, values, and original causes (18). The objective takes on the sense of a mirror for the elementary personality; everything reveals the profound reason from which it was originally brought into existence for the Self. Thus, the entirety of the world serves as a concrete matter for its transcendental self-recognition. However, this recognition is also a form of distinction. The Self gains knowledge by objectifying, freeing, and eliminating deeper layers of itself, and, as it does so, it becomes the subject of a new experience. In this process, it comes to possess itself in a centre that is internally superior to the knowledge it has gained. ‘This is you,’ ‘This, however, is another’—these are the principles that are realised as a unified experience in this phase and to which is attached the meaning of that test that occultism connects to the so-called ‘Guardian of the Threshold.’

This leads to the ultimate, supreme phase of purification. The Self has detached itself from *samskāra* in both the dynamic world and the world of the Word. This detachment is considered in its first two transcendental powers, which transcend mere phenomena: immediate efficiency and reflective conception. Beyond these two powers lies a third power related to the bare principle of egoity. This power constitutes the centre of the person and correlates with the existence of the totality of the world, as a world focused on the formation of the individual. The principle of the individual represents a transition beyond the world of the person. Thus, in accordance with its requirements, the core of *samskāra*—the essential centre of the person—must be projected and perceived by the Self as something contingent and external, of which it is the absolute cause. The Self must regard what previously constituted its deepest centrality with the same sentiment it had for objects in the external, sensible world. It must externalise its own Self. By doing so, the Self becomes the unconditioned cause of itself from a state of nonbeing, realising the state of one who is not—who is not passive to his own existence but creates his existence out of nothing through an absolute act—an act that becomes the fundamental substance of all beings, and this substance is freedom itself. Only then is the Self entirely purified and becomes the transcendent Lord of the world. By externalising it, the Self transcends the transcendental function *samskāra* of the person in the totality of its powers, from which the world derives all its consistency.

Thus, at the point where the Self brings itself before itself, the cathartic process is complete, and the doors to pure magical realisation are opened. It becomes clear that the power, the absolute act (which is not only sufficient in a formal sense but also in a material sense), was previously nothing more than an illusion.

Hence, various magical abilities that can be acquired independently of the methodical process of self-liberation, as previously explained, are inevitably impaired by a hidden element of passivity. The true essence of power, understood as autarchy, only holds concrete meaning when it comes from an individual who has originated from a state of nonbeing. This person has transformed the fundamental principle of existence—the Self—into a state of freedom that ultimately depends on itself.

Before proceeding further, it is worth making a general note on the cognitive aspect of the cathartic process to show how it concretely strengthens the idealistic premise. The fact is that magical idealism, beyond its phase of theoretical presentation, fully aligns with Eastern gnoseology.

This gnoseology considers that the primary form of knowledge is gained through direct experience (aparokshajnana) or immediate experience (anubhava). This perspective aligns with a basic form of empiricism, rejecting any induction or inference that extends beyond the current data as problematic and abstract. It does not suggest a 'thing-in-itself' behind the phenomenon as true reality but instead considers as real only what is currently experienced. However, it acknowledges the possibility of various forms of experience, each correlated with a certain reality, which are hierarchised up to an absolute experience, that of the Rishi, in relation to which alone an absolute reality exists. The principles of this gnoseology are, therefore, that to know is not to think but to be the known thing in terms of actuality and possession, and that the character of absoluteness does not pertain to a certain reality but rather to a certain mode of experiencing reality. It is the eternity realised within the Rishi that, radiating throughout the universe, transfigures it sub specie aeternitatis: what is eternal is that which is completed by eternal eyes. Thus, at the starting point of catharsis, what is real is simply the sensible phenomenon, and there is nothing behind it. The integration process is synthetic—advancing from the lesser to the greater—that is, the various transcendental functions, of which the phenomenon will be the 'derivative,' do not exist prior to the act of integration that establishes them. If the phenomenon must refer back to a dynamicity, this to a concept, and this concept to a subjective entity, it is necessary for the individual to project into the phenomenal world his own self as dynamicity, meaning, and Self. The world exists as dynamicity, meaning, and Self only when—sit venia verbis—the individual immerses himself, having developed his powers appropriate to these aspects, into the empty form of the phenomenon. The real existence of a spiritual world, unfolding in an eternal ether, thus proceeds solely from the process of self-liberation or purification of the Self. When an individual becomes capable of externalising his own Self, he gains the ability to perceive reality as a collection of subjective entities or personal centres of freedom. This represents a stage of intuition or cosmic consciousness (ἔσνως). In this state, the Self transcends the necessity for a specific, irreducible individuation. Instead, it exists as a continuum that maintains unity amidst the infinite variety of individual consciousnesses. The Self can project itself into these consciousnesses, which continue in a higher dimension. This can be likened to how the submerged mass of a continent unites the multiplicity of separate islands that surface from the water. The essence of autarchy is the full understanding and perfect possession of that mystery which lies behind the act of self-consciousness of one who fundamentally possesses himself. For such self-consciousness—as Schelling recognised—is like a lamp that illuminates only what is before it, while leaving the deepest darkness behind (19). Here, then, knowing means projecting the Self into other beings, transferring one's own inner essence from one individual to another—*intus-ire*. This realm of knowledge, in terms of its potential, signifies the complete realisation of that which is entirely detached or the magical principle.

[In the previous essays discussing the gnoseological premise of magical idealism, solipsism is implicitly present. One cannot, in any way, admit the existence of a multiplicity of subjects, each possessing the same reality and dignity as my own subject. For that bare and immanent certainty that I can call 'Self' is unrepeatable; it is an absolute experience that mediates everything and is itself mediated by nothing. Thus, to speak of an 'other' Self is a contradiction in terms: the 'other' Self, inasmuch as it is 'other,' is no longer a Self, that is, it is no longer a centrality or subjectivity, but rather something mediated. However, as such, it is conditioned by the unique Self, since this, like the immediate *νακτ' ἐξοχήν*, is the power and presupposition of all mediation. In short, the other is not a Self, but rather a particular object of my experience—a peripheral element in which the mark of subjectivity is projected. It is evident that one cannot acknowledge that the 'other' Selves hold the same metaphysical value as the unique Self or have a genuine and independent existence. Doing so would lead to a lack of self-awareness; that is, one would become engrossed in the object being considered, neglecting the Self as the subject and the basis for both the positing and the object itself. One might also admit that the unique Self is an abstraction outside the relationship with an experience in which various objects are associated with the mark of subjectivity; however, this correlation does not exclude, but rather implies, a hierarchical subordination. As the Pythagoreans

noted, every number is such by virtue of the One: the many, without a unifying principle, would not even be many, but rather so many separate units. Thus, two consciousnesses, if they were absolutely two, would not be two but one consciousness and one consciousness incommunicable with each other, that is, a single consciousness. Hence, the multiplicity of consciousnesses implies a higher consciousness, in which they are contained—like limbs in the unity of the body. Now the fundamental question is: Does the essence of the Self—understood as that unique experience mentioned above—reside in the relation (i.e., in what comprehends all terms), or in one of the elements being related?

The choice between these options is fundamentally based on an act of free will. Magical idealism decides in favour of the former and thus situates the Self in that which encompasses everything and which is comprehended by nothing. However, this understanding should not be interpreted as something currently perfect: the totality of experience is indeed the body of the Self (and thus the Self cannot disregard it or isolate itself), but rather a body in the process of organising, a body affected by quanta of deprivation and not entirely governed, unified, and transparent in relation to the pure principle of autarchy. The perfect unity is rather the terminus ad quem of magical development. Now, along this development, it is possible to experience as the Self—and thus to actualise in the central principle of one's being—that which, instead, in the order of sensible experience, was merely a particular object to which the mark of subjectivity had been connected only by inference—as a hypothesis and an explanatory principle.

It is that consciousness is not a static point; rather, it admits degrees of depth and intensity. By deepening oneself and transcending the 'being' of a specific individual—transforming from an individuated singular consciousness into a more universal, individuating consciousness that remains indifferent to countless individual forms—one can experience oneself among a multiplicity of subjects without losing one's own identity (this is the meaning of the initiatory 'we,' whose *caput mortuum* is the royal and pontifical 'we'). However, even at this point, subordination is the ultimate reference point: the Self remains the superior principle that relates to the various subjects it experiences in the same way that an entelechy or organic principle relates to the various functions of a body.

Between the person and the 'Subject,' there is therefore no alterity, but rather continuity and progressivity: the person is the Universal Subject in potency, and the Universal Subject is the act of the person. It should not be assumed that the point at which the various subjects are one, in accordance with a perfect organic synthesis, exists actually beyond the consciousness of the individual. The distance between myself and the 'others'—the fact that I cannot assert 'I' to encompass all of my experiences but instead suffer the violence of a distinction—is nothing but the symbol of the internal conflict within myself; it reflects the character of deprivation inherent in what is in potency. The task is to start from this state of deprivation and affirm an act that transcends it: only then will God exist, the subject of subjects, the monad of monads. The sense of this can be expressed with Eckhart: 'I—the Unique One—raise all creatures from their consciousness to mine so that in me they become unity.' (20) As if the set of beings to which my experience is tied and which resist me were an inorganic matter, which asks my power for unity, for the point that will animate it with life, and for persuasion. This is what Christ alludes to when, in the apocryphal Acts of John, he speaks of the 'Gathering of the limbs of the Ineffable.' (21) In other circumstances, as the ultimate reference point and principle of the absolute, the personal Self of sensory experience remains, and beyond the contingencies of the latter, there is nothing else. Once again, the process is synthetic.

A branch does not simply come to recognise itself in the tree, which already exists beyond its limited awareness and is assumed by it. This self-recognition does not allow it to communicate with other finite subjects or branches that coexist with it in the tree (as suggested by E. Carpenter). Instead, it should be stated that the branch actively creates, either out of nothing or from itself, a more perfect unity that is the tree. In doing so, it gradually gives the 'others' a reality that they previously lacked as 'others.' The concept of advancing from deprivation to a state of sufficiency,

which did not previously exist or coexist with the act that brings it about, is fundamentally the central focus of the current doctrine].

Through catharsis, the individual has recreated his own *samskāra*, that is, his transcendent personality. By distinguishing from this, he has transformed that particular ensemble into freedom, whereby the principle of the for-itself or reflection reasserts and concretises itself beyond the world of being. Everything that has become—namely, the spiritual world—could never have come into being without the freedom and power of the individual, who is affirmed in the value of sufficiency. However, the state of existence that has developed to the level of cosmic consciousness remains a world of phenomena and appearances. As previously stated in earlier essays, only within the absolutely sufficient act does a determination acquire absolute reality; only such an act frees it from negative contingency and allows it to shine forth in the unconditional. Nevertheless, the possibility of such an act arises only at the end of the process of catharsis. Thus, when the Self does not advance further in the proper realisation, it may regress into a naive supersensible realism. For instance, it may believe that the form of eternity reveals entities existing in themselves and of equal or even superior dignity to the individual power of experience. However, all of this only appears insofar as its appearance presupposes a principle that is internally superior to the entirety of the spiritual world, in relation to which this world is contingent. Here the mystic comes to a halt: he identifies with the spiritual world and conforms to the laws of cosmic becoming, beyond which he does not reaffirm himself. The resolution of the microcosm into the macrocosm, along with the notion of ‘free necessity,’ constitutes his ultimate conclusion. The magician, on the other hand, transcends this limit: he, while remaining aware of the principle of positing, realises that nature is not necessary at all and thereby achieves supreme liberation (*mahanmukti*), unity (*kaivalya*), and ‘seedless *samādhi*.’ (22) The principles of this solution are as follows: ‘I am not the Self’ (that is: I am not the existing Self, but rather its power); therefore, ‘I am not my body’ (or *samskāra*, meaning I am not nature) (23); and finally, ‘I do not even exist’ (that is: I am the unconditional cause of my existence, I am contingent upon myself, and the substance of my being is freedom) (24). Let us linger for another moment on this very important point. In modern philosophy, a conception has reemerged that already caused serious concerns in early Greek speculation. This conception is that of the irrationality of being. Reason, within the overall framework of things, can adequately comprehend what they are; it can fully explore and conceptually construct their essence—their ‘What.’ However, that things simply are, their bare existence, remains an impenetrable fact that can be accepted but not explained, before which mere reason comes to a halt (25). The real existence of the rational is, in other words, radically irrational, something that is irreducible to logical being. Therefore, Hegel indicated (from a logical point of view) that pure being is pure nothingness (26). Similarly, the Greek, in his love for the purely rational, saw existence as an injustice (Anaximander), something that is not, or rather, something that should not be (Parmenides), the principle of evil or disorder (*ἄπερον* – which is *κακοποιόν*, according to Plato). Regarding what provides the fundamental experience of being—the Self—Carlyle reaffirms *ἄλογος* by challenging the philosopher to explain not why I am dressed in this or that way, nor this or that law, but rather, in general, why I am here (27). The essence of the magical is this: to transform pure existence from a mere brute fact—an opaque necessity that transcends the power of the Self—into an act of freedom. It aims to make existence dependent on itself by reaffirming the Self beyond it. In short, it seeks to establish the Self as the cause of being that arises from nothing. Lao Tzu’s connection between ‘emptiness’ and ‘non-existence’ highlights how these attributes relate to the concept of the Perfect One. From this deep understanding of the Perfect One, he asserts that every being is rooted in nonbeing. Similarly, the concept of *māyā*, which has been widely debated, refers to both illusion and creative power in Tantra. Additionally, the meaning of the supramundane body of the Buddha, known as the Dharmakaya, is clarified. This principle of non-existence serves as the foundation of all reality, thus illuminating the Buddhist doctrine of universal emptiness (*śūnyatāvāda*).

It has been observed that at the end of the process of catharsis, such an unconditional principle is realised, which resolves being. The final phase of magical realisation consists of actualising such a principle, which, for the time being, is entirely indeterminate, in a concrete and mediated body. In this phase, freedom, in addition to being formal—it pertains to the simple form of perception that consistently carries a certain content linked to *samskāra*—also becomes material; that is, it becomes capable of producing and arbitrarily manipulating any content or object of experience.

The meaning of this second phase is the reaffirmation of the power of the unconditioned, based on three degrees of transcendental mediation that define the three realms of the externalisation of *samskāra*: the dynamic, the verbal, and the intuitive. Dynamicity, conception, and inner experience emerge from 'illusion,' or *māyā*. These entities possess a substance embodying freedom, contingency, or arbitrariness. This endeavour is understood as the 'redemption of the world' or the creation of the immortal, magical body. A significant temptation arises at the point of liberation: the Self, recognising nature's contingency in relation to itself, may believe it has reached the pinnacle of its development and immerse itself in the pure, indeterminate enjoyment of self—what Hinayana Buddhism calls *nirvāna*. Yet, in doing so, it risks renouncing the concrete body, which only exists by reaffirming the demand that brought the transcendental Self into the real experiences of the individual. Occultism describes this temptation as the 'great guardian of the threshold.' Overcoming it entails realising that a higher, living perfection awaits the magical principle, one attainable only by recreating oneself through the energy that reclaims the world from the nonbeing of illusion—a state in which it was submerged by the 'Liberated One.' This process grants absolute existence through a causality arising from nothing, culminating in the purified, bare principle. This is the essence of the 'redemption of the world': demonstrating the absolute non-reality of the world by recreating it from nothing at will, ultimately fulfilling the magical Self through a concrete mediation. It becomes apparent why the terms 'magical body' or 'body of freedom' (with 'body' being used metaphorically in this context) are referred to as the 'cosmic body,' and why the secret Taoist treatise outlining the principles of high magic is titled *Phan-khoa-thu* (which literally translates to 'Book of Things Returned' or 'Restored to their Original State.' This idea can be compared to the concept of 'Final Restitution' in Valentinian Gnosticism). The moralistic interpretation that suggests the *nirmanakāya* (literally, 'one who renounces *nirvāna*') sacrifices himself purely out of compassion for humanity illustrates how the highest wisdom can be distorted and rendered unrecognisable, ultimately reduced to a corrupt *caput mortuum* opaque to its transcendent meaning.

In the magical phase, what was once the faculty of judgment in discursiveness transforms into an unconditional or arbitrary act of cosmic creation. As the phenomenal world is experienced through intuition, the first moment involves a judgment that resolves the dynamic world. The second and third moments correspond respectively to the creation of mediated powers of conception and to the development of inner life. This entire new world is made up not only formally but also materially of *māyā*, or freedom. In actualising this world, the Self is realised through three powers. Modern Rosicrucianism refers to these powers as the spiritual, the Spirit of Life, and the Man-Spirit. In Indian esotericism, they are known as Ishvara, Hīranyagarbha, and Virat. These concepts somewhat correspond to the *Trikāya*, or the triple nature of the Buddha in the Mahāyāna school—powers that together constitute its magical body. If we view the mineral, vegetable, animal, and personal realms as representations of various moments of transcendental power—ranging from lifeless phenomena to pure interiority—we can better understand the further individuation of the concept of the magical body. In this context, Ishvara, Hīranyagarbha, and Virat correspond to the principles of the vegetable, animal, and personal realms of the external world, respectively. This understanding is centred on the role of the autarch, which affirms itself unconditionally in the dynamic principle that lies beyond the phenomenal spiritual realm. At a deep level of insight that surpasses ordinary sensory perception, the Self has, in its general experience, resolved, annulled, or redeemed minerality. Through this affirmation and transformation, the Self identifies with Virat. This same process applies to the other two principles as well. It is important to note that the reality of various experiences is grounded in the different relationships formed through which specific functions of

consciousness are engaged. For instance, when we say that minerality is nullified, we mean that the Self has related to that function in a new way. This means that the function is no longer experienced in a 'mineral' manner, but rather in a higher, hierarchically superior way. The various realms of nature are mere phenomena. Their disappearance indicates that the principle of separation, which kept them at a distance from the Self, has been overcome. Consequently, the Self reabsorbs these realms and, within the principle of freedom, regenerates the functions that originally produced them. It is important to remember that the human body, as it comprises the four principles, can act both as immediate material and as a kind of lever for the cosmic process of creating the magical body. This occurs because it involves addressing the transcendental function or metaphysical essence of the elements, which remains consistent across the various phenomena in which these elements manifest (28). Thus, by genuinely resolving, for instance, the vegetative function within one's own body, one simultaneously resolves the vegetative nature present throughout the entire macrocosm. Magical action, at its core, is objective and encompasses the macrocosm. This idea challenges the simplistic belief that the immortal body is just an elevated individual body existing among many mortal ones. Rather, the immortal body represents the infinite nature of all bodies, perceived from a perspective of unity—an eternal aspect of a productively free function. In this sense, the body of the Absolute Individual is synonymous with the universe itself, which unfolds gradually as a system encompassing vegetality, animality, and personality; this development is a reflection of universal evolution. This understanding clarifies why esoteric traditions referred to the immortal body as a 'glory,' viewing it as the vehicle for all the higher powers of the cosmos. The Gnostic Hymn of the Pearl explains that the 'Garment of Glory' is sealed with Names, which represent the powers of the divine hierarchy, starting with the King of Kings (29). In Western occultism, the planets Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan are associated with the cosmic states that correspond to the regeneration of the three mentioned principles. These principles relate to the inherent and universal power to create dynamic entities, living beings, and independent individuals. Just as mortal humans draw sustenance from food, the immortal man, referred to as the ἄνθρωπος ἄρρητος (the ineffable man), derives life from the unconditional creation of beings from nothingness. Power is his essence. The limbs of his external perfection reflect his completeness in infinite spiritual individualities (at this level, every cosmic function is elevated to the status of spirit), and the magical Self, as their creator, contains and governs these individualities from a higher principle. Just as the entelechy of the physical body encompasses and manages its constituent particles, the magical Self circulates within them and transforms them while simultaneously transcending them in the simplicity of eternal illumination. This illustrates the essence of magical development. A more thorough logical analysis and a detailed identification of its individual phases will be presented in the third chapter of the second book of *Teoria dell' Individuo Assoluto* (30). Further methodological notes will be provided in the discussion of Tantric doctrine within the essay titled *Il Mondo come Potenza* (31).

In conclusion, it is important to issue a warning. Power, often seen as a magical principle, should never be regarded as a transcendent condition that one must embrace to achieve self-affirmation or validation. Such a mindset results in an escapism that distances the individual from his true self. Once the individual loses his centrality, it becomes nearly impossible to regain it through this perspective, which ultimately leads further away from one's authentic self. Power should not be pursued, sought after, or desired, as such an attitude can lead to heteronomy or dependency. Instead, power must align with self-affirmation, rather than precede it. Self-affirmation should be recognised as the primary condition; it is not simply a result of a process but rather a prerequisite for that process to exist (32). As has been stated, perfect possession is not so much a privileged stage as it is a mode or form of experiencing any stage, and indeed the entire process. One could say that it is, along the path to fulfilment, eternally present formaliter, even if materialiter it occurs precisely at the point where the internal consistency has risen to that power of its own, such that the judgment of existence is resolved completely within the judgment of value, in which the Word, as such, is immediately made flesh. However, even this distinction, which is legitimate at a certain level, conceals a residue of abstraction. It, in fact, disregards the actual character of persuasion, which is

neither the antecedent A nor a consequent B; rather, it is the interval, the illumination through which the Self, in bringing B to life, reaffirms itself as the negation of A, as having and possessing itself in contrast to its own being. When the essence of the Self concentrates in this interval, that unity or simplicity—the value around which, as discussed in relation to final causes, everything revolves—radiates, encapsulating in an absolute synthesis the power of the entire development—from the most elementary forms of the realm of being to the most glorious realisations of magic. ‘In the tireless, boundless wheel of Brahman, the individual drifts anxiously, as long as he perceives the lord of the wheel (chakravarti) as separate from himself. However, at the moment he recognises himself in that Self which eternally turns the wheel, he immediately attains the peace of immortality.’ (33)

Perfect possession is not merely a privileged stage; rather, it is a mode or form of experiencing any stage and the entire process itself. One might argue that it exists, along the path to fulfilment, as an eternal presence in a certain sense, even if it only manifests materially at the point where internal consistency reaches such a level that the judgment of existence is entirely resolved within the judgment of value. In this state, the Word is immediately made flesh. However, this distinction, while valid at a certain level, still harbours a degree of abstraction. It overlooks the true nature of persuasion, which is neither the initial state (A) nor the concluding state (B). Instead, it represents the interval—the illumination through which the Self, in bringing B to life, reaffirms itself by negating A, thus having, possessing itself in contrast to its own being. When the essence of the Self concentrates within this interval, that unity or simplicity—the value that everything revolves around, as discussed in relation to final causes—begins to radiate. This encapsulates in an absolute synthesis the power of the entire development, from the most elementary forms of existence to the most magnificent realisations of magic. As expressed, ‘In the tireless, boundless wheel of Brahman, the individual drifts anxiously, as long as he perceives the lord of the wheel (chakravarti) as separate from himself. However, at the moment he recognises himself in that Self which eternally turns the wheel, he immediately attains the peace of immortality.’ (34)

(1) The following anecdote from India is particularly evocative. A disciple asked his spiritual master, with whom he was bathing, when he would finally be able to realise Brahman. In response, the master submerged the disciple’s head underwater, forcing him to struggle until he felt as though he were suffocating. When the disciple finally broke free and resurfaced, the master said: ‘When the desire to realise Brahman within you is as intense and profound as the desire you felt to reassert your material life, only then will it find fulfilment.’ This applies to the entirety of magical development: as long as the will and desire for self-realisation remain mere mental shadows, as long as they do not match the intensity of that dark and irrational power that asserts itself at the core of our being, no concrete results can be expected. As Jacobi rightly notes, one cannot improve oneself through ideas or reasoning; instead, one needs to be organised and must therefore organise oneself (cf. the passage from Garve in F.E. Jacobi, *Über die Lehre Spinoza*, Anh. VII).

(2) Editor’s note: this refers to the part of the work that will be titled *Fenomenologia dell’Individuo Assoluto* (Turin: Bocca, 1930). The indication of ‘book’ clearly refers to ‘part,’ as the work is conceived as a unified whole, although it was published in two volumes because it originally exceeded 700 pages.

(3) Editor’s note: the reconciliation of the principle of determination—established and confirmed by these stages through their internal articulations—with the fundamental principle of free will or unconditional freedom is discussed in the *Teoria dell’Individuo Assoluto*, Vol. I, § 6 (Appendix) and Vol. II, Introduction, and § 31 (in Vol. I, *Teoria*, the Appendix is on pp. 123-137 in the 1927 edition and pp. 71-93 in the 1998 edition. Vol. II is *Fenomenologia*, with the Introduction and § 31 on pp. 1-19 and 334-337 in the 1930 edition and pp. 15-30 and 289-292 in the 1974 edition.

(4) This is the profound meaning of the magical evocation: making the ‘gods’ appear in an intuitable reality. The power over them is based on the potency of that distinctive act—or more accurately, self-distinctive act—upon which the possibility of their appearance rests.

(5) Here we return to a previously mentioned theme: the ‘purification of elements,’ known in India as *bhutasuddi*, which corresponds in alchemy to the ‘liberation of metals’ and in Masonic esotericism to the ‘preparation of the stone’ (cf. O. Wirth, *Le symbolisme hermétique*, Paris, 1909, pp. 36-38). This process encompasses both what is termed ‘good’ and what is termed ‘bad.’ See Shiva Chandra, *Principles of Tantra*, London, 1916, Vol. II, p. LXXXVIII. It is essential to achieve complete purification; one dependency is no better than another. This is also a central theme in Christian Gnosticism.

(6) M. Blondel, *L’Action: essai d’une critique de la vie et d’une science de la pratique*, Paris: Alcan, 1893, p. 380.

(7) Lao Tzu, op. cit., passim, and ch. VII.

(8) This subtle power corresponds to the ‘possession without contact’ mentioned in Taoist esotericism and to the ‘Force’ of Arcana XI in the Tarot, which is symbolised by a woman effortlessly opening the jaws of a furious lion. This imagery illustrates the principle of spiritual causality, which governs all violent forces and every form of physical determinism or power. As Lao Tsu further states (ch. LXXVI), the one who can truly conquer does not need to fight.

(9) Ibid., ch. LXXVIII.

(10) Quoted in Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, IV, 13, 90.

(11) For magical idealism, morality is a means, never an end; it holds value not in itself but in how it enables the will to enhance its own affirmation and mediation. There is ‘heteronomy’ as long as the purpose of the will is placed in something other than the will itself (Nietzsche).

(12) Patanjali, *Yogasutras*, to be compared with R. Steiner, *Geheimwissenschaft in Umriss*, Leipzig, 1910, ch. V, pp. 278 ff, and with Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*.

(13) For Taine, perception is a ‘true hallucination.’ The concept of suggestion serves as the bridge connecting idea and reality, internal experience and external experience; thus, it is natural for it to be considered the magical organ. Initially, I may have only a simple and faint mental image of something; beyond that, I can animate it within my imagination. In the third stage, I may perceive it externally as a subjective hallucination; in the fourth stage, I can influence other consciousnesses so that they also perceive it (collective hallucination). This same power, when intensified and directed at the physical level of being becomes objective and is thus a magical act. A magician is someone who knows how to ‘influence’ matter itself; with his control over its processes, he can shape it into the forms he desires. There are no gaps in this sequence. Objectivity represents the ultimate limit of subjective affirmation, the point at which the action is completely self-possessed.

(14) For someone with inner agility, who perceives the relativity of personal experiences and connects this insight to a sense of ‘effortless action’ on a transcendental level, this reversal is no longer extraordinary. To use a fitting analogy from A. Reghini, this phenomenon resembles the mechanisms of motion transmission via a pulley, where a small movement in one pulley instantly inverts the direction of the entire transmission to the parallel one.

(15) Novalis, *Schriften*, ed. cit., vol. II, p. 101.

(16) Cf. A.E. Waite, *The Mysteries of Magic*, London, 1897, p. 68.

(17) Ibid., p. XIV. Cf. G. Ribemont-Dessaignes, *L’empereur de Chine*, Paris, 1921, p. 56: ‘Un homme peut-il être Dieu ? - Oui – Lequel ? - La sphère est rétractée, le centre s’est irradié.’ [‘Can a man be God? Yes. Which one? The sphere is retracted; the centre has radiated.’]

(18) This moment of magical experience is particularly emphasised by the Mantrashastra, which perceives in the totality of things the material formation (sthûla) of a cosmic verb (parashabda)—that is, a living power of objective expression. Human language would merely be a reflective correlate of this materiality, further distorted by various influences such as race and time.

Mantrayoga seeks to elevate the Self beyond such reflection, affirming it in the ‘language of the Gods’ (hiranyagarbha-shabda) that governs the productive process of things. Cf. J. Woodroffe, *The Garland of Letters, Studies in the Maharashtra*, Madras, 1922. This will also be addressed in the aforementioned work on Tantra.

(19) F. W. Schelling, *Der Transzendente Idealismus*, Sec. I. ch. I, 4.

