

THE ABSOLUTE INDIVIDUAL



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ESSAYS ON MAGICAL IDEALISM

WARNING

Although care has been taken to elaborate and arrange the various essays in such a way that they go - at least for a certain class of readers - to constitute an organism in their own right, it is perhaps well to make it known that what follows in the spirit of the Author represents simply a preliminary stance, an anticipation, the whole unfolding and full speculative justification of which goes back to the work Theory of the Absolute Individual, the printing of which will be taken care of as soon as possible (1).

J.E.

(1) It will come out two years after the publication of this book (Ed.).

I. The problem of the contemporary spirit and the passing of idealism

"La philosophie, c'est la réflexion aboutissant à reconnaître sa propre insuffisance et la nécessité d'une action absolue partant d'elle-même" (1).

J. LAGNEAU (*Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, mars 1898, p. 127)

That Western civilization is today going through a period of crisis is something that is evident even to a superficial consideration. Expressions such as "turning point of history," "transition point," *Sturm und Drang*, have become common knowledge and are heard repeated everywhere to the point of boredom. It is also, to a degree, equally clear that the present crisis far surpasses any other that is given to be found in the past: and this, by the very fact of the unfolding of the modern spirit in new, manifold branches in which, however, today, in almost equal measure, the critical moment is present: it transmutes from rational to religious consciousness, from art to economics, from the sciences of nature to ethics. In all these fields equally the friendly principles totter, the old certainties no longer satisfy, and the warmth of criticism and denial barely manages to conceal a general sense of insufficiency and uneasiness. At such a state of affairs two problems present themselves almost by themselves: first, to see whether the various critical moments of the individual disciplines do not reconnect with a single crisis of the spirit in general, of which they would be but the appearances according to forms appropriate to the diversity of those disciplines themselves; and, if so, to determine the nature and reason for this one element, which would go to constitute the central motif of the epoch. The second problem would be to see whether the crisis in question is purely negative, whether it preludes the dissolution, the *pralaya* of an entire cycle of civilization (Spengler) (2), or

(1) "Philosophy is the reflection that leads to the recognition of one's own insufficiency and the need for absolute action that starts from within."

Jules Lagneau (1851-1894) belongs to that type of philosophers whose existence has been a struggle with their own ideas. Until the need for metaphysics, a spiritualistic, inspiring to the thought of Maine de Biran. He founded the "Union pour l'action morale" (later "Union pour la vérité"). For Lagneau, philosophical experience is a search for truth, but in the meantime it must inspire action. Posthumously published were *Fragments* (1898) and *Les célèbres leçons* (1926) (Ed.).

(2) 11 reference is obviously to *Der Untergang des Abendlandes*, published a few years earlier in two volumes (1918 and 1922). Evola himself would translate it only thirty years later: *Il tramonto dell'Occidente*, Longanesi, Milan, 1957. See also J. Evola, *Oswald Spengler*, Julius Evola Foundation. Rome, 2003 (ed.).

whether it does not instead conceal the awakening and budding of a new life or positivity; of which it would then be necessary to determine the nature, in order to be able to make it the light that will delineate for us the way that, beyond the ruins and anguish, our will and our own dissatisfaction must create for itself.

Regarding the first point, since an inductive investigation-whereby one would have to try to determine in each individual discipline, according to the categories proper to it, the particular nature and reason for the critical moment, and then see whether or not in the individual results something is found in common, which, in the case, would be the element sought-here would not know how to be expounded nevertheless according to its general lineaments, we hold to another, much simpler way, which could base its legitimacy on the following observations. After all, in any field of activity, the spirit has to do only with itself, and in any problem, as it is a human problem, as its hidden spring and its intimate interest, in truth a single problem can always be found, that of self-certainty. If this is true, it is to be noted that the meaning of the movement of an epoch can result immediately from an examination of the problems and demands that appear in it in that discipline, where the spirit no longer finds itself refracted in partial manifestations and forms but places itself, immediately and in full awareness, before itself and of itself makes itself the sole object of its science. In other words: if in philosophy it is with Hegel to be recognized as the form in which the exigencies obscurely operating in the various fields of the culture and activity of an epoch come to self-awareness, in an examination of the characteristic situation of modern philosophy one may perhaps presume to encounter directly the center and foundation of the crisis of the contemporary spirit. What of hypothetical such a presumption implies in itself could be resolved by showing that the principle found is actually capable of explaining the particular negative moments of individual disciplines, although here such a verification can only be hinted at.

By this second way, the first of the problems formulated above conduces from itself to the other. In fact, the course of the present treatment can be outlined thus: one will go on to recognize in idealism the characteristic feature of modern philosophy; one will then consider idealism, discover the internal disagreement and the further question it contains, and at this point going on to connect the crisis of the present epoch, one will have exhausted the first problem; by then establishing the nature of the antithesis contained in idealism, whether it is there and, if so, what is the way of resolving it in a further affirmation, one will also have exhausted the second problem, which, as one recalls, consisted in knowing whether the negativity of the crisis was but the most external manifestation and, on the other hand, the leaven of a new development. In this second phase of the discussion one will see constructed almost by itself, as a logical consequence of the premises and yet of the story, the concept of magical idealism - of which in this first essay we will limit ourselves to studying the relationship with the positions of so-called occultism.

...

1. 11 fundamental problem of modern philosophy is the gnoseological problem or problem of knowledge, which, in short and in a very exoteric form, can be formulated as follows: all experience is constituted by the conjointness of a subject and an object, of a knower and a con scient; now how is the relation that binds these two principles possible and, therefore, what is the meaning of that conjointness, in which u mana experience develops? How important this problem is and, therefore, how justified is the interest that modern philosophy places in it, can be made intelligible as follows. Through knowledge, broadly understood, one affirms to oneself the reality of a nature, of other consciousnesses and, even, 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 from them - naively assumed as facts, without any criticism or reflection preli minate - depart the natural sciences, moral and social disciplines, religions and theories of values, if one has no way, in the examination of cono scence, to grant certainty to all that is postulated by it as true, if there is no way of showing the conditions by which truth is immanent to human thought and, in connection, of confirming the validity and defining the meaning of various fundamental principles, the whole world not only of cul ture but of common consciousness itself must appear hypothetical and meaningless: the formal or aesthetic value that would then, alone, befit it, in no way would know how to prevent skepticism from dissolving its intimate essence. It is not enough: when one were to affirm in earnest the impotence of knowledge to justify itself, skepticism itself would turn out to be untenable: in fact, it cannot assert its principle, that in human knowledge there is no certainty, if it does not connect a certainty to it, which with betrays the content of the very principle for which it is denied that any knowing (thus the skeptical one included) can have certainty. It would then result that all experience, even in its most luminous forms, is a kind of incomprehensible dream, from which the ego should let itself pas sively dream because when it instead brought r e f l e c t i o n upon it, it would immediately be torn apart in an internal contradiction. One could never insist enough on the importance of this consi deration and thus on the necessity of the gnoseological problem as the basis of every other, especially in contrast to so many currents which, with a movement whose presumptuous temerity could not be said to be greater than its naiveté, still today claim to assert as absolute truth the fruits of a dogmatized and fantasized sfre nata, while they are powerless to explain the foundation of their procedures and the very meaning of the words and con ceptions they employ.

2. Now the solution given by modern speculation to the gno seological problem is, in principle, idealism or, more precisely, *in idealism's conception of the world we have come to recognize the conditionality for a system of absolute certainty*. - Idealism, as is well known, consists in the assertion that an external world, existing in itself independent of knowing and therefore of the self, is in no way coherently affer mable: that therefore the entire universe is not is but asystem of four knowing, v.d. is but *in virtue of t h e* self and *for* the self. It is worth setting forth here a brief summary of the arguments on which this theory rests.

If one reflects a little, it becomes clear that of a thing that was absolute-mind outside of me, I would know absolutely nothing and therefore could i n no way affirm i t s existence. In so much of a thing I can affirm resistance, insofar as-and for that much-that I know it, that is to say, insofar as-and for that much-that it is comprehended within the sphere of the 'I. From this it follows immediately that the only reality of which I can in truth speak in regard to a thing is that which coincides with its being perceived and which therefore depends on my perceiving it, without which it would exist *for me* as

little as light without my visual faculty. Of course, two objections will immediately spring up here. First, it will be pointed out, that the fact that a thing does not exist *for me*, does not in consequence lead to the fact that it *in itself* does not exist, that is, that there can be things or aspects of things that I do not know and yet still exist. To this it is answered that these things or aspects of things that "exist all the same" are either not known by me in any w a y, not *even through reasoning and not even as a possibility of future experience*, and then their existence can be no more than a gratuitous

hypothesis and a reverie; otherwise they are struck down by the argument set forth and made to fall, i n one way or another, within the self. - The second objection is that for me there are not only the things I perceive, but also those perceived by others, and that I do not believe in the reality of things only by virtue of my perceptions or reasoning, but also because my perception or reasoning is con ferred by that of others. This objection, however, turns within

a vicious circle: since the same reasoning is repeated for others as for things, that is, it is to be said that nothing I know about others except what either by perception, or by discourse, or by intuition, or by any other mode of *my*

k n o w i n g I come to consciousness and which, however, I thereby bring back within the sphere of my subjectivity. More acute, however, would be the objection, that idealism overlooks the fact that in perception things turn out to be known essentially as "other," v.d. as external and independent of me. An exhaustive discussion of this point would take one far. In any case, this much is clear, that such a character of externality of things, in order for me to speak of it, must figure as a certainty of *my* consciousness, so that it appears only as

a particular character that *I know* in the thing:

v.d. this externality *for me* of things is conditioned by an act of *mine*,

With which I posit the thing as external. In fact, one can repeat the argument

and say that a difuori that was really difuori could be nothing to my consciousness, therefore that the difuori present in perceptions is relative, and everything comes down to this situation, that, *within* my experience, *I place* certain things as *relatively* external to me or even as existing in itself. The result is that every reality is but a determination of my consciousness, that the self, rather than being understood by the universe, understands this within itself, is the infinite ether that underlies every determination and unfolding.

Here one can connect the instance of Kant's famous *Critique of Pure Reason*. From a careful analysis of experience, it turns out that the world, as it appears and to science and to common consciousness itself, including the features of exteriority, objectivity, etc., is not at all the immediate datum of consciousness; which instead is an absolutely subjective complex of sensations transmuting haphazardly Funa into the other and which by itself has nothing to do, nor can give any justification, to that spatial, ordered and objective world we know. Kant, in investigating how a science in general is possible as a science (i.e.: as a universally valid and absolutely certain systematic whole), offered the solution of the difficulty in the theory, that not knowledge regulates itself about things, but things regulate themselves about knowledge in this sense, that the knowing subjective has in itself universal and necessary forms (space, time, causality, etc.) and in them comprehending the chaos of sensation, from this it draws the objective and regulated world that is the object of our cono scence and to which a science in general is possible. In other words: cono scence is not, as vulgarly believed, a reproduction but a creation of its object; the world, depending on the forms of knowledge, would be another when the self was otherwise conformed. The difficulty, in which Kant had been left, about the origin of matter before sensation, was later resolved by Fichte, who showed how a non-ego (Kant's "thing-in-itself") is not given except as a *quid* posited by the ego, and how the foundation of this law, whereby the ego posits a non-ego, is to be sought in the ego itself as a knowing subject.

With this nod to Kantian philosophy, another cornerstone of idealism has been exposed: and that is that if the object, in general, is nothing, if it is not simply an internal determination of consciousness, it is new mind nothing, if it is understood as a mere modification of a passive recep tivity. A wax may well bear the mark impressed by a foreign object, ina nothing is in consciousness, if it does not assume it in itself c does not F inform of reflection. Consciousness, by itself, means *mediation*, hence activity, self-consciousness. From this it follows that the whole experience is something quite ideal not as a mere spectacle, but as a *posited* reality, created by the self according to the absolute activity of self-consciousness.

3. This, in brief, is the worldview of idealism: Fio at the center of the cosmos, creator of all reality and all value; beyond him, nothingness, since his theory shows him inexorably enclosed in a pri

gion, from which it can never escape, for the simple reason that it is a prison, which has no walls.

Before going any further, it is worth showing how this theory, at first sight so paradoxical, agrees with the intimate truth of two of the attitudes that seem to contradict it most openly: common sense and positional science. About common sense, it should be noted that its truth is what immediate mind perceives itself to be: as Berkeley observes, it knows nothing either of transcendental causes, or of substances, or of *qualitates occultae*; it lives in a sphere of pure subjectivity, and to claim that the determinations which it gives to things, and which continually contradict themselves, really belong to the things themselves, is as absurd as to claim that the sweet taste or the pain of a sting belong essentially to sugar or to the pin. Now not only idealism, but already science is a "scandal of common sense": for what can the experience of this, all alive, warm and sonorous, blazing with light and color, have to do with the arid and abstract world of science, which knows nothing but vibrations of ethers and gyrations of atoms? Yet science can show that truth is on its side and condemn the world of common sense as a semblance, and this because of the subjectivity, that is, in a way, idealism, of it. But if one crosses the field and goes to see what Positionality consists of that science opposes to the idealism of common sense, one sees it vanishing like a phantom. Here again, one can only skim Pargomento. First, already Kant noted that experience cannot ground judgments of necessity, i.e., that science from here can know that things are so and have also been so in observational cases, but not that they are necessarily so and universally so: and showed that whenever science postulates an objective truth, i.e., universally valid, in that it can only be justified by an idealistic theory; and the Lachelier (3) added that no other mind things go in regard to the legitimacy of the "principle of induction" without presupposing which the search for laws, as Millian empiricism (4) itself understands them, is impossible. Again: the fundamental presupposition of science is that nature can be resolved in the intellectual forms of the self: such is the implicit premise - to cite but two examples - of analytic geometry, when it adapts physics to geometry and geometry to the algebraic function; and of the innumerable mechanical applications of differential calculus, where the utterly theoretical concept of the infinitesimal is supposed to be convenient to reality. And this is of pure idealism. In general, it stands that science dissolves reality into

(3) Jules Lachelier (1832-1918) is one of the leading exponents of the revival of spirituality in France, believing that only religious experience allows one to fully understand the reality given that the science is limited and observationally from a point of view delimiting (Ed.).

(4) By the English philosopher John Stuart Mill (Ed.).

quantitative relations and through the elaboration of principles, formulas and laws, goes to replace it with a purely mental world: that the atom, which is a mere pragmatic hypothesis, as the profound work of Mannequin (5) has shown it; that entropy and energy, of which nothing else can be said except that they are mere integrals, v.d. abstract algebraic functions; that the aether, a hypothetical fluid of irreconcilable properties; that the hyperspace and non-Euclidean and multi-three-dimensional systems of Riemann (6) and Lobatschewsky (7) to which the latest physics seems to defer, are existences in the realistic and materialistic sense of the term, this is a patently absurd. Yet these elements underlie all modern scientific spie gation. Thus it is that epistemology has recently shown that science, with its world, is a true *creation* of the spirit not only autonomous *but also arbitrary*, that reality is accepted by it only provisionally and almost as a pretext, since it immediately denies it and resolves it, through calculus and geometry, in a "hypothetical-deductive relational system" in itself sufficient and indifferent-as Poincaré (8) understood it in his "principle of equivalence," to which Einstein with the "transformation system" gave concreteness-to the varied nature of that same reality. The paradoxical teaching of present-day physics is precisely this, that it is experience itself that has forced the scientist to overcome it in the purely intellectual and self-enclosed system of a pure mathematicalism, given that he wants to adapt to it and fully account for it. Thus the "mathematical idealism" of Cohen (9) and Cas sirer (IO), for whom the world, in its true essence, would be simple-

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

(6) the mathematician GermanGeorg Friedrich Bernhard Riemann (1826-1866), despite his short life, is one of the leading researchers who devoted himself to the construction of non-Euclidean geo-metries independently of N. Lobacevsky's studies. His studies of 1854 (the so-called "geometry elliptic of Riemann") result inreality alternativesa those Russian's (Ed.).

(7) Nicolaij Ivanovic Lobacevsky (o Lobatschewsky) (1793-1856) è the father of non-Euclidean geometry (he called his "hyperbolic geometry"), which he f i r s t theorized in 1829 in an essay published in a journal at the University of Kazan, of which he became ret t h e following year. He then published three more extensive accounts between 1835 and 1855: *New Principles of geometry. Investigations geometrical on theory of parallels e Pangeometry*. See Renato Betti, *Lobacevsky*, Bruno Mondadori, Milan, 2005 (ed.).

(8) Mathematician and physicist, Jules Henri Poincaré (1854-1912) became interested in the last parie ofhis lifeat the discussion onepistemology and,opposing those who believed that the definition of a mathematical concept or entity consisted of its definition in terms logic, he argued a kind of intuitionism: the its justification lies in their constructability from intuitive data (Ed.).

(9) German philosopher Hermann Cohen (1842-1918) is the founder of the "Marburg School," which theorized a "return to Kant" and thus believed the "transcenden tale method" was necessary to seek the conditions of possibility of scientific knowledge (Ed.)

(10) Ernst Cassirer (1874-1945) also had ideas that he shared with the "scuo-

mind a complex of algebraic functions, if not the expression of the current state of science, it is certainly its profound truth, the ideal to which it tends and to which it is increasingly approaching.