- (20) Meister Eckhart, ed. cit., Vol. I, p. 164; see also vol. I, p. 163: ‘All creatures seek their highest perfection, each yearning to transcend mere existence and embrace the fullness of substance. In this striving, they converge upon my reason, endeavouring to become reason itself. Yet I—the One—am the force that draws all creatures back to their source in God. Thus, let each soul contemplate the nature of its actions.’ Regarding Eckhart’s concept of Vernunft, which, like λόγος from early Greek wisdom, is derived from the idea of sufficiency, see id., p. 167: ‘In the tranquil desert of divinity (Gottheit—opposed to Gott as the cause to its effect), where nothing has ever penetrated, and within the undifferentiated silence that remains still yet animates all things—in this sacred realm, beings live in accordance with reason (vernünftig leben).’
- (21) M.R. James, *Apocrypha Anecdota*, Cambridge, 1897, series II, p. 13 ff; see also the similar passage from the *Gospel of Eve* in Epiphanius (Dindorf edition, XXVI, 3).
- (22) See Patanjali, *Yoga Sutras*, III, 49, 50, 54, 55.
- (23) It is essential to clarify that in this context, ‘nature’ or ‘body’ refers to the metaphysical totality of the world (e.g., the Hegelian Idea), further distilled to encompass real experience.
- (24) Sāmkhya Kārika, LXIV.
- (25) Cfr. G. Simmel, Schopenhauer und Nietzsche. Ein Vortragszyklus, Leipzig, 1920, III; F.W. Schelling, *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, S. W. t. 10, p. 149 ff.
- (26) Ibid. Id.; G. Hegel, *Encyk. der ph. Wissenschaften*, § 87.
- (27) Thomas Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, I, ed. J.M. Dent, p. 37. Cf. Serner, *Letzte Lockerung*, I, 2: ‘Was dürfte das erste Gehirn, das auf dem Globus geriet, getan haben? Vermutlich erstaunte es über sein Anwesenheit und wusste mit sich und dem schmutzigen Vehikel unter seinen Füßen nichts anzufangen’ [‘What could the first brain that appeared on the globe have done? Presumably, it marvelled at its own existence and did not know how to engage with itself and the dirty vehicle beneath its feet.’]. This reflects on the necessity of self-affirmation within the Self. Blondel bases his entire framework on this premise, which culminates, as is well known, in the transcendent God of theism.
- (28) This is made explicit and profoundly suggestive in a Mithraic ritual (A. Dieterich, *Eine Mithraliturgie*, Leipzig, 1903), which associates the perfect body with the various elements in their original, immortal, and liberating functions. Phrases such as ‘elemental origin of my origin’ and ‘elemental substance of my substance,’ along with references to ‘immortal Water, Solid, and Air,’ illustrate this connection. These concepts can be further compared with the metaphysical significance of the various elements according to Indian doctrines, as discussed in J. Woodroffe, *The Garland of Letters*, cited in chapters XXX and XXXI.
- (29) G.R.S. Mead, *The Doctrine of the Subtle Body in Western Tradition*, London, 1919, p. 110 ff. ‘It (the spiritual body) was not a body within any order of subtle bodies... but rather the source of every possibility of embodiment, the seedbed from which all such bodies could be produced. The Christian and pagan Gnostics asserted that the resurrection body is a body of freedom, no longer bound by slavery. The great transformation wrought by the “resurrection” was fundamental; it liberated humanity from the constraints of “fate,” from the dominion of the “rulers.”’
- (30) Editor’s note: see J. Evola, *Fenomenologia dell’Individuo Assoluto*, Turin: Bocca, 1930, pp. 236-337; Rome: Edizioni Mediterranee, 1974, pp. 211-292.
- (31) Editor’s note: the reference likely pertains to the three-part essay that Evola later published under the title *Il problema di Oriente ed Occidente e la teoria della conoscenza secondo i Tantra*, in *Ultra* for May, July, and September 1925.
- (32) If power is understood as a means for the Self to attain the certainty it lacks, this understanding aligns fully with Weininger’s assertion that its pursuit, when derived from negative motivations, means to escape, slavery, fear, and a refuge from internal decay. Through this path, no one will ever achieve even a grain of true potency.
- (33) *Shvetashvarara Upanishad*, 1.6.

VI. Contemporary Demands for Magical Idealism

A recurring theme throughout these pages is the need to illustrate how the concept of magical idealism logically extends and integrates the most advanced positions achieved by modern Western thought. The objective now is to directly and specifically address this demand by examining a group of significant thinkers in contemporary culture. This will highlight the profound motives that inform their conceptions and ultimately demonstrate how, by optimally utilising these motives within their own frameworks—without compromising any of their existing components, but rather enhancing them towards a greater organic perfection—one can arrive at the assertions outlined in the previous discussion.

To fully grasp the concept of magical idealism, it is essential to understand how it can be logically inferred or interpreted through historical developments, influences, and philosophical arguments. If we view history as an entity in itself—imposing the inevitable constraints of certain elements that shape the present moment—then demonstrating the historical necessity of magical idealism would actually contradict the very essence of the doctrine. This occurs because the core principle of magical idealism is the idea of absolute and unconditional self-determination. Such self-determination cannot exist if there are external forces opposing the Self, or if there is something that exists independently from its will. However, this perspective changes significantly when we embrace the principle of the ideality of time—and consequently, of history. If time is not an independent entity, but rather a category as posited by Kant—essentially a way in which the Self organises the material of representation, which is neither strictly temporal nor atemporal, and which exists without a definitive ‘before’ or ‘after’—then the idea of being inevitably determined by the past dissipates. In this context, we recognise that the past exists only within the act of experience itself. This act should be understood as metatemporal, revealing that it is not the past that conditions or determines the present. Instead, the present defines a segment of my current experience. A past that exists independently—namely, a past that is not part of my actual experience—becomes gnoseologically absurd and non-existent. Consequently, one can conclude that history is merely a means through which the Self projects its internal, timeless desires onto the canvas of time, almost like a mythical representation. As the creator of history, the individual in the current moment perceives only the limitations of his own assertions. Thus, the ideality of time transforms history into a flexible faculty, inherently neutral towards freedom. History does not act as a tyrannical force that oppresses the individual; rather, it is a manageable entity that reflects and reaffirms what the individual has conceptually asserted in a timeless and metahistorical context. In this regard, history manifests as the very faculty of freedom, allowing individuals to reflect upon and demonstrate a posteriori (after the fact), within the temporal framework, the determinations made a priori (before the fact) at a timeless and metahistorical juncture. The ‘historical deduction’ is always a subsequent event, an ἐπιγίόμενον τι, with its necessity merely representing the phenomenon of freedom that unconditionally determines it.

Having established this, one can demonstrate the historical necessity of magical idealism without this assumption implying any contradiction. It arises as the synthesis of a dialectic, in which the thesis is the rationalism of romantic philosophy, which, exhausting itself in a conceptual world abstracted from reality and individuality, generated the antithesis of materialism and positivism (1). Through the integration of the thesis into its antithesis, the empty ideality gradually filled itself with concrete content. Thus, among the last representatives of the Hegelian left (Stirner, Nietzsche), the individual—previously viewed in abstract, theoretical terms—gained true, concrete significance in relation to a value that is absolute and not dependent on external conditions. As this principle of synthesis developed, it led to the concept of an individual affirmation so complete that, within the very framework of the real world—presented antithetically by the positive sciences—it had the ability to fully reconcile contradictions between the abstract and the concrete. In the rational or abstract world, this process of mediation had only been an empty, lifeless image—an abstract idea that lacked the vitality and substance of real, lived experience. Just as the rationalistic thesis culminated in an idealisation of the real, so from the synthesis of magical idealism was postulated a realisation of the ideal (which is then the true derealisation of the real); that is, a power of the

individual as real as the being and determination of nature studied from the antithetical perspective of science.

1. Carlo Michelstaedter

In the modern era, Carlo Michelstaedter stands out as a profoundly compelling figure who, with dazzling brilliance and an intense sense of life, embodies the individual's quest for absolute value and persuasion. By shattering most clearly all the compromises that a deficient Self employs to conceal its lifeless life (ἄβιος βίος), he has brought it to its ultimate conclusion, forcing it to confront what man fears most: the act of facing oneself, recognising one's true nature, and ultimately measuring oneself against a single point—the point of true value and being. We previously mentioned several positions that Michelstaedter presents with such intensity and a tragic quality that his work transcends the boundaries of abstract discourse. Central to his philosophy is the concept of 'persuasion,' understood as the absolute self-sufficiency of the Self, which he identifies as the true principle of individuality. For Michelstaedter, persuasion is fundamentally the negation of correlations: when the Self derives its stability from an 'other,' it becomes dependent on external factors and relationships. In such cases, rather than genuine persuasion, deficiency and the loss of value prevail. True value exists solely in its self-sufficiency; it does not seek external validation for its existence and power—this is what he calls autarchy. Life is shaped by various factors such as needs, emotions, social conventions, and intellectual pretenses. Additionally, the physical body and the natural system—viewed as a result of its endlessly recurring space-time development, driven by a persistent sense of deficiency as it seeks to obtain something beyond itself, which it can never fully acquire (2)—are also considered to be within the realm of non-value. The Self persuades itself of its existence inasmuch as it perceives it as continuous, that is, It remains outside the fullness of actual possession, deferring its persuasion to the next moment and thus becoming dependent on the latter. The Self escapes from itself in every present moment that is not fully realised but rather sought after and desired. However, this desired future can never truly be attained, as the future represents a state of deprivation—always just out of reach, like a shadow that accompanies the one who flees, maintaining a constant distance from the body of its reality. This, according to Michelstaedter, reflects the sense of everyday life and embodies a lack of true value—that which ought not to be. In contrast to the previous situation, the voice of persuasion calls for standing firm in one's identity and resisting any sense of deficiency with all of one's strength. It encourages not to yield to the idea that life is insufficient on its own, seeking fulfilment or validation from external circumstances or future moments. Instead of asking for something more, one should grasp the essence of existence firmly and not chase after it but rather choose to remain present (3). While deficiency 'accelerates the passage of time, creating a constant anxiety about the future and turning an empty present into anticipation for what comes next, the stability of an individual pre-occupies an infinite sense of time and effectively stops it. This firmness can appear dizzying to those who are caught up in the flow of the moment. For the stable individual, every moment is akin to a century in the lives of others—until he transform into a flame and becomes anchored in the ultimate present (4).' To identify such a transformative point, it is essential to understand the nature of the correlation within these premises. The world is seen as being generated by the direction of deficiency, which serves as a concrete embodiment of this concept. In this regard, the idealistic demand becomes not only satisfied but also deepened in meaning, as the genesis of reality—as in Buddhism—is connected to moments of value and directions of will. It is an illusion to believe that the point of persuasion can be achieved through an abstract, inner consistency in a value that, like in Stoicism, exists without intrinsic meaning. Those who seek persuasion must rise to a universal responsibility; the act of persuasion is, in essence, cosmic. I must not flee from my deficiency—that is, from the world—but instead, take it upon myself, adapt to its weight, and redeem it. Michelstaedter asserts, 'You cannot consider yourself persuaded as long as there is still something that is not persuaded,' referring to persuasion as the 'ultimate consciousness

of one who is one with things, who contains all things: ἐν συνεχές (5).’ The concrete point of persuasion, therefore, signifies a cosmic consummation.

To clarify the central problem posed by Michelstaedter, it may be beneficial to reconnect the concept of insufficiency to the Aristotelian idea of an imperfect act. An imperfect or impure act is one in which the powers do not achieve actuality independently (κάθ’ αὐτό) but require support from an external source. This is illustrated by the act of sensory perception, in which the capacity to perceive is insufficient on its own; it does not produce perception independently but rather depends on a correlation with the object. The fundamental point of Michelstaedter’s position is that the imperfect act does not resolve the deprivation of the Self; rather, it confirms it. For instance, consider the Self that is thirsty: as long as it drinks, it will continue to be thirsty because, in drinking, it affirms its condition as someone who is insufficient in one’s own life—someone who needs something ‘other’ to live. The Self does not exist in itself; it is constantly in pursuit of something external to fill that void. Water and other external sources are merely symbols of this deficiency. It is essential to emphasise this: one does not desire because there is a deprivation of being; rather, there is a deprivation of being because one desires. Furthermore, it is not that a desire, such as thirst, exists solely because certain things, like water, are available. Instead, the desired things, along with the privation of being that drives the desire for them, are equally created by the desire for the relative. Thus, desire is the prius that creates the correlation between privation and the relative object—thirst and water. As the Self feeds on its desires and seeks external sources for life, it only sustains its own deprivation and remains trapped within it, fleeing from the pure or perfect act—the eternal water of which Christ (6) speaks—in which every thirst, along with every other form of privation, would be completely overcome. This yearning, this obscure striving that drives the Self outward towards the ‘other,’ generates the system of finite and contingent reality. Persuasion, which is fueled by the realisation of absolute self-consistency and pure being-in-itself, signifies a consummation of the world.

We need to clarify the meaning of ‘consummation.’ Several implications arise from this idea that Michelstaedter did not fully explore. First and foremost, acknowledging that I must not flee from my deficiencies means that I must recognise myself as a creative force in the world. This leads to the justification of idealism, which asserts that the world is shaped by the Self, as a moral imperative. However, the world, as proposed, is viewed as a negation of value. From the overarching necessity to redeem the world and to identify with its inherent incompleteness, we derive a second point: this is not merely a theoretical observation but a morally imperative assertion. Therefore, the very negation of value must, in some way, be recognised as a value itself. This point is crucial. If I view the desire that generated the world as a brute fact, an irrational absolute, it becomes evident that persuasion, which is conceived as the negation of this desire, would depend on it. Consequently, persuasion would not be unconditionally self-sufficient; instead, it would owe its existence to an ‘other’ that allows itself to be negated, thus enabling persuasion to affirm itself. In this scenario—if the desire is not reintegrated within an order understood through the affirmation of value but remains merely an absolute fact—persuasion would not genuinely be persuasion at all. The initial mystery would inevitably condemn the perfection of persuasion to mere illusion. Therefore, as a moral postulate, we must acknowledge that the antithesis itself participates, in some manner, in value. But how does it do so? This question prompts a revitalisation of the concept of persuasion as a dynamic principle. It is clear that if persuasion does not focus on a pure, unrelated sufficiency—meaning a static state—but rather on sufficiency as the negation of insufficiency—meaning an active relation—the antithesis indeed possesses value and can be better understood. The Self must first recognise deprivation or non-value, but only on the condition that this recognition is seen as something to be negated. This act of negation, and this alone, reveals the value of persuasion. However, what does it mean to negate the antithesis, which here is synonymous with nature? It is essential to remember that for Michelstaedter, nature represents a non-value in that it embodies the Self’s inclination to shy away from fully embracing itself, correlating with an imperfect or impure act. Thus, it is not a matter of annihilating specific determinations, as this would merely address the effects rather than the transcendental root of non-

value; nor is it about destroying every action in general, since the antithesis is not action in the broad sense but rather action as a flight from oneself, characterised by 'seeking.' Not every action is necessarily of the same nature. Instead, we must address the passive, heteronomous, and extroverted modes of action. The negation of these modes is represented by sufficient action, or action grounded in power, as previously discussed. To live in such a way that one's actions are fully aligned with a state of complete self-mastery transforms all worldly determinations, allowing them to manifest solely as the embodiment of infinite power—the absolute Individual whose essence is power. This represents the essence of cosmic fulfilment. Just as the concept of 'rhetoric' illustrates the development of a world based on dependence and necessity, 'persuasion' reflects the evolution of the world of the autarch, a cosmic ruler. Therefore, the point of sheer negation serves as a neutral point (*laya*) between these two phases.

Michelstaedter's views evolved into what can be described as magical idealism, following a consistent logical progression. However, he remained fixated on an indeterminate negation. This fixation arose partly because he did not sufficiently recognise that the finite and the infinite are not specific objects or particular actions; instead, they represent distinct ways of experiencing or engaging with any object or action. In general, the true Lord does not need to negate (in the sense of obliterating) existence. By attempting to render life absolute, he risks exiling it into a state of motionless, undifferentiated unity or illumination. The creative act, which is an act of power—not rooted in desire or violence, but in the act of giving—does not destroy the achievement of perfect possession. Rather, it testifies to and reaffirms that possession. Michelstaedter, enraptured by the intense immediacy of his demand for absolute value, could not give it concrete form, yet managed to articulate it within his doctrine of power (7)—a pursuit that may be connected to the tragic end of his mortal existence.

[However, Michelstaedter argues, 'we should not focus on the external factors that determine human existence, but rather on how these factors influence individuals and the nature of that relationship' (Unpublished writings, Excerpt from no. 5 of 1922 in *La Ronda*, p. 17; cf. *La persuasione e la rettorica*, p. 32). He believes that beyond actions lies a form or value that shapes how experiences are perceived. In essence, the purely logical relationships are somewhat indeterminate, while value represents a higher dimension that gives them meaning. One of Michelstaedter's significant contributions is his reaffirmation of the importance of considering value within a metaphysical framework. In this context, 'rhetoric' and the 'path of persuasion' cannot be understood solely from a logical standpoint, as the 'going' of deficiency (8)—which he defines as the 'identical repetition of an identical situation'—essentially signifies immobility and permanence, but from the viewpoint of value. In this context, magical idealism highlights the fact that Michelstaedter acknowledges the existence of two paths, and this duality itself constitutes a value. The assertion of persuasion cannot simply be seen as a declaration of freedom or an infinite claim unless it inherently includes the awareness that it can equally affirm non-value as value. Only the Lord of Yes and No can embody true freedom and infinitude (see *Teoria dell'Individuo Assoluto*, L I, §. 1-5 [pp. 13-95 ed. 1927; pp. 31-76 ed. 1998]). Furthermore, Michelstaedter's critique of the juxtaposition between persuasion and non-persuasion presupposes a favourable stance towards the concept of 'persuasion.'

2. Otto Braun

In Michelstaedter, the moment of absolute affirmation of value predominates, which, almost folded in on itself due to its intense inner and overwhelming nature, somewhat renounces a concrete embodiment. In contrast, Otto Braun fundamentally emphasises the aspect of effective power, the transformation of value into an absolute force operating within the very heart of the antithesis of raw reality. The brief life of Braun, as revealed through fragments of a diary and letters, thus ascends—amid the conflict between reality and absolute will that has already overwhelmed and

shattered the noble lives of Rimbaud, Nietzsche, Weininger, and Michelstaedter himself—to the status of a symbol.

In Braun, the matter is not one of philosophy—especially when this is understood as a dry and abstract conceptual architecture; even a set of judgments of depth and clarity that is all the more extraordinary when one considers that they flowed from a callow youth fade into the background, together with the testimonies of an intense and exquisite feeling. What is fundamentally interesting in Braun, and what constitutes an early sign of a new era, is the grand display of a self-creating, titanic will, an unshakeable faith, and a demiurgic power through which value becomes life and absolute reality. ‘God—he says (9)—wants to become body and therefore needs man.’ This man who will realise God is the future man, the modern Hero. ‘Be a titan’; the gospel of will—such is the commandment to the eleven-year-old Braun.

Almost by a sure instinct, it became clear to him even as a child what the only true path for real progress in the history of the spirit was: hence he vigorously opposed, as if against ‘something criminal and even diabolical,’ the resurgence of religious sentiment, which prompts one to flee from one’s duty and, as a result, merely confirms one’s reluctance to confront reality by escaping into an imagined transcendence or clinging to old, outdated forms. Similarly, he was little concerned with fanciful mysticism and empty reflection: ‘We, in this day and age, no longer have either the right or the time to be mystics; we need people who immerse themselves in life and are powerful in action to bring forth something new, for something new is approaching; I can feel it’ (p. 31). A fundamental theme of his is the will to be fully of this earthly world (p. 39), not merely to accept it but to master and recreate it. He felt the need for an active, creative, and synthetic power through which the real would become entirely transparent with spiritual value; he sought this path unwaveringly, awakening, shaping, and forging all those energies that sprang from his adolescence, eagerly absorbing everything that nature and culture could offer him, only to then refashion it into that unique form and value he had set for himself. ‘To transform everything that comes my way, conforming it to my purpose: this, for me, is the essence of the freedom of the will’ (p. 148). He clearly understood the necessity of embracing various forces, for only then can the ideal (‘ought to be’) truly exist, allowing one to overcome the empty rigidity of Stoic thought. He established a principle that emphasises the importance of experiencing deep passions while maintaining self-control. The restraint or unleashing of these passions should depend on deliberate action, much like the operation of a lever. In this lies the key to understanding the coexistence, alongside the strict discipline of will, of a profound appreciation for the life of art and nature. He was aware that he had a deep, intuitive understanding and perception of the essence of things, as he sought to become conscious of the elemental level of that formative power, which served as the raw material of the future hero and which already resonated within him when, as a boy, he would launch into wild nighttime runs through the woods during a storm. However, Braun felt he absolutely had to mediate this primordial energy: he recognised the inevitable dispersion inherent in merely accumulating and multiplying experiences, and he subsumed the richness of that material into the closed form of individuality. ‘Be sufficient unto yourself’—the solitude of the Unique One as a condition of genius—extends even to a distrust of ‘passive activity,’ which stems from the enthusiasm of creation and inspiration that possesses us more than we possess it, to replace it with the pure form of will: a fully restrained and conscious production. Thus, when the European war broke out, he saw it as a means to discipline himself, gain mastery over himself, become virile, and rediscover within himself the fullness, power, and beauty necessary for the extraordinary existence to which he aspired. In the very arrangements of military service, he came to appreciate the symbol of that ‘discipline of the spirit, intimately inflamed with passion, yet externally rigid and tempered like steel, containing in magnificent sum the immensity of the infinite’ (p. 150). Moreover, he regarded his very adherence to the idea of homeland as provisional, as a mere step towards mastering a broader reality: ‘Only when the roots have firmly taken hold in the maternal soil and have absorbed the essence of the homeland with loving avidity can the crown expand further without harm.’ However, at times his youth and fervour certainly caused the means to transform into an end in

itself. In any case, the trial was fatal: a shell shattered his life on the fields of France before he had reached his twentieth year.

Therefore, it may be argued that with regard to that 'sign of a value' and that 'symbol' which Braun dreamed of embodying in a Carlylean sense, he could add very little to what he had already experienced, which can be gleaned from his notes and letters. As mentioned, the profound, essential value of Braun's figure emerges solely from a formal point of view: as a pure autoctisis of power and absolute will. However, when one examines what this power and will immediately signify in Braun's consciousness, one encounters some ambiguity. It is certain that the goal he cherished and aimed to dedicate a vast work to was the State: he contrasted the religious, the poet, and the sage with the hero, and for him, in contemporary times, the hero was synonymous with a statesman—though he emphasised that his conception of a statesman was fundamentally different from the current understanding of the term (p. 162). In any case, the specific type of State in which the essence of his hero was to be realised remains unclear: on one hand, Braun refers to a particular interpretation of socialism, while on the other, he alludes to Greek tyranny, as well as the Napoleonic and Nietzschean types of rulers, without clarifying how these two aspects can be reconciled. In any case, this is not the right path. When the will is directed towards the inward desire to possess its deepest transcendental essence, the illusion of dominion over other beings, as expressed in the social realm, becomes apparent. Before one can truly dominate others, one must first be able to dominate oneself, which entails possessing one's entire body—this body, six feet tall, in which, according to Buddha, 'the world, the origin of the world, the consummation of the world, and the path to the consummation of the world, is contained.' The Nietzschean ruler, susceptible to annihilation by a mere cerebral congestion, the brute force of a bullet, or the cut of a blade, is but a mock ruler. True dominance and experience come only from the perspective of a being fully realised in freedom, akin to the sambhogakaya in Mahayana Buddhism. From this state, it is possible to exert influence over not only the beings of one realm of existence but also the infinite beings that are part of the unified Self, recognised as expressions and realisations of its power and self-sufficiency.

Another and greater flaw, which became more pronounced in Braun in his later years, is the transcendence of value. He occasionally felt the titanic will in man subordinated to a higher obligation, leading him to humble the Self by subsuming it under a task or mission that he perceived as originating from a demonic force, a superior power: 'If I do not adapt to the will of the age, then the age must adapt to my will, and thus I become what I am! This is not the decree of titanic arbitrariness; rather, it is a devoted and humble obedience to that lofty demon, etc.' (p. 162). 'We are destined to serve the divinity' (p. 182). This, in truth, could lead down a very slippery slope. Nevertheless, he questioned whether 'the gods are merely symbols of our will and represent a sudden influx of vital energy at its maximum intensity into the physical world, so that the idea, in a certain manner, shapes the organism' (pp. 95–96), and further pondered: 'If the Titans had won, and if Christ were merely one of them?' (p. 103).

Braun, focused on the principle of actualised power, shifted the emphasis of the Self beyond its original centrality. As a result, he was unable to fully recognise himself within the absolute nature of this new perspective, which led to a sense of duty. Similarly, Michelstaedter's passion for achieving absolute consistency somewhat distanced him from the potential for effective action. If we understand the two positions as complementary to one another and combine the expression of power with the notions of persuasion and autonomy into an indivisible unity, then we provide a framework for understanding the principle of that synthesis which, along the path that magical idealism has taken from initiatory wisdom, may realise a new, unprecedented era in the history of the spirit.

3. Giovanni Gentile

Modern idealism can be understood as a profound desire for complete self-realisation. However, this realisation is not something the Self innately recognises within itself; rather, it learns about it

from external sources through the phenomena shaped within an abstractly rational framework. Giovanni Gentile exemplifies this synthesis clearly. His endeavour to encompass and control the entire world through an immanent principle reaches its peak; yet, this principle remains merely an ideal concept, reflecting the criticised notion of the 'transcendental Self.' It represents only a faint echo of the deep individual power illustrated by Michelstaedter. If Gentile could genuinely refer to the 'pure act' of his rationalism as the 'Self,' he would not merely be seen as a university professor limited to reforming school curricula (10). Instead, he would embody the cosmic centrality depicted in esoteric traditions, akin to figures such as the rishi, the yogin, Christ, and Buddha. This highlights the entire difference between 'actual idealism' and magical idealism. Now, since the purely rational can never justify itself, it can be demonstrated that Gentile's system is based on a crude fact, which, as such, contradicts its own principle: hence a crisis that cannot be resolved unless one transitions from the first idealism to the second.

Gentile's fundamental principle, derived from Hegel, asserts that a pure immediate being, a pure existence, is gnoseologically absurd; every being is constituted through an act that posits it for the Self. The priority of the category of the act over any content of experience is thus emphasised. Such an act is naturally that of the gnoseological subject, the impersonal thinking Self. Now, a thinking subject implies a thought object. However, complications arise in defining the thought object, as a distinction is made between a 'logic of the thought object'—which operates under its own laws relative to 'nature'—and the 'dialectic of the thinking subject,' which pertains to the concrete and actual process of thinking and knowing. If nothing exists except as mediated, the 'thought object' cannot exist independently of the logic that frames it, which in turn cannot be conceived apart from the concrete process of thinking and thus the actuality of the thinking subject himself. The distinction between the logic of the thought object (or 'abstract logos') and the process of the thinking subject (or 'concrete logos') is difficult to establish. In reality, the laws that govern the thought object merely reflect specific formations arising from the concrete process of thought. Simply stating that the abstract logos is the abstract understanding of the concrete logos does not resolve the issue (11), as it raises the question of how such abstract thought is conceivable when it vanishes into nothingness if not actively thought; once it is thought, it loses its abstract nature and becomes part of the concrete reality of thought—the concrete logos. The concepts of 'thought object' and 'fact' (12) thus suffer from the same contradiction as Kant's noumenon and resolve themselves in the concept of determination in general within the thinking subject. The situation is as follows: on one hand, the thinking subject or 'pure act' remains the unique category capable of encompassing every phenomenon; on the other hand, it is necessary to strive to derive from it a principle of determination that effectively accounts for the multiplicity and diversity of the phenomena it seeks to encompass. To this end, Gentile turns to the consideration of the 'dialectic of the concrete logos.' Thinking—he asserts—as self-positing, involves distinguishing oneself, that is, extinguishing in an object or non-Self the abstract, punctual identity of the Self (i.e., determining oneself). Subsequently, in recognising oneself within this determination or object, one mediates oneself, existing as a Self, as self-consciousness. But recognition, by restoring the immediate, punctual identity, triggers an endless series of reflections, understandings, or interpretations. The internal distancing within self-synthesis—the self-positing of the Self as such—might account for the genesis of determination; however, this process fails to fully clarify itself. Gentile does not ground this explanation in a coherent, self-sustaining framework, as the Self generally distances itself from an 'other' without perfectly reflecting it (this stands in contrast, for example, to Athanasius' conception of the divine Trinity, in which each aspect mirrors the others in unified harmony) (13). In other words, Gentile offers a straightforward exposition rather than a transcendental deduction of becoming. However, his exposition lacks clarity and depth, making the concept of becoming ambiguous. It is reduced to mere existence, devoid of the substantial and justified form of being. Consequently, the necessity associated with it can only emerge from empirical suggestions. This leads to a problem of value that extends beyond Logic, which Gentile entirely overlooks. Since the concept of the Aristotelian God, realised in the eternal identity of His act, or that of the unmanifested Shakti in Tantra, does not present any inherent inconceivability, we

must question why the spirit must become (or is becoming). If one argues that a spirit that does not objectify itself and does not become would not constitute self-consciousness or spirit, but rather nature, it can be countered that even if this argument were more than a mere *petitio principii*, nature would instead represent a spirit that, being eternally compelled to objectify itself and become, is no different from a plant that can only grow. Now, every 'nature' presupposes, in its essential determinateness, a law that defines it as that particular nature and not another; yet every law implies a legislator who, as such, cannot himself be subject to a law. or Gentile, confined to the framework of abstract reflection, the dimension of the legislator cannot have any meaning. He believes that problems can be resolved by shifting focus from the 'metaphysics of being' to the 'metaphysics of knowing.' He assumes that a particular aspect of experience becomes clearer when referred to as a 'thought object' rather than as 'substance.' In doing so, he appeals to becoming as an essential and inescapable aspect of the process of thinking, failing to realise that in doing so, he raises a thousand questions only to replace them with one that is a thousand times bigger. It should be noted that the objection presupposes an 'abstract' point of view, which, by treating the act as an object, precludes the possibility of understanding it. It can be countered that such a stance, dear to Gentile, is without value, as it gratuitously assumes as an explanatory principle that which the opponent viewpoint considers to be problematic. Furthermore, when the Self becomes too entangled with its actions in an uncontrolled or irrational way, not only do the initial issues remain unaddressed but they are effectively ignored; instead, by swallowing the darkness, one deludes oneself into thinking it has been dissolved. The concept of 'actual consciousness' is understood as a form that encompasses every phenomenon. Adhering completely to this concept means, as we will argue, embracing the world itself, allowing oneself to be lived by it, and ultimately leading to a kind of passive mysticism that closely identifies with an absolute, stupefied phenomenalism. Conversely, Gentile could indeed recognise the presented objection based on his own principles, as it is considered 'abstract' (and an objection, by nature, will always be seen as a priori 'abstract' by the actualist, since it does not align with his doctrine). In response to this objection, taken as an antithesis, he could create a 'concrete' new synthesis. However, this is precisely the critical point: if the actualist were to do this truly, he would be compelled to transcend the realm of the rational and affirm the principle of the arbitrary. This can be clarified as follows: for someone who is deeply rooted in the creative core of his own being, an act may feel like an expression of unconditional freedom. In contrast, for those who remain on the surface level of discourse, this same act can seem like a logical necessity or an unavoidable obligation, represented as a *Sollen* or as a compelling force behind duty and law. When experienced from an external perspective—passively—arbitrary affirmation may appear as a truth or logical coherence, presenting itself as undeniable certainty, as an apodicticity.