4. These last considerations have been expounded in order to give some support to the assertion, that idealism is a conception that inevitably imposes itself as soon as the foundations of knowledge are deepened: it can be found, in an unconscious form, at the bottom of any branch of human activity, so that it could be said that in reality nothing else exists in the world of man except crude idealisms that have not yet reached self-consciousness, and a conscious idealism, which is the idealism properly so called expounded by modern gnoseology. This theory is therefore a conquered and established position, and in no way is it for put to neglect and ignore it: any further development must start from it *as from a presupposition* under pain that while it believes it goes further, in reality it only succeeds in leading backward. Nonetheless, it is a fact that idealism, as hitherto expounded in philosophy, is only half of it, *and this is precisely the only point for which one can go beyond it.*

Indeed, if one asks the philosopher what is **the** "I," which is the creator of the world, history and the heavens, one has for answer that is the so-called "absolute self" or "transcendental." Now this absolute I is something furiously ambiguous: it oscillates between the real I (i.e., that which the individual can *experience* immediately within himself as his most intimate and purest certainty, the original principle by which all experience is experienced as *my* experience) and the God of theism. What makes it so indetermined, is that very thing from which it was born - the theory of knowledge: for for this, *if* knowing is to be explained and certainty assured, the world must result to be posited by the activity of the thinking subject. Now it is evident that it is not my own power, nor that of any other consciousness at the present evolutionary point, which can recognize itself in *real function and freedom* in such a thought: but if this cannot therefore defer to the real self, neither can it defer to a transcendent cosmic principle, such as would be the theistic God, for then knowing is not explained, and idealism on the other hand in so far as it is legitimate, in so far as it is a system that explains precisely *our human* knowing. To the idealist who escapes here with that amphibious being which is the transcendental self, one can twist his own weapon with the following dilemma: either the transcendent self is the real self, - but this is factually false, for the list idea, as will shortly be seen closely, is *powerless*; or it is not the real self,

- and then it is either nothing, or it is simply my idea or concept, which

the Marburg" for the reference to Kant in his philosophy, which pursued an ideal of a unified synthesis of human culture: in his view, the various realizations of it all coalesce on a "symbolic activity" that leads to the creation of conceptual schemes autonomous from the real datum (Ed.)

is real only in virtue of an activity (philosophizing, intuition, etc.) of this real I, from whose center it falls out in any case. - The *fact is that in the theoretical setting the question remains indeterminate*, the immanence postulated theoretically may in fact be in concrete immanence as much as transcendence, for it is a foolish game to put the I in the place of the God, when such attributes are given to it, that I actually can recognize myself in it as little, as in the God of ancient faith. That is to say, it turns out this, that the truth or falsity of idealism - *and this, mind you, means*, as we shall have occasion to show still more closely later, *whether or not man can give certainty and meaning to his life and experience - cannot be demonstrated theoretically*: it can be decided not by an *intellectual act* but by a *concrete realization*.

That is to say, idealism in abstractly logical premises is neither true nor false: truth is contingent to it and can only come to it from the activity, admittedly unconditional in itself, according to which the individual generates in himself the principle, intellectually postulated by transcendental philosophy, according to a concrete and living reality. That this is the only solution, seems clear considering the other alternative, whereby one would place the absolute self of idealism in God, according to the viewpoint of the so-called "Hegelian right" which makes idealism an introduction to religion. Now this solution, when seriously affirmed, is not as cheap as it would appear in a Green (11), Caird (12) or Blondel (13): for if the God into which the idealistic ego has been made to pass is the God of the vulgar religious consciousness - of the *simpliciores* or theologians - it remains a pure state of emotionality or an abstract idea and, in concrete terms, fatally enters into disagreement with the positive determinate facts of the empirical ego which ironically retain all their crude reality. Since there is no rapture of ecstasy so absolute, that the ecstatic does not return to his own flesh, concretely here one falls into a moth-eaten and contradictory dualism, proper to a period long before the idealistic instance. If, therefore, by a religious solution is not meant the abandonment of all positions, the bankruptcy of all coherence and all certainty at the meager stoicism of faith, it is necessary that such a solution be referred to a mystical process, or rather: *magical*, in which God is but a

(11) English philosopher Thomas Bell Green (1836-1882) was professor of ethics at Oxford, criticized empiricism and claimed the spiritual character of man and the world, which for both derives from a universal self-determining subject (Ed.)

(12) Also an Englishman, Edward Caird (1835-1908), an exponent of neo-Hegelianism, applied the Hegelian concept of the absolute to religious experience, which in its final phase understands God as the identity of subject and object, universe and human spirituality (Ed.)

(13) Famous for his *L'action* (1903), Maurice Blondel (1861-1949) is an exponent of the French spiritualist tradition with a Christian background that contrasts intellectualism and scientism: for Blondel, man can only achieve perfect adequacy between his will and the realization of what he wants through God's action (Ed.)

phantasm when it is generated in ourselves and not by words, cects, fantasies or beautiful feelings, but by an absolutely concrete movement; that is, in which empirical resistance is *really* transfigured and resolved into divinity. As it was distinctly understood by the Orientals, there is but one way of proving God, and that is: to make oneself God, àno0eco0T|vai.

Senonché such a criticism is efficient even against idealists, who, if they were consistent, would have to, at a pinch, claim that the God is the university philosophy professor. For it is already clear that, *if* idealism is to be true, the empirical individual is to be negated, but only as a thing unaware of and stiffened in its factual limitation, to be instead integrated into a development in which, far from being subordinated and deferring to something outside itself, it remains within itself, in an infinite potential and making itself sufficient (cwTdpKrts) of its principle. This, on the other hand, is not the truth of the idealists: they pit the concrete individual against that abstraction which is their transcendent self and in the name of this dissolve the former. The individual, they say, is an illusion, a nothingness, πf| óv; what is real, however, is the idea (Hegel), God (Royce) (14), the pure Act (Gen tile). If one then goes to see what this Absolute represents in them, living persons, little is needed to ascertain that it is nothing more than a dull idea, a mere explanatory principle or, at most, a lyrical afflatus, an emotion that lives in a corner of their inert rigid empiricity. But the sterile sacrifice of the individual celebrated in the mental seat actually conceals the corruption of a concrete Ego which, - repugnant to any need to impugn itself and *make itself* truly absolute - beyond the harmless curse emanating from itself, protected indeed by it, quietly persists in its obliviousness. Thus it is that the ego which has elevated itself in philosophy to the point of cosmic creator, finds itself by any accident of its little "supe rata" humanity driven back among the infinite contingencies of life, against which it is as *powerless*, as the peasant who knows nothing of such admirable elevations. Hence, absolute idealism, insofar as it is purely theoretical, ultimately mutates with the tendencies of the "Hegelian left" properly called (Strauss, Feuerbach, Stirner) (15), which does not dissolve the rationalistic and theological superworld other than by the affirmation of man in his empiricity, of the natural determinations to which the self is passive, which he finds and does not give or explain.

(14) Josiah Royce (1855-1916) is the leading exponent of American idealism, which he fused with the pragmatism of William James. His ideas are mainly set forth in *LM conception of God* (1895) and *The World and the Individual* (1900-1901): objective reality is the all-encompassing consciousness of God in which all the individual possibilities of finite intellects are contained (Ed.)

(15) David Friedrich Strauss (1808-1874) is the leader of the "Hegelian left" and the one who first divided Hegelians into "right," "left," and "center" in an 1837 (Ed.) paper.

5. Consider this very important point more closely. Abstract idealism if, as we have seen, it can legitimately arrive at the assertion that every real is conditioned by my activity, it could not, however, with equal legitimacy assert that I can *always* place myself as sufficient to this same activity. It must, *bon gré mal gré*, find that while I can place myself as the sufficient principle of, for example, my thinking proper, I cannot equally and to the same extent place myself about that group of rap presentations in which my thinking *in general* manifests itself with regard to, for example, an atmospheric phenomenon. It can and should be said that as much a philosophical theory as, for example, a lightning bolt, do not exist outside and independent of that activity by which they are constructed and posited *for* the self; yet it must be recognized that the degree to which one is *actively present* to one's activity in the two cases is very different: among other things, it is clear that while it is in my power to reconstruct my first thought arbitrarily, this is not possible for me in the second case except in a very incomplete way, that is, only in regard to the empty and dull image of lightning; that there is a class of cases in which the I, in the present and general state of things, is, as it were, compelled to manifest its activity, to create, as for example in regard to the representation of the landscape which at this moment stands before me, while it is in my power now to continue philosophizing, or met termi to think of a friend, or still not to think at all. Therefore, within my own activity, *from which in any case I can never get out and which remains the substratum or elementary condition of all reality in general*, I must distinguish two species of courses, those to which I am sufficient and those to which I am only sufficient in a meager or null degree, and to the latter is correlative the so-called objective or external world or of things existing in themselves. - Now it is clear from the foregoing that between the two groups there is no difference in nature, but only in degree (16): what distinguishes them is simply the *amount of sufficiency* or, to use Michelstaedter's term, persuasion-and this is the antithesis of abstract idealism.

Formal or gnoseological sufficiency is opposed by an insufficiency, I will say, *intensive*. Idealism, as a condition for absolute certainty, is a *moral value*, a *ought-to-be*: it *must* be; yet it cannot, in real consciousness, be. To the ego, having *discursively* arrived at self-consciousness as of the absolute principle of all that reality in which he lives his life, is opposed in the concrete seat this same reality (17) as something

(16) The difference between the lightning simply thought, which the individual can tranquillamente and when he wants to evoke, and the real one, which can incinerate him, i.e. the difference between possible and real, between mental and concrete, between *esse essentiae* and *esse existentiae* is not qualitative, but quantitative, *intensive*: these are ever deeper and more intense *degrees* of the power of judgment, between which there is *continuity*, and with respect to each of them freedom can figure in a varied function.

(17) For the solution of the same dualism, which could be sniffed out here, in a value or "ought-to-be," see more below § 10 of Essay II. Here it is important to note the transform-

over which he has no power, which he then understands as foreign to himself and which, however, he seeks to deny, to dissolve and, therefore, to take back into himself in order, by such a movement, to demonstrate to himself concretely that value.

Now to such a conjunction can be traced the hidden and deep meaning of the current crisis. As mentioned above, the demonstration of this thesis here can only be hinted at in the main points. In the main, the insoddisfazione with general forms of culture and the accentuation of the individualistic and activist moment against the dogmatic and universalistic element is a phenomenon today as general as it is significant. Specifically: in the decline of transcendental religion, in the so-called "Twilight of the Gods" and in the rise, beyond it, of modernism and the "immanent religion"; in the demonstration of science as an essentially arbitrary, subjective and original construction rather than reproductive, objective and necessary as according to the traditional concept; in the ruin of the idea of an eternal Reason and Truth, made once and for all and indifferent to human evolution, led by intuitionism, pragmatism, relativism and, in a sense, even neo-Hegelianism; in the negation of all tradition in art, in the advent in it of the Romantic and individualistic instance through a complex and exceedingly significant whole unfolding from symbolism and impressionism up to that tendency which the writer has had the honor of affirming in Italy, to Dadaism (18); finally, in the social field, in the anarchic phenomenon and also under the socialistic or communistic if understood in their intimate psychological foundation; in all these points equally the above-mentioned transcendental situation can be distinctly recognized: v.d. the opposing and distancing of the "I" within the very body of its reality and the related dissolving movement, through which the demand for the absolute sufficiency to itself of the real "I" - the value of the individual - flashes.

6. That being the case, let us return to the philosophical setting to develop the solution that has been shown to be the conditionality for the truth of idealism. The ego, it has been seen, comprehends in itself the whole universe, but 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, so to speak, passive, it does not *possess* its action but, almost, undergoes it. Now the point of fundamental importance, which must be held firm here, on pain of the ruin of all conquered positions and, however, of all certainty, and the highlighting of which is the merit of one of the strongest personalities that contemporary Italy can boast of - of Carlo Michelstaedter - is the following: *the individual must not flee from his own deficiency*, must not, by yielding,

zione. proper to magical idealism, of what it is to *be in the* logical and gnoseological order, into a *ought-to-be* of the practical order.

(18) See below. Appendix.

to escape its burden and responsibility, to *grant it a reality, a reason and a person that it, as a mere privation, can in no way have* - and thus to extrapose, to remit the reality that the I lacks to a what of *other*, matter, God, nature, universal Reason, transcendental I, etc. *Instead, the ego must be sufficient to its insufficiency, must take it upon itself and, bearing its full weight, consist.* That is, he must understand that everything which seems to have a reality independent of him is but an illusion, caused by his own deficiency (19); and this he must make himself to fill, by means of an unconditional process which establishes the absolute presence of himself to the totality of his activity - for then he will have completed in himself the absolute certainty, "he will have *persuaded* the world," and, in this, he will have brought to *life* that reality of which idealism is only to anticipate the empty intellectual form and Pastrano "ought-to-be." In this process, to which the term *concrete* or *magical idealism* is proposed, *is* to be recognized the task of a future civilization and yet the positive solution to the crisis of the modern spirit.

What fundamentally matters, then, is this: to *say that one thing is not caused by me, is not the same as saying that it is caused by something else*. The inference of the first proposition to the second is synthetic and in no way justifiable. What is not caused by me is nothing more than what is not caused by me i.e., simply, a *deprivation* (aTéprjau;) of my causality, something negative: *this non-being is not to be called being*: a positivity can only be connected to it according to a *violence* and *injustice*. - Now precisely this is what realism does: it calls reality of another what is simply negation of me. But then it should exclude all activity from its world, for it takes away all meaning and value from it. For activity has meaning and value only there where there is something to be made real, which is already not so. This case occurs precisely when the "other" (v.d. that which resists my freedom) is felt to be deprivation: then the world appears as something incomplete, demanding its integration to that high of the individual, so that CTcpov, necessity, becomes TOCÛTÓV, freedom, to that development of self-assertion, so that the actuality of causality extends over that which was its deprivation. If, on the other hand.

(19) See footnote 17 on p. 37. This illuminates even more the significance of the current crisis. The criticism modern has destroyed the state of innocence, has did see things, which not can be more ignore. Not è more given of defer to the ancient supports, if not one want to deliberately cheat oneself - since of them one knows the unreality. Modern culture has cut all bridges behind the individual: if he is still to live, he must draw his life from himself; if a fixed point is still to exist, only his Ego can be such. And the present crisis has precisely this sense: on the one hand, the distinct awareness that the ancient certainty rested sur a promissory note and that, now, there is nothing left to lean on or take refuge in: on the other hand, the hesitation and deficiency of the individual to take the extreme step of taking upon himself a cosmic responsibility, *to call himself God*: to make himself sufficient to the solitude of what is absolute, to plot the principle in which the whole world is regenerated and acquires consistency and certainty.

it is posited that F "other" *as such* is a positivity and reality - and not a deprivation, a non-being - then everything is already perfect and nothing else needs to be done. All purpose and all value of activity, all responsibility is lost; that *the voids of my being are not such: I "other" fills them*. In the other case, the whole world is a request of being to the "I" so that it, in potency, implements it and in that redeems it from deprivation, makes it real.

Connected to this is another important point, to which we shall return; namely: *it is not necessarily the case that the limitation of my causality requires a cause*; in other words, it is not necessarily the case that what is unfinished and imperfect cannot otherwise be conceived of as negative, as the negation *supravvenuta* to a pre-existing absolute or perfection. Instead, one can conceive that what is limited and imperfect already has a degree of positivity and stands at the beginning, and that the absolute is not its negation, but rather the further development, *Vatto*, of which it is the power or an elementary degree, so that said absolute to it does not pre-exist, but is generated from it by means of a *synthesis*, v.d. by means of a passage that brings something new, something that did not already exist in the antecedent. - This is the deep motive of aristotelism, which magical idealism reaffirms in the clearest way.

Beyond this is the problem of the "path of persuasion": *how* the individual can it come to develop its power to the point of taking back into itself all that vast system of reality (or, better: of non-reality) which, when opposed to it extrinsically and in the form of irri-bending, seems to crush it and dissolve it into nothingness? 11 moment of the revelation of value, of ought-to-be, finds set against itself the deafening, seemingly inexorable rigidity of a being that, though it has no value, though it ought not to be, *is*. To claim to bridge *immediately*, by an instantaneous act of a titanic will, the interval separating the two terms of an *itthesis* and thus redeem in pure actuality the infinite deficiency or deprivation that burdens the concrete individual, seems practically impossible and also, for reasons that will be mentioned elsewhere, logically contradictory. In magical idealism it is not a question of act, of immediacy - but of process, of mediation. It is true that at the requirement of sufficiency, the individual already by itself is not and has nothing: it is given neither a law, nor a power, nor a way: "he is alone in the wilderness, and must in the darkness create life for himself, make legs for himself to walk, and make a way where there is no road" (20)-from himself he must create his truth, his faith and his substance. Persuasion is not communicable: it cannot be given or ingested, but it requires the self by its own power to construct it. However, this construction would not know how to resolve itself into a mere subjective movement: it must be essentially concrete, as the resolution in the individual's sufficient form of the various world determinations, takes place correlatively to the process of understanding and consummation

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

Of these: it is *cosmic work*. As such, its life, rather than simply a miraculous and unnamable dazzling in an abstract interiority, requires the articulation of this in multiple determinations, a stirring up and creation of new means and faculties, in short, a whole science and methodology that is *absolutely positive* if, in its reality, essentially conditioned by its *absolute individuality*. "Persuasion," while always remaining the *prius*, when it is not empowered and made objective through such a spiritual science, remains an empty value and its requirement can only lead to Stoic dualism.

7. Here we can reconnect with the consideration of occultism that stopped in modern culture particularly through the work of the various theosophical schools (Blavatsky, Steiner). However, one would not know how to fully appreciate such movements and to show for what valuable aids to the above-mentioned task they result as forces that could develop the individual toward a new, unprecedented epoch of history and spirit, if one did not first notice certain imperfections from which they are, in the main, affected and which stem essentially from that, that occultism neglects to settle its accounts with idealism and, in general, with modern speculation.

Here it must be well understood. That abstract idealism must be superseded, this has been shown above and in the very words of idealism: but to surpass it means to take up its positions, to refute them or reduce them to mere presuppositions and to move on; not to simply set it aside, not to ignore that it contains a comprehensive and inevitable world conception, the flower of a bimillennial civilization, in order to return lightheartedly to naive conceptions that it has long since refuted and resolved. Occultism in the main accuses idealism of being a product of abstract rational faculties against which it defends its principles as emanating from higher faculties. Now that the "I" should not stand stiffened for eternity in the present categories, but instead should regard these as by no means provisional and tend to resolve them into others more comprehensive and more responsive, in living reality and intensity of power, to the need for "persuasion," this is certainly conceded; and for that matter it also appears as what to a certain extent the I has made within the itself of discursivity since earlier times, in which, for example, from the logic of the *Nyànà* he passed to the Stotelian *òpyavov ari*; and here he did not stop, but proceeded into the logic of the principle of sufficient reason (Leibniz); nor did he stiffen in this, but went on to the Kantian logic of the a priori synthesis, to the antithetic of Fichte, finally to the Hegelian dialectic, to the logic of contraries (Hamelin), to logistcs (Peano, Russell) (21). In truth, there is no logic, but rather a history

(21) Giuseppe Peano (1858-1932). Italian mathematician and logician to whom we owe the famous

"Peano's axioms" on basic mathematical notions. Russell is Bertrand Russell (1872-1970), mathematician, philosopher and politician who opposed all metaphysics in the name of

or a becoming of logic. However, human reason also has a duty to pre-der assurance that what is pointed out to it as its further stage is not in-ve-ce a point already surpassed by it; and therefore it must demand that the truths which are ascribed to higher faculties and for which it should abandon its positions, prove themselves such, v.d. show where the points which it holds for the most advanced - here those of idealism - are insufficient and how the elimination of such deficiency necessarily leads, *according to con-tinuity*, to those truths. If, on the other hand, the faculties that are presumed to be superior prove incapable of such a movement, they would, beyond the veils of mi-sterio and initiatory presumptions, have no way of guaranteeing themselves, and reason has not only the right but also the duty to cast them back as phantasies, and this in the name of the same principle of development.