Accordingly, Gentile understands the formula $\text{Self} = \text{non-Self}$, in which he synthesises the process of concrete logos, as 'the ultimate and unconditional condition of every thought' (p. 68), without realising that a condition can never be unconditional. Either the Self is truly *norma sui*, meaning that every law can only be contingent. In this case, the 'unconditionally imperative character of the law of concrete logos' (p. 78) becomes an empty sound (14). Alternatively, there exists a limit or law that is indifferent to the power of the Self, which serves as the foundation for its existence. This concept is similar to the *Anstoss* (opposition) in Fichte's philosophy and is clearly indicated by the inability to be or think otherwise—even if this cannot be adequately confirmed in terms of knowledge. If this is the case, it is just as reasonable to recognise oneself as a creature and turn to religion, as one idol is no better than another. It is not valid to argue, as Rickert (15) does, that the negation of the law's imperativity would be a specific instance of this—meaning that it is willed as long as it is recognised as worthy of choice in contrast to the alternative of adhering to the law (p. 79). This objection presupposes what is at stake, namely, that a real negation cannot exist and that it is not possible to reaffirm oneself beyond the factitious framework of the general law of the *Sollen*. The way of living the act in accordance with the *Sollen* represents an ultimate instance of this issue. Furthermore, this difficulty re-emerges from another angle, specifically concerning the problem of how the philosophy of the act itself can be generally conceived. Because, of the two options, one is that either the Self is entirely interpenetrated with its activity, in which case it lacks the perspective

to view it as a whole and discern its general law; instead, lost in the activity, it can only grasp the unpredictable, uncoercible contingency of the moment. Alternatively, the Self, almost detaching itself from itself, can know this law, but in doing so, it concedes the contingency of that law, as it becomes a 'thought object'—a distinct entity—and therefore remains internally surpassed by the principle that makes such a distinction possible. Keep in mind that this surpassing, by hypothesis, has nothing to do with the surpassings internal to the law itself and accounted for by it. Gentile has recognised the difficulty and, having discarded the second option, attempts to rely on the first, asserting that if he acknowledges his doctrine presents not the thinking subject in itself but rather a concept of the thinking subject—and thus not the thinking subject, but a thought object—he concedes the relativity and 'abstractness' of such a 'concept of the self-concept' (that is, of his entire philosophy). He is prepared to abandon it to the relentless becoming of dialecticism (p. 148), understanding his own logic as merely a stage, abstract like all others (pp. 320-322). However, this counterargument is flawed: relativity and the spirit's submission to becoming are intrinsically tied to Gentile's concept of the self-concept, that 'thought object' in which he—here and now—conceives and allows the 'thinking subject' to perish. This relativity embodies the hypocrisy of exclusivity and dogmatism; this supposed stepping outside of oneself, this sacrifice, merely results in stagnation within the closed circle of momentary contingency, as its cause lies outside of itself. If the solution must be real and the vicious circle is to be broken, then the transition must not occur from one concept to another, or from one 'thought object' to another, but rather from the entire dimension of logical-discursive consciousness to a higher or deeper dimension of absolute freedom. It is essential to move beyond the creaturely notion of the identity of freedom and law, the *vis a tergo* of the Sollen, and to understand oneself in relation to that unconditional principle for which the act itself is merely a fact, and which truly stands in a similar relationship to the principle of Gentile's philosophy as the spiritual principle does to the demiurgic principle in Gnostic thought. This situation is highly significant: from the rational itself arises the need for its own overcoming. Discursive consciousness compels the Self to transcend it if it wishes to penetrate the depths of that thought which resolves the world into an immanent principle. As Abbagnano (16) astutely observes, true thought—thinking thought—can never become an object of itself; it can never be thought. What else does this imply if not that it lies beyond the realm of the rational? Thus, the attempt to capture all aspects of reality and life within the realm of thought has ultimately resulted in a sense of emptiness (17): the very act of affirming the supreme power of thought inherently implies its transcendence into the nonrational. However, a new question arises here: what is the meaning of this nonrational? That is: what is the relation between the Self and this nonrational? This point is important because it defines the position of magical idealism in relation to irrationalism. When the nonrational (to which the foundation of rational law, of logical Sollen, must therefore be referred back: all rationality would be the effect of a deep nonrational but arbitrary affirmation) is perceived by the Self as a blind and uncoercible power, which it can in no way direct and dominate and of which it feels like an accident lost in an indefinite unpredictable becoming, it must indeed be considered that the transition beyond the rational is not yet entirely accomplished, that the Self still looks at the *ἄλογον* from the outside, that it does not penetrate and possess itself at the centre the original and unconditioned principle of creation. The irrationalism that proceeds from such a situation is that of Schopenhauer, Bergson, Le Roy (18), Abbagnano, etc. and merges with a sort of vivified empiricism; it marks the moment of transition in which the Self has already detached itself from the illusory fascination with pure logic and turned towards the profound power from which logic arises. However, it has not yet fully engaged with this power and therefore experiences it only passively. For one who has absolutely possessed himself in it, the *ἄλογον* indicates only the unconditionality of his will, autarchy. Thus, beyond the realm of abstract intellect, we find a divide between two types of individuals: one who lives his life as a lord and dominator, and another who perceives himself merely as a demonic force of a nature that is passive in relation to itself, relying on an external reason for its existence (this reason is not understood in the rationalistic sense but rather in the Greek sense as interpreted by Michelstaedter, which relates to the concept of spontaneity). Ultimately, there remains a profound abyss between these two experiences (19). It is

clear that the overcoming of rationality, when associated with the impulse towards persuasion—which in rationalism manifested as the will to dominate every reality through thought—only occurs at the point of life lived in accordance with autarchy. It is here that the principle is restored, which can justify the logical. Consequently, it must be understood that magical idealism represents this additional dimension in which the tenets of Gentile's philosophy are integrated.

Given this, let us definitively establish what, in the final analysis, is the inherent value of modern idealism from Kant to Royce, Weber, and Gentile. The fundamental principle is that spontaneity and freedom are two different concepts; one thing is the activity of which one simply has the principle within oneself (as is, according to the well-known Aristotelian definition, spontaneity), and another is the activity of which the Self not only has the principle within itself but also possesses it. In spontaneity, the possible is identical to the real in the sense that the act takes the form of an absolute self-boundedness, an inconvertible compulsion, a brute occurrence; in short, the principle is passive with respect to itself. In freedom, however, the possible is not identical to the real; a point of autarchy, of real possibility (not of *δύναμις*, but of *potestas*), governs the act as the ultimate reason for its being or not being, for its being this way or otherwise. Thus, the real is said to be contingent on the possible—not due to deprivation but to the perfection and possession of the principle of actuality. Regarding the distinction: one thing is not being subject to external conditions (i.e., not being coerced, the negative freedom inherent in spontaneity, as seen in Spinoza's flawed *causa sui* [*post hoc ergo propter hoc*]); another is not being subject to conditions at all, which is to be positively free; positive freedom entails the absence of even internal determinations and the arbitrariness (non-inconvertibility) of the act. A being is a Self insofar as, and to the extent that, it is freedom, not spontaneity.

Once this is understood, when the idealist, in response to any contingency of experience—such as, for example, an ocean—claims that he has posited it, it is evident that he is referring not to freedom but to spontaneity. Indeed, he refers to mere representation, to that elementary assent (*συγκατάθεσις*) by which, in general, one becomes aware of things. This assent, while a necessary condition for any reality as such, is far from being a sufficient condition for the Self. In representation, there is no subordination of reality to possibility; the Self is passive in relation to its own act—it does not so much affirm things as the things affirm themselves within it. Like passion or emotion, representation is indeed something belonging to the Self, something intimate that it draws from within itself (and the legitimacy of the idealist position, fully satisfied since Leibniz can only go so far), but it is not identical with the Self. The Self cannot say that it gives it to itself freely because it does not fully control or possess the representations it perceives. Consequently, the idealistic reduction of nature to a position of the Self is successful only to the extent that the Self itself is reduced to nature—meaning, when nothing is known—or rather, when it is as though nothing is known—of that Self, which is freedom. In doing so, an evident paralogism is committed: the concept of the Self is conflated with that of the principle of spontaneity, which is, in fact, the concept of nature. Hence, the true meaning of the idealist statement 'The Self posits the non-Self' is, in reality, 'Nature posits itself,' or more simply, 'A world is (ist da).'

The key to this doctrine is thus Spinozism. When Spinozism is freed from dogma, it leads to phenomenalism, which is evident in the history of idealism. In Kant's philosophy, the shift from the individual Self to the impersonal 'Ich denke' (I think) and then to 'Bewusstsein in allgemein' (general consciousness) represents the first step towards the dissolution of freedom. However, a trace of interiority remains due to the tension between the limitations of the thing-in-itself and the process of a priori synthesis. The progress of the theory of immanence concerning this dualism is also that of the détente of individual affirmation. Fichte's Self does not absorb the non-Self (the Kantian thing-in-itself) except by becoming the abstract Ich-heit, which disperses itself in the realm of the preconscious (Vorbewusst). The Hegelian Idea does not reassert the logical principle over that set of concrete determinations that the monochromatic 'philosophy of identity' of Schelling left outside of itself, unless it admits within itself the ἕτερον, the 'other,' becoming dialectical and acknowledging as rational and free those contingent determinations of things that, while simply given and in conflict with the Self, should justly be deemed only irrational (in the Greek sense of

the term). Finally, with the ruin of the ‘philosophy of nature’ and the heterological concept of *Ohnmacht der Natur* on one side and, on the other side, the decline of the ideal of a priori knowledge within the realm of positive sciences (characterised by the reduction of geometry and mechanics from deductive a priori sciences to experimental sciences—which invalidates the presupposition of Kantian critique)—we witness the final collapse of the individual into the irrational becoming of phenomena, which coincides completely, without residue or further mediation, with self-consciousness itself. The Self does not take on the form that (gnoseologically) governs the contingency of phenomena—the Schlegelian ‘Chaos ausserhalb des Systems’—which, like the actual consciousness of Gentile’s philosophy, manifests as an absolute adherence to the act of spontaneity through which things become and assert themselves within the Self.

However, as has been stated, this occurs through a kind of passive mysticism that concretely identifies with an absolute, stupefied phenomenalism. It has already been noted in the second essay that beyond the identification of reality and will (possibility), the question remains whether will is the criterion of reality or whether reality is the criterion of will. In other words, can what occurs be considered as real because it is willed (and thus real only to the extent that it can be considered willed, while remaining unreal in other respects as a correlate of the deprivation of will), or is it considered willed because it is real, that is, simply due to the irrational fact of its existence (*Dasein*) and its brute τὸ ὄντι? It has been demonstrated that only the latter alternative is suitable for actualism, as it does not elevate itself to a doctrine of power or idealism. The being posited as a matter of principle is posited in this manner only because it is found to be true in reality: the *müssen* [absolute duty] is the truth and the foundation of its *Sollen* (20). Similarly, since a large part of the occurrences in experience cannot be traced back to a principle of conscious deliberation or intentional predetermination by the real Self (and this can be demonstrated to the idealist at any moment, provided he does not deliberately deceive himself) (21), one must abstract from that subjective activity by which things are posited the characteristics of purposefulness and conscious predetermination—unless one prefers to transition (as Hartmann’s logic leads us to from the premises of transcendental philosophy) to a philosophy of the unconscious. Finally, since it is not even possible to construct a logical-ontological framework a posteriori for such a vast complex of phenomena (the pen of Professor Krug is still awaiting deduction) (22), the logic inherent in this cosmological function of the Self must be reduced to a minimum, to an abstract generality, to a universal void that is equally adequate to the specificity of infinite distinctions. This corresponds precisely to the nature of the logic of Gentilian pure act, which is so broadly applicable that it pertains to nothing in particular; it is a bag that can contain all things equally well (23). From a logical perspective, there exists an empty indeterminacy; yet, on a material level, we encounter characteristics such as irrationality, unintentionality, absence of finality, passivity, and pure spontaneity, which manifest and consume themselves entirely in the various ‘here and now’—these are the characteristics that define the function which the doctrine of immanence recognises as its ultimate affirmation, provided that one has the courage to think it through.

In Spinoza, the blind spontaneity of that which can only be what it is—of that which is passive in relation to its own nature, reducing the Self to a vain and incomprehensible shadow—was understood as God. In Gentile, this God comes to know itself in its truth, explicitly becoming nature, the uncontrollable madness of phenomena. Consequently, the corresponding doctrine, beyond all logical apparatus, aligns itself with Bergson’s. In both systems, the individual does not hold firm but yields; he does not master things, but rather loses and dissolves himself in a drunken coalescence that degrades him to a demonic principle. Such is the path of corruption, the ironic outcome of the immanentist stance.

In conclusion: it has been said that mere representational activity is a necessary but not sufficient condition for things to be real, as these things are referred back to a Self. I may claim to have posited things, but I do so insofar as I am spontaneity, not insofar as I am a Self, which is to say, as freedom. To say that I, as a Self or as a self-sufficient principle (αὐτάρκης), cannot recognise myself as the unconditional cause of representations (i.e., of nature) does not imply that these representations are caused by something ‘other,’ such as real things or things that exist

independently of perception. It simply means that I am insufficient for a part of my activity, which still belongs to spontaneity—that this part has not yet been MORALISED, and that the Self, as freedom, suffers a PRIVATION within it. Hence, as has been stated, a fin de non recevoir must be invoked against realism. When, then, can the principle of idealism—that the Self posits things—truly be affirmed? When the individual has transformed the dark passion of the world into a body of freedom, that is, when he has shifted the form in which he experiences representational activity from spontaneity—a mere coincidence of reality and possibility—to unconditional, arbitrary causality—to power. Faced with this task, the idealist flees: instead of the real or magical act—the act that, by possessing them, nullifies things—he substitutes a discursive act that acknowledges them and leans on them for support. He refers to his nonbeing as ‘being’ and labels as ‘real’ what should rightly be considered unreal since it is a deprivation of his power. In doing this, he acknowledges and even flatters this deprivation, incestuously feeding into it. Unable to grasp the essence of the Self, he relinquishes his identity and dissolves into external things. Terms like ‘rationality,’ ‘historicity,’ ‘concrete freedom,’ and the ‘transcendental Self’ are merely labels for this escapism, symbols of his impotence. These concepts are forcefully attributed to what, in relation to the essence of the Self and morality (in the sense defined by Weininger and Michelstaedter), lacks value: death and darkness—nature itself.

4. Octave Hamelin (24)

Gentile’s system presents, in a discursive context, the generic function by which the world would be recaptured within the immanent rational principle; on the other hand, it has been shown how his conception, when thoroughly examined, postulates the Self as a metarational principle of absolute, arbitrary freedom. It has also been noted that this function (the ‘pure act’) in Gentile remains somewhat empty and indistinct in itself, a night, compared to which that which Hegel saw in Schelling’s Absolute—‘in which all the cows are black’—becomes midday light and this is not because it abolishes the distinction, but because it is a uniform and indifferent distinction, equally adequate to the specificity of the infinite distinctions it recaptures, as in a sack. The task thus arises to integrate contemporary idealism, primarily by adapting it according to a structured body of values and meanings to the concrete distinctions of experience and, secondly, by reaffirming within it the principle of absolute freedom. This leads to the consideration of the philosophy of one of the most powerful thinkers of our time, yet so little known in Italy, Octave Hamelin, whose tragic fate, like that of Braun and Michelstaedter, befell him while he was still in the prime of his years. The fundamental principle of Hamelin is relationship: there is nothing intelligible except in relation to something that is distinct from it. To understand is to distinguish. However, the relationship is understood in a wholly immanent and activistic way, meaning that it is not as if there were already distinct elements that allow thought to think; rather, the distinction—and thus the distinct—arises from the very energy of thinking or understanding. The very effort to comprehend a given element generates, in opposition to it, a distinct—one that did not exist prior to this act—that defines it and, by establishing a relationship with it, renders it intelligible. Thus, the essence of understanding lies in the relationship between two distinct elements. This relationship, driven by the need for deeper comprehension, may either incorporate or oppose a new, distinct element. This process leads to further integration and clarification, resulting in a higher synthesis, and continues in this manner. The originality of such a principle and its difference from that of Hegelian dialectics (which is a ‘dialectic of contradictions,’ not of ‘contraries’) reside in the synthetic and positively constructive nature of the process it defines: the antithesis does not deny or exclude the thesis; rather, it adjusts and adds to it, integrating it. Hamelin does not comprehend the concept of the supreme being in the Platonic and Hegelian sense as a universal principle that is realised through the subsequent negation of the particular. In this context, the particular, due to its specific nature, acts as a negation with respect to the universal, as expressed in the idea that *omnis determinatio negatio est*. Instead, Hamelin understands the supreme being in an Aristotelian sense as the individual, which is realised through the development of an elementary and indeterminate being according to ever-increasing

and original degrees of perfection, determination, and actuality (25). In accordance with the Hamelinian principle of distinctness, the concept of the universal, which was once seen by rationalists (and since all rationalism is inherently a form of Platonism) as the ultimate goal, is now considered the starting point—the most fundamental level of reality. This reality undergoes a synthetic development, progressing from the simplest to the most complex and from the lesser to the greater, ultimately seeking to realise itself in the individual, in whom it reaches its fullest expression. Based on this principle, Hamelin constructs an ideal history of the world that, while as imaginative as the bold cosmogonies of romantic philosophy, never loses touch with concrete experience and the findings of positive sciences; instead, it strengthens and clarifies them. From the necessity of being to understand itself ever more deeply through the principle of relation, the foundational reason for the various elements of representation or categories emerges. Thus, the indeterminate relationship of being and nonbeing develops into number and time, the latter into space and movement, leading to the distinctive characteristics of entities and the transformations that entities undergo over time; the process of alteration ultimately progresses and integrates into increased specificity, causality, and finality, culminating in the supreme synthesis of freedom, a self-aware and self-possessed personality. Only in the personality, understood as the centre of absolute freedom and an unconditional act, does being manage to grasp and possess itself. This concept refers to the being-for-itself: the complete reflection of a person who, in a certain way, detaches from being and, in opposition to necessity—which is the law of being itself—affirms freedom. For Hamelin, this juncture represents the logical culmination of the universal process.

It is important to note, in order to preempt a justified objection, that Hamelin explicitly rejects the notion of a cosmic thought or an impersonal ‘I think’ that unfolds automatically according to laws that would be as unintelligible as matter itself in their raw given-ness (p. 452). The ‘relationship’ is, for him, immanent to the conscious and free centre and should not be substantialised into a separate entity or law: even the categories logically prior to personality must be considered as consciousness, in more or less distinct degrees. Thus, against Hegel, the priority of freedom over the various constructed categories is reaffirmed: these certainly constitute the body of spirit, yet a body that is completely manageable and agile, a body with which the Self interpenetrates but of which, as freedom, it also controls the entire process and interconnectedness of these categories (p. 450). However, Hamelin does not carry this assertion to its ultimate consequences. Spirit—he says—initially constructs being in accordance with determinism, since according to the general principle of the distinct, only in the face of complete being, constrained by the bonds of necessity, can it understand itself as freedom or contingency. Freedom would thus be conditioned by determinism; if not by a transcending principle, at least by a correlative or elementary degree. The question remains: Is freedom, even if materially conditioned by determinism, also the condition of this condition, the ideal prius that generates it with a view to its own realisation? That is: what comes first, freedom or the law of distinction? Is freedom a category, albeit the supreme one, of the process, or is it that which contains and from which the entire process draws life? Or, finally: Does spirit construct its own freedom (understood as the ultimate term of the development of the categories) freely or per necessity?

It is clear that when (as in various moments Hamelin seems to be led to think, cf., for example, p. 382) the arbitrariness is not recognised as distinct from the entire process and as the foundation from which the entire dialectical structure derives its substance, there is no way to truly exercise the rationalistic spectre of a pure reason without a subject, from which, at a certain moment, the Self and freedom would somehow emerge—though how this occurs remains unknown. To clarify, let us make this point clear: a freedom that is generated necessarily, a freedom that exists only under specific conditions is, in fact, an irony of freedom. Such produced freedom cannot genuinely be considered true freedom if its creation is dictated by an overarching and unconditional law, like the one in Fichte’s *Sittenlehre*, which is based on the imperative: one thus encounters a problem (which has already appeared in the philosophy of the shakti-tantra with the requirement to reconcile, in an absolute unity—Brahman—the immobile consciousness—Shiva or Chit—and the dynamic power—Shakti; and in *Mahāyāna* with the doctrine that *samsārā* = becoming and *nirvāna* are but

two coexisting faces of a single reality, which is *shūnyatā* = ‘emptiness’) that lies at the heart of magical idealism, to which the latter has introduced the concept of autarchy as an interval, a concept akin to the Hamelinian relationship, insofar it is understood or experienced as the very expression of freedom and possession.

Finally, one last deduction remains to be made. Hamelin, in considering the free act of the person, understood as unconditional choice, posits the perfection of being; he clearly sees that the criterion for the reality of things consists in their being willed by the Self, which is solely the free act of the Self that makes them properly real (and in this transition, in accordance with his principle, he rightly perceives not a leap but a continuous passage from a lesser potency to a more intense one of being) (pp. 401-402). But then the principle of his morality: ‘fully will your will’ also implies: ‘bring the world into existence in its utmost reality’, and, in his view, this act equates to freedom: ‘bring the world into being by transcending its necessity through freedom, thereby transforming yourself into a being of power (26).’ Such would be the logical conclusion of the system, which would then fully agree with the principle: ‘Do not allow your deficiency, your lack of freedom to define who you are,’ as enunciated by Michelstaedter and as developed in what precedes. But this inference escapes Hamelin, or rather he recoils from it. As he remains anchored to the real centre of the person, he avoids seeking the escape route provided by Royce and Gentile who define as ‘my will’ that which pertains to the irrational and necessary nature of things and which is, in fact, an intruder upon my true will, with which it cannot and should not identify; on the other hand, by recognising the deficiency of concrete will in relation to the world, he leaves the question open and hints—albeit with many reservations and showing himself to be the first to realise how unsatisfactory such a solution is—at theism (pp. 456-457). Had he instead held firmly to the imperative of his morality: ‘fully will your pure will’—then he would have understood that mere personality is not the final point, and that beyond it, other categories must be constructed, relating to the consummation of the being in the world of freedom or its realisation—in other words, to the construction of the magical Self. Since he acknowledges that the emergence of freedom involves the coexistence and integration of distinct elements, which in turn leads to the exclusion of contradictions, he can understand that the principle of this next phase must be negation. Through negation—beyond the *opus conditionis* established by the dialectic of the distinct per necessity—the affirmation of the Self as a ‘cosmic body’ or ‘body of freedom’ and ‘power’ would be realised. The issue is that Hamelin merely posits the antithesis of determinism or nature against the pure principle of freedom without attempting to mediate it, that is, to make it entirely sufficient and coextensive with its antithesis; thus, the final phase of his dialectic is, in truth, only the first of further development (27), which is that explored by the methodology of the magical; only within this framework is it possible to understand the point at which being, possessing itself entirely as an absolute Individual, logically consummates universal becoming.

5. Hermann Keyserling

The tendencies, elicited by Hermann Keyserling, which in Germany gave rise to the so-called ‘School of Wisdom,’ are interesting because they aim to transfigure the intellectual synthesis itself into the metarational principle of freedom. This shifts the centre of the Self away from the *vis a tergo* of rational imperatives and necessity in general, without abolishing the realm of concrete experience.

The key to Keyserling’s views is the phenomenon of understanding. Consider the moment when the Self says to itself, ‘I have understood.’ This is essentially a point of spontaneity, freedom, and interiority: there is no way to force someone into understanding. On the other hand, it has a mystical and illuminating quality. If one seeks to experience the moment of ‘meaning’—not a specific meaning, but the concept of meaning itself, the pure essence of understanding that underlies all comprehension—one will sense that something ineffable shines from it. This element, while encompassing and supporting the understanding, transcends all the means and forms from which it has originated. This mystic moment of pure understanding is the moment of spirit. Certainly, a

meaning exists only in connection with a certain form or nature that expresses it (28)—but the reverse is also true, namely that the act of being understood and internalised is always the condition for anything to have existence for the Self (p. 60). Therefore, the synthetic function of understanding is, as a matter of principle, the absolute prior, the foundation, or a priori of all our experience, though varying in degrees. Since it is unreasonable to claim that meaning exists in objects independently of the Self (nothing has inherent meaning, but everything can acquire it, p. 188) and understanding is always inherently linked to spontaneity and interiority, it becomes evident that Keyserling is defining a function that reaffirms the principle of a free and creative Self throughout the entire spectrum of human experience. Since—and herein lies Keyserling's advance, as anticipated by Novalis, on Kant's concept of 'a priori synthesis,' which, as everyone knows, is preconscious (*vorbewusst*), impersonal, and abstractly intellectual—here, understanding is regarded as an unconditional and immanent power of the real Self; it is not a concept but an actual element of interiority. It follows that the entire world takes on the character of an expressive medium, a symbolic material that the Self must invest, animate, and almost recreate through the act of its understanding.

Thus, the distinction between nature and spirit reduces to the difference between an abstract expressive medium and an expressive medium entirely resolved in the actuality of a meaning (p. 43). Matter, necessity would be nothing but the deprivation (*στέρηση*) of meaning, the brute 'letter' opaque to itself. However, even when reduced to this form, such a distinction must be explained. The essence of meaning, in its deep subjectivity and in principle, is absolute freedom but in expressing itself, it inevitably crystallises into a given inconvertible body and leads to the reduction to necessity of (that is, into an automatic course) that unconditional principle in which it enjoys itself—like in a kind of sudden, illuminating insight—within the pure moment of self-determination, of the creative conception suspended between the 'not yet' of the possible and the form in which the possibility itself is now affirmed (pp. 102, 114, 371). The abstract medium of expression, which is nature and necessity, consists solely of past processes of self-expression that have been exhausted and continue through mechanical repetition (pp. 350-351). However, the spirit rises from these processes by conceiving itself according to a deeper meaning, which it then expresses and embodies by utilising that very matter in which its previous freedom has coagulated and become automatic. This process advances towards a meaning or an interiority that is continually deeper, corresponding to an increasingly rich, organic, and articulated body of expression. From this emerges the idea that various natural or historical laws are merely grammatical and syntactical rules, which those who dwell on the profound plane of meaning need not negate but rather master internally, much like an artist skilfully controls the material in which he brings his creation to life.

This leads to the problem of the 'human type.' According to Keyserling (p. 358), it should not be relegated to art, religion, or philosophy. Artists are, typically, mediums; that greatness which speaks in or through them almost never coincides with their conscious person. Religion should be excluded because, at its core, it involves a principle of authority and dogmatism on one side, along with dependence and passivity on the other. This dynamic is incompatible with the nature of autonomous, individual affirmation that is associated with the concept of 'meaning.' Even less can one refer to the thinker who remains entrenched in a world of abstract concepts, foreign to reality and disconnected from the depth of his own creative Self. Instead, it is worth referring to the ancient concept of Wisdom when understood as a synthesis of life and knowledge within the individual unity of the creator. What is essential is that the Self does not become a slave to abstract knowledge but produces it internally as living reality; that one no longer survives in an ideality that an abyss separates from concrete reality, but realises oneself in the world and expresses oneself in it, fully embodying all that one conceives in the profound realm of meaning. Thus, the type of the Wise Man also becomes that of the Lord, and this is evidently not in relation to a brute power but in relation to the principle that is internally superior to the totality of life, commanding and shaping it from the height of the power of freedom (p. 364). The deeper the plane in which understanding is

realised, the more perfectly and completely the Self controls and commands the entirety of various forces (natural, social, etc.) that it re-appropriates as the material of its 'language.'

From this development, it is clear that Keyserling speaks of 'meaning' and 'understanding' in a rather metaphorical way to suggest a certain function, which he then reaffirms in the whole of all the concrete powers of internal and external experience.

Evidently, in the doctrine of 'meaning,' the problem of knowledge is closely connected to the problem of power, which is resolved by Keyserling through the theory of levels of consciousness. The premise, which has been previously mentioned and is characteristic of idealism, is that every objective depends on a subjective, that things are as we are or, better, as we posit ourselves. To want to seek control over the world from the outside, acting in the realm of the masses and physical determinisms, is an impossible and contradictory assumption (p. 385). However, matters change significantly when the Self directs its action into the profound realm of transcendental causes—into the sphere of 'meaning,' the incorporeal essence that conditions the corporeal and remains unconditioned by anything. Human freedom, in its highest form, resides in our ability to determine where the focus of our consciousness falls. This focus can either rest within the world of phenomena, where genuine initiative is absent, or at the nexus of original creative function, whose core principle is freedom and possibility. In other words, every phenomenon is not the final, fundamental reference point; rather, it relies on a spiritual power that gives it reason and consistency. When we perceive this power as something external and beyond our understanding, it seems like an unchangeable inevitability. However, when we recognise and affirm the divine spark within ourselves, which is the core source of our life, the world that once held us in iron slavery becomes, through a subtle transformation, our instrument (29) (p. 165; *Die Philosophie als Kunst*, pp. 213, 223, 226). It will then be possible to unconditionally determine the form in which reality must appear to us, truly experiencing the given not as a final fundamental reference point but as something plastic that reflects docilely what the Self conceives in the realm of meaning.

'Representation creates reality, and not the other way around'; 'the faculty of representation is unconditional'; 'the Self can, through a shift in the level of consciousness, possess itself in this faculty'—such are the principles of Keyserling's doctrine of power, as well as those found in esotericism and certain Western schools of magic (30).

Additionally, a fundamental point is introduced, though not expressed as clearly as in Michelstaedter: the individual must rise to the sense of an absolute responsibility, must become sufficient unto his own life, not only in the order of the properly subjective but also in the order of the cosmic, the universal. The Self must become for itself the ultimate reason and must be able to bear the weight of universal responsibility, without attempting to pass it off to another: for only by personally assuming this burden can it hope to overcome fate in freedom (pp. 483-486).