Now the points that occultism would very hardly know how to support against modern speculation and which it should get rid of as vec-chie ideas of Platonism and Indian philosophy, are the following. First, *incomplete immanentism*: occultism in principle opposes to the cosmic process 1 *actual* existence of an Absolute already in itself perfect and immobile (the *Sat* or *Parabrahman* of the Puranas, analogous to Platonic *WU-num bonum*). Now such a position removes all value from that process and renders it entirely incomprehensible: since what could be its purpose, instead already is. Given this premise, occultism cannot justify the need for individual development, which is instead very much alive in it, except by resorting to a theory of the "fall"-that is, by understanding the world as such as something negative, as the consequence of an original error that alienated consciousness from the realm of the Absolute. The process then would have the sense of a *catharsis*, *an* atonement and a return to the original principle. If- as well as the fall, if it explains the process, it does not explain itself: forced to pre-suppose in the Absolute a principle distinct from it (since if it is the Absolute itself that determines the "fall," the fall is no longer such, absoluteness being to be understood-unless one falls into the most vicious intellectualism- not as a transcendent norm, but as the attribute of what the original principle wills), it does not explain the presupposed dualism but, sem-plically, it displaces it. Certainly, a pure becoming is unintelligible: that which conditions the becoming and allows its moments to enter into relation cannot itself be a becoming, but an immobility; all the while this immobility would not know how to stand outside the becoming, it must instead immanent in it. In a word: what occultism in principle lacks is a distinct understanding of *value*, in which the immovable and the becoming are synthetically reconciled (22). That is, one cannot have on the one hand the process, on the other the immobile *Sat*: the process *is* *Sat* itself, it is the act of its infinite

Of logical empiricism. He was, *since* the time of World War I, always on pacifist and conscientious objection (Ed.) positions.

(22) See below, § IO of Essay II.

(23) . Then the pessimistic concept of the world as an illusion, as a place of sorrow from which it matters only to flee, fails: the world appears instead as something positive, as something *that has value*, to be sure not by drawing back, but by affirming it to the end, by dominating it: the Absolute is not behind, but ahead (this is the irreducible conquest that the Occident, with its *activism*, has achieved over the East). The second point is the *neglect of gnoseology*, from which it follows that occultism does not know how to concede completely that the Absolute is nothing but the power itself of the individual—that "the Telema, the Father of all things, is *here*" (Hermes)—and, beyond it, nothing exists in and of itself; consequently, that the "supersensibles" affirmed by that doctrine (bodies, subtle centers and planes, elementaries, Logoi, etc.) are either ideas and abstract hypotheses, or *possibilities* of the individual, which, however, have reality only when these go there to create, in actual experience, through a process unconditional and synthetic—from potency to act; and thus that, in truth, there is but the usual, invariably solitary, and its development according to what he wills.

Since it is not worth appealing here to higher faculties, which reveal the existence

in itself of things and powers: to this common sense is already capable, which reflection has refuted, and yet even at the angelic consciousness which, claimed to know in fact through scholastic intellectual intuition or any other higher faculty, of things in itself, a further idealistic angelic consciousness could reaffirm itself that would demonstrate the naiveté of the claim of such knowledge which, in reality, is conditioned by intellectual intuition itself and then, through this, by the same consciousness subject which up to it has developed and *has wanted to* develop itself. When occultism has eliminated these two essential deficiencies, it can in principle fall under magical idealism.

It in fact first of all has the merit of insisting on that, that what matters is not to enrich the mind with new cognitions or theories, to bliss oneself in feelings and fantasies or console oneself in a morality by themselves, but to impregnate oneself in the deepest power of one's life and *truly* develop. Over all that is physical, v.d. over all that is necessity and passivity, the self must reassert itself as a being of freedom and power. Now for this purpose one must first of all become master of one's mental faculties. Despite the paradoxical appearance of such a statement, the fact remains that rather than it being us who actively think thought, it would be to say that in the main it is thought that thinks us: not only in the unconscious play of associations and in what Ribot called the "logic of feelings," not only in the

(23) To tell the truth, it is found said in Blavatsky (*Abrégé de la doctrine secrète*, Paris, 1923, pp. 463-464) that *Sai* (being) and *Asat* (non-being) generate each other and that their truth is an eternal circular motion. But this point, of which ample development is found in Taoism and the Tantras, remains in her at the hint stage; indeed it is contradicted by various other positions.

regard to logical thought, to rational evidence it turns out, upon careful consideration, that the "I" behaves in an essentially passive manner. Now if the proposition of idealism is true, that everything that exists has a purely ideal reality, it is clear that the "I" who had come to *possess and* know how to dominate according to freedom his own thought, would at the same point have made himself lord of all the determinations in which he experiences his experience. The possibility of those marvelous phenomena which occur in Indian schools and which go to the confusion of Western culture, is reconnected in large part precisely to such a dominion over one's own thought. This point is evidently the first stage of magical idealism; and occultism, for its part, places therein, as it were, the organ for the knowledge and verification of its truths, and studies a methodology aimed precisely at this, that the ego, having wielded and empowered, through concentration, meditation and special practices, its own thought, goes by means of it to arouse new faculty and new powers.

Secondly, occultism resolves in certain of objectivity studied by the natural sciences abstractly, out of any relation to the spiritual, and metaphysics understood as that *determination of values* in the pure ideal mind seat, which is its intimate essence, into a third term, which is the *occult conceptions of the world*. What is specific about this and what distinguishes it from rationalistic philosophies of nature, such as Schelling or Hegel, is the subordination of the ontological principle to the practical principle. Indeed, it posits, beyond the realities of sensible consciousness, occult spiritual realities, resolving the former into increasing degrees of unity and interiority, and the principles of these it reconnects to higher principles that exist virtually in the self,

v.d. a possibility of the individual; the result is that the knowledge or, idealistically, resistance of that occult spiritual reality is at one with the development of these principles and yet that occult phenomenology or metaphysics acquires the sense I would almost say of an itinerary, of the mythical description of the stages that mark the degrees of spiritual development. Certainly, occultists and theosophists here speak of the existence in themselves of a quantity of elements (v.d. they give, like realism, as existing in fact and in a transcendent way that which *must* exist but which nevertheless remains a simple possibility of the self) and in this it has been seen that they fall into an illusion: it is nevertheless important to note that such an illusion may be methodologically necessary and, as such, to be respected, v.d. it may be *useful* that the "I," at a given point of development, believes in the existence in itself of evil, although it has no consistency theoretically, is, in certain cases, necessary and useful, so that in opposition to "evils" there arises a "good," that is, in general, so that a development of moral consciousness takes place. In truth, it stands that the spiritual realities, of which occultism speaks, rather than existences in the realistic sense of the term, are *tasks for activity*, names of possible experiences in which the self would tend more and more to achieve unity and universal "persuasion"; so that in the individual who does not really go to overcome, challenge and develop, they would not know how to be

nothing more than fantasies, empty names or, at most, more or less consoling hypotheses and abstract explanatory principles. Beyond this is the identification of the Manas-Buddhi-Atma triad of the spiritual Man with the degrees in which he realizes self-conscious power and control over his own lower body (in technical, astral, etheric and physical terms) and the elevation, through that, to a sufficient principle of the animal, vegetable and mineral worlds; the overcoming of animal generation or heterogeneration and the substitution for it, by means of the aforementioned taking possession of the formative and regulative principles of human organization, self-generation and then spiritual creation - thus the construction of immortality; the establishment of self-consciousness, that is, the integration of actuality, over those dead zones that are sleep and the periods before birth and after physical death; the consummation of the necessity of space and time in the spiritual vision to be developed up to cosmic consciousness - these are the main points, which will be elaborated in the following pages, to which occultism and theosophy pin their efforts, their studies and their disciplines and which, being also stages of the "way of persuasion" unite them with magical idealism, since as a common goal of this and that appears evidently mind that fulfillment of the real self in an absolute existence, in a living and actual eternity - *interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio* - which is the truth in one of the Stirnerian One and of the* Ari Stotellian pure act.