The primary merit of the 'School of Wisdom' lies in its assertion that what truly matters is not the accumulation of new knowledge or experiences, but the elevation of one's personality—the repositioning of the Self(s) centre to a higher plane or dimension. From this vantage, the individual perceives his actions, decisions, and experiences as fully under his control and engages in activities with a resolute sense of purpose, driven by intrinsic motivations rather than external pressures (p. 499). This fully aligns with magical idealism, especially when this plane is referred to as that of the Lord. The concept of 'Meaning,' however, requires greater specification. One must ask: what is the meaning of this 'meaning'? While the concept of 'meaning' is valid when considered in its broad, mystical and self-generative aspect, when it is connected to the aforementioned dialectical process of expression (the idea that thoughts and ideas are developed through contradictions and their resolutions), things become more complicated. The 'meaning,' understood as an inherent tendency to inevitably express, objectify and reaffirm itself in new expressions, etc., may be the most challenging aspect to comprehend and does not conform to the empirical data governed by the dialectical laws that rationalism adheres to. Here, too, a freedom must indeed be affirmed beyond the entire process. To organically link the process—understood as the ongoing deepening of meaning—with the principle of the Lord, it is essential to approach it dynamically. This requires situating it within the context where the Self transcends its freedom, which has now taken on an

objective reality. By doing so, we can reaffirm a principle that is eternally irreducible to existence. Then 'understanding,' or 'Meaning,' would denote, in its fundamental meaning, the possession and realisation of the Self in pure actual essence, in an ever more perfect way. Autarchy would thus be the key to the process, the value in which original freedom has sought itself—a consequence that Keyserling hints at when he refers to the principle that one must make oneself one's ultimate reason, that one must rise to the sense of universal responsibility, take upon oneself its 'fate,' become sufficient unto it and resolve it within the principle of the Lord. Furthermore, once it is established that determinism—the rigidity inherent in determinism—constitutes the antithetical moment of the conceptual substance that serves as a basis for expression, it follows that the reaffirmation of the principle of meaning—which is freedom—upon it can only have a negative character; it results in derealisation, disruption, and the dissolution of all necessity within the contingent and the fluid. Therefore, the idea of a substrate of material necessity, of laws, even if restricted to 'grammar' or 'language' (languages themselves, moreover, change and transform according to various needs), ultimately cannot be maintained and the idea of a universal system entirely penetrated by the function of 'Meaning' merges into the idea of a 'body of freedom,' which is also a 'body of negation.' Following Heraclitus, Novalis, Bhagavan Das (31), and the conception upheld here, the universal process must be understood as a burning and its enduring purpose as the fulfilment of the Self as an entity of pure negativity—that is, of pure contingency and absolute possession.

If desired, several and more significant objections could still be raised against Keyserling, to which the unsystematic and 'symphonic' nature of his expositions also lends itself. This is particularly true regarding history, whose ideality he does not fully grasp and which he often treats from an empirical standpoint, indeed transcending the plane of 'meaning.' While on one hand he affirms that it is not historical fact that creates 'Meaning,' but rather 'Meaning' that creates historical fact (p. 293), on the other hand, like Croce, he acknowledges the existence of historical determinisms that impose, from epoch to epoch, the inescapable condition for meaning to be incorporated and made concrete (32). Consider the Keyserlingian principle that meaning exists only as it is expressed, and one will see how dangerous this position is. Given that we must hold firm to the principle that nothing is without being understood to some extent and that understanding has as an inseparable attribute freedom, the right approach would be to deny the actual precedence of any historical condition. Consequently, the entirety of past or antecedent history becomes an absolutely formless matter, whose individuation is not established or discovered but is exclusively focused on the unconditional meta-historical determination of meaning, thereby rendering it a conditioned factor rather than a conditioning one.

However, it is not the appropriate context to dwell on these issues. What is essential to highlight is Keyserling's insightful interpretation of the function of 'meaning,' according to which understanding is removed from the rational and peripheral plane and is intertwined with the principle of deep self-realisation and power.

(1) The transition of the Hegelian 'Logos,' through which it gains its concreteness, is not found in nature or in the pure logical sphere of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*. Rather, it pertains to the entirety of Hegelian thought, particularly through the 'left Hegelianis' in the natural sciences, involving the specific faculties that extend beyond pure a priori concepts and lead to a defined consciousness of concrete reality.

(2) C. Michelstaedter, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

(3) C. Michelstaedter, *Il dialogo della salute*, Genoa, 1912, pp. 57-58.

(4) *Ibid.*, p. 58, 56.

(5) C. Michelstaedter, *La persuasione...*, p. 91.

(6) John 4:13-14: 'Whosoever drinketh of the water, that I shall give him, shall never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.'

- (7) It is hardly worth noting how the connection between the concepts of power and autarchy (cf. above, p. 63 ff) allows magical idealism to address the objection that it creates a condition for persuasion and thus a new rhetoric. In this process, persuasion remains the primary ideal of power and the condition for its possibility. Similarly, meaning is the primary ideal of expression, in which it gains form and concreteness.
- (8) Translator's note: In Michelstaedter's philosophy, 'the going of deficiency' refers to the inherent limitations of life governed by rhetoric, which he contrasts with persuasion. This 'going' or movement is not true progression; it is a repetitive cycle, representing a fixed, unchanging state rather than dynamic transformation. The deficiency lies in the reliance on external validation and norms, rather than self-sufficiency and existential authenticity. The cycle Michelstaedter critiques signifies life's stagnation under societal constraints, rather than the true freedom found in metaphysical self-realisation.
- (9) O. Braun, *Aus nachgelassenen Schriften eines Frühvollendeten*, ed. J. Vogelstein, Berlin, 1921, p. 182.
- (10) Editor's note: the reform of 16 July 1923. Gentile served as Minister of Education from 1922-1924.
- (11) G. Gentile, *Sistema di logica come teoria del conoscere*, Bari, 1923, vol. II, p. 121.
- (12) Translator's note: the concepts of '*pensato*' ('thought') and '*fatto*' ('fact' or 'done') refer to a philosophical distinction between something as it exists in thought and as it exists in reality or experience. The challenge in this distinction is how to reconcile the '*pensato*' and the '*fatto*.' In other words, how can we understand the connection between what we think and how things actually are in the world? This ties into a deeper philosophical issue about how the mind (or subject) relates to the external world (or object). In this passage, the concepts of '*pensato*' and '*fatto*' are compared to Kant's *noumenon* (thing-in-itself), which we cannot know directly, only as it appears to us (phenomenon). The *noumenon* represents the ultimate reality that our thoughts (*pensato*) try to grasp, but always mediated by our subjective experience of facts (*fatto*). The text suggests that this distinction is affected by a similar contradiction as in Kantian thought and can be resolved by understanding both thought and fact as part of the same process of determination. This leads to the idea that the thinking subject absorbs and explains the diversity of experiences or facts.
- (13) Editor's note: Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296–373 AD), Bishop of Alexandria and a key figure in early Christianity, is renowned for his staunch defence of Trinitarianism against Arianism. His influential writings, including *On the Incarnation* and *Against the Arians*, were crucial in shaping the Nicene Creed. Throughout his life, he faced multiple exiles due to his theological positions, yet he remained a resilient advocate for orthodox Christian beliefs. Athanasius is venerated as a Doctor of the Church and is celebrated for shaping Christian doctrine on the nature of Christ.
- (14) The proposition that 'every assertion of thought is a declaration of truth, which would hold no value unless it is favoured and thus presents itself as unconditionally imperative in relation to its opposite' (loc. cit., p. 300) brings us back to the ideas of Plato in the Euthyphro and Thomas Aquinas. This suggests that things do not possess value simply because they are willed; rather, they are willed because a value already exists in them, independent of the will itself.
- (15) H. Rickert, *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, Tübingen/Leipzig, 1904, p. 130.
- (16) N. Abbagnano, *Le sorgenti irrazionali del pensiero*, Naples, 1923, p. 89.
- (17) *Ibid.*, p. 90.
- (18) Editor's note: Édouard Le Roy (1870–1954) was a French philosopher known for his critiques of the limitations of scientific thinking in comprehending reality. He argued that while scientific methods are powerful tools for understanding the natural world, they often fall short of addressing the complexities of human experience and the metaphysical aspects of reality. In works such as *La Démonstration de l'Existence de Dieu* (1910), Le Roy emphasised the need for a philosophy that accounts for the subjective and existential dimensions of life, positing that scientific thinking, focused solely on empirical data and objective analysis, is incapable of grasping the full richness of reality.

(19) Abbagnano has raised an objection to magical idealism, arguing that the very situation or necessity of autarchy can ultimately be regarded as nothing more than a particular moment in the infinite, uncontrollable becoming of life. However, one can counter this with equal justification by asserting that experiencing life as infinite and uncontrollable becoming can instead be considered the object of a specific volition of the autarch. After all, a contingency that is forced to exist eternally and solely as contingency would not truly be a genuine contingency. As one can see, this leads to the question of the plane or dimension that serves as the ultimate reason for the individual. Once one has viewed the world through rose-coloured glasses, one inevitably perceives everything as rosy, even what might otherwise appear differently.

(20) Schelling, in his *Second Philosophy (Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie, S. W., vol. X, p. 152 ff)*, observed that if the Hegelian Idea manifests in nature, the cause of this is not an internal necessity logically deducible to it but rather the mere fact of the actual existence of nature.

(21) See above, **pp. 50-52.**

(22) Translator's note: Wilhelm Traugott Krug (1770–1842) was a pivotal figure in the transition from Kantian philosophy to post-Kantian idealism. As the successor to Kant in the chair of logic and metaphysics at the University of Königsberg, Krug found himself at the centre of a burgeoning philosophical landscape that was grappling with the implications of Kant's critical philosophy. Just prior to his appointment, Krug posed a significant challenge to the idealist philosophy championed by Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling. This challenge emerged from his concern regarding the explanatory power of idealism. In particular, Krug questioned how idealist philosophers, including Schelling, could justify the existence of particular entities—such as the pen he was using—if all reality is ultimately derived from the Absolute. Idealism posits that all particular things emerge from a singular, unified Absolute. This raises the question of how particular entities can be grounded in this Absolute without losing their individuality. Krug's challenge implies a need for a coherent explanation of how distinct, finite entities arise from an infinite source. Krug was particularly concerned with the status of individuality within idealism. If all things are manifestations of the Absolute, what accounts for the uniqueness and particular characteristics of individual objects? For instance, why does this specific pen exist rather than being subsumed into a more general idea or concept? By questioning the ability of idealists to explain the existence of particular things, Krug was invoking a traditional philosophical concern about causality. He sought to understand whether idealist philosophy could provide a satisfactory account of how the Absolute causally relates to specific entities in the world. Krug's critique also touched upon the role of the subject in perceiving and interacting with the world. He might have been asking how an individual consciousness can engage with or relate to the Absolute in a way that gives rise to particular experiences and objects, like his pen. Krug's challenge was significant not only in critiquing idealism but also in paving the way for subsequent developments in German philosophy. It raised essential questions about the relationship between the finite and the infinite, the individual and the universal, and the nature of existence itself. His inquiries anticipated later philosophical developments, particularly in the works of Hegel, who would grapple with similar issues concerning the nature of reality and the relationship between the Absolute and particular beings.

(23) Gentile, *op. cit.*, p. 119, explicitly states that the pure act serves as the common denominator for every concept or determination. In mathematics, it is known that in equations with a common denominator (as long as it is non-zero), one can simplify the equation by removing the denominator from consideration. This allows for the analysis of the remaining terms without altering the essential properties of the equation.

(24) Editor's note: Octave Hamelin (1856–1918) was a French philosopher and mathematician recognised for his significant contributions to the philosophy of mathematics, particularly in the fields of logic and the foundations of mathematical thought. A prominent figure in the intellectual community of his time, Hamelin explored the interplay between mathematics and philosophy, emphasising the role of intuition in mathematical reasoning. His notable works include *Le calcul de l'infini* and *Les Philosophes et la mathématique*, in which he addressed the philosophical implications of mathematical concepts. In *Essai sur les éléments principaux de la représentation*,

Hamelin explores the foundational aspects of representation in philosophy and mathematics. He investigates how mental representations shape our understanding of reality, focusing on the cognitive processes involved in perception and thought. He distinguishes among various types of representations—sensory, conceptual, and mathematical—emphasising the critical roles of intuition and imagination in their formation. He argues that these cognitive faculties are vital for understanding abstract concepts, as they enable a deeper engagement with and comprehension of the underlying ideas. Through his examination, he addresses the interplay between representation and reality, questioning how accurately our mental constructs reflect the external world. He critiques purely logical approaches that neglect the importance of intuitive understanding, advocating for a more integrated perspective that acknowledges the complexities of human cognition. This work contributes significantly to discussions on the philosophy of representation and the epistemological implications of mathematical thought. Tragically, Hamelin drowned in 1918 while attempting to save a man who had fallen overboard, an act of heroism that cut short his promising career and left a gap in the philosophical discourse surrounding mathematics and logic. His insights continue to resonate within contemporary discussions on the philosophy of mathematics.

(25) The fundamental concept of Hamelin, which he draws from Aristotle and to which he fully adheres here, is that the finite and the determinate are not contradictory, as Hegel asserted in alignment with Spinoza. Rather, they are incomplete: they do not negate themselves but possess being to a certain extent. Therefore, the transition from the finite to the absolute is not a movement from nonbeing to being, but rather from an incomplete degree of being to its perfection. This process is not one of negation but of composition, integration, and intensification; it is fundamentally positive and progressive—a series of affirmations rather than negations (O. Hamelin, *Essai...*, pp. 32-36). If, on the other hand, it is posited that the finite as such is an absolute nonbeing, the process can only have a regressive and carthartic character: that is, it is forced to presuppose being as existing already presently beyond the nonbeing of the finite, so that it is revealed when a negation negates that negation which is the finite—such is the theory of Platonism. For the reconciliation of negation and progressivity in the current doctrine, see above, **p. 66, note 30**.

(26) Hamelin rightly observes that Kant, ‘faithful to the traditions of a logic primarily concerned with the extension of concepts and much less with their content, understood the form of knowledge as what Peripateticism considered its matter, namely the general. Conversely, for Kant, the matter of knowledge consisted of the particular and the individual—the concrete—which Aristotle had often treated as the formal and essential aspects of things’ (*op. cit.*, p. 10). In this context, the locus of the act, which for Aristotle was the individual and the real, becomes, for Kant, the universal and the rational. Thus, in Kant, as in all subsequent idealism, the act signifies an escape from the world—a catharsis of the real into the universal void of the concept, culminating in a new κόσμος νοητός (intelligible world). In contrast, within concrete or magical idealism, the act takes the opposite direction: it moves from the ideal to the real. Here, the rational is viewed as an abstract matter or power, with the ‘act’ embodying what Kant refers to as the matter of intuition, i.e., the τὸ ὄν τι (the concrete world). Therefore, its significance lies in the fulfilment of the Self as the Kantian ‘intuitive intellect.’ This fulfilment is the culmination of a passivity intermingled with sensible perception, as it does not autonomously generate its object or material from itself, according to principles of sufficiency and arbitrariness, within an absolute or magical framework.

(27) To be precise, Hamelin, while still under the influence of theism, hints at the idea of further development beyond the finite person, though he does not construct this dialectically. He links the finitude of human freedom to a ‘fall,’ which, however, the self is called upon to redeem in a process wherein its very mortal nature would be transcended (pp. 465-467). Yet, this notion remains at a mythological level. The demand to understand what immortality means, what its concrete conditions are, and what the method of its realisation entails does not appear at all in his work

(28) H. Keyserling, *Schöpferische Erkenntnis, Einführung in die Schule der Weisheit*, Darmstadt, 1922, p. 66.

(29) Here arises the question of whether the spiritual principle, which acts as a mediator between the Self and the non-Self, enabling potentiality, exists already behind the phenomenon or whether it must be created through the phenomenon, progressing from a less intense act to a more intense one. In the first case, the potentiality would inhere in the Self incidentally—that is, it would not belong to the Self *qua* self, but rather to the Self insofar as it surrenders to an ‘other’ (such as the ‘elementary’ of magic, the *devatâ*, etc.). In the second case, however, it would belong to the Self essentially—that is, it would be its own creation and possession. It appears that Keyserling lacks awareness of this crucial issue.

(30) For example, in C. Agrippa (*De occulta philosophia*, I, 1), it is noted that the foundation of magic relies on the belief in three interconnected worlds: the elemental, celestial, and intellectual. These worlds are arranged in a hierarchical order: ‘Each lower world is governed by its superior and receives its influence. Thus, magicians believe that by the same degrees and through each of these worlds, one can naturally ascend to the “archetypal world” itself, the creator and ruler of all things, and from there act not only upon natural forces but even evoke new ones.’

(31) Novalis, *Opere Complete*, ed. cit., Vol. II, pp. 58, 336; Bhagavan Das, *The Science of Peace*, Madras, 1922, *passim*.

(32) Cit., *passim*, and H. Keyserling, *Die Philosophie als Kunst*, Darmstadt, 1922, pp. 22, 30-32, 70-72, in which one finds the legitimate demand that the ideal should not remain disconnected from reality but should integrate with the world of its time and take on a tangible form. However, the significance of this practical necessity must be interpreted with care—particularly to ensure it does not undermine the stance of freedom, which, by its nature, cannot allow for compromises or concessions.

Appendix on the Meaning of Modern Art

[It may be beneficial to introduce this Appendix with a note on the criterion of aesthetic criticism employed by the author. This criterion rejects both ‘contentism’ and ‘formalism.’ Indeed, contentism and formalism are generic criteria that fail to grasp the aesthetic phenomenon in its specificity and the nuances of that specificity. Art does not prove anything; it is not the case that a certain content, by being presented artistically, acquires characteristics of certainty, morality, practicality, and so forth, that it did not inherently possess. Thus, it can be said that judgment based on content is doomed to perceive what is not art within art; it is, therefore, not an aesthetic judgment but rather a theoretical, moral, or other forms of judgment. Furthermore, just as the ‘intention’ of the artist is of no concern, so too is his ‘technical skill’—whether in the ability to translate ideas or emotions into their work or in the expressive quality of the latter—since the question of having expressed and realised something is not specific to art but can arise in any other cultural form with

equal validity. Evaluations that focus solely on the formal aspects of art ought to be left—using a saying from Boltzmann (1)—to tailors and shoemakers.

These criteria are not only generic and abstract but touch only upon the surface of the phenomenon; regarding the meaning, the essence of art, or what art represents in general for the Self, they say nothing. The value of art, insofar as it is art and nothing else, entirely escapes their scope. On the contrary, the principle adopted here is precisely that of considering the function through which the Self experiences its activity and the meaning that this activity holds for it. If we consider the act in general—that is, the act independently of both what it brings into existence (contentism) and the varying degrees of perfection in that bringing into existence—as form, then we may say that what is of interest is the form of the form (thus understood). This perspective is eminently transcendental; without it, there is no hope of grasping phenomena in their individual intimacy and deep meaning—of transcending the phenomenon to reach its spiritual essence or value.

It is evident that this principle can be applied to art just as it is to any other aspect of consciousness. However, this is not because art is an indifferent category; rather, it is because art functions as a flexible medium that can incorporate the individuality of various elements and fully represent them. Through this principle, a clear definition of art emerges, distinguishing it from everything it is not. Within the realm of art, this allows for the recognition of uniquely original moments that would otherwise be reduced to an indistinct point when viewed through other principles. This criterion underpins the treatment of modern art that follows, as well as the hierarchical arrangement of various categories (both ‘objective,’ such as space, time, quantity, etc., and ‘subjective,’ such as science, philosophy, religion, etc.) that will be presented in *Teoria dell’Individuo Assoluto*].

When viewed from the perspective of individual value or autarchy, the context from which the so-called ‘great art’ largely arose must seem entirely negative. In fact, within ‘great art,’ the artist was productive—productive according to an objectively recognised value—precisely because he surrendered to inspiration, intuition, and the pulse of life from the universal. He allowed himself to be possessed and driven by a higher force (the *μανία*, or genius, as understood by the ancients, as well as the genius concept in the aesthetics of Kant and Schelling), of which he knew nothing, acting as its unconscious instrument in the moment of creation (2).

In this situation, it was not the Self that created art; instead, art emerged from within it. This emergence coincided with the strengthening of its individual consciousness and its quest for absolute sufficiency—traits that characterise the final epoch. Consequently, a crisis of aesthetic consciousness emerged as a logical necessity. From the challenge of transcending this fundamental femininity and mediumity of the artist, and thus of creating art that, while being art, possessed individual value, arose what can be identified as modern art, which, in its ultimate expression, manifests as abstract art. This determination arises from the fundamental difference in how the principle of the Self engages with its creative process, creating a qualitative divide that separates it from what was previously understood as art in general. The organ of the new art is grounded in the principle of absolute formalism, which entirely overturns the classical relationship between content and expressive medium. In ‘great art,’ the expressive medium was rigorously subordinated to the revelation of an objective, transcendent content. In the new conception, however, emphasis shifts to the expressive medium itself, with all content becoming subordinate to it as material or raw substance. This introduces a paradox: form is elevated to the status of content, while content is reduced to a contingent element serving the expression of form. Here, expression does not arise because something seeks to reveal itself through it; rather, something is manifested purely as an act of will to express, driven by form for the sake of form alone.

This leads to the designation of abstract art: it is called abstract because it lacks a clearly defined object—whether that be a natural scene, an emotional state, or even an idea—to communicate or bring to life, with the expressive medium remaining subordinate to it. What abstract art expresses is nothing but pure expressiveness, articulating the rhythm of inner freedom. The artwork here has a value that is simply harmonic (in the musical sense), one might say almost algebraic; arising solely from a counterpoint and orchestration of images and words, or sounds, tones, and chords, or even

lines and colours, it, in a certain sense, no longer intends to convey anything concrete. The artist invites the viewer not to seek a concrete object or idea but to feel vaguely, to immerse himself in the rhythms, the elusive meanings, and the impressions that emanate from the compositions. This requires adopting a particular attitude conducive to an understanding that is not merely sentimental but properly harmonic, much like the appreciation of a symphony.

Now, since the priority of content over the expressive medium in classical art was merely a reflection of a situation in which the artist was nothing in himself and created only to the extent that he became an unconscious and passive instrument of a universal expression through him, this reversal of the relationship, whereby the pure expressive medium is elevated to self-sufficiency, comes to testify to the displacement of the centre to the individual, the celebration, in aesthetic terms, of autonomy and yet the overcoming of that attitude, by which the unconditional and the universal were understood as something objective, falling before the concrete power of the Self, yielding to the concrete power of the Self. In short: in 'great art,' the individual was the expressive instrument of God and, in that sense, was not yet truly an individual, a Self. As the individual moves towards realising himself as such, he gradually detaches from the womb of the universal—from which the content of his creations previously flowed—and, shifting the centre to himself, he begins to regard the expressive medium—once merely an instrument of the ἕτερον (the 'other'), or of the 'genius' beyond his conscious awareness—as an end in itself. This medium, now recognised as an autonomous faculty, becomes the ultimate purpose with which the act of creation must eventually align.

This idea can also be expressed from another point of view. As Schelling saw with particular clarity, in classical art, the role of the individual's conscious will was minimal: artistic production revealed and embodied infinitely more than what the artist had consciously intended. The artist, therefore, did not so much express a predetermined value or conception of beauty clearly possessed a priori but rather witnessed it unexpectedly emerge from the work itself—often beyond, and even contrary to, what had been consciously intended. The artist came to understand this beauty only a posteriori, with astonishment, almost as if it were a grace, drawn from the creation itself. This also explains the often-observed phenomenon that artists—especially those who embody their role with the greatest passion and depth—are frequently the least capable of recognising the value of their own works. Wundt's concept of the 'heterogenesis of ends' (3) is highly effective in classical art. As Keyserling points out, the artist often acts as a medium. In the formless stage of pure creativity, in which the formative power originates, the artist is largely absent as a conscious individual. He remains passive in relation to this creative force, which operates within him almost unconsciously. This dynamic makes the artist less of an author or creator and more like a craftsman or demiurge. The focus of consciousness emerges only after a moment of true creativity. When it does, it reveals a vast disproportion between what the artist has created and what he intended to create. In the history of art, the more perfect the work, the greater this disparity becomes. This suggests that the individual will diminishes significantly, stepping back to yield entirely to the transcendent power that inspires it. Through this power, the value of the infinite is realised. In response to this situation, the demand for art as an individual value became most evident. Novalis and, in some respects, Wagner emphasised that the artwork is not merely the product of genius but also an expression of will. Thus, within the formations that emerged from the organ of art (abstracted, that is, from absolute formalism), two essential demands also stirred: to reaffirm the conscious Self at the foundational moment of aesthetic creation and, second, to imbue the entire work with will, reaffirming that will against the aura of the unconscious and the transcendent that flowed beyond any conscious intention (4). The process of internal realisation—in which the concept of 'genius' is embraced by the individual and mediumistic or feminine art transforms into individual or positive art—has developed in modern aesthetics through various stages. These stages parallel the gradual incorporation and resolution of the principle of the ineffable transcendent into pure subjective freedom. It is important to provide a brief overview of these stages, as they still require serious theoretical understanding today.

Materialism stood in opposition to panlogism, while the stark concreteness and immanence of aesthetic or veristic realism contrasted sharply with the alienation from the world (*Weltentfremdung*) found in romantic art. These two opposing poles engaged in a dynamic interaction, each expressing and realising its own truth through contrast with the other. As individual consciousness and intimacy began to emerge, this interaction transformed the infinite and gave rise to symbolism. In the further development of symbolism, we see the internalisation and possession of the universal that the artist had previously approached with reverence. As the Self awakened to a sense of its own autonomy—breaking free from the bonds of tradition and the *humanitas* in which it had almost existed for itself, as if in a dream—this universal manifested as an immense, oppressive mystery. The consummation of this mystery about subjectivity resulted in the dissolution of the traditional coalescence of the Self with the universal, thereby exhausting the immanent and secret rationality of contemporary art's evolution.

1. In symbolism, the immediate emergence of the principle of formalism is evident. The world of external experience is reduced to symbolic matter and signs, giving rise to a new consciousness interwoven with intricate relationships and secret sympathies that resonate with ineffable harmonies. However, in its initial moment (as seen in Verlaine), this position cannot be fully realised, as nature still remains present. Only through nature's mediation—offering support to what has transcended it—does the artist uncover the infinite musicality inherent in the individual. Furthermore, this mediation was essential until the Self transcended the immediacy of its new existence, which remained conditioned by nature's influence and connected to it.
2. A painful process of self-emancipation—a death within life and a life within death—was necessary to prepare for a new form of autonomous art. Through the consummation of itself, the Self could experience itself as an unconditional power. Art became a value that drove the work of the so-called 'poètes maudits,' particularly that of Rimbaud: a continual tearing apart and igniting of everything, fueled by an indescribable passion and ecstasy for that Self, or superior principle, which Rimbaud referred to as 'an other.'
3. In Mallarmé's proper analogism, this phase reaches its limit: only music and azure remain. Content has vanished, and beyond it lies the subtle and omnipresent realm of analogy, relationships, and secret sympathies. The wind and fire give rise to a magical calm. Thus, the original instance has been realised in its entirety, but it reveals itself to be an abstraction. Mallarmé's poetry embodies a frozen and bewildered interiority, losing—rather than realising—the individual principle in the golden enchantment of rhythms and in the algebra of images. The magician has dissolved into his own enchantment. This situation signifies a broader meaning: while analogism, through the resolution of content into symbol, sought to realise the essential substance of the individual within the aesthetic realm, it found itself saturating every sign of this new existence with infinite mystery. In the revelation of subjectivity, the lyricism of symbolism encountered an intimate sense of the ineffable, manifested as a darkness—a mystery that is irreducible. In truth, the objective infinite with which Romanticism had rhetorically resonated became an internalised feeling or understanding. However, in relation to the subject and as a living entity within it, this could only be experienced as negativity—integral to the genius of the art, serving as a means to explore and express the individual principle. Thus, the abstraction and deprivation of completed formalism in Mallarmé, alongside the dark, tragic, and elusive weight affecting the deepest interiority in Maeterlinck, are two complementary aspects of the same logical situation. The Self, once again, is an other.
4. In vain does Cubism attempt to instill sufficiency in the abstract individualistic analogical realm by denying the subjective fantastic and evocative indefiniteness. It seeks—through the technique of

‘equivalents’—to reintroduce the pre-aesthetic concreteness associated with real experience. However, this concreteness is no longer understood according to any established order; instead, it is recreated and composed within an architecture that follows solely the free and internal aesthetic formation of the individual. Ultimately, this endeavour proves futile because such attempts do not achieve their intended purpose; in truth, it is only authentic when aligned with the raw immediacy of the given order. The consciousness recognises this futility, leading the artist, consumed by the curse of externality and the deprivation of his interiority, to plunge—seeking to smother his anguish—into the matter and immediate nature. In this unrestrained orgy of experience—within the struggle, dynamism, and the ‘lyrical obsession with the matter,’ (7) in the vertigo of intuition, speed, and sexuality—he seeks, in a certain way renewing a Dionysian pantheism, to prove his own concreteness. In such conjunction, he positions Futurism—of which Impressionism, Sensism, and Primitivism can be regarded as elementary degrees, not fully realised in their rationale.

5. Futurism inherently contains the seeds of its own dissolution and transformation. When the Self achieves a specific realisation through its creative work, it does not passively and silently fade into something external. Instead, it emerges as a creator of instinctive and unconditional forms—a raw, productive force that transcends its immediate expression. This is evident in the chaos and intensity of ‘words in freedom,’ driven by a restless desire for the ‘new.’ In this process, as the Self approaches the decline of Futurism, it shifts from mere analogical interiority towards a more concrete and central understanding of itself. It recognises that, at its core, it is pure potential for form—a free and unconditional creator.

6. Indeed, the raw instinctivity of the Futurist, through mediation, transforms into Expressionism. Here, consciousness no longer centres itself on the value of nature but on that of the Self. However, it does not fully dare to embrace this new perspective; it lingers there, moved as it listens to itself in the first intimate moment of creation, which it then attempts to attribute to itself. In doing so, it seeks to prove its own centrality, reproducing that moment within itself as an Expressionist artist—i.e., as a creator of a form that reflects an immediate, elemental interiority. However, the completion of this process occurs only in Dadaism.

7. The fundamental principle of this tendency is that it is futile to substitute one formative world for another, even if the latter is more imbued with freedom and interiority. What is truly significant about this radicalism, which makes it the most noteworthy tendency in contemporary aesthetics, is the actual displacement of the Self to an absolute centre. Rimbaud’s work, although driven by the aspiration for direct possession of the creative Self, ultimately served only to consume and strip away the superficial aspects of existence. From this, through the realm of ‘illuminations,’ aether was unveiled beyond the oppressive atmosphere of nature and human experience, allowing the Self to penetrate it as a free sovereign. In post-Rimbaudian art, the artist, captivated by this newfound ability to be a creative magician, instead of utilising this liberation to realise the Self in its centrality, exploited it to construct new worlds that are super- or hypersensitive. Consequently, he fell into a new form of decentred consciousness, continuing, to borrow an image from Rimbaud himself, to feel like ‘brass,’ only awakening as a mere trumpet. And instead, it was the primordial and unconditional principle that dadaism aimed for: it was not a matter of substituting one γένεσις for another (or, at least, this should not be the final instance), but of completely abolishing that consciousness,t which, in art, exists only as it is already a form or categorisation—awakening only at the moment of formation (of the work) and being absent or passive at the earlier or deeper moment of creating. To raise this demand means to introduce, within aesthetic consciousness, the problem of freedom; that is to say, to contrast the determinedly free Self—represented in the work’s natural process as merely ‘signified nature,’ which, as such, is already natured and, in accordance with the decentred principle, was still present in expressionism—with the Self as centre and thus as arbitrariness or unconditionality.