* * *

It will be shown how the generic *possibility* of the aforementioned points is in fact exhibited by a complex of phenomena, the positivity of which modern metapsychics is gradually sanctioning scientifically. Nonetheless the *real* is *contingent* on the possible: and here it is of fundamental importance to affirm that said points, as to their actual, present reality, are essentially contingent, v.d. conditioned by that, that the "I" *wills* them, *believes* them and, by its free power, brings them into actual existence. *The way, in truth, does not exist for those who do not want to walk. If "persuasion" is to have the value of freedom, if it is to be not a brute and factitious given, but the absoluteness of a life that gives itself to itself, it is necessary that, however much it may be said and shown, there may always be those who have a way of retorting that the above statements are mere myths and empty dreams - so that in no way does the fatality of an inconvertible way to perfection appear. However, the magical idealist to these would oppose that it cannot be dream or fantasy what he absolutely wants it to be. Others, on the other hand, would say that the way is long, hard and desolate and that he would not know how to adapt his own strength to it. To these he would repeat what Fichte said in regard to his morality: worse for you, there is no other. For outside the value of persuasion, there is only the horror and curse of non-being.*

IL On the concept of power

1. It has been seen how one of the fundamental principles that magical idealism with reference to the achievements of modern gnoseology affirms, is that in so far as knowledge can be understood as capable of providing a system of absolute certainty, in so far as one goes on to conceive of thought no longer as shaping things, but as shaping things itself; that is, no longer as a passive reproducing, but as a function generating, with its own energy, the object of knowing at the same point as knowledge of it. This theory was glimpsed as early as Vico, who fixed it in the well-known formula: "*verum et factum convertuntur*"-that is, the true, the unconditionally certain, mutates with the fact, that is, with what is produced considerably by an activity of the ego: there is no absolute knowledge, that there where science draws from itself its own subject (1). Conception, this, which in Vico was probably provoked by the observation of meteors, in which the character of apodicticity and universal validity is connected precisely to the fact that they proceed essentially by construction, according to a free position and a *priori* legislation. Senonché il Vico, insofar as he held to a concrete, yes, but one-sided concept of human possibilities, found himself compelled by the above criterion to restrict the absolutely certain knowledge for man to the rather miserable domain of mathematics and history, these seeming to him to be the only fields in which ITo could claim to be effectively a creator, whereas, about nature, he affirms it can come to be known according to absolute knowledge only by God, its author.

However, this was not paid for by the later philosophy, and with the "synthesis to *priori*" of Kant, with the "intellectual intuition" of Fichte and Schelling, with the Hegelian concept of history, whereby this no longer remains restricted to the social field, but takes up in an ideal phenomenology the same process of cosmic construction, finally with the dialecticism of knowledge in action, such as was elaborated by Gentile and, with more positive references, by Weber, went to extend the domain of "fact" over the entire sphere of human experience. Nor could it be otherwise. For a knowledge, if it is partial, cannot

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

have in any way the character of *absolute* knowledge, and breaking the domain of certainty in half implies in truth ruining all certainty as *absolute* certainty.

Aut Caesar, aut nihil: if the "I" is not given to understand as its pro ducto rimerò system o f experience, in no way can it be resold on a part of it an unconditional knowing-and then qua lunque instance for absolute certainty must be rejected into nothingness. That this is the case can be shown by examining the two fields to which Vico restricted himself, mathematics and history. About mathematics today it is known that its certainty is merely formal and hypothetical; in concrete it subor dines on that of first principles. Now such principles in theory in no way would know how to guarantee themselves a unique and exclusive determination: to fer mar to an example known to all, *a priori* both Euclid's geometry and Riemann's geometry and Lobatschewsky's geometry (2) are true. Who can give one of these three theoretically compossible geometries the note of no longer formal, but real certainty is, in the very words of Riemann and Lobatschewsky (3), experience. Specifically: that it seems intuitively evident that the sum of the interior angles of a triangle gives 180° rather than more or less, that $2 + 2$ makes 4 this does not proceed from a free *a priori* position nor from a transcendent character o f mathematical truth, but from the fact that one is in a physical environment to which a certain index of density c is proper, not something else (4), in an experience based on finite rather than infinite sets. But as long as this element of expe rience is something given, something that is independent of our power, nothing will be able to guarantee its fixity, and yet the system of mathematical certainty, which has its roots in it, remains irremediably dominated by contin people. Likewise, in history it is true that the human factor stands very much in the foreground, but it also depends on the set of environment, physical conditions, etc., which man, understood in the strict sense, finds and does not make; and if about these conditions, precisely because they are not "made" certain knowledge must be excluded, it must be recognized that history accommodates in its bosom an obscure principle, which evaporates into nothing its pretended absoluteness, due only for a whole possession of all conditions. The demand of philosophy beyond Vico is thus legitimate: if, in general, there must be absolute certainty, nothing must be for the I, which the I has not placed.

2. But if real is the need, illusory is the satisfaction that philosophy gave to it. According to such a demand it was indeed necessary to put the self in the place of God, since God by Vico was precisely understood as the principle

(2) See notes 6 and 7 on p. 33 of the previous essay (Ed.).

(3) B. Riemann. *Ueber die Hypothesen welche der Geometrie zu Grande liegen*, Abh. d.K. Gesellschaft, Göttingen, 1854, p. 148. N.I. Lobatschewsky. *Pangeometry*, Coll. of geom. works, by Lobatschewsky, voi. II, p. 618.

(4) Cf. J. Rougier, *Le paralogsnes du rationalisme*, Paris, 1920, pp. 281-284.

sufficient of that part of experience which he thought fell outside human activity. Then it was necessary to understand the individual not as something rigid, fixed once and for all in certain capacities, but as an infinite power of development and to affirm that an absolute knowing has for its condition affective restendence of a sufficient activity of the ego over all that world, which is its world; consequently, that the point of unconditional certainty is mutated with that of autarky and absolute power, dazzling from a progressive affirmation of the ego beyond its amorphous and oblique daily life. The theory of absolute knowledge, consequently carried out, must therefore pass into the *magical* since, in the other case, it could not retain even one of its positions.

Senonché to this passing into action, to this condition of self-building up to an absolute Individual, which proceeded logically from the instance, was opposed by a fundamental sloth, and since on the other hand remained the horror for the other alternative, leading to the bankruptcy of all knowledge in a mere opinare and in a problematicity enslaved to the contingency of the moment, modern philosophy made itself to seek a *modus vivendi*: and this it found very cheaply in the concept of the transcendental I. Mention has already been made of the misunderstanding related to such a notion. Now it is very important to understand well the situation from whence it arose. I can well say that every thing, insofar as it is known by me, must be taken up in my cognitive act: the opposite thesis would in fact lead to the absurd assertion, that there are things known by me (for, known by me they must well be, in one way or another, in order that I may speak of them) and yet, insofar as I place them outside my cognitive act, I cannot say that I know them. That the question stands thus from the point of view of abstract conscience there is no doubt, and, let us repeat, idealism, in this respect, constitutes an absolutely impregnable position. With respect to such a standpoint, therefore, the instance of absolute knowledge would remain satisfied, since the self, understood as the gnoseological subject of idealism, undoubtedly goes to replace God. But when, beyond the abstract and formal side, one invests experience from the point of view of freedom and the concrete individual, things appear in quite another way: the power, which thunderbolts at the cognitive level, is then transmuted in the main into powerlessness. With respect to the world of representation, the self results in fact as chained and necessitated, in no way is it allowed - in the normal way - not to perceive or transmute what it perceives, to modify the conditions of representation both in regard to the so-called a priori forms (space, time, causality, etc.), as well as in regard to the various physical and physiological determinisms to which, in one way or another, one must well concede a certain reality consistency, since the physical and physiological sciences are not entirely a sound vacuum and one must well explain the possibility of their success, partial though it may be. And the thing appears even more distinctly in the plane of action proper, where the concrete individual finds himself enmeshed in an infinity of contingencies that compel him to what he least wants. From

gnoseological point of view, nothing is therefore, which is not posited by the I: as Midas could touch nothing, which he did not at once turn into gold. so knowledge cannot assert itself over anything, without thereby reducing it to something conditioned by it and posited by it. But, from the standpoint of freedom, the self appears in a certain sense to be a slave to its own cognitive activity: this takes place in determinations over which he has little or no power, which possess him more than he possesses them. Now what in the face of this situation remained to be done to an unsuspecting individuality, and while affixed to the condition for absolute certainty, is quite clear: to shrink, that is, to the abstract-concognitive point of view and to deny as an illusion all that is freedom and concrete individuality. And thus was born the idea of the transcendental self, an abstract subject of knowing, mind you, not of my or any other real knowing, but of knowing in general; empty form devouring the concrete world into ideal entities, which an incomprehensible activity, stringent freedom and necessity, individuality and universality in a blissful *coincidentia oppositorum*⁵ unfolds into sets that the Bradley (5) rightly understood as "unearthly ballets of exanguous categories." Such a transcendental self was posited as the "true" self and, with a kind of refined metaphysical masochism, it was contrasted with the individual of concrete life and freedom as an abstraction, as a "puppet of the imagination," as something contradictory whose only destiny-so Hegel expressed it-is "the damnation of a cold, flat death" - nor could it be otherwise, since everything that falls outside the abstract knowing exhales a testimony of impotence, which would inexorably dissolve the mirage of absolute knowledge. Thus, as Stirner **sharply** noted (6), starting from the premise that only what is human is true, one was forced to posit that the human lives only in the head of the rationale list, in its fantastic transcendental ego, while the antihuman is found *dap* everywhere; not only that, but, going to the bottom of the position, one comes to a real 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 absolute passivity and impotence.

3. That this is so, can be clarified by showing how such philosophers are led to conceive of the will. Royce, for example, in a certain way accepts the Vichian principle: the actual being of things, he says, is resolved in their being the objects of an affirmation of the individual will; things are accomplished embodiments of purposes, which in the ideal have only a partial and indeterminate expression. That's fine; but it turns out in fact that spes-

(5) Exponent of neo-Hegelianism English, Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924), critic of hedonism, empiricism, formalism and the psychologism: the *its* metaphysics a radical monism expounded in the 1893 volume *Appearance and Reality* (Ed.).