8. Dadaism seeks to express its core antithesis through the theme of negation. The Self, through arbitrary agitation and the increasing diffusion and disorganisation of aesthetic forms, attempts to embody pure freedom while confronting its own limitations. However, consciousness recognises the deception inherent in this attempt, a concept that has been explored previously (8). The Self negates only to the extent that it engages in polemics; it deviates from true, absolute freedom. In this process of negation, the Self positions itself at the same level as what it opposes, becoming pre-occupied with it. Therefore, negation, in its deeper sense, contradicts true necessity. This leads to the realisation that *'le vrai Dada est contre Dada,'* signifying a shift towards the theme of indifference.

9. Dragged along by its dialectic, aesthetic consciousness moves away from a previous phase characterised by contradictions and mere negation, somewhat withdrawing from the aggressive assertion of the unconditional principle. In absorbing the pre-poetic experience *'avec délice mais sans goût,'* it finds itself *'dans la plaine.'* This movement, which seems to lead to its eclipse, actually achieves the autonomy and liberation—and thus the truth—of the unconditional principle. Within the realm of the determined, indeterminacy and indifference emerge. Through self-negation, pure freedom attains an absolute state; consciousness, once a void of the 'ought to be' of the unconditional, now experiences this freedom in a concrete form. The 'plaine'—the spectacle of real experience—exists not reinterpreted in a lyrical or symbolic manner but simply in its raw state, serving unconditionally as an object of poetry for the Dadaist. It reveals the Self, which transforms into every determination with fluidity, elusiveness, and the power to ascribe value or non-value to everything, remaining indifferent to states of being or nonbeing. The simultaneous and punctual coexistence of opposites, the transcendence beyond identity and contradiction, and the indescribable fluctuation within the *'grande bouche pleine de fiel et d'excrément'*—the impossibility of discerning between various degrees of light (10)—become the phenomenon through which the possession of unconditional freedom (11) is revealed. Thus, the perfection associated with this demand is attained. The infinite, the genius, the great halo that transcends individual awareness and will, initially perceived as a mystery (Maeterlinck) within the intimate realm of analogical consciousness, is ultimately dominated and reduced to the very consciousness of the individual as unconditional freedom.

Conveying the spiritual state corresponding to the latest realisations of abstract art is exceedingly difficult. It is challenging to penetrate and experience these realisations or grasp their value, particularly for those who lack a deep familiarity with the technique of 'pure art' and have not cultivated a certain degree of the highly interior and rarefied consciousness that the author possesses (for only like understands like). Those who approach abstract art without these essential prerequisites, much like they might engage with the works of Shelley or Beethoven, often perceive it as chaotic and incoherent, reacting with indignation and astonishment at the very existence of such expressions. Abstract consciousness, as articulated by the most recent aesthetics, exists on a completely different plane—almost another dimension—of the spirit, distinct from everyday practical and emotional life, and from the values resonant with the 'great cries of tragic humanity.' The journey toward this state is arduous and painful, requiring the burning away of what most people consider the most intimate and genuine aspects of life. If one were to seek a point of comparison, it might be found in the detached yet fervently intense inner lives of mystics such as Ruysbroeck and Eckhart (12).

However, in abstract art, this value does not manifest as a uniform and solitary light, as it does in these two authors. Instead, it emerges from a disjointed array of dark, intimate, and restless vital states. These states, as though lost in a diaphanous atmosphere where a sense of dream or delirium gradually transforms and clarifies into a radiant, solar quality, carry with them inexplicable sounds and movements. A logic entirely different from everyday reasoning underlies this realm: in it, even the most familiar and glorious lights appear pale, like the feeble vegetation of subterranean realms; the common will wavers as if intoxicated, and even language conveys an incomprehensible sense of

foreignness. Within this sphere, every reality disintegrates, drained of life by external rarity, returning to an elemental chaos that feels ‘dry and burning, burning and monotonous.’ However, for those who have deeply penetrated abstract art, it becomes evident that this incoherence and madness are merely appearances. Behind them lies, in metallic luminosity, the sense of the absolute freedom of the Self. This is merely a final thin veil that obscures while simultaneously revealing the aesthetic possession of that formless and unconditional purity, which is the raw power and origin of every form and every order. Here, art fundamentally becomes a form of self-revelation. This idea can be illustrated from a different perspective. As previously mentioned, according to trends that have shaped the development of abstract art, anything can become what Cocteau refers to as the ‘object of poetry’: aesthetic value is subjective, and the artist can, at his discretion, enhance any determination, whether it is constructed through traditional aesthetic means or drawn directly from everyday experiences. Thus, it has been proposed that both the *Mona Lisa* and a tram ticket glued onto a piece of cardboard can be equally valid works of art within the Dada movement. From the viewer’s perspective, one might argue that—beyond its intrinsic value and focusing instead on the responses it evokes—the challenge remains: even if one attains the extreme sensitivity and abstraction required to perceive the latest expressions of abstract art as more than mere oddities and incoherencies, how can one be certain of genuinely understanding what the author experienced, given the absence of a concrete foundation, rather than interpreting it solely through one’s personal lens?

Tristan Tzara, the founder of the Dada movement, presents an intriguing rule for composing a Dada poem in his *Manifeste de l’amour faible et de l’amour amer*: ‘Take a newspaper, a pair of scissors, and from this newspaper, select an article of the desired length for your poem. Cut out the article and, carefully, cut each word it contains, placing them into a bag. Shake gently. Finally, take the cut-out words one by one and copy them diligently. The poem will resemble you. And here is an infinitely original writer with an enchanting sensitivity, albeit one not yet understood by the masses.’ This is not mere jest; by transcending the deliberately paradoxical form—an aspect fiercely embraced by Dadaists—one uncovers a profound truth: it is not the author but the viewer who creates the artwork (Wilde). The aesthetic value does not inherently reside within the artwork; rather, it is realised through interpretation and recreation, contingent on individual will shaped by various emotional and cultural influences. Art cannot be reduced to a specific work in isolation; instead, it represents a function of the Self, transforming a given experience into what is ultimately defined as a work of art. However, for the average person, experience possesses only a limited degree of freedom: it is primarily drawn, like a force following the path of least resistance, to a specific class of objects that are then established—through more or less explicit conventions—as the ‘true’ and universal works of art. This inclination is internally shaped by determinations that are somewhat uniform and persistent, to which the average person’s Self adheres, failing to strive for a genuinely free life. As Kant noted in his *Critique of Judgment*, the universal recognition of certain works of art as beautiful relies solely on the subjective foundation of human judgment, shaped by largely analogous determinations across individuals. Now, let us assume that an individual has attained a level of autonomy sufficient to abstract from all cultural, emotional, and hereditary influences—that is, from the innate and often unconscious biases with which one approaches paintings and poems, alongside the a priori notion that one is indeed engaging with art. In this case, the power of aesthetic judgment would become more fluid, entirely contingent upon one’s own will. It would then become clear that ‘artistic’ and ‘beautiful’ would no longer signify a specific and almost predetermined category of objects; instead, everything would serve as a mirror in which the individual could rediscover himself. The very poem constructed according to Tzara’s rules could genuinely become a poem—my poem (13).

From a strictly idealistic perspective, the creative process of attributing aesthetic values should be considered identical for both Dadaist and classical works of art. The difference lies in this: at the moment of the fixation of certain determinations in judgment, the artwork appears in a certain way as given; it imposes itself almost by its own accord, and understanding is, in a sense, automatic. In

this way, the artwork of the ancien régime allows for only a very limited number of alternatives to the freedom of the spectator. In modern art, this changes significantly, as its principle is, as we have seen, freedom. The further we move into the later phases of abstract art, the less the work is tied to a sense of inevitability or fate, and the less it presents itself as a fixed reality. Instead, the viewer is invited to engage with genuine spontaneity, freely reconstructing the meaning of what is before him for the artwork to have any significance.

The highly original and daring work of T. Tzara, G. Ribemont-Dessaignes, H. Arp, K. Schwitters, and Kandinsky (14) can be seen as the culmination of a series of tendencies that, beginning with Novalis and F. Schlegel, operated in various ways—often unconsciously—within modern aesthetics to affirm art as an individual value. At the same time, their work marks a critical boundary: in a certain sense, both art proper and art as a general form of expression undergo a dissolution within their work, a dissolution that Dadaism, in particular, embraced with full awareness. And since art is understood as an activity that is characterised essentially by mediation and the subordination of the Self—through spontaneity and genius—to a universal, modern consciousness, which has affirmed the principle of autonomous individuality, has set a boundary beyond which art can only persist by fulfilling or completing itself in its very nature. Thus, the opinion of those who, fixed within a traditional order, claim that modern art is no longer art or that art is dead, becomes entirely understandable. In truth, from symbolism to Dadaism, we are dealing with movements that, in their very essence, are entirely meta-artistic, if not outright anti-artistic. Yet this arises from a historical necessity and carries an a priori value.

Art, in its essence, is the remnant of a life driven by spontaneity, even predating the principle of the person. Just as instinct gradually diminishes under the influence of reason and will, art is destined to fade as an outdated category, yielding to new forms of spiritual development that carry forward its underlying truths. However, during this decline—exemplified by the self-negation and self-irony inherent in abstract art—art continues to provide the Self with meaningful experiences. The dynamic of reclaiming one's freedom at the original and inner point of each action, overcoming all superficial 'grace' in an absolute positivity, and reasserting one's will over what transcended it and conditioned its fruitful production is, in truth, the very rhythm of magical realisation. Modern art, as the culmination of artistic expression, is built upon this rhythmic process and provides the Self with a sense of realisation through formal expression—images that dwell within the realm of subjective imagination, sounds, words, and colors. It is within this domain, distinct from the objective power of reality, that the Self experiences absolute freedom in Dadaism; however, this experience lacks the intensity and depth found in the transitions from speculation to transcendental idealism. In response to critics who accused poets of whimsically manipulating the real world through their imaginations, Novalis contended that poets do not exaggerate enough; they only vaguely grasp the magic inherent in their language, merely toying with their imagination like a child wielding a magic wand, oblivious to the forces at play and the worlds that must align with them. When an artist probes deeper into the motivations behind creating modern art, he inevitably reaffirms the rhythm of liberation and self-affirmation learned in the realm of aesthetics within the profound dimensions of real life. Consequently, he will come to understand art, as Lao Tzu suggested, as a foundational phase (Lehrjahre, or 'years of teaching,' as Novalis termed it) leading to further development. The concept of 'grace' encompasses much more than mere aesthetic production. Just as the creative drive of the artist is fueled by a generative principle that transcends individual effort, every action in the life of an ordinary person is governed by a set of laws and determinisms—both physical and physiological—that impart a sense of transcendence, originating from sources beyond oneself. The effort to harmonise the will with its outcomes, perfecting it not only in artistic endeavours but also in everyday life, signals a shift toward magical idealism. This idealism extends the historical evolution of the spirit beyond the confines of modern art. Future poetry will embody its essence

through action, as indicated by its Greek root (ποίησις, from ποιεῖν), meaning to create. The focus of future artistic endeavors will shift toward the Self and the process of self-creation. However, the continuation of art, once modern aesthetics has been fully realised, risks stagnation—leading to either regression or mere survival. In any case, what endures may resemble an automatic, lifeless process devoid of meaningful growth, much like a dead branch that can no longer contribute to the vitality of a tree.

(1) Editor's note: Ludwig Boltzmann (1844–1906) was an Austrian physicist and philosopher known for his foundational contributions to statistical mechanics and thermodynamics. Born on February 20, 1844, in Vienna, he studied at the University of Vienna, where he later became a professor. Boltzmann is best recognised for his formulation of the Boltzmann equation, which describes the statistical distribution of particles in a gas. His work laid the groundwork for understanding the relationship between the microscopic properties of atoms and the macroscopic properties of materials. In addition to his scientific achievements, Boltzmann was a prominent advocate of the atomic theory of matter, which was controversial during his time. He engaged in philosophical discussions about the nature of reality and the role of scientific theories in understanding the universe. His ideas significantly influenced later developments in physics and philosophy, particularly in the realms of statistical mechanics and the interpretation of thermodynamic laws. Boltzmann's major publications include *The Principles of Mechanics* (1896) and *Lectures on Gas Theory* (1896), in which he elaborated on his theories. Despite facing criticism and opposition during his lifetime, his work has gained immense recognition and respect in contemporary physics.

(2) In light of this connection, in an early work (J. Evola, *Arte asrrata*, Rome, 1920, p. 8), outlining the concept of art as an individual fact, we encountered the provocative assertion that the 'sincere' artist—overwhelmed in the 'divine moment' of inspiration, creating as if seized by an indomitable mania—produces the 'true' work of art in a manner akin to a dog instinctively jumping onto a female dog. At a fundamental level, both actions may converge at the same point of intrinsic value.

(3) Editor's Note: Wilhelm Wundt (1832–1920) was a German philosopher and psychologist, often regarded as the father of experimental psychology. He established the first psychological laboratory at the University of Leipzig in 1879. His notable works include *Principles of Physiological Psychology* (1874), which integrated psychology with physiology, and *Volkerpsychologie* (1880–1920), a multi-volume study of cultural psychology that emphasised the influence of social factors on human consciousness.

(4) Currently, A. Onofri supports this requirement with clear awareness, and we hope to see him present a complete theoretical discussion on it soon. However, we disagree with how he has tried to address it in his poetry. In his work, the principle of pure art is transcended, as is the concept of pure freedom—though, as we will see, Dadaism embraces this idea. The aim of poetry is to express a specific content, and, according to the author, the appropriate form for this content is not art but rather a magical affirmation. [Editor's Note: Arturo Onofri (1895–1979) was an Italian poet, essayist, and philosopher known for his contributions to early 20th-century Italian literature and thought. His works often explore the relationship between art, spirituality, and human experience. Onofri emphasised the transformative power of poetry and its capacity to express profound truths. Notable works include *Il Poeta* (1936), in which he discusses the nature of the poet's role in society, and *Il magico e l'arte* (1940), which examines the intersection of magic and artistic creation. His writings, deeply influenced by Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, reflect an interest in Hermeticism and the spiritual dimensions of art.]

(5) 'Toutes les formes d'amour, de souffrance, de folie ; il cherche lui-même, il épuise en lui tous les poisons, pour n'en garder que les quintessences. Ineffable *torture* où il a besoin de toute la foi, de toute la force surhumaine, où il devient entre tous le grand malade, le grand criminel, le grand maudit, – et le suprême Savant [...] ('Trois lettres inédites', *Nouvelle Revue Française*, October 1,

1912, p. 572) ('All forms of love, suffering, and madness; he seeks them out, exhausting all the poisons within him to retain only their essences. An ineffable torture in which he needs all his faith and superhuman strength, in which he becomes the greatest of the afflicted, the greatest of the criminals, the greatest of the cursed—and the supreme Wise').

(6) In *La musique et les lettres*, he states that poetry is the idea of things, in which 'idea' signifies harmony; thus, art creates symphonic relationships between things: 'pyrotechnique—he says—*non moins que métaphysique*, ce point de vue ; mais un peu d'artifice, à la hauteur et à l'exemple de la pensée, *épanouit la réjouissance idéale*' ('This point of view is no less pyrotechnic—he says—than metaphysical; but a firework, at the height of thought and as an example of it, unfolds ideal joy').

(7) F.T. Marinetti, *Les nuits en liberté futuristes*, Milan, 1919, p. 20.

(8) Cf. supra, pp. 88-89.

(9) Tristan Tzara, *Manifeste de l'amour faible et de l'amour amer*, in *Sept manifestes dada*, Paris, 1924: 'Le Mensonge circule, je l'arrête, il devient vérité. C'est ainsi que tout est pareil et tout est sans pareil' ['The Lie circulates, I stop it, it becomes truth. Thus, everything is the same and everything is unique']. The expressions in French quoted above are also by Tzara, *ibid.*, p. 75: 'L'anti-dadaïsme est une maladie : la self-cleptomanie. L'état normal de l'homme est dada. Mais les vrais dadas sont contre dada' ['Anti-Dadaism is a disease: self-kleptomania. The normal state of man is dada. But real dadas are against dada'].

(10) T. Tzara, *Manifeste Dada* 1918, in *op. cit.*, p. 11 ff.

(11) It is important to highlight the difference, indeed the opposition, between Dadaism and Futurism, which are related as instinctiveness is to self-sufficiency, as absolute immediacy is to absolute mediation, and, consequently, the error into which several critics (for example, Gori and Flora) have fallen somewhat naively by reducing Dadaism to a form of Bergsonism—a reduction that does, however, apply to Futurism. Dadaism can be associated, if at all, with Stirner: its principle is the individual, understood as absolute possession and as a conditioned will—cold and arbitrary—whereas in Bergson and Futurism, the individual is dissolved into the momentum of universal life, becoming a raw and decentred force of nature.

This distinction, well-grounded in a deep exploration of various works and authors, should be emphasised, as it reflects in its own way within the aesthetic realm a deeper philosophical divide between Magical Idealism (which, to a certain extent, has parallels to Dadaism) and Irrationalism. [Editor's note: Julius Evola engaged in a polemical exchange with Gino Gori in the newspaper *L'Impero*. This polemic can be found in the collection 'Seriai sull'arte d'avanguardia', edited by E. Valento and published by the Fondazione Julius Evola in Rome, 1994. In this work, Evola critically addressed avant-garde art movements, a subject on which he held strong and often controversial views.]

(12) Editor's Note: Johannes Eckhart (c. 1260–c. 1328), commonly known as Meister Eckhart, was a German Dominican theologian, philosopher, and mystic. Eckhart is renowned for his speculative mysticism, which emphasises the direct, inner experience of the divine. His thought deeply engages with the nature of being, the soul's union with God, and the transcendence of individual subjectivity, themes that resonate with later developments in idealism. His concept of 'ground' (Grunt), in which the soul becomes one with God beyond all forms, has been interpreted as a precursor to later philosophical idealism, influencing thinkers like Hegel, Schelling, and Schopenhauer. Eckhart's writings, although controversial during his lifetime, contributed to discussions on the relationship between the individual and the Absolute, themes central to idealism. For a comprehensive study, see Bernard McGinn, *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart* (New York: Crossroads, 2001). Jan van Ruysbroeck (1293–1381), also known as John of Ruusbroec, was a Flemish mystic and one of the most prominent Christian contemplatives of the late Middle Ages. Ruysbroeck's writings focus on the mystical union between the soul and God, particularly through the concept of 'the common life'—a life that transcends individuality to enter into the divine. His work focuses on an active love of God while maintaining the mystical tradition of inner transformation and unity, which parallels idealist themes of overcoming duality and merging the finite with the infinite. Although primarily a mystical theologian, Ruysbroeck's ideas have affinities

with later philosophical idealism, particularly in his view of the soul's return to the divine source. His influence extended to later mystics such as Nicholas of Cusa and Jakob Böhme, who in turn influenced idealist philosophers. For a detailed exploration of Ruysbroeck's mysticism, see Paul Mommaers, *The Land Within: The Mysticism of Jan Van Ruusbroec* (Brussels: P.I.E.-Peter Lang, 2004).

(13) Accordingly, in the aforementioned *Abstract Art*, it has been asserted that the *consensus gentium*, the universal recognition, attests not to the value, but to the disvalue of an aesthetic judgment; for such a judgment holds greater value the more it is individual, i.e., the more its affirmation is unique and irreducible to any form of uniformity. To this, Tilgher might perhaps assent, by pushing his theory of art as originality to its fullest extent (Adriano Tilgher (1887–1941) was an Italian philosopher, literary critic, and essayist, best known for his contributions to existentialist and aesthetic thought. Tilgher emphasised the primacy of individuality and originality in art, advocating a view of art as an expression of personal creativity rather than conformity to universal standards. His works, particularly in aesthetics, explore the nature of artistic creation as a unique, subjective act that resists reduction to common forms or societal norms. His major works include *La filosofia dell'arte* (1923) and *Storia del concetto di lavoro* (1924), in which he examined art in relation to existential individuality and the human condition. For a comprehensive study, see Piero Di Giovanni, *Adriano Tilgher e la crisi della cultura europea* (Rome: Bulzoni Editore, 1989). [Ed.]

(14) Editor's Note: See *Lettere di Julius Evola a Tristan Tzara (1919-1923)*, edited by E. Valento, Rome: Fondazione Julius Evola, 1991.

(15) Novalis, *op. cit.* (*Die Lehrlinge zu Sais*), p. 138.

(16) Lao Tzu, *op. cit.*, c. XLV.

(17) The relationship between art and other cultural categories, as well as its connection to the concept of absolute self-realisation, will be examined in the work *Teoria dell'Individuo Assoluto*. The study will also outline the various stages of an individual's process as a whole.

(18) This assertion of completeness may sound strange to those who do not understand art formally, as a category and symbol of a deeper spiritual experience, but rather materially, according to a criterion rooted in the artistic production itself. Those who seek the 'masterpiece' in modern art get stuck at this material level of consideration and can never be satisfied for the simple reason that the 'masterpiece' of modern art lies elsewhere—not in the production of a perfect, organic, and complete work, but in the realisation of a new mode of experiencing the aesthetic function (that is, no longer in keeping with spontaneity and religiosity, but in keeping with the autonomy and authority of the individual) in relation to which what is produced represents a secondary and negligible moment. Now, this realisation has been achieved in all the desired perfection through the development described above.

The bibliographic sources of the essays

This is the list of the articles and essays published before or concurrently with the book that, in part revised and expanded, form its basis.

- '*La potenza come valore metafisico*', in *Atanòr*, no. 6, June 1924, pp. 177-186; no. 7, July 1924, pp. 202-209; no. 8-9, August-September 1924, pp. 237-242.
- '*La potenza come valore metafisico*', in *Ultra*, no. 3, July 1924, pp. 146-160.
- '*L'idealismo dell'insufficienza*', in *Il Mondo*, June 26, 1924.
- '*L'Io supernormale*', in *Il Mondo*, January 24, 1924.
- '*La costruzione dell'immortalità*', in *Il Mondo*, April 12, 1924.
- '*Otto Braun*', in *Il Nuovo Paese*, July 21, 1923.

- 'Recensione di *Sistema di logica come teoria del conoscere* di Giovanni Gentile', in *Ultra*, no. 4-5, October-November 1923, pp. 270-272.
- '*Semiscoperta di un grande pensatore*', in *Conscientia*, August 15, 1925.
- '*La Scuola della Sapienza di Keyserling*', in *Il Mondo*, March 4, 1924.
- '*E. Keyserling e la "Scuola della Sapienza"*', in *Ultra*, no. 5-6, December 1924.
- '*Ciò che pensa Keyserling*', in *Conscientia*, April 4, 1925.

This text presents several key philosophical concepts that are fundamental to understanding the nature of knowledge, the role of the Self, and the critique of modern idealism. Here are some of the key concepts along with their definitions:

I.

- **Gnoseological Problem:** the terms gnoseology and epistemology are often used interchangeably, but they have distinct connotations and historical contexts: Epistemology is the branch of philosophy that studies the nature, sources, limitations, and validity of knowledge. It focuses on how we know what we know. It addresses questions like: What is knowledge? How is knowledge acquired? What are the limits of human understanding? What distinguishes justified belief from opinion? Epistemology typically emphasises the processes and justification of knowledge claims. Gnoseology is a term derived from the Greek word 'gnosis,' meaning knowledge. It refers to the study of knowledge in a broader sense, encompassing both the nature of knowledge and its relation to reality. Gnoseology often examines the distinction between knowledge and belief, the origins of knowledge, and how it relates to metaphysics and existence. While it overlaps with epistemology, gnoseology often incorporates a more ontological perspective, considering how knowledge relates to being and existence. In essence, epistemology is a more focused study of knowledge acquisition and justification, while gnoseology encompasses a broader exploration of knowledge's nature and its relationship to reality and existence.
- **Idealism:** a philosophical stance asserting that reality is fundamentally shaped by the mind or consciousness. In idealism, the external world does not exist independently of knowledge; instead, it is seen as a construct of the Self, positing that we can only know what we perceive or conceive.
- **Conditionality:** the concept within idealism emphasising that the existence of external reality depends on the Self's capacity to know and perceive it. This implies that our understanding of reality is contingent upon our mental faculties and subjective experiences.
- **Vicious Circle:** a logical fallacy that occurs when the conclusion of an argument is used as a premise within the same argument. In the context of idealism, this suggests that affirmations about knowledge and reality are ultimately circular and dependent on subjective perception.
- **Externality:** the characteristic of objects that are perceived as independent and outside the subject. In the idealist framework, this notion is contested as it is ultimately conditioned by the act of perception, suggesting that what is deemed external is relative to the Self's experience.
- **Kantian Philosophy:** the philosophical framework established by Immanuel Kant, particularly in his *Critique of Pure Reason*, which posits that knowledge does not conform

to objects but rather that objects conform to the structures of knowledge present in the mind. Kant introduced the idea that the mind imposes forms (space, time, causality) onto the chaotic data of sensory experience to create coherent knowledge.

- **Thing-in-itself:** a concept from Kant's philosophy referring to the reality that exists independently of human perception. Kant argues that while we can know phenomena (the world as experienced), the 'thing-in-itself' remains inaccessible to human knowledge, which is filtered through the structures of consciousness.
- **Fichte's Contribution:** Johann Gottlieb Fichte expanded on Kantian idealism by asserting that the non-Self (the external world) is posited by the Self. His philosophy stresses that the foundation for understanding reality lies within the Self, as it actively constructs knowledge.
- **Universal and Necessary Forms:** these are the inherent structures within human consciousness (like space, time, and causality) that shape how experiences are organised and understood. They play a crucial role in Kant's theory of knowledge, indicating that our understanding of reality is influenced by these pre-existing categories.
- **Self-Consciousness:** the awareness of oneself as an individual, distinct from others and the environment. In idealism, self-consciousness plays a crucial role in the formation of reality, as it involves the active engagement of the Self in creating meaning.
- **Common Sense:** the basic level of practical reasoning and everyday understanding that individuals use to navigate the world. Common sense is often critiqued in philosophical discourse for its reliance on subjective experience and its failure to engage with deeper metaphysical questions.
- **Positive Science:** the systematic study of phenomena through observation, experimentation, and the application of the scientific method. It contrasts with metaphysical or speculative inquiry, focusing instead on empirical evidence and objective findings.
- **Transcendental Self:** an abstract subject of knowing, distinct from the concrete individual. It represents a form of pure knowledge, detached from individual experience and free will, and embodies the idea that knowledge can be pursued without being influenced by the personal or concrete self. It reduces the world into ideal entities and is critiqued as being an illusion of power.
- **Induction Principle:** a fundamental concept in scientific reasoning that involves deriving general principles from specific observations. It is essential for the formulation of scientific laws and theories but faces scrutiny regarding its philosophical justification.
- **Mathematical Idealism:** a philosophical view positing that mathematical entities and structures form the fundamental basis of reality. It suggests that the true essence of the world can be understood through mathematical relationships and abstractions.
- **Pragmatic Hypothesis:** a theoretical construct used in scientific inquiry that serves as a practical tool for explanation and prediction, rather than claiming to represent an absolute truth. It lays stress on the utility of concepts in understanding phenomena.
- **Hypothetical-Deductive System:** a method in scientific reasoning that involves formulating hypotheses and deducing their consequences to test against observations. It highlights the relationship between theory and empirical evidence.
- **Poincaré's Principle of Equivalence:** a concept in physics proposed by Henri Poincaré, which asserts that different physical theories can describe the same phenomena equally well, suggesting that the choice of theory may be arbitrary as long as it yields consistent predictions.
- **Transformation Theory:** a framework in physics developed by Albert Einstein, focusing on how physical quantities change when switching between different reference frames. It underscores the relativity of observations in physics.

- **Immanence and Transcendence:** immanence refers to the quality of being contained within or existing within a certain domain, particularly in relation to the divine or spiritual presence that is inherent in the world. Transcendence, on the other hand, denotes a state of going beyond or existing outside of the normal limits, often associated with the divine being beyond the physical realm. In the context of the text, the Self is considered to oscillate between these two states.
- **Concrete Realisation:** the actualisation of philosophical or theoretical concepts in practical, lived experiences. This term underscores that the validity of ideas (like idealism) must be demonstrated through real-life engagement and action, rather than through abstract reasoning alone.
- **Hegelian Right and Hegelian Left:** these terms refer to different interpretations of Hegelian philosophy. The Hegelian Right often emphasises a more conservative or religious interpretation of Hegel's ideas, integrating them into traditional theological frameworks. The Hegelian Left, conversely, critiques and often rejects the metaphysical aspects, focusing instead on human experience and empirical reality.
- **Empirical Self:** the individual as experienced in the concrete, observable world. This concept highlights the actual, lived experience of a person, as opposed to an abstract or idealised conception of self.
- **Dualism:** a philosophical concept positing the existence of two distinct and opposing realities or substances, often categorised as mind and body, or spirit and matter. The text critiques the dualism that arises from the separation of the ideal Self from the concrete individual.
- **Mystical Process:** a spiritual or transformative journey that transcends ordinary understanding and experience, often characterised by a deep connection with the divine or ultimate reality. In this context, it suggests that true engagement with the divine must arise from inner transformation rather than external concepts.
- **Self-Actualisation:** the realisation or fulfilment of one's talents, potential, and capabilities. This concept emphasises personal growth and the continuous development of the Self as an active and engaged participant in reality.
- **Cosmic Creator:** a philosophical designation for a being (often referred to as God) that is considered the source of all existence and reality. In the text, it reflects the paradox of the Self being viewed as a creator while also being subjected to the contingencies of life.
- **Sufficient Principle:** a foundational concept or cause that explains a phenomenon or state of being. In philosophical discourse, it often refers to a self-contained basis for existence or knowledge that does not require external justification.
- **Objective or External World:** the realm of existence that is independent of individual perception or thought, encompassing things that exist in themselves. In contrast to subjective reality, this world is seen as having an existence beyond individual consciousness.
- **Quantity of Sufficiency and Persuasion:** here, sufficiency pertains to the extent to which an individual can claim autonomy over their experiences and reality. Persuasion, as referenced from Michelstaedter, is the idea that the degree of belief or conviction one holds can influence their perception of reality. The text posits that there is no essential difference between subjective and objective realities; rather, it is a matter of the degree of sufficiency one perceives.
- **Moral Value of Idealism:** this concept suggests that idealism, while it proposes a vision of absolute certainty, is inherently a normative claim about how things ought to be rather than a description of how they are. This implies that idealism is tied to ethical considerations rather than merely theoretical constructs.