(6) M. Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, Recl. Bibl., p. 172, cf. p. 207.

sissimo things counteract, disappoint or even defeat the effective and conscious will of the individual. How does he explain this? Royce is driven to this graceful solution: that such an effective, conscious will is illusory and abstract and that what the "really" self wants in such cases lies precisely in what violates or disappoints him (7). That is, what he thinks he wants, he does not want - he can recognize his "true" will only in the determinations with which things break his real will. Conclusion: the "true" will of the self is the negation of it and, more precisely, the person of its powerlessness. That is, one does not have an activity of the I that, according to absolute, creative power, embodies in things, in a way from the inside out, what he freely and intentionally wills. On the contrary: instead, my will must be told by things what it has "freely" willed; the criterion of my true will is furnished by the given, from the outside, and as for what I, as a concrete individual, want, it is a shadow, an illusion caused by my unconsciousness and finitude. It is repugnant to Royce to admit that the idea or will conforms to nature, for such is the profound sense of his doctrine, and he thinks he saves himself by saying that this nature incorporates a system of ends of a divine order: but with this things in nothing change, the pith of the process remains likewise external to my concrete individuality, which in contrast to it is deprived of all power and real autonomy. One feels the need to draw the reader's attention to the profound immorality and tragic irony of such a doctrine, which, consistently carried out, leads to the apotheosis of powerlessness, to the dissolution of the individual over things, and yet to nothing more than a refined and empowered materialism. This turn is found, for example, in Gentile's philosophy; at the center of which is the concept of so-called "concrete freedom," that is, freedom that is identical with necessity, which is not the sufficient principle of an absolute, arbitrary legislation, but which follows the fatality of an "ultimate and unconditional" rational law (8); this turns it into an infinite becoming, of which it therefore does not possess the reason (9), in which, according to the principle that there is no self-consciousness outside the various contents of consciousness, the light and persuasion of the ego dazzle only at the point where the various determinations of experience rape an individual who conforms to them and whom all autarky denies in the absorbed demiurgicity of the act. As is well known, in being raped lies the pleasure of woman, and yet here we wish to leave the philosopher

(7) J. Royce, *World and the Individual*, transl. il., Bari, 1914, vol. II, p. 129; cf. p. 121.

(8) G. Gentile, *Logica*, Bari, 1923, you. il, p. 68.

(9) It is one thing to have the same principle in oneself, quite another to possess it. In spontaneity, the self has its own principle in itself, but it does not possess it, it is not possessed. And one thing is the not being determined by other (v.d. the absence of coercion or necessity external); another is being positively free, which implies also being of there from itself internal need, the to dominate internally, from an unconditional point, one's own act, as will be seen below.

choose the sex that best suits them. It should only be noted that such a movement, culminating in the sharpest dissolution of all freedom and concrete individuality, is a logical consequence of the condition for an absolute knowledge. when it goes to assert itself at a stubborn obliviousness of the concrete ego. Only such abdication can in fact give the illusion of power. It is clear that, by gouging out one's eyes, one has a way of not seeing that which, though it exists, one does not like to see: no other is the meaning of the movement whereby from the concrete self one defers to the transcendental self.

It would be interesting, however, to see whether any such philosopher, when, in spite of all his will, he were taken and put to torture, would have the strength of mind to be sufficient to the pretense of his doctrine and, in conformity, to recognize that his "concrete freedom," his true, "historical" and "rational" "will," is that relative to the "fact," v.d. to that which waxes and wrenches his person and yet to those which such an unpleasant situation imposes on him, while that will of his which internally rebels against violence and suffers impotence and all tends to reaffirm the principle of the individual is instead an illusion, an abstraction-not his real, living will, but a "puppet of the imagination."

4. Consider human experience in all its concreteness, then the problem posed urges a quite different solution. For it appears indeed all that a pure knowing is an abstraction that never existed, that any cognitive and logical determination, thought and its laws are not something impersonal, unfolding automatically according to eternal norms and indifferent to the human, but always the product of an individual activity, but rather always the symbolic expressions of profound affirmations of the I (I). Similarly, categories are not abstract cognitive forms, which the spirit would find in itself nice and made, fallen to it no one knows from where, but are, as was already understood by Vedānta and Buddhist philosophy, sem plically modes of activity and freedom, which subsist as long as the correlative affirmation of the individual persists and fall or transmute with the fall or transmutation of this. But if the *prius* is never abstract knowing or logical truth, but activity, will, and individuality, the whole absurdity of contenting oneself with the point of view of the gnoseological subject and erasing, with a kind of verdict of authority, the profound whole of the powers of life, passion, and effort that preside over formations and of which philosophical activity itself is only a particular moment propelled

(10) An evocative exposition of this thesis is found in the work: N. Abbagnano, *sources irrational of thought*, Naples. 1923. In it one take in consideration the main doctrines philosophical (the realism classical, empiricism English, the criticism kan tian, the "philosophy of values." the doctrine of Bradley and Royce. actualism, Aliotta's hope-mentalism, intuitionism, neo-realism) and it is shown by an internal analysis that they derive their foundation and justification not from the rational, but from the irrational. .On this, however, see below.

by an unsettled affair of elements, which the individual, so long as he holds fast to the plane of the specular abstract, can in no way master. Then the sufficiency of the transcendental ego is revealed as an illusion and a rettorica, opposed to it is the impotence of the concrete individual, and, at the most distinct awareness of this antithesis, it is to be affirmed that certainty and absolute knowledge are a vain name there where they do not reflect the concrete power of an I who, from the height of an unconditional, arbitrary freedom, dominates the whole of all those conditions and energies, in which

one shapes the totality of his experience. The absolute certainty extends so much, as far as my power and dominion extends: everything that escapes my will and lordship is to be said by me not to be known according to certain knowledge, since its principle, which, by hypothesis thesis, transcends me, is something of which I can never be certain, something that can always escape me and delude me and make false, with variations imprevedute, the positions I connect to it. In a word: *I can tell myself absolutely certain only of those things of which I have the principle and causes within me, as unconditioned freedom v.d. according to the function of possession; in the others, only of what in them satisfies this condition.* The process of knowing and that of absolute self-realization, of the elevation of the individual to a universal Lord, then fall at the same point, from which it also appears to be the principle of error and obscurity nothing more than that of powerlessness. 11 criterion of error and truth is simply the degree of intensity of the assertion of possession: sketchy assertion, weak e uncertain è error, an assertion absolute e a itself entirely sufficient is truth. Error is a weak truth, truth an intense and powerful error. Again, as with the possible and the real, the difference is not qualitative, but quantitative; these are degrees of the homogeneous *continuum* of individual affirmation.

Such a theory, if it sounds harassing to the European mentality, is reconnected in the main to the fundamental principles of the wisdom of the East, according to which it is held that few prejudices are so absurd, as that, irradiated in modern Western culture, whereby it is thought that anyone, provided he has a certain degree of intellectual clarity, whatever life he allows himself to live in, can participate, through the teaching communicated to him by science or philosophy, in a real certainty (11). Be assured that on this path no violence can ever cause absolute knowledge to be met with anything but a deformed and insubstantial shadow. Instead, the view of the Orientals, which is then echoed in mysticism everywhere, is that the cognitive process is conditioned by the process of actual transformation and empowerment of the concrete self, that absolute knowing is a *flatus vocis* when it does not represent as the flower or the gushing light

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

by the one whose power has been fulfilled in the absolute self-realization of the Vedic *Rishi*, the Buddhist *Aṣṭa*, and the Taoist *Phap*.

Bottom line: as long as some thing exists, it is not given absolute certainty; as long as there is a world as a world, that is, as something "Other," as a set of impenetrable and resistant powers, the principle of the Absolute, strictly speaking, does not exist. But this negation of the world as a condition of certainty is not to be understood in an abstract way, that is, as an absolute annulment of all form, as an empty and interminable *nirvana*. *On the contrary*: it is reconnected with the one who neither yields to the world nor flees from it, but rather who comes face to face with it, who dominates it entirely, and who in every determination then recognizes himself as *a power entity*, thereby demonstrating the non-existence of the world itself as "Other," as well as, at the same point, the absolute reality of it, in the infinity of its forms, as simply the manifestation of an unconditioned self-will of the absolute individual, of the One.

Hence a fundamental concept: only in the absolute individual, only in the entirely sufficient act does the world become certain and, in that, real. It is the point of the Autarch that communicates consistency and certainty to nature, which it, before him, does not already possess but demands. The world is the process of being that from an ideal *intensive* limit of privation tends to fulfill itself in an absolute possession and, in that, to realize itself and make itself certain to itself. Whence it is that to ask for certainty and reality from nature is absurd; since nature, as such, is privation, *GTÉpr|oi<*, and certainty and reality does not have it in itself, but in the individual, and therefore in so far as the individual gives it to himself. Of absolute certainty there is therefore no demonstration that *TCÒ èpyco v.d.* by action, by a *proceeding*. Explanation and truth do *not stand behind but ahead*. All nature thus *rests* on the individual: the point at which he turns to fulfill himself according to self in the act of power is what conditions it, which takes up its beginning and end.

Having thus established the subordination of the gnoseological problem to the principle of potency, it remains to work out a distinct understanding of the concept of this so that it may indeed prove to be the point capable of resolving the existence of absolute certainty. It will be seen how by such an assumption one also comes to determine what is to be thought of in the concept of freedom, if it is not to evaporate into a sound vacuum.