- **Self-Consciousness as Absolute Principle:** the idea that self-consciousness is foundational to understanding reality. It posits that the Self's awareness and recognition of itself serve as the basis for all other forms of existence and reality that it encounters.
- **Crisis of Culture:** a reference to a profound dissatisfaction with prevailing cultural norms and forms, which manifests in various movements and ideologies. This crisis is characterised by a shift from universalistic ideals towards individualism and activism, highlighting the tensions between traditional structures and modernity.
- **Transcendental Religion and Immanent Religion:** transcendental religion refers to beliefs centred on a reality that exists beyond the physical world, often involving a divine entity. Immanent religion, on the other hand, focuses on the divine presence within the world and human experience, suggesting a shift towards understanding spirituality as a part of everyday life.
- **Intuitionism, Pragmatism, and Relativism:** philosophical movements that challenge traditional notions of objective truth and absolute values. Intuitionism underscores knowledge gained through intuition rather than reason. Pragmatism suggests that truth is determined by practical consequences and utility. Relativism posits that truth is not absolute but varies based on individual perspectives and cultural contexts.
- **Absolute Sufficiency of the Real Self:** this concept emphasises the necessity for the individual to recognise and embrace their own reality and sufficiency, overcoming any perceived deficiencies. It underscores the importance of self-acceptance and realisation of one's potential.
- **Transcendental Activity:** a term used to describe the activity of the Self that goes beyond mere empirical engagement, reflecting a deeper, more abstract form of activity that encompasses the individual's role in shaping his reality.
- **Deficiency and Responsibility:** the idea that individuals must confront their own limitations and shortcomings, rather than projecting these deficiencies onto external entities or concepts. This recognition is tied to taking responsibility for one's own existence and the active engagement with reality.
- **Concrete or Magical Idealism:** this term refers to a form of idealism that emphasises the active and transformative engagement of the individual with reality, suggesting that the ideal can only be realised through concrete actions that bring abstract ideals into existence.
- **Causality and Deprivation (στέρησις):** the concept highlights the distinction between actions that originate from the self and those that are merely perceived as negations of the self's power. Deprivation is framed as the absence of causality, representing a negative state rather than a positive existence.
- **Realism:** in this context, realism is critiqued for its tendency to define reality in opposition to the self, failing to recognise the intrinsic worth of activity and the potential for individual agency. Realism acknowledges only what stands in contrast to the self, thereby neglecting the self's role in shaping reality.
- **Self-Affirmation and Power of Causality:** this concept denotes the process by which the individual recognises their ability to bring about change in the world. The power of causality is framed as the capacity of the self to transform perceptions of deprivation into acts of creation and fulfilment.
- **Transformation of Necessity into Freedom (ἔτερον το ταῦτόν):** the process by which an individual perceives the 'other'—elements of reality that resist his freedom—as a challenge to be integrated into their self-identity, ultimately achieving a sense of freedom through self-affirmation.

- **Limitations of Causality:** this notion asserts that the limitations one encounters in their ability to act do not necessarily imply the need for a prior cause or perfection. Instead, limitations can represent an initial stage of development from which further growth can emerge.
- **Development from Limitation:** this idea suggests that what is perceived as limited or imperfect is not merely a negation of the absolute but rather an essential aspect of its evolution. The absolute emerges through the synthesis of the limited and the development that follows.
- **Path of Persuasion:** the individual's journey towards reclaiming agency and establishing value in the face of an indifferent or unreflective reality. It emphasises the process of self-creation and the development of a personal truth against external pressures.
- **Cosmic Work:** the concept underscores the idea that the individual's task of self-creation and engagement with reality is a significant, expansive endeavour. It conveys a sense of responsibility for constructing one's existence and truth within the broader context of the universe.
- **Process of Mediation:** this notion stresses that the transformation from limitation to fulfilment is not instantaneous but rather requires a gradual, mediative process. It rejects the idea of immediate action in favor of a continuous effort to bridge gaps between aspiration and reality.
- **Causality:** the relationship between cause and effect. In the text, it is distinguished between actions caused by the self and those perceived as caused by external factors. This discussion leads to the notion that what is not caused by the self represents a deprivation of causality, not a separate positivity.
- **Deprivation (στέρησης):** a philosophical term indicating the absence or lack of something, particularly the lack of one's own agency or causality. In this context, it is framed as a negative state that cannot itself constitute a positive reality.
- **Necessity (ἔτερον) and Freedom (ταύτόν):** these concepts are used to describe the relationship between the self and the world. Necessity refers to the constraints or conditions that resist an individual's freedom, while freedom represents the individual's capacity to assert their will and create reality.
- **Self-Affirmation:** the process through which an individual asserts and realises their identity and agency in the world, transforming external necessities into expressions of freedom. This involves recognising and integrating challenges into one's own power of causality.
- **Immanence:** a philosophical concept denoting the idea that the divine or the Absolute is present within the world and its processes, as opposed to being transcendent or external to them. In the critique of occultism, immanence suggests that the Absolute is not separate from becoming but is realised through it.
- **Fall:** in this context, the term describes a philosophical concept that suggests a decline from a state of original purity or perfection. The Fall is posited by some schools of thought, particularly within occultism, to explain the need for individual development and the challenges faced in the world.
- **Supersensibles:** entities or realities that are beyond sensory experience, often posited by occult philosophies. In the text, they are critiqued as either mere abstractions or potentialities that require actualisation through individual action.
- **Thelema:** A term used to denote a principle or force that embodies the will of the individual. The reference suggests that true authority and power lie within the individual rather than in an external Absolute.

- **Occult Conception of the World:** a worldview that posits spiritual realities beyond the physical, focusing on a hierarchy of existence that connects lower realities to higher spiritual principles within the individual self. This conception contrasts with purely rationalist philosophies by emphasising practical spiritual experiences over abstract ontological discussions.
- **Practical Principle:** the guiding force that prioritises action and experience in the understanding of reality. In occultism, this principle subordinates theoretical ontological discussions to the lived experiences and transformative practices of individuals.
- **Spiritual Realities:** entities or states of existence that are not directly observable or quantifiable but are considered significant for individual spiritual development. These realities are framed as objectives for self-actualisation, highlighting their importance in achieving unity and moral consciousness.
- **Phenomenology or Occult Metaphysics:** the study of spiritual experiences and their stages in the context of personal development. This approach uses mythic narratives to describe the transformative journey individuals undertake towards spiritual enlightenment.
- **Illusion:** in this context, the term refers to a necessary, albeit potentially misleading, belief in certain spiritual realities or entities that aid in personal development. While these beliefs may not reflect an objective truth, they can serve a methodological purpose in guiding individuals towards higher states of consciousness.
- **Moral Consciousness:** the awareness and understanding of moral values and principles that guide an individual's actions and decisions. The text suggests that the existence of concepts like 'evil' can be beneficial in the development of moral consciousness by providing a contrast against which 'good' can be defined.
- **Triad (Manas-Buddhi-Atma):** a framework within occult philosophy representing different aspects of the spiritual self. Manas refers to the mind, Buddhi to the intellect or higher understanding, and Atma to the true self or spirit. The integration of these aspects is crucial for achieving mastery over one's lower bodily functions.
- **Self-Generation:** the process of creating or manifesting one's existence and experiences from within, rather than being influenced solely by external forces. This concept emphasises individual agency in achieving spiritual evolution and immortality.
- **Intuition or Cosmic Consciousness (ἔξωωις):** a heightened state of awareness that transcends individual experience, connecting the individual to the universe's greater realities. This state involves a profound understanding of the interconnectedness of all existence and the spiritual dimensions of life.
- **Actuality vs. Possibility:** the distinction between what currently exists (actuality) and what can potentially exist (possibility).
- **Interminabilis Vitae Tota Simul et Perfecta Possessio:** a Latin phrase meaning 'the total and perfect possession of life at all times.' It reflects the idea of achieving a unified existence that transcends temporal limitations, aligning with spiritual ideals found in various philosophical traditions.

II

- **Verum et Factum Convertuntur:** a principle from Vico meaning 'the true and the made are convertible.' It indicates that truth is what is created by the Self, implying that knowledge is self-generated rather than passively received from external reality.
- **Absolute Knowledge:** the idea that knowledge must encompass the entirety of experience and must be created entirely by the Self to be unconditionally certain. Partial knowledge undermines the possibility of true certainty.

- **Concrete Individual:** the actual, lived experience of a person as opposed to abstract, idealised categories of the Self. The text critiques philosophies that deny the reality and autonomy of the concrete individual in favor of abstract cognitive activity.
- **Will:** the concept of the individual's intention and purpose, which, in this context, is critiqued by idealist philosophy as illusory. Philosophers like Royce suggest that the true will of the Self is revealed not in what the individual consciously desires, but in what opposes or thwarts that desire, leading to the paradox that the Self's true will is identified with impotence and passivity.
- **Coincidentia Oppositorum:** the merging of opposites (freedom and necessity, individuality and universality) in abstract thought. However, this ideal synthesis is criticised as detached from the real, lived experiences of individuals.
- **Epistemological Subject:** the idealist notion that the Self is the subject of knowledge and the source of all posited reality. This subject replaces the role of God in absolute knowledge, creating a mirage of omnipotence for the transcendental Self.
- **Self-Construction:** the idea that true knowledge and freedom come from the Self's active engagement in shaping reality. The text critiques the inertia that hinders this self-construction, leading to a state of impotence or surrender to external forces.
- **Concrete Knowledge:** knowledge that is tied to the actual, lived experiences and activity of the individual, rather than being an abstract, detached form of cognition. The text asserts that all knowledge is rooted in individual will and action.
- **Abstract Knowledge:** knowledge that is detached from lived, concrete experience and freedom. The text critiques this type of knowledge as it relies on the transcendental Self and negates the complexity of individual life forces, passions, and efforts. Abstract knowledge is seen as insufficient for grasping the full reality of human experience.
- **Intellectual Intuition:** a concept found in Fichte and Schelling that refers to a direct, non-empirical form of knowing in which the Self intuits reality as a product of its own activity, blurring the line between subject and object.
- **Concrete Freedom:** a concept critiqued in the text, referring to a type of freedom that is ultimately identical to necessity. In philosophies like those of Gentile, freedom is seen as adhering to an inevitable rational law, stripping the individual of real autonomy and reducing freedom to conformity with external forces.
- **Sufficiency of the Transcendental Self:** the belief that the transcendental Self can provide sufficient grounds for absolute knowledge and certainty. The text critiques this sufficiency as an illusion, pointing out the real impotence of the individual when confronted with the contingencies of life that cannot be fully known or controlled.
- **A Priori Forms:** the fundamental structures of experience, such as space, time, and causality, that shape how the Self perceives the world. These are accepted as forms of determinism that the individual must acknowledge as real, complicating the claim that the Self can fully determine or create its knowledge of the world.
- **'Empty Sound':** Kant refers to certain philosophical arguments as 'empty sound' (*'leere schall'*), implying that these arguments may have a surface appearance or rhetoric but lack substantive content or meaning. This phrase underscores his critique of metaphysical claims that cannot be grounded in empirical experience or rational necessity, often considering them mere noise devoid of genuine insight.
- **Freedom vs. Impotence:** the duality between the Self's ability to act freely (freedom) and its passive, constrained state (impotence). While the transcendental Self might appear free in the abstract realm of knowledge, the concrete individual experiences powerlessness when

faced with external realities like physical laws and circumstances that constrain actions and decisions.

- **Will and Power:** the concept of will is critical in this context as it relates to the Self's ability to act with intention and power. The text challenges philosophies like Royce's, which suggest that the 'true' will of the Self might align with what opposes the individual's conscious desires, indicating that true will reflects an external imposition of reality.
- **Autarchy:** the Self's absolute sovereignty and centrality, in which it recognises itself as the source of all power, meaning, and reality in its experience. It contrasts with the passive, dependent Self, which allows its reality and meaning to be defined by something external or 'Other.'
- **Error and Truth:** in this framework, error and truth are not distinct in kind but differ in degree. The intensity of one's affirmation and possession of something determines whether it is true or an error. A weak affirmation is considered error, while a strong, complete affirmation is viewed as truth.
- **Eastern Wisdom:** the reference to Eastern philosophy, particularly Vedanta and Buddhism, posits that knowledge is tied to the transformation of the individual. Absolute knowledge is achieved through a process of empowerment and self-realisation, rather than through intellectual clarity alone, as is more common in Western approaches.
- **Principle of Power:** knowledge and certainty are subordinate to the principle of power. This is the assertion that one can only truly know or possess what one has power over, underscoring the role of mastery and self-determination in acquiring absolute knowledge.
- **Non-centrality:** the condition in which an individual or entity lacks a core, self-sufficient identity or sovereignty. Instead of acting from an internal centre of power, such an entity is driven by external forces and appetites, leading to a dependent and peripheral existence.
- **Being:** that which exists, encompasses all entities, phenomena, and states of existence. It signifies actuality, presence, and the essence of things that have reality. Being can be divided into various categories, such as concrete Being: Physical entities (e.g., objects, organisms), abstract Being: non-physical concepts (e.g., ideas, numbers). And existential Being: The state of being alive or conscious. Questions of being often relate to understanding existence, identity, and the nature of reality itself.
- **Nonbeing:** the absence of existence or reality. It signifies the concept of nothingness, emptiness, or void. Nonbeing is often discussed in contrast to being, highlighting nullity (the state of lacking any form of existence or substance); nonbeing can be viewed as a precursor to being, representing possibilities that have not yet manifested. Nonbeing raises questions about the nature of absence, the conditions for existence, and the limits of our understanding. It also prompts discussions about the meaning of existence itself and whether something can arise from nothing. The relationship between being and non-being is central to various philosophical debates, including discussions on creation, existence, and metaphysical foundations. Many philosophers, such as Parmenides and Heidegger, have engaged deeply with these concepts to explore the essence of existence and the implications of non-existence.
- **Spirit:** the principle of absolute self-affirmation, autonomy, and pure, irreducible power. In this framework, Spirit represents a state of existence in which the Self is fully aware, free, and sovereign, acting without external compulsion or desire.
- **Necessity:** the opposite of freedom, referring to any situation in which action or being is determined by external forces or conditions, leaving no room for self-determined choice. It implies a lack of autonomy, in which actions are compelled rather than willed.

- **Absolute Will:** the concept of an unconditioned and free will that determines its own course of action, independent of external motives, desires, or constraints. This will is the source of true freedom and autonomy.
- **Servitude:** a condition of dependence and submission, in which the individual or entity is governed by external forces or principles, lacking autonomy and self-determination.
- **Positivity:** an attitude or condition of self-affirmation and active engagement with experience or reality, in which the individual creates meaning, value, or pleasure from their own will, rather than passively receiving them from external sources.
- **Appetites:** desires or impulses that compel the individual to act in pursuit of external objects, thus undermining their autonomy and self-possession. These appetites represent a form of internal compulsion, leading to dependence and a loss of centrality.
- **Motive:** an external or internal stimulus that drives the individual to act. In the framework of this text, motives undermine true freedom when they originate outside the Self's autonomous will, compelling the individual to act from a place of necessity.
- **Aseity:** the quality of being self-sufficient or existing in and of oneself. In this context, it relates to the concept of the Self or Spirit being the ultimate source of its own being and actions, without reliance on external forces.
- **Mystical Ecstasy:** a state of heightened consciousness in which the individual experiences the Absolute or divine in a passive, often overwhelming manner. While powerful, this experience lacks the active self-determination that characterises the form of Spirit described in the text.
- **Svechchhāchari:** a term from Indian philosophy referring to the condition of acting according to one's own will, without external compulsion or limitation. It denotes a state of ultimate freedom and self-determination.
- **Sollen (Ought to Be):** a German term meaning 'should' or 'ought,' which contrasts with 'sein' (is). This distinction highlights the difference between what exists (fact) and what is desired or demanded (normative claim). In this context, it points to the idea that universal knowledge is more of a normative expectation than a realised truth.
- **Platonic Exemplarism:** the philosophical position that eternal truths or ideals (such as those of good, beauty, or truth) exist independently of any subjective will or determination. These truths are objective and exist in a realm of forms or exemplars, as envisioned by Plato.
- **Freedom and Necessity:** these concepts are juxtaposed to highlight the difference between autonomous, self-determined will (freedom) and actions or states bound by predetermined conditions or laws (necessity). The text argues that necessity, even if it appears as rational or ideal, negates true freedom.
- **Analytic Determinism:** the philosophical idea that one's actions or being are inevitably determined by an unchangeable, inherent nature. It suggests that freedom is merely the unfolding of this predetermined nature, offering no real autonomy.
- **Synthetic Autonomy:** a radical form of self-creation in which freedom is absolute, creating itself from nothing (*causa sui ex nihilo*). This autonomy rejects any predetermined nature or external force that dictates one's being or actions, making the Self the sole author of its reality.
- **Causa sui** ('Cause of itself'): this concept represents the idea of self-creation or self-determination. In this text, it is linked to the absolute freedom of the Self, which exists as the sole author of its own being, free from external constraints or pre-existing determinations.

- ***Causa sui ex nihilo***: a concept of self-causation, in which the Self creates itself absolutely out of nothing. This idea emphasises a freedom that is unbound by any pre-existing nature, law, or external principle, often associated with existentialist and idealist philosophies.
- **Brute Fact**: an aspect of reality that is accepted as given and unchangeable, something that exists independently of the will or understanding of the individual. It represents necessity and external determination, which stands in opposition to autonomy and freedom.
- **Determinism**: a philosophical doctrine in which every event or state is determined by preceding causes or laws, leaving no room for autonomous, free will. In this context, determinism negates the possibility of genuine freedom and power.
- **Synthetic Autonomy vs. Analytic Determinism**: the contrast between the view that freedom is self-created and independent of any preconditions (synthetic autonomy), versus the view that actions are inherently determined by an existing nature or law (analytic determinism).
- **Spirit as Freedom**: a concept in which the spirit is defined as absolute freedom, unconstrained by any external laws, nature, or rationality. It emphasises the role of the spirit in arbitrarily creating its own being and laws, rejecting all forms of necessity.
- **Nature and Necessity**: the domain of external determination, in which actions and being are governed by unchanging laws or forces. Nature, in this sense, is contrasted with spirit, which is free and self-determining.
- **Master of Yes and No**: a metaphorical description of one who possesses the ultimate authority to affirm or deny, indicating a state of complete self-mastery and autonomy. It contrasts with the state of dependence, passivity, or servitude.
- ***Marché de dupes***: a French phrase meaning ‘a fool’s bargain.’ In this context, it refers to the pursuit of power through technology or natural forces, which ultimately leads to submission rather than true mastery. It critiques the illusion of control over nature when, in reality, such control requires submission to external laws.
- **Positive Science**: empirical sciences that study phenomena in an ‘extroverted’ way, focusing on observable appearances and laws rather than on the interior essence or spiritual foundation of things. In this passage, positive science is seen as inadequate for achieving true power, as it abstracts from the spiritual principles underlying phenomena.
- **Extroverted Attitude**: this concept refers to an approach that focuses on external appearances and objective realities, neglecting the inner, spiritual essence of things. It contrasts with a more inward, self-centred approach that connects phenomena to the metaphysical and the Self.
- **Mechanical Laws**: the laws of nature as understood through positive science, which are seen as rigid and external to the Self. The passage critiques the idea of power achieved through these laws, seeing them as the framework of submission rather than genuine freedom.
- **Metaphysical Productivity**: the idea that true power comes not from knowledge or adherence to external laws but from a deeper, creative force within the Self that can produce reality from within. This force transcends physical phenomena and conditions knowledge itself.
- **Elemental Magic**: the manipulation of natural forces through occult practices or mystical means. The passage critiques any form of power that depends on something ‘other’ than the Self, whether it be magic, the divine, or the subconscious, viewing such dependence as a form of powerlessness.
- **Autonomy and Autosuggestion**: the methods of conscious self-suggestion (such as those proposed by Émile Coué) that aim to manipulate the subconscious mind for power or self-

improvement. However, relying on the subconscious in this manner is seen as another form of external dependence rather than true autonomy.

- **Praxeology:** the study of human action and decision-making, especially in terms of their relation to power. In the passage, praxeology is mentioned in relation to the issue of how power is conceived—not just in practical terms but in terms of the Self’s relationship to external forces.
- **Deficiency and Non-Being:** the notion that anything over which the Self lacks power is a form of ‘non-being’ or deficiency. This is not an inherent condition but a state created by the Self’s relationship to necessity. It represents a point of tension that must be overcome for the Self to achieve absolute power.
- **Practical Reason:** in Kantian ethics, practical reason governs moral action and decision-making. In the passage, practical reason is upheld as the means by which the Self can reclaim its power over non-being and realise its freedom in a concrete, active way.
- **Autarch:** A self-ruling or autonomous individual who exercises complete control over their reality and being. In this passage, the autarch represents the ideal of someone who transcends all limitations, including deficiency and external laws, by reclaiming non-being and turning it into an expression of absolute freedom.
- **Indeterminacy:** the concept that uncertainty or lack of predetermined guidelines is essential for true freedom. This allows the Self to act spontaneously and autonomously, rather than being constrained by fixed knowledge or external laws.
- **Non-Being as a Resource:** the idea that the Self’s encounter with non-being or deficiency can be transformed into a source of power. The non-being is likened to fuel for a flame, representing a potential that can be consumed and transcended through the Self’s will and action.
- **Transcendent Power:** the notion that true power goes beyond mere physical or observable realms, penetrating deeper into metaphysical or supersensible entities. The passage argues that absolute dominion encompasses all experiences, dissolving boundaries between the spiritual and the physical.
- **Absolute Dominion:** the concept that an individual can reclaim the entirety of their experience, asserting control and power over all phenomena. It suggests that true dominion is not limited to specific instances or stages but is present in every aspect of existence, characterised by an infinite transcendent power.
- **Nishedha:** a Sanskrit term often translated as ‘negation’ or ‘prohibition.’ In this context, it signifies the function of power as negation, in which the act of denying oneself as mere existence leads to the affirmation of a higher state of being.
- **Shakti:** a Sanskrit term meaning ‘power,’ ‘energy,’ or ‘force.’ It represents divine feminine energy: the dynamic force associated with goddesses in Hindu philosophy; cosmic energy: the source of creation and sustenance in the universe.
- **Heraclitean πῦρ (fire):** the idea of fire as a symbol of change and transformation. In this context, it represents the infinite energy of spirit that both creates and dissolves, reflecting the dynamic nature of reality and the individual’s ability to assert power over all forms.
- **Absolute Point of Freedom:** a conceptual point at which the essence of individuality seeks autonomy and self-realisation, transcending the limitations imposed by space and time. It represents the culmination of the Self’s journey towards autarchy.
- **Absolute Individual:** the ideal individual who achieves complete self-realisation and autonomy. This concept implies that the Absolute Individual, or Persuaded, exists in a state of unchanging unity and self-love, creating and possessing all that emanates from this singular essence.

- **Transcendent Power:** a higher form of power that surpasses ordinary limits, characterised by unconditional negativity and the ability to synthesise experiences into a cohesive whole. This power is linked to the individual's essence and the act of creation.
- **Eternal Synthesis of Absolute Possession:** the idea that true power involves a continual process of integrating and consuming experiences within the Self, leading to an everlasting state of possession and control over one's reality.
- **Illumination:** in this context, illumination signifies the realisation of one's true nature and the essence of the individual. It suggests that the individual, while seeking this illumination, may feel overwhelmed by its brilliance, prompting a retreat from the absolute centre of their being.

III.

- **Cosmic Construction:** the concept that the Self is not merely an isolated entity but part of a larger cosmic framework that contributes to the creation and structuring of knowledge. This suggests that the Self has a role in the larger scheme of universal understanding.
- **Hypothetical Nature of Knowledge:** the idea that knowledge, especially in the context of science and its possibility, is based on assumptions that are not necessarily factual. This highlights the contingent nature of epistemology and how knowledge claims are often rooted in premises that can be questioned.
- **Gnoseological Deduction:** a methodological approach within magical idealism that seeks to establish the connection between knowledge and the Self. It posits that universal knowledge and the Self's existence are interdependent, arguing that the latter provides the basis for the former.
- **Finite Self:** the notion that the ordinary, everyday Self is limited and constrained by various external factors and contingencies, opposing the idealised conception of an absolute or infinite Self.
- **Experimental Science:** a discipline that investigates phenomena through empirical methods, which has begun to explore areas previously dismissed as absurd. The text argues that this science has yielded insights into human potential and the nature of the Self that challenge traditional notions.
- **Supranormal Knowledge:** knowledge that transcends ordinary human capabilities and understanding, suggesting that there are forms of awareness and cognition beyond the typical human experience. This knowledge is associated with phenomena such as clairvoyance and other extraordinary abilities.
- **Psychic Power:** the ability to influence one's own body, others, and even external matter through mental processes. This concept includes phenomena such as self-suggestion, hypnosis, and mediumship, in which thought or intention can manifest tangible effects.
- **Creative Power and Knowledge:** attributes traditionally ascribed to divinity that are suggested to be present within the human being. This idea posits that humans may possess latent abilities that allow for creativity and understanding that defy conventional limits.
- **Transcendental Possibilities:** the potential for experiences and phenomena that go beyond ordinary physiological or psychological explanations, suggesting a richer understanding of human capacities when viewed through a transcendental lens.
- **Normal and Subnormal Phenomena:** the range of human experiences, from typical states like sleep and dreams to pathological conditions like hysteria and madness. When examined beyond their immediate physiological or psychological aspects, these states reveal additional layers of human potential and freedom.

- **Supranormal Phenomena:** events or experiences that transcend the ordinary limits of human perception and understanding, often associated with paranormal or extraordinary capabilities. These phenomena challenge conventional scientific and philosophical frameworks.
- **Indeterminacy:** the state or condition of being not determined or predictable. It refers to the areas within reality in which the usual laws of nature and causality do not apply, allowing for greater freedom and the assertion of individual will.
- **Self-Mastery:** the ability of an individual to control and govern his own thoughts, emotions, and actions. This concept is crucial for achieving immortality and transforming one's experience, as it involves overcoming passive tendencies and asserting one's autonomy.
- **Organic Determinism:** the idea that an individual's thoughts, behaviours, and conscious experiences are heavily influenced or governed by his biological and physiological conditions. It suggests that the physical body and its processes constrain the capacity for conscious choice and self-assertion.
- **Transmutation:** the process of transformation or change, particularly in a spiritual or alchemical sense. In the context of the text, it refers to the individual's ability to transform their mortal existence into a state of immortality through conscious effort and development.
- **Kundalini Yoga:** a form of yoga that aims to awaken the latent spiritual energy (Kundalini) within an individual, often through practices involving meditation, breath control, and physical postures. It is associated with achieving higher states of consciousness and self-realisation.
- **Spiritual Body:** concept referring to a non-physical or higher aspect of the individual that transcends the material body. It is often associated with notions of immortality and spiritual enlightenment.

IV

- **Autogeneration:** the ability of an individual to generate or create themselves independently, transcending the limitations of heterogeneration. This concept is associated with self-creation and the realisation of one's own power, particularly in the context of achieving immortality through practices like Kundalini yoga.
- **Heterogeneration:** the condition in which an individual perceives their generative capacity as dependent on an external source, particularly in the context of sexual reproduction. This highlights the individual's inadequacy and the limitation imposed by mortality, suggesting that true generative power is not fully realised within oneself.
- **Being-in-itself (*Sein für sich*):** Key idea in Hegel's philosophy, particularly in his work *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In Hegel's dialectical framework, being-for-itself refers to a mode of existence that is self-aware and reflective. It contrasts with being-in-itself (or *Sein an sich*), which describes a state of existence that is merely given and lacks self-awareness. While being-in-itself denotes an object or thing that exists independently of any observer, being-for-itself embodies a conscious subject that recognises itself as distinct and independent. The transition from being-in-itself to being-for-itself represents a critical step in the development of consciousness. In Hegel's dialectic, consciousness evolves through stages, moving from a simple awareness of existence (being-in-itself) to a more complex self-awareness (being-for-itself). This evolution is a key part of Hegel's exploration of freedom and individuality. 'Being-for-itself' signifies a state of freedom and autonomy, in which the subject can affirm its own existence and desires. This self-affirmation leads to the development of individuality, as the subject recognises its own agency and capacity to shape its reality. The concept also highlights the relationship between the self and the other. Being-for-itself implies a recognition of others as separate entities, which is crucial for the

development of intersubjectivity and social relations. This dynamic is central to Hegel's understanding of the formation of self-consciousness within the context of the larger social and historical framework. Hegel employs being-for-itself in his dialectical method, emphasising that this state is not static but involves a continuous process of development and transformation. The self-conscious subject seeks to realise its freedom and overcome limitations, ultimately moving towards a higher unity in the synthesis of self and other.

- **Cosmic Power:** the inherent force within the individual that connects them to the larger cosmos, suggesting that the Self is not merely an isolated entity but part of a greater, dynamic system. This concept implies that the individual's realisation of their own power can lead to a deeper understanding of their place within the universe.
- **Conscious Self:** the aspect of the individual that is aware, reflective, and capable of agency. The conscious Self is central to the transformative process of establishing generative power within oneself, moving from a passive state to an active engagement with one's own capabilities.
- **Divine Generation:** a state of existence characterised by the realisation of one's own divine nature and the ability to create from that perspective. It contrasts with human or animal generation, which is seen as limited and dependent on external factors.
- **Chakras:** energy centres within the human body, traditionally understood in Eastern philosophies, particularly in yoga and tantra. Each chakra is associated with specific physical, emotional, and spiritual functions, and they correspond to various aspects of the cosmos, reflecting the connection between the microcosm (the human body) and the macrocosm (the universe).
- **Mahashakti:** the supreme cosmic power or energy, often associated with the feminine aspect of divinity in tantra. The individual aligned with Kundalini is described as indistinguishable from Mahashakti, embodying the entirety of the universe's power.
- **Purification:** a process aimed at achieving self-sufficiency and completeness by removing external dependencies or influences. This concept is essential in the context of achieving autogeneration and a higher state of consciousness, indicating that true purity lies in the realisation of one's own essence without reliance on 'other' elements.
- **Self:** the essence of an individual that is aware and capable of reflection and agency. In this context, the Self is often discussed in relation to the body and external conditions, emphasising the distinction between the passive, organic aspects of existence and the potential for self-determination.
- **Die Bestimmung des Menschen (The Vocation of Man):** in this book, Fichte explores the nature of human freedom, purpose, and moral agency, framed as a philosophical journey through doubt, knowledge, and faith. The book is structured into three parts—*Doubt*, *Knowledge*, and *Faith*—reflecting Fichte's own struggles with idealism and the nature of reality. In *Doubt*, he questions the reliability of human perception and the limits of self-determination. *Knowledge* delves into his concept of the 'I' as a self-determining agent, emphasising that human knowledge shapes one's world but may not grasp an absolute reality. In *Faith*, Fichte ultimately posits that one's true vocation lies in a moral and spiritual commitment to an infinite moral order, transcending purely rational limitations. This work represents Fichte's mature reflections on individual purpose and ethical self-realisation within a framework of idealism.
- **Autonomous Existence:** the capacity of the Self to act independently and assert control over its own life and reality. This concept suggests that true immortality and spiritual advancement come from the ability to determine one's own existence rather than being shaped by external factors.

- **Passivity:** the condition of being subject to external influences and lacking agency. In this text, it describes the ordinary individual's experience of life, in which they are often governed by unconscious organic systems and emotional responses rather than conscious choice.
- **Transformation of Mortality:** the process through which an individual moves beyond the limitations of physical existence and mortality. It involves actively reshaping one's being and existence to achieve a state of immortality, as opposed to simply seeking escape from the realities of life.
- **Kingdom of Heaven:** a metaphorical concept that represents a state of spiritual realisation and triumph over the limitations of mortal existence. It implies that true immortality is not a separate or distant state but is realised through conscious engagement with and mastery of earthly life.
- **Transmutation:** in this context, it refers to the process of transforming one's being from a base or mortal state into a higher, immortal state. This concept echoes alchemical ideas of changing base metals into gold, symbolising the elevation of the Self through spiritual practice.
- **Immortal Body:** a body that transcends the ordinary physical form, characterised by autonomy and the capacity for self-determination. This body is seen as a manifestation of spiritual power and freedom, distinct from mere material existence.
- **Body of Activity:** a term used to describe the spiritual body that acts with autonomy and shapes its existence. This concept emphasises the dynamic and creative potential of the individual in transcending mere physicality.
- **Magical Self:** the aspect of the individual that is capable of wielding creative and transformative power. This concept ties into the broader themes of self-construction and immortality through esoteric practices.
- **Androgyne:** a concept rooted in Platonic philosophy that represents the unity of masculine and feminine principles within the individual. It underscores the idea of wholeness and completeness that transcends the limitations of duality, particularly in the context of self-creation and transformation.
- **Generative Power:** the inherent creative potential within the Self that enables it to generate its own existence and reality. This power, when harnessed and directed inward, allows for self-creation and transcendence beyond traditional biological reproduction.
- **Dasein:** A term originating from Heidegger's philosophy, meaning 'being there' or existence. In this context, it relates to the existential grounding of the feminine principle and its implications for understanding the nature of existence and individuality.
- **Self-Sufficiency:** The state of being in which the individual possesses the autonomy and power to create and shape their own existence. It reflects the idea of achieving independence from external influences and fully realising one's inner potential.
- **Passive Life:** a state of existence in which the individual is subjected to external influences and lacks true agency. In this context, it denotes the ordinary experience of life that remains tethered to material and sensory conditions.
- **Absolute Life:** a transcendent state of existence that goes beyond the conventional understanding of life, often associated with divine or eternal realities. It is seen as incompatible with the passive experience of existence and can lead to annihilation for those unprepared.
- **Tantra-yoga:** a discipline that combines physical practices with spiritual teachings aimed at realising the interconnectedness of the individual and the cosmos. It involves the worship of deities as symbols of the principles governing both the body and the universe.

- **Elemental Components:** the fundamental principles or deities recognised within tantra that represent various aspects of existence, from the subtle to the dense. They reflect the hierarchical nature of reality and its manifestations.
- **Actualisation (*bhava*):** the process of bringing potential into reality. In the context of tantra, it refers to the realisation of the divine deities within the human body, transforming the individual into a conduit of cosmic energy.

V.

- **Value Judgment:** the process of evaluating and determining the significance or worth of experiences, beliefs, or actions. In magical idealism, this process becomes a creative act that transforms theoretical judgments into active expressions of existence.
- **Practical Application:** in the context of magical idealism, this refers to the active engagement of one's will and desire for self-realisation. It transcends theoretical understanding, requiring the individual to embody and enact the principles of magical idealism in his life.
- **Antithesis to Freedom:** a fundamental premise in magical idealism that recognises a deficiency within the Self, which serves as an obstacle to true freedom. This deficiency is seen as a necessary condition for the development of individual power.
- **Self-Realisation:** the process of discovering and manifesting one's true self, potential, or essence. It involves aligning the will with profound desires to achieve a deeper understanding of one's existence.
- **Personhood:** the state of being a person, characterised by self-awareness, individuality, and the capacity for reflection. In magical idealism, achieving personhood is a critical step in realising one's true nature.
- **Reflection:** the act of contemplating or considering one's own thoughts, feelings, and existence. This reflective process leads to an understanding of the Self as distinct from the natural world and a pathway to personal power and freedom.
- **Transcendence:** The act of going beyond ordinary limits or boundaries, particularly in terms of personal development or spiritual growth. In the context of magical idealism, it refers to overcoming the deficiencies of the Self to achieve a higher state of being.
- **Concrete Realisation:** the process of bringing abstract concepts or potentials into tangible existence through action and engagement with the world. This concept highlights the importance of practical experience in achieving self-realisation.
- **Mediated Awareness:** an understanding of the Self that is shaped through reflection and interaction with the external world. This form of awareness is a critical component of developing individual identity and personhood.
- **Tongebung (literally 'intonation')**: in philosophy, the term refers to the underlying tone or expressive quality that shapes how ideas and concepts are conveyed. It often reflects the mood, emphasis, or affective 'colour' a philosopher brings to his writing or speech, which can be as significant as the content itself in conveying meaning. For example, the *Tongebung* of a work might be solemn, ironic, hopeful, or critical, influencing how the reader or listener perceives and interprets the philosophical ideas presented. Philosophers like Nietzsche or Kierkegaard, for instance, are often noted not only for the substance of their ideas but also for the particular *Tongebung* they employ—Nietzsche's aphoristic, provocative style and Kierkegaard's earnest, sometimes ironic tone shape the experience and depth of engagement with their ideas. In this way, *Tongebung* is not merely about rhetorical style but about how the form of expression communicates aspects of a thinker's worldview and intention that might be difficult to capture in purely conceptual language.

- **Ideal Moment:** a theoretical point at which the Self can fully recognise and affirm its existence and power, enabling it to transcend limitations and achieve self-realisation.
- **Categories of Existence:** the various frameworks or systems through which individuals experience and understand reality. In magical idealism, these categories are connected to the realisation of individual values and the affirmation of the Self.
- **Cosmic Act of Creative Faith:** a foundational belief in the ability of the individual to manifest their will and intentions into reality, aligning personal desires with the broader forces of existence.
- **Articulated World of Reflection:** the structured and conceptual reality that emerges from the Self's reflective processes. It contrasts with the pure, formless principle of power and freedom, presenting a world perceived as empty and devoid of inherent meaning.
- **Cosmic Creative Powers:** the inherent forces or energies believed to govern the cosmos, which magical idealism seeks to restore to the individual, allowing for a greater expression of power and autonomy.
- **Integral:** in the mathematical context presented, it refers to the process of integrating a derivative back into an original function, symbolising the restoration of the Self's original power through magical practices.
- **Dynamic Forces:** active, living energies or influences that shape individual experience and perception, as opposed to static intellectual concepts. These forces encompass desires, will, and other profound aspects of the Self.
- **Samskāra:** in Indian philosophy, it denotes the imprints or latent tendencies formed by past experiences that influence behavior and perception. It represents both the conditioning of the individual and the underlying forces shaping their existence.
- **Transcendental Plane:** a realm of experience or reality that goes beyond ordinary perception, often associated with the higher spiritual or metaphysical dimensions of existence. Engaging with this plane allows for the transformation of reality.
- **Freedom:** The ability to act, choose, or determine one's course without constraint. In this context, freedom is described as a principle that leads to the fragmentation of the organic unity of being into a multiplicity of possibilities.
- **Deformative and Finitising Principle:** the aspect of freedom that introduces limitations and fragmentation into the originally unified experience of being, resulting in a diverse array of distinct particulars rather than a single, cohesive existence.
- **Phenomenon:** an observable event or experience, which, in this context, is seen as a manifestation of the underlying principles of the Self. It is contrasted with deeper, more abstract concepts of existence..
- **Cathartic Process:** a purifying or transformative experience that leads to emotional release and psychological renewal. In this context, it describes the Self's journey of distinguishing itself from its *samskāra* and reconstructing its identity.
- **Three Levels or Depths of Principle:** the conceptual framework that describes the manifestation of a phenomenon through three interconnected stages: (1) dynamic power, (2) the shaping concept, and (3) the absolute freedom that underlies both. This framework highlights the process of understanding and integrating various aspects of existence.
- **Preparatory Phase:** an initial stage of development focused on affirming the Self's autonomy and establishing active agency. This phase is crucial for cultivating the necessary qualities for deeper magical development.

- **Trial by Fire:** metaphorical experience of testing and purification through hardship and adversity. It represents the Self's journey of confronting and overcoming reliance on external supports to achieve greater self-sufficiency.
- **Active Scepticism:** a proactive questioning and challenging of beliefs, norms, and truths, aimed at establishing one's own understanding and integrity. This form of scepticism is seen as essential for the Self to detach from external influences and cultivate independence.
- **Conscious and Reasoned Madness:** a state of intense questioning and disruption of one's beliefs and norms, in which the Self pushes the boundaries of sanity in the pursuit of authentic self-realisation and freedom from external constraints.
- **Ultimate Reason for Itself:** the notion that the Self must be the primary source of its own existence and justification. This idea emphasises self-sufficiency and autonomy, transforming passive acknowledgment of independence into an active, living reality.
- **Mystical Experience vs. Magical Experience:** a distinction made between two modes of engagement with reality. The mystical experience involves merging with universal laws without asserting individuality, while the magical experience allows for the command and manipulation of these processes, asserting the Self's dominion over them.
- **Command and Manipulate:** the ability of the magician to exert control over natural processes or energies, contrasting with the passive engagement of the mystic. This capacity arises from the transformative power gained through the trial by fire.
- **Dependency and Detachment:** a complex relationship in which the Self recognises its dependence on external factors while striving for independence. True independence involves not merely rejecting external influences but also understanding and integrating them as part of the Self's development.
- **Trial of Suffering:** the enduring confrontation with negation or adversity that ultimately leads to self-realisation and freedom. This trial underscores the importance of resilience in the face of challenges as a means of asserting the Self's power.
- **Stoicism and Christian Resignation:** philosophical and theological approaches that emphasise acceptance of suffering as a pathway to deeper understanding and strength. They advocate for finding meaning in suffering, seeing it as a potential source of grace or enlightenment.
- **Active Will:** the principle that the Self must not only be autonomous in essence but also in action. This involves acting in a way that aligns with true independence, rather than being driven by personal desires or external motivations.
- **Desire vs. Love:** a critical distinction made between wanting something for oneself (desire) and wanting something for its own sake (love).
- **Violence as Weakness:** the idea that forceful or aggressive actions are indicative of weakness, as they reinforce dependency and conflict rather than achieving true autonomy. In contrast, gentle actions arising from love are seen as manifestations of strength.
- **Wei Wu Wei (Action without Action):** A central concept in Taoism that advocates for effortless action or achieving goals through non-intervention. It emphasises the idea that true mastery comes from alignment with the natural flow of existence rather than forceful exertion.
- **Gesture of Giving:** an action that signifies selflessness and the principle of relinquishing control, highlighting the notion that true power and magical force stem from generosity and love, rather than desire and attachment.
- **Rigid and Contracted Crystal of Affirmation:** a metaphor for the fixed, unyielding beliefs and identifications that trap the Self within a limited perspective, hindering its potential for growth and expansion.

- **Waves of New, Subtle Force:** the transformative energy generated by love that enables the Self to influence and dominate its environment, acting as a creative principle that extends beyond mere existence.
- **Path of the Dominator:** the journey towards achieving mastery and autonomy through rigorous self-discipline and transformation, allowing the individual to resolve internal conflicts and become a self-sufficient entity.
- **Impassibility:** A state of inner stability and detachment that allows the Self to remain unaffected by external or internal chaos, akin to a divine observer maintaining a higher perspective.
- **Deeper Negation of Self:** a phase of self-transformation that involves recognising and affirming the existence of things independently, shifting from abstract self-denial to a profound appreciation for the essence of objects of unconditional love.
- **Principle of Non-Resistance:** a philosophical idea advocating for adaptability and yielding, suggesting that true strength lies in the ability to navigate challenges without forceful confrontation, similar to the nature of water.
- **Hypostatisation of Trials:** the erroneous elevation of personal challenges or trials into ultimate goals, distracting from their true purpose as means for achieving greater self-realisation and understanding.
- **Absolute:** the ultimate reality or totality that encompasses all existence, from which true autonomy and clarity of purpose emerge, transcending the individual experiences of suffering or negativity.
- **Judgment of Value vs. Judgment of Existence:** a distinction between assessing the worth of something based on subjective ideals (value) and acknowledging its objective reality (existence).
- **Purification Phase:** a crucial stage in the transformative process in which the Self seeks to transcend passive sensory perception and attain an active, affirmative modality that generates perception from within, leading to a more profound engagement with reality.
- **Antithesis of Abstract Idealism:** the idea that the Self is inherently incomplete in its own activity due to the existence of an external, sensible world that reflects its limitations, presenting a challenge to the notion of self-sufficiency in idealism.
- **Passivity of Sensory Perception:** the condition in which sensory experiences are received rather than actively produced by the Self, leading to a form of constrained awareness and limiting conscious freedom.
- **Empirical Conjunction:** the manifestation of the Self's limitations in the relationship between sensory perception and the external world, highlighting the dependence on external stimuli for awareness and experience.
- **Active and Affirmative Modality:** a new way of perceiving that goes beyond mere reception to actively generate and affirm the existence of objects, signifying a more empowered and liberated engagement with reality.
- **Perfect Act (*τελεία ἐνέργεια*) vs. Imperfect Act (*ἀτελής ἐνέργεια*):** an Aristotelian distinction in which the function of perception evolves from a flawed, incomplete act (passive perception) to a complete, fully realised act (active perception), embodying the Self's creative power.
- **Abstraction from Sensory Perceptions:** the Self's capacity to detach from sensory inputs, allowing for a deliberate exclusion from consciousness and establishing an independent existence that transcends external influences.

- **Liberation and Purification of Sensory Powers:** the transformation of the senses from passive receptors to active producers of perception, empowering the Self to shape and generate experiences from within.
- ***Principium Individuationis*:** the underlying principle that determines individual experience, rooted in the Self's latent tendencies, desires, and karmic imprints (*samskāra*), which ultimately shape perception.
- **Seedless *Samādhi*:** a state of meditative absorption described by Patanjali, characterised by the complete dissolution of latent tendencies (*samskāra*) and the attainment of a pure, unconditioned state of consciousness
- **Material Congruence:** the alignment or compatibility between different experiences (sensory and magical) that emerges from the purification process, allowing for a cohesive understanding of reality.
- ***Pratyahara*:** a yogic practice of withdrawing the senses from external stimuli to enhance inner awareness and control over sensory perception.
- ***Dharana*:** the focused concentration on a single object, sensation, or thought, aimed at excluding all other distractions from consciousness.
- ***Dhyāna*:** a meditative state in which the Self generates a purely ideal object of focus, rich in internal vitality, allowing for deeper engagement and connection with the essence of the object.
- ***Samādhi* (with 'seeds')**: a state of deep meditation in which the Self connects with its potential and creative essence while still retaining some influence from *samskāra*, leading to a heightened state of awareness.
- **Organ of the New Active Form of Perception:** the redefined capacity of the Self to actively shape perceptions and experiences, akin to the power of imagination and suggestion, exemplified in phenomena like hypnosis.
- **Hypnotic Phenomenon:** a state in which an individual experiences vivid perceptions generated by the hypnotist, illustrating the active power of the mind to create experiences that can surpass ordinary sensory impressions.
- **Illusion vs. Reality:** the distinction between experiences perceived as deceptive or illusory and those considered real is reframed as a question of intensity. The sensible world is seen as a crystallised form of hypnosis, while hallucinations are weak and fleeting experiences.
- **Intensity of Experience:** the strength and persistence of an experience determine its classification as either a hallucination or a reality. A powerful and constant experience can be viewed as a 'true hallucination,' emphasising the subjective nature of perception.
- **Idealistic Premise:** the foundational belief that reality is restored to categorical activity when the concept of the 'thing-in-itself' is dismissed. This perspective opens up the possibility for reaffirming freedom and elevating imagination to a status equal to sensitive perception.
- **Imagination vs. Sensory Perception:** imagination is positioned as an active force that can generate experiences and perceptions, whereas sensory perception is seen as passive and reactive to external stimuli.
- **Retention in the Process of *Samādhi*:** the transformative journey towards *samādhi* is characterised by retaining and reforming existing perceptions rather than introducing entirely new content. This suggests a shift from passive to active engagement with the same experience.

- **Invariant and Seminal Reasons (λόγοι σπερματικοί):** the idea that an underlying, unchanging principle or body of seminal reasons connects different forms of perception, remaining intact until the Self distinguishes itself from its *samskāra*.
- **Dreaming as Productive Perception:** the concept that dreams illustrate a form of perception in which the Self is primarily acted upon rather than acting. Dreams arise from organic states, sensory impressions, or subconscious drives, highlighting a lack of control and autonomy.
- **Active Control in Dreams:** as the Self progresses, it gains awareness and the ability to direct its experiences in dreams. Initially marked by clarity, this active control evolves into a pure, undifferentiated awareness linked to *samādhi*.
- **Pure, Undifferentiated Awareness (ananta-jyotih):** a state of consciousness characterised by the absence of differentiation, achieved during sleep and correlating with *samādhi*. This awareness allows for the reemergence of the world shaped by *samskāra* in a new, active manner.
- **Magical Realisation:** the concept that through the attainment of a higher state of consciousness, the Self can experience reality in a transformative way, wherein the world is recreated from within, reflecting a new mode of perception.
- **The ‘Perfectly Awakened One’ (Buddha):** a literal and symbolic representation of enlightenment, in which the awakened state transcends ordinary perception and consciousness, embodying the ultimate realisation of the Self.
- **Integration of Waking and Dream States:** the necessity for the Self to reconcile and incorporate the waking physical world with the newly emerging world shaped by its productive mindset, emphasising the importance of active creation from within.
- **Chittashuddhi:** literally meaning ‘purity of consciousness,’ this concept refers to the process of cleansing the mind from distractions and impurities, enabling the Self to connect with its true essence and experience a higher state of awareness.
- **Active vs. Passive Perception:** a distinction between two modes of perception; active perception involves generating and shaping experiences from within, while passive perception relies on receiving sensory stimuli from the external world.
- **Ceremonial Magic:** a practice that employs rituals, symbols, and ceremonies to evoke or direct magical energies. It often relies on external elements to stimulate the imagination, stressing the role of context and belief in achieving desired outcomes.
- **Suggestion:** the psychological mechanism by which external influences or internal beliefs shape perception and experience. In the context of magic and imagination, it underscores the importance of self-determination and inner will in realising desired effects
- **Heterosuggestion:** a form of suggestion in which an individual is influenced by external stimuli or the suggestions of others, often leading to confusion between objective reality and fantasy. It emphasises the impact of external forces on perception and experience.
- **Translucent Imagination:** the notion that the imagination should be clear and free from impurities, allowing it to effectively engage with external realities without distorting or generating fantastic illusions. In Kabbalistic terms, translucence signifies clarity and purity in the imaginative faculty.
- **Great Magical Agent:** a term referring to the fundamental force or principle involved in magical practices. Engaging with this agent requires a purified imagination to ensure that the results are aligned with objective reality rather than mere fantasy.
- **Test of Love:** a concept that underscores the importance of assimilating into the objective world without personal bias or affirmation. This process is essential for maintaining objectivity and aligning one’s inner self with the external world.

- **Objective Antithesis:** the contrasting reality to subjective experience, which lays stress on the need for the individual to shape his perception and inner self based on external objective truths rather than personal feelings or beliefs.
- **Samyama:** a term from Patanjali's Yoga Sutras that refers to the integration of three practices: dhāraṇā (concentration), dhyāna (meditation), and *samādhi* (absorption). This process allows the individual to transcend ordinary perception and engage deeply with the object of focus.
- **Astral Light:** in Western occultism, this term refers to a pure, undetermined potentiality or substance from which new experiences are generated. It is considered the foundational substrate for the processes of purification and realisation in magical practices.
- **Dynamic Elemental World:** a realm in which various determinations are immediately experienced in their transparency, reflecting the active nature of reality. In this context, the world is seen as inherently dynamic, with its elements woven into the substance of the Self.
- **Interior and Exterior:** the relationship between the internal experiences of the Self and the external world. The Self transcends its concrete incarnation by engaging deeply with the external, achieving a productive sensitivity that allows it to feel and realise its surroundings.
- **Autonomy and Freedom:** the capacity of the Self to operate independently and creatively within the dynamic world, distinguishing itself from sensory determinations. This autonomy is achieved through the interiorisation of external experiences.
- **Self-denial and Dedication:** the practices necessary to overcome fear and the terror associated with self-transcendence. These qualities allow the individual to venture beyond the confines of the self, fostering the courage to engage with the dynamic world.
- **Small Egoism:** a state of being in which the individual is confined within a limited sense of self, characterised by fear and inadequacy. This egoism hinders the creative power of the Self and restricts the capacity to transfigure the sensible world.
- **Radical Avarice:** a concept attributed to Lao-tzu, referring to the fear of losing oneself and the desire to cling to the familiar. This avarice prevents the individual from embracing the pure activity of love and creative expression.
- **ὑστερήμα (Hysterema):** a term that denotes the act of transcending oneself or going beyond one's current state. It stresses the necessity of overcoming personal limitations to engage with the dynamic and creative forces of existence.
- **ἔκστασις (Ekstasis):** a state of deprivation or being outside oneself, representing the experience of being trapped in a hollow existence. The concept suggests that true life and creativity arise from surrendering the limited Self.
- **Interiorising the External:** this process refers to the way in which an individual projects external experiences inwardly, detaching them from the Self. It represents a form of internalisation in which external phenomena are assimilated into one's inner reality.
- **Dynamic Formations:** these are the various manifestations of objective reality that arise from the Self's internal transcendental dynamics. They represent the active, energetic aspects of experience as they are externalised from the Self.
- **Objectification:** the act of rendering internal experiences into external, perceivable forms. This process allows the Self to recognise and relate to its internal dynamics as separate from its external manifestations.
- **Sovereignty over the Efficient Plane:** the ability of the Self to exert control and influence over its experiences and the external world. This sovereignty is achieved through the projection and objectification of its internal dynamics.

- **Centrifugal vs. Centripetal Focus:** centrifugal focus refers to an outward orientation of perception, in which attention is directed away from the Self. In contrast, centripetal focus emphasises an inward orientation, in which the Self reflects on and engages with its internal experiences and the external world.
- **World of Inspiration:** a term used by certain mystics and neo-Rosicrucians to describe a realm of creative and transformative experiences. This world is characterised by deep interconnectedness with the Self and is associated with higher levels of perception.
- **Lower Devachan:** in Indian esotericism, this concept refers to a state of consciousness that represents a level of existence characterised by the inner reflection of the Self within a dynamic, interconnected world.
- **Dynamic Function:** the active capacity of the Self to engage with and influence the external world. This concept evolves to encompass not only the actions of the Self but also the superior principles that underlie and inform those actions.
- **Mediated Efficiency:** the effectiveness of the Self's actions as influenced by deeper principles that condition its experience. This efficiency is not direct but is shaped by the underlying dynamics of the Self.
- **Living Language:** a metaphor describing the unfolding of the world as a system of meanings and expressions that resonate with the inner dynamics of the Self. It suggests that the world embodies and communicates the profound interiority of the Self.
- **Transcendental Self-Recognition:** the process through which the Self recognises its essence and deeper layers through interaction with the external world. This recognition fosters a sense of unity and understanding of the Self's place in the cosmos.
- **Guardian of the Threshold:** a symbolic figure in occultism representing the challenges and tests one must face in the process of self-realisation and transcendence. It signifies the boundary between ordinary consciousness and higher states of being.
- **Supreme Phase of Purification:** the highest stage in the process of cleansing the Self from its attachments to *samskāra* and external phenomena, allowing it to achieve a state of transcendence and autonomy.
- **Immediate Efficiency:** a transcendental power of the Self that pertains to its ability to act directly and effectively within the world. This power signifies the capacity for spontaneous action without the mediation of reflection.
- **Reflective Conception:** the ability of the Self to think about and conceptualise experiences and phenomena. It is a more contemplative form of engagement with reality compared to immediate efficiency.
- **Bare Principle of Egoity:** the fundamental essence of the individual, representing the core identity of the Self. This principle underlies the existence of the totality of the world and the individual's formation.
- **Contingent and External:** the Self's perception of its deepest centrality and identity as separate and not inherently tied to its existence, allowing it to regard its own essence as an object in the same way it perceives external phenomena.
- **Unconditioned Cause:** the Self's ability to originate its existence independently, moving from a state of non-being to being through an act of creation. This act is fundamental to achieving true freedom.
- **Magical Realisation:** the attainment of a higher state of existence and power through the cathartic process. This state is characterised by an absolute sense of freedom and self-determination.

- **Eastern Epistemology:** a system of knowledge that values direct experience (aparokshajnana) and immediate experience (anubhava) as the highest forms of understanding. It rejects the notion of a 'thing-in-itself' and focuses on the realities present in immediate experience.
- **Elementary Empiricism:** the belief that knowledge arises from direct sensory experience rather than abstract concepts or inductions. This approach values what is immediately present and experienced.
- **Absolute Experience:** the highest form of experience, as exemplified by the rishi, who embodies a complete understanding of reality. This experience is seen as the foundation for an absolute reality.
- **Eternity Realised within the Rishi:** the idea that true eternity is experienced through a being who perceives reality in its absolute form, allowing that experience to permeate and transform the universe.
- **Sensible Phenomenon:** the immediate, observable aspects of reality that are perceived through the senses. According to this framework, these phenomena do not have a deeper reality behind them.
- **Synthetic Integration:** the process of synthesising various transcendental functions, moving from lesser to greater realities. This integration generates a comprehensive understanding of the Self and its relationship to the world.
- **Derivative:** the idea that the various transcendental functions arise from the act of integration rather than existing independently prior to that process. It highlights the interdependence of perception and the Self's active engagement with reality.
- **Dynamicity:** the inherent dynamism of the Self, which is projected into the phenomenal world. This dynamicity represents the active, self-creating aspect of existence that gives life and meaning to the external world.
- **Concept:** the mental framework or idea that encapsulates the understanding of a phenomenon. It serves as an intermediary between dynamicity and subjective entities, allowing for the interpretation of reality.
- **Subjective Entity:** an individual consciousness or inner centre of freedom that perceives and interacts with the world. This concept emphasises the personal, experiential aspect of existence.
- **Projection of the Self:** the act of externalising one's inner essence into the world, which enables the individual to experience reality as a reflection of their own dynamicity and meaning.
- **Phenomenal World:** the realm of observable phenomena that arises from the dynamic interplay of subjective entities. This world is shaped by the individual's projection of self and meaning.
- **Self-Liberation:** the process through which the individual purifies and transforms the Self, enabling the experience of a spiritual world. This journey is essential for achieving a deeper understanding of existence.
- **Continuum:** a concept that signifies the unity of the Self across different individual consciousnesses. It reflects the idea that despite apparent separations, there is an underlying unity connecting all beings.
- **Infinite Individual Consciousnesses:** the notion that individual consciousnesses are not isolated but part of a greater continuum. This highlights the interdependent nature of existence and the potential for the Self to project into multiple realities.

- ***Intus-ire***: a term that conveys the idea of transferring one's inner essence into other beings. It represents a form of deep empathy or connection with others, in which knowledge is gained through the projection of the Self.
- **Realm of Knowledge**: the domain in which understanding and connection occur, particularly through the projection of the Self. It signifies the potential for complete realisation of the magical principle that transcends individual existence.
- **Magical Principle**: the underlying force or essence that facilitates the transformation and interconnection of individual consciousnesses. It embodies the potential for creativity and freedom in the context of spiritual realisation.
- **Solipsism**: the philosophical idea that only one's own mind is sure to exist. In this context, it underscores the unrepeatable nature of the Self and the impossibility of acknowledging other Selves as possessing the same reality.
- **Immanent Certainty**: the intrinsic awareness of one's own existence and subjectivity that does not require external validation. It signifies a self-evident consciousness that mediates all experiences.
- **Mediation**: the process through which the Self relates to objects and experiences, asserting that all perceptions are filtered through the unique Self. This highlights the dependence of all experiences on the singularity of the Self.
- **Unreflexiveness**: a state of being unaware of oneself as the subject that underlies the act of positing objects in the world. It involves losing sight of the Self while engaging with external experiences.
- **Hierarchical Subordination**: the arrangement of elements in a hierarchy in which the unique Self is considered superior to any objects or other Selves. This concept emphasises that multiplicity requires a unifying principle to be meaningful.
- **Pythagorean Unity**: the idea that individual entities derive their existence from a singular principle (the One). This notion underlines the necessity of a higher unifying essence for the existence of multiplicity.
- **Individuated Consciousness**: a form of consciousness that is confined to a particular identity or experience. This state can be transcended to achieve a broader awareness that encompasses multiple individual consciousnesses.
- **Initiatory 'We'**: a collective sense of identity that emerges when the individual transcends personal limitations to connect with a greater consciousness. This concept implies a shared experience among individuals while maintaining the integrity of the Self.
- **Universal Subject**: a higher consciousness that contains and encompasses individual consciousnesses. This term reflects the idea that the personal Self is a manifestation of a more extensive, universal reality.
- **Entelechy**: the realisation of potential or the actualisation of an inherent purpose within an organism or principle. In this context, it represents the guiding force that relates individual subjects to their functions.
- **Continuity and Progressivity**: the notion that there is a seamless progression from individual consciousness to the Universal Subject, suggesting that development is ongoing and integral to the nature of reality.
- **Synthetic Process**: an integrative approach to understanding reality in which the individual consciousness actively participates in creating a unified experience. This contrasts with merely recognising pre-existing unity.

- **Act of Actualisation:** the conscious effort to transform a state of deprivation into a realisation of sufficiency or wholeness. This act embodies the essential movement towards unity and self-realisation.
- **Christ's Gathering of the Limbs of the Ineffable:** a metaphorical expression that illustrates the process of unifying disparate elements of existence through a divine or transcendent principle. It stresses the importance of bringing together separate beings into a cohesive whole.
- **Absolute Reality:** a state of existence in which determinations are unconditioned and free from negative contingency. This reality is achieved through the absolute act, which transcends ordinary existence and reflects the fullness of being.
- **Naive Supersensible Realism:** a state of understanding that mistakenly attributes equal or superior dignity to spiritual entities compared to the individual's experience. It reflects a failure to recognise the contingent nature of the spiritual world relative to the Self.
- **Microcosm and Macrocosm:** concepts referring to the relationship between the individual (microcosm) and the universe or cosmic order (macrocosm). The microcosm is a reflection of the macrocosm, indicating a holistic connection between the two.
- **Free Necessity:** the idea that while certain processes and structures exist within the universe, they are not determined by an external necessity. This concept allows for the understanding of choice and agency in the context of existence.
- **Supreme Liberation (*mahanmukti*):** the ultimate state of freedom achieved through the transcending of all limitations, including those of nature and existence. It represents a complete realisation of the Self as unconditioned and independent.
- **Unity (*kaivalya*):** a state of complete oneness and integration with the universe, achieved through the realisation of the Self beyond all dualities and separations.
- **Pure Being and Pure Nothingness:** a philosophical assertion, particularly attributed to Hegel, that pure being is indistinguishable from pure nothingness, highlighting the paradox inherent in existence and the limits of logical reasoning.
- **Carlyle's Challenge:** a philosophical inquiry that questions the fundamental reason for existence itself. Carlyle emphasises the need for a deeper exploration of the nature of being, rather than merely the conditions of individual existence.
- **Negative Contingency:** the idea that certain aspects of existence lack inherent necessity and are therefore contingent upon external factors. This concept emphasises the limitations of phenomena that arise from transient conditions rather than absolute truths.
- **Rationality of Being:** the philosophical inquiry into the nature of existence, emphasising that reason can understand the essence of things but struggles to explain their mere existence. This concept highlights the limitations of logical comprehension in grappling with fundamental questions of being.
- **Irrationality of Being:** the notion that existence, in its most basic form, cannot be fully comprehended or explained by reason. This idea suggests that while we can analyse and understand the nature of things, the mere fact of existence remains an enigmatic reality.
- **Impenetrable Fact:** a concept that indicates certain truths or realities resist full understanding or explanation. This highlights the inherent mystery of existence that persists despite philosophical inquiry.
- **Ultimate Reference Point:** a foundational principle or concept that serves as a guiding basis for understanding other ideas or experiences. It often refers to the Self or consciousness that provides coherence to various existential inquiries.

- **External Perfection:** the ideal state of being in which the individual embodies the highest virtues and qualities, reflecting a spiritual absolute that encompasses and integrates all aspects of existence.
- **Absoluteness:** the quality of being complete, unconditioned, and independent, often associated with a higher state of existence that transcends particularities and multiplicities.
- **Cosmic Functions:** the various roles or operations within the universe that contribute to the overall order and dynamic of existence. At the level of spirit, these functions are elevated to a spiritual significance, reflecting the interconnectedness of all things..
- **Eternal Illumination:** a state of perpetual enlightenment or awareness that transcends temporal limitations. It signifies the ultimate understanding of reality and self that is constant and unchanging.
- **Magical Development:** the process of spiritual evolution and transformation that allows individuals to refine their powers and capacities through conscious engagement with their higher selves and the principles of magic.
- **Heteronomy:** a state of dependence on external authorities or influences, as opposed to autonomy, in which one acts according to their own principles and values. This concept highlights the dangers of seeking power outside of self-affirmation.
- **Perfect Possession:** the state of fully realising and embodying one's potential and powers. It is not merely a phase but a way of experiencing all stages of development, indicating a deep level of self-awareness and integration.
- **Interval:** the space or moment of transition between states of being. In this context, it signifies the transformative experience through which the Self reaffirms its identity and existence, acting as the bridge between different forms of consciousness.
- **Judgment of Existence vs. Judgment of Value:** the distinction between understanding one's mere existence and comprehending the value and significance of that existence. The resolution of these judgments leads to a deeper synthesis and understanding of self and reality.
- **Brahman:** in Hindu philosophy, Brahman is the ultimate reality or cosmic spirit that underlies all existence. It is often described as the source of all things, encompassing both the manifest and unmanifest aspects of reality.
- **Chakravarti:** a Sanskrit term referring to the 'lord of the wheel,' symbolising the ruler or authority that governs the cycle of existence. In the context of this passage, it represents the realisation of unity with the eternal Self that governs all.
- **Peace of Immortality:** the state of transcending the limitations of physical existence, achieving a sense of eternal peace and unity with the cosmos. It signifies liberation from the anxieties of mortal life and the recognition of one's enduring nature.

VI

- **Transcendental Function:** a philosophical idea that refers to the underlying principles that govern phenomena and the relationship between the individual and the universe. It highlights the metaphysical roots of experiences and the importance of understanding how these principles manifest in reality.
- **Freedom and Power of the Individual:** this concept asserts that true agency lies in the individual's ability to determine their own existence and values. It emphasises self-affirmation as the foundational condition for personal development, contrasting with notions of external constraints or predetermined paths.
- **Microcosm and Macrocosm:** a concept referring to the relationship between small-scale systems (microcosm) and larger universal systems (macrocosm). The text indicates that

understanding one's personal existence (microcosm) is essential to grasping one's connection to the greater universe (macrocosm).

- **Hierarchical Subordination:** this term denotes the structured relationship between different levels of existence or consciousness, in which higher levels have authority or influence over lower ones. In the context of magical idealism, it suggests that the unique Self holds a superior position over other consciousnesses.
- ***Ich-Heit* (literally, 'I-ness' or 'I-hood')**: this German term is often used in philosophy to refer to the quality or essence of the *Ich* ('I' or 'self')—in other words, the unique, subjective presence or self-awareness of an individual as an 'I.' This term often highlights the distinctiveness of personal identity and the experience of being oneself as an autonomous, self-reflective being. *Ich-Heit* involves not just the existence of a person as an individual but his inward sense of self as an agent who perceives, thinks, and acts. In German Idealism and related philosophies, such as those of Fichte and later thinkers, *Ich-Heit* is integral to discussions of self-consciousness and autonomy. Fichte's philosophy, for example, places the *Ich* as central, emphasising how one's self-awareness and sense of *Ich-Heit* shape the construction of reality. Similarly, *Ich-Heit* becomes essential in existentialist and phenomenological contexts, in which it conveys the deeply personal and often irreducible nature of one's self-experience. It captures the idea that each self has a unique vantage point and existential orientation, making *Ich-Heit* not just an abstract quality but the lived reality of one's individual consciousness.
- **Illumination:** a metaphorical term used to describe a moment of clarity or realisation where understanding transcends the mere existence of being. It signifies a transformative insight that enables the individual to grasp deeper truths about their existence and the universe.
- **Condition for its Own Possibility:** a philosophical idea suggesting that the existence of something (such as self-affirmation) is a prerequisite for its own realisation. This underscores the active role of the individual in creating the conditions for their development.
- **Heteronomy:** a condition in which one's actions or decisions are influenced or controlled by external forces, rather than being self-directed. In contrast to autonomy, heteronomy implies dependency and lack of true self-determination.
- **Ineffable Man** (*ἄνθρωπος ἄρρητος*): a term referring to a transcendent aspect of humanity that embodies profound spiritual insight and wisdom, suggesting that the true nature of being goes beyond ordinary human understanding and language.
- **Ideality of Time:** the philosophical concept that time is not an independent entity but a category through which the Self organises and interprets experiences. This posits that time is a framework for understanding reality rather than a linear sequence of events.
- **Metatemporal Act:** an action or expression of the Self that transcends temporal limitations, allowing for the understanding of the past, present, and future as interconnected within the individual's experience, rather than as isolated or predetermined moments.
- **Given-ness:** this term refers to the quality of something as directly presented to consciousness, without interpretation or conceptualisation. Central in phenomenology, it highlights how objects or experiences appear self-evidently to consciousness. Philosophers like Husserl and Heidegger explore this immediacy in their studies of perception and intentionality, emphasising how phenomena manifest directly, grounding knowledge and understanding in the structure of immediate experience
- **A Priori and A Posteriori:** a priori refers to knowledge or justification that is independent of experience, while a posteriori refers to knowledge that is dependent on experience. The text discusses how the individual asserts their freedom and determination at a timeless, metahistorical juncture (a priori), which then manifests in their historical experience (a posteriori).

- **Plastic Faculty of History:** the idea that history is flexible and malleable, shaped by the individual's will and creativity rather than being a rigid, predetermined path. This suggests that history can be actively crafted by the individual rather than passively endured.
- **Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis:** a dialectical method in which an initial proposition (thesis) encounters its opposite (antithesis), leading to a resolution (synthesis) that incorporates elements of both. In this context, it refers to how magical idealism synthesises romantic rationalism and materialism to form a new understanding of individuality.
- **Historical Necessity of Magical Idealism:** the notion that magical idealism arises logically from historical developments and philosophical arguments. It asserts that the evolution of thought culminates in a framework in which individuals can actively shape their realities rather than being constrained by historical determinism.
- **Concrete Content:** the tangible, lived experiences and values that enrich abstract concepts. In the context of magical idealism, it suggests that the individual's affirmation and power are rooted in real, practical contexts rather than abstract theoretical frameworks.
- **Absolute Value:** a value that exists independently of external conditions and is intrinsic to the individual's existence. This concept underscores the notion that true significance comes from within rather than being dictated by societal or historical forces.
- **Sittenlehre** ('moral philosophy' or 'ethics'): this German term refers specifically to the study of principles and laws governing moral behaviour, often concerning duties, virtues, and the norms of conduct that define ethical life. In philosophical texts, *Sittenlehre* addresses the foundation of moral obligations and explores what it means to live in accordance with ethical standards. The term is notably used by Kant in his *Metaphysik der Sitten*, in which he establishes a moral framework based on the categorical imperative, advocating for actions that respect universal moral laws. For Kant, *Sittenlehre* involves deriving ethical principles a priori, meaning from reason alone, independent of empirical influences. Kant's approach is deontological, focusing on duty and rational principles rather than consequences. Beyond Kant, *Sittenlehre* has broader applications in German philosophy and theology, often encompassing both theoretical and practical dimensions of moral thought, linking ethical duties to societal customs and personal character development.
- **Realisation of the Ideal:** the process through which abstract ideals become manifested in reality. In magical idealism, this entails the individual's ability to embody and express their ideals in practical, meaningful ways within the real world.
- **Derealisation of the Real:** a concept implying the transformation of reality to align with ideals, indicating a shift in which the ideal becomes more significant than mere existence, challenging traditional notions of what is 'real' by elevating subjective experience.
- **Persuasion:** in Michelstaedter's philosophy, persuasion refers to the absolute self-sufficiency of the Self. It is the condition in which the Self does not rely on external relationships or entities for its existence, embodying a state of true autonomy and self-affirmation.
- **Non-value:** this term denotes aspects of existence that are devoid of intrinsic worth or meaning, characterised by dependence on external factors, needs, and social conventions. Non-value is associated with deficiency and a lack of true existence.
- **Deficiency:** the condition of lack or insufficiency that drives the individual to seek fulfilment outside of themselves. It is seen as a fundamental aspect of the human experience that leads to dependence and the pursuit of external validation.
- **Continuous Existence:** a perception of the Self that views existence as ongoing but lacking in true possession. This concept emphasises the struggle of the Self to affirm its existence in the face of dependency and the illusion of future fulfilment.

- **Gravitation of Deficiency:** the metaphorical force that compels individuals to seek value and fulfilment externally. It highlights the tendency of the Self to chase after what it lacks rather than affirming its intrinsic value.
- **Firmness in Being:** the state of self-affirmation in which the individual stands resolutely in their existence, rejecting the pursuit of external validation and embracing their intrinsic value. It represents a stabilisation of the Self in the present moment.
- **Cosmic Responsibility:** the idea that the act of persuasion and self-affirmation extends beyond individual existence to encompass a universal dimension. It requires the individual to engage with the world and its deficiencies rather than escape from them, thus taking responsibility for their own being and the broader cosmos.
- **Illusion of Abstract Inner Consistency:** the belief that one can achieve value and persuasion through mere internal consistency or rational abstraction, similar to Stoicism. This is challenged by the argument that true persuasion necessitates a more dynamic engagement with reality and the acknowledgment of one's deficiencies.
- **Ultimate Present:** a concept referring to the intense experience of being fully engaged in the present moment, transcending the anxieties of past and future. It signifies a state of existence in which the individual embraces their reality without seeking external validation.
- **Ultimate Consciousness:** a state of awareness in which the Self achieves a complete unity with all things, recognising its inherent value and connection to the cosmos. It signifies a holistic understanding of existence, in which the individual perceives itself as part of a greater whole.
- **Cosmic Consummation:** the ultimate realisation of the Self's value and power, leading to a harmonious existence with the world. It represents the fulfilment of the individual's potential and the affirmation of absolute self-sufficiency.
- **Deprivation of the Self:** the condition of lacking intrinsic value or fulfilment, which drives the individual to seek external validation or resources. It signifies a fundamental deficiency in existence that results from the inability to affirm oneself.
- **Symbol of Deficiency:** an external object or concept that represents the void experienced by the Self. For instance, water is a symbol of the thirst that arises from the Self's lack of self-sufficiency.
- **Creative Function of the World:** the notion that the individual is not merely a passive observer of the world but an active participant in its creation and transformation. This concept aligns with the idealist view that the Self posits reality.
- **Moral Imperative:** an ethical obligation to act in a way that affirms the individual's autonomy and recognises the interconnectedness of existence. It involves acknowledging one's role in shaping the world and taking responsibility for its inherent deficiencies.
- **Recognition of Negation as Value:** the understanding that the act of negation itself can embody value. This suggests that recognising and addressing deficiencies is integral to achieving a higher state of existence.
- **Dynamic Principle of Persuasion:** the idea that persuasion is not a static state but an active process that involves negating insufficiency and asserting one's value. It underlines the relational aspect of existence, in which the Self engages with the world to achieve self-affirmation.
- **Transcendental Root of Non-value:** the fundamental cause of the absence of value in existence, which must be addressed to overcome deficiencies. It refers to the underlying motivations and desires that drive individuals away from self-realisation.

- **Sufficient Action:** actions that arise from a state of power and self-mastery, in contrast to actions driven by external needs or deficiencies. Sufficient action signifies a mode of existence in which the individual operates from a place of fullness rather than lack.
- **Cosmic Ruler (see Autarch):** the ideal individual who embodies absolute self-sufficiency and power, exercising creative agency over their existence and the world. This concept aligns with the vision of an individual who transcends limitations and asserts their authority over reality.
- **Neutral Point (Laya):** a conceptual space between two opposing phases or conditions, serving as a point of potential transition or transformation. It reflects the balance between affirmation and negation in the pursuit of self-realisation.
- **Doctrine of Power:** a philosophical framework that underlines the role of individual agency and creative expression in shaping reality. It posits that true power arises from the affirmation of self and the ability to act meaningfully within the world.
- **Value:** value represents an intrinsic quality or worth attributed to concepts, experiences, or actions, particularly in a metaphysical context. It signifies the deeper significance that goes beyond mere logical relations and embodies the higher dimension through which individual experiences are defined and understood.
- **Absolute Will:** in the philosophy of Otto Braun, absolute will refers to a powerful, self-creating force that embodies a profound and transformative capacity to shape reality. It transcends passive acceptance and strives for active engagement and recreation of the world, highlighting the dynamic nature of human potential.
- **Demiurgic Power:** the creative and transformative force within an individual that aspires to manifest absolute reality and spiritual values in the material world. It reflects the idea that humans possess the capacity to actively shape their existence and influence the world around them.
- **Creative and Synthetic Power:** this concept emphasises the necessity for individuals to harness and integrate various experiences and influences into a coherent personal vision or value. It suggests an active engagement with life, in which the individual actively molds their reality rather than passively receiving it.
- **Freedom of the Will:** this notion encapsulates the idea that true freedom involves the ability to transform and direct one's experiences towards a defined purpose. It implies an active engagement with one's desires and passions, requiring both self-control and intentional action to shape one's life and reality.
- **Discipline of Will:** the structured approach to managing one's passions and desires in pursuit of a greater purpose. It highlights the balance between experiencing deep emotions and exercising self-restraint, allowing for a deliberate action that leads to personal growth and transformation.
- **Elemental Level of Formative Power:** this concept pertains to the foundational energies or forces that drive creativity and transformation within an individual. It suggests an intuitive understanding of the raw material necessary for shaping one's identity and contributions to the world, highlighting the importance of this inner awareness for realising one's potential.
- **Sufficiency unto Oneself :** this phrase suggests an ideal of self-reliance and independence, particularly in the context of creative genius. It stresses the importance of solitude and self-sufficiency as essential conditions for profound creativity and personal development.
- **Solitude of the Unique:** this concept refers to the individual experience of isolation that is essential for the emergence of unique creativity and genius. It underscores the notion that true creative insight often requires a degree of separation from societal influences.

- **Passive Activity:** In this context, passive activity is viewed with distrust as it implies a lack of intentionality and conscious engagement in the creative process. The emphasis is on the necessity of active and disciplined will in creative production, rather than succumbing to inspiration or external influences.
- **Discipline of the Spirit:** this term denotes a rigorous and structured approach to personal development and creativity, characterised by a passionate internal drive balanced with external restraint. It represents the synthesis of fervor and control, allowing for effective self-mastery.
- **Virility:** In this context, virility refers to strength, assertiveness, and the capacity for personal development. It encompasses not just physical prowess but also an inner strength and determination to realise one's aspirations and potential.
- **Maternal Soil :** this metaphorical concept symbolises the foundational cultural and historical roots of an individual or society. It suggests that a deep connection to one's heritage is essential for growth and expansion into broader realities.
- **Autocthisis:** A neologism introduced by Giovanni Gentile, derived from Greek roots αὐτός (autós, meaning 'self') and κτίσις (ktísis, meaning 'creation'). It denotes the notion of self-creation or self-manifestation, emphasising the idea that individuals can shape their own existence and essence through their will and actions.
- **Transcendental Essence:** the fundamental, deeper nature of the Self that exists beyond mere physicality or social roles. It emphasises the need for individuals to first dominate and understand their inner selves before exerting influence over others or external realities.
- **Dominion over Self:** this concept denotes the idea that true power begins with self-mastery. It suggests that before one can assert control or authority over others, one must achieve complete dominion over one's own body, mind, and desires.
- **Sambhogakaya:** in Mahayana Buddhism, *sambhogakaya* represents the 'enjoyment body' of a Buddha, symbolising a state of blissful awareness and enlightenment. It implies a realisation of a higher consciousness that allows individuals to perceive and interact with the interconnectedness of all beings.
- **Transcendence of Value:** this term refers to the idea that individuals sometimes subjugate their own will to a higher obligation or mission, which can lead to an overemphasis on duty at the expense of personal power and autonomy. It questions whether such obligations come from a higher, possibly external, source.
- **Demonic Force:** In this context, it refers to a perceived superior power or influence that drives individuals to submit their will in service of a higher cause or obligation. It implies a complex relationship between personal agency and external expectations or ideals.
- **Actualised Power:** this concept highlights the manifestation of one's inner potential and will into concrete actions and realities. It emphasises the necessity of aligning one's desires and actions with a sense of purpose and fulfilment.
- **Pure Act:** in Gentile's philosophy, the 'pure act' refers to the ultimate expression of existence and self-realisation. It posits that true existence is not merely a state of being but an active engagement with reality, wherein the Self defines and asserts its existence through action.
- **Epistemological Subject:** this term refers to the thinking Self that engages in the act of knowing. It underscores the role of the subject in constituting knowledge and experience, highlighting the relational nature between the thinker and the object of thought.
- **Thought Object:** a thought object refers to an idea or concept that is contemplated by the thinking subject. Its existence is mediated through the logic that frames it, indicating that it cannot exist independently of the cognitive processes that create it. In the context of

Gentile's philosophy, a thought object represents anything that the epistemological subject contemplates or engages with. It underscores the necessity of a relational framework between the thinker and what is being thought about.

- **Logic of the Thought Object:** this pertains to the abstract rules or laws that govern the formation and understanding of thought objects.
- **Dialectic of the Thinking Subject:** this refers to the actual, concrete processes of thinking, in which the subject engages with and interprets the world. The distinction between these two is problematic because the laws governing thought objects reflect the concrete processes of thought, making it difficult to separate the abstract from the concrete.
- **Abstract Logos:** the conceptual framework or understanding that does not directly engage with the concrete reality.
- **Concrete Logos:** the tangible, lived experience of thought and reality.
- **Kant's Noumenon:** In Kantian philosophy, the noumenon is the thing-in-itself, which exists independently of human perception. It contrasts with phenomena, which are the appearances of things as perceived by the senses.
- **Determination:** the process through which the thinking subject ascribes meaning and identity to the thought object, shaping it within the context of self-awareness and consciousness.
- **Self-Positing:** the act of establishing one's identity and existence through conscious thought and reflection. It involves distinguishing the Self from the non-Self, thus enabling self-awareness.
- **Athanasius' Conception of the Divine Trinity:** Athanasius presents a Christian theological understanding of the Trinity, which emphasises the relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as distinct yet unified. This is used as a metaphor to illustrate the complexities in Gentile's understanding of the relationship between the Self and the Other.
- **Transcendental Deduction of Becoming:** a philosophical exploration aimed at grounding the process of becoming or change within a coherent and justified framework, addressing the deeper implications of existence and identity.
- **Essential Determinateness:** the inherent characteristics or laws that define a particular entity or nature. Each law implies a legislator, suggesting an underlying principle or power that dictates the characteristics of that nature.
- **Legislator:** in this philosophical context, a legislator refers to the governing principle or force that establishes the laws that define nature. This raises questions about the origins of these laws and the nature of the authority behind them.
- **Self and Non-Self:** a philosophical dichotomy in which the Self represents the individual consciousness or identity, while the Non-Self pertains to everything external or different from the Self. This distinction raises questions about individuality, identity, and existence.
- **Unconditional Condition:** a term used to describe a foundational premise or principle that is supposed to be absolute and without limitations. The discussion challenges the validity of the idea that a condition can be truly unconditional.
- **Anstoss (Opposition):** a term used in Fichte's philosophy referring to the necessary opposition or resistance that helps define the Self and its actions. It highlights the relationship between self-consciousness and external influences.
- **Imperativity of the Law:** the authoritative nature of a law that commands or obliges action. It raises questions about the necessity of laws and their relationship to human freedom.

- **Contingency:** the philosophical concept that denotes the possibility of events occurring without being determined by necessity. It refers to the unpredictable and often random nature of existence.
- **Identity of Freedom and Law:** the concept that freedom is inherently linked to the laws governing actions. In this context, it suggests that true freedom cannot exist without some form of law or structure guiding it.
- **Vis a Tergo (Force from Behind):** a driving force or compulsion that prompts an individual to act according to duty or obligation. It reflects the internal motivations behind moral actions.
- **Gnostic Thought:** a belief system that highlights the acquisition of secret knowledge (gnosis) for spiritual enlightenment and understanding of the divine. It often involves dualistic views of the material and spiritual worlds.
- **Irrationalism:** a philosophical position that lays stress on the limits of reason and the importance of non-rational forces, emotions, or instincts in understanding reality. It often critiques the dominance of rational thought in traditional philosophy.
- **ἄλογον (Alogos):** a Greek term meaning 'irrational' or 'non-rational.' It refers to forces or principles that do not conform to logical reasoning but are nonetheless essential to existence and experience.
- **Spontaneity:** the quality of acting or occurring without external influence or premeditation; in this context, it refers to the Self's immediate engagement with reality.
- **Chaos ausserhalb des Systems (Chaos Outside the System):** a term describing the disordered and unpredictable state of reality that exists independently of any structured philosophical system.
- **Müssen (Must):** an absolute duty or necessity; it denotes what is fundamentally true and binding in moral or existential terms.
- **Actualism:** a philosophical perspective positing that reality (*Dasein*) must be accepted as the foundational criterion for understanding existence, as opposed to elevating will to a position of dominance.
- **Cosmological Function of the Self:** the role of the Self within the broader context of existence and reality, encompassing how it perceives and interacts with the universe.
- **Logic of Gentilian Pure Act:** a concept in Gentile's philosophy that describes an overarching principle or logic that is abstract and universally applicable but lacks specificity; it suggests a potentiality that can accommodate all forms of existence.
- **Empty Indeterminacy:** a state of logical abstraction in which no specific determinations are made; it implies a lack of concrete characteristics while maintaining potentiality.
- **Blind Spontaneity:** a condition of existence in which actions or phenomena occur without intentionality or direction, described as passive and unreflective.
- **Self-Sufficient Principle (αὐτάρκης):** a self-contained entity that possesses within itself the capacity for existence or action without relying on external sources.
- **Representational Activity:** the cognitive process through which the Self perceives and engages with reality, producing mental images or concepts of external objects.
- **Magical Act:** an action that is transformative and possesses a degree of mastery over reality, as opposed to mere acknowledgment or passive engagement with it.
- **Moralisation:** the process of imbuing actions or states with ethical significance, particularly in relation to the Self's understanding of freedom and agency.
- **Historicality:** the quality of being shaped by historical contexts and conditions; it emphasises the relationship between the Self and its temporal and cultural environment.

- **Conscious Deliberation:** the cognitive process of thoughtfully considering actions or decisions, which involves an awareness of motives and consequences.
- **Demonic Principle:** a characterisation of a force or aspect of reality that is chaotic, uncontrollable, or destructive, often leading to the dissolution of the individual Self.
- **Rationality:** the quality of being based on reason or logic; in the context, it is critiqued as a superficial escape from the deeper essence of the Self.
- **Generic Function:** the overarching role or principle through which the world is conceptualised within a rational framework, suggesting that all distinct elements can be understood through a common structure.
- **Immanent Rational Principle:** a philosophical concept that emphasises rationality as inherent within the world itself, rather than something external or transcendent.
- **Metarational Principle:** a principle that transcends conventional rationality, embodying a form of absolute freedom that cannot be fully articulated or constrained by traditional logical frameworks.
- **Pure Act:** an abstract and indistinct notion within Gentile's philosophy that serves as a foundational principle but lacks specific characteristics or determinations.
- **Indifferent Distinction:** a form of distinction that is uniform and non-judgmental, allowing for a multitude of specific distinctions to exist without negating their individual characteristics.
- **Hegelian Dialectics:** a method of reasoning that involves the resolution of contradictions through a process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis, which leads to higher forms of understanding.
- **Aristotelian Sense of the Universal:** the view that the universal is not an abstract ideal but is realised through the development of individual entities, emphasising the importance of particulars in the attainment of universality.
- **Ideal History of the World:** a philosophical narrative that interprets historical development as a progressive realisation of ideals, reflecting both creative imagination and empirical observation.
- **Categories:** fundamental concepts or frameworks through which understanding and knowledge are structured; in this context, they evolve from simpler to more complex forms.
- **Immanent Relation:** a type of relationship that is intrinsic to consciousness and existence, rather than derived from external or transcendent sources.
- **Unconditional Choice:** a decision made without any constraints or conditions, representing the highest expression of individual freedom and autonomy.
- **Cosmic Body:** a metaphorical concept that represents the interconnectedness of all beings and the universe, suggesting a holistic view of existence.
- **Unity of Contradictions:** the philosophical idea that oppositional forces or concepts can coexist and contribute to a more profound understanding or synthesis, rather than negating one another.
- **Samsārā and Nirvāna:** concepts from Eastern philosophy representing the cycle of existence (*samsārā*) and the ultimate state of liberation or enlightenment (*nirvāna*), often viewed as interconnected aspects of reality.
- **Self-Possession:** the state of being fully in control of one's own identity and agency, allowing for a complete understanding of one's own freedom and actions.
- **Ideal Prius:** the concept that posits a prior ideal or condition that serves as the foundation or source of subsequent reality or development, in this case, relating to the emergence of freedom and individuality.

- **Metarational Principle of Freedom:** a foundational idea that transcends traditional rationality, positing that true freedom arises not merely from logical imperatives but from a deeper, self-directed spontaneity that shapes the Self's existence and understanding.
- **Meaning:** an intrinsic quality that exists in relation to forms of expression. Meaning is not fixed in objects but is generated through the act of understanding, reflecting a dynamic interplay between the Self and the world. In Hermann Keyserling's philosophy, 'meaning' (*Sinn*) is a central concept that encapsulates several intertwined ideas about existence, understanding, and the Self. Meaning is not an inherent quality of external objects but emerges from the individual's act of understanding. It is deeply personal and varies with each person's unique experiences. Meaning is intricately linked to the notion of freedom. True understanding arises from the free and creative Self, which actively shapes its reality rather than passively accepting external definitions of meaning. Meaning is a dynamic and evolving process. It is continually reshaped through a dialectical interplay of contradictions and resolutions, reflecting the fluid nature of human understanding. Meaning encompasses a spiritual aspect, transcending rationality. It invites individuals to engage with the deeper essence of life, imbuing their experiences with purpose and significance. The Wise Man epitomises the ideal relationship with meaning, integrating life and knowledge. This figure represents an active pursuit of deeper understanding, in which meaning guides actions and enriches existence. Understanding and meaning provide individuals with the power to shape their realities. By internalising meaning, they can transform their experiences from passive acceptance to active engagement and self-expression.
- **Wise Man:** an archetype representing the synthesis of life and knowledge within an individual, characterised by autonomy, creativity, and an ability to affirm meaning without succumbing to external dogmas or abstract concepts.
- **Levels of Consciousness:** the different planes of awareness that influence how individuals perceive and interact with the world. This concept highlights the significance of focusing one's consciousness on deeper, creative aspects of existence rather than external, deterministic forces.
- **Dialectical Process:** a method of understanding that involves the development of ideas through contradictions and their resolutions. This process underscores how meaning emerges and evolves rather than being static or predetermined.
- **Historical Determinism:** the idea that historical events and societal developments shape and restrict the possibilities for meaning and understanding, often seen as inescapable forces that dictate the course of human experience.