5. With respect to an eventual determination of his consciousness, the individual can take two radically opposed attitudes to each other. Any concrete distinction between nature and spirit, between non-ego and ego, objectivity and subjectivity, etc., can invariably be traced back to the values that proceed respectively from each of these two directions, between which it is given to the individual to opt, in order thereby to define the plan that will henceforth go on to hold the intimate meaning of each of his lives. The first of these attitudes is that according to which the self does not hold to itself, as to an absolute center or principle, but rather deepens in its determination, which it does not experience as

his own creation or position, but to which he ascribes a reality distinct from him and subsistent in himself. He thus in a certain way alienates himself from himself, makes himself as a void and, with a gesture of dedication, goes and remits to an "Other," to an *èrepov* his centrality and reality. Then he, with respect to his own determination, remains essentially passive and insubstantial, in all that he is he does not have his life and persuasion in himself, but outside himself, in the "Other," on whom he feels he depends. This attitude, which is essentially negative or feminine, is contrasted by the other, according to which the individual consists in itself as in a principle of absolute centrality, as in a power, before which there is nothing and from which alone every determination or object derives its reality, which is thus experienced as that of a what of place, of freely generated by the "I." According to such an option, the self absolutely rejects the Other, denies that there is any reality outside or above itself and from what it draws from itself; it feels that *it* does not depend on anything, it is to itself the ultimate reason, the center on which all existence gravitates and within all life behaves as the absolute Lord. It is therefore a matter of two distinct planes or levels of consciousness, which infinitely differentiate action even when it maintains an identical object: for, in general-and this is a fundamental principle of magical idealism-what matters is not the doing itself, that is, what is done, but the *how what is done*, that is, the meaning, the value within which a certain action or experience is situated. This is what decides everything in order to a spiritual consideration. One must eradicate in the clearest way the prejudice, peculiar to a lower level of consciousness, that the criterion of spirituality, freedom, etc., resides in the proper nature of this or that object. In truth, there are neither material nor spiritual things, but rather a *way*, material or spiritual, of experiencing things, which in themselves are neither material nor spiritual, which in their value or disvalue are determined only by the plane, of freedom and centrality, or rather of necessity and absence, in which the individual stands with respect to experience in general. Now nothing but the feminine and negative attitude generates the character of materiality: whether the Other-that is, that reality which the self distinguishes from itself, in which it does not recognize itself and on which it makes itself dependent-is called physical matter, nature, or I between descendent, higher will, or even Spirit, supersensible Entity, God, this in nothing changes the situation, it always remains a thing, something foreign, a "puppet of the imagination," and the world that lives for it can never be but that of non-centrality, of non-being, of a consciousness impure to itself deficient - short, of a creature and a slave: such is the world of matter, of the brute and dark entity. In contrast to the negativity of this attitude, which in the terms of Jung's psychology could be said to be *extraverted*, the point of essential positivity, of absolute irreducible self-assertion at every experience evidently defines the principle of Spirit and provides a fundamental condition for the concept of potency. Let it be noted, however: never the *con-held*, but always *form of the act* is what decides. The same Asso

lute can be experienced passively and yet materially, as well as in certain cases of mystical ecstasy. Conversely, the contrary option does not necessarily exclude all recognition of distinct realities, all deficiency, all generosity, all love or self-denial. On the contrary, all this may well be the object of an experience according to potency and freedom - it is enough that the self does not lose itself in the relative act, but in it instead enjoys itself as the will that has unconditionally willed it, so that not even for a moment does it fall into the illusion of believing that everything which, by virtue of its very act, it goes on to recognize as value or aseity is so necessarily, that is, is so by the violence of a principle that transcends its centrality.

6. From this proceeds the further distinction, delineating even more the concept of power, between action according to desire or deficient and action according to autarky or unconditioned. If one glances at the life in which the individual habitually lives, not only in the amorphous mediocrity of the masses, but often also in the great lights of tragic and spiritual humanity, it appears that in the main his doing is not to be said to be properly determined by him as a sufficient center, but by correlations of appetites and motives with respect to which he is passive or almost passive. That is, the ego does not possess his action: he desires-and in desire not the ego takes the thing, but the thing takes the ego, destroys its centrality in a compulsion that hurls it outward, to the periphery of itself. What is very important is to note that such a situation *can* take back within itself not this or that action, *but the totality of all possible actions*. For a servant does not cease to be a servant by the fact of changing master; and one who thinks that he has accomplished something from the point of view of individual worth and freedom by, for example, changing from sensual motives to spiritual motives, from love of matter and self to love of the supersensible, of others or of freedom itself, those who believe there is any difference between the desire of the brute and that of the God whom some cosmogonies conceive as generating the world at the attraction of the idea of "being many," those fall victim to a big woolly illusion, which only the absence not so much of sufficiently deep philosophical reflection as of the sense of what is properly the *value* of an action can make comprehensible. In the totality of such a universe, there is dependence: action always arises according to necessity; the self is not the author of it, does not have the principle of it in itself, does not posit it, but undergoes it. And wherever the individual acts out of an internal urge of his own nature, or in reaction to an internal discomfort or deprivation, or even out of the attraction of an idea, a pleasure or bliss, whatever it may be, "material" or "spiritual" (12), he remains inexorably-

(12) Cf. Meister Eckhart, *Schriften und Predigten*, ed. E. Buttner, vol. I, p. 121: "Aus diesem innersten Grande (in which life lives only for itself, *aus seinem eigenen Grunde lebt*) heraus solisi dii alle deine Werke wirken, oline eine Warum. *Ich behaupte*

mind locked up in this circle of the slave. Specifically: the enjoyment that is experienced by men is in the main the price of obedience and abdication. It, with its ever-varying and yet always the same enticements, imposes given determinations on the activity that seeks it and thus reduces individuality to a passive instrument of transcendent correlations, just as Schopenhauer showed particularly clearly for the case of sexuality and, on a much broader horizon, Michelstaedter in his concept of *l'acte* (13). Clearly, according to the point of power, such a situation must be transcended in the most absolute way. Value and pleasure must not precede and determine activity and will but must instead proceed almost as an effect from the unconditioned willing of the latter, as perfect willing. That is to say, in the Lord's action there must be nothing of desire and internal compulsion: it must manifest a will which in its determination has nothing before it, neither a nature of its own, nor the light of a pleasure, nor the attraction of a motive or an ideal, which therefore in itself absolutely and *positively* generates itself, in this having in mind nothing but the cold and solitary love of its sufficient affirmation. As long as I perform an act with a view to the pleasure or utility derived from it or because it conforms to my being or to any law, material or ideal, *and not because it is simply willed, there is no talk*, either of grace, freedom or power. Mind you, however: from this proceeds not the denial of all enjoyment in a bleak asceticism, but only the ending of it *as a possession*, as something of which one has the principle in oneself: that is to say, one no longer has an activity which in order to arrive at an enjoyment is compelled to unfold itself in a certain inconvertible way, but rather an activity which does not get from anything the conditions for the pleasurable or the painful, which moreover at the point of its determination does not have the attraction at all present, of a pleasure or the repulsion of a pain, but for itself wills itself and the pleasure does not find or receive, but arbitrarily creates it, drawing it from the perfection of its affirmation, dazzling with power. Only when pleasure-and, with it, value in general-can it be experienced not as the determinant of the activity, but as the flower and creation of it (14), which in turn pro-

entschieden: solange die deine Werke verrichtest um des Himmelreichs, um Gottes oder um deiner Soligkeit willen, als so von aussen her, so bist du wirklich nicht! aus dem Rechten. - Fragst du einen wahr hasten Menschen, einen deraus seinem eigenen Grunde wirkt: "Warum wirkst du deine Werke?" wenn er richtig antwortet, würde er auch sagen: "Ich wirke, um zu wirken!" ["From this intimate base (in which life lives only for itself.

= *aus seinen eigenen Grunde lebt*) you should develop all your works, *without a why*. I consider it decisive fact that as long as you turn your works **t o t h e** heavenly sphere, on the will of God of your spirituality, that is, on something external, you are not at all right. A true work must arise from itself; to the question, "Why do you do your works?" it would be right to answer, "I do them in order to do them.""

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

(14) Cf. O. Hamelin, *Essai sur les éléments principaux de la représentation*, Paris, 1907, p. 426. One can reject the Aristotelian doctrine that pleasure rather than the

yields from a will over which no stimulus, appetite, motive or idea has power, only when the act has not pleasure and value or reason outside itself, but in itself, as a function of possession, only then does the servant no longer change master, but truly rises to autonomy, to being free - and the pious cere from the stigma of passivity, becomes the very splendor of the positive absolute.

Thus the concept of potency, of which the quistion is here a question, is not correctly understood unless it is connected with an attitude of positivity, of central affirmation, with the recise denial of the illusion of an "Other" at any experience, finally with a naked determinant will from nothingness, beyond all furniture and appetite. In fact, in all other cases there is invariably a dependence of the individual on something that falls outside of him and of whose determinations he can therefore never be said to be cello according to absolute knowledge. It may be useful to illuminate these results by restating them at the notions of morality, logic and power itself as remitted to an applied natural science.

7. Morality hinges fundamentally on the feeling of duty, proceeding from a certain system of values, to which the will, which is moral will, subsumes itself. Now here it is a matter of understanding the meaning of the relation between will and value: is it the will that unconditionally determines values, or are values experienced by it as something given, which it simply recognizes and accepts? This alternative can be found in the opposition of the doctrines of Plato and Duns Scotus (15); Plato, in the- *V Euthyphro*, posed precisely the problem, whether some determinations were willed by the Gods because they were recognized by them as good, or whether they turned out to be good solely because they were willed by the Gods. In the one case, first there is an eternal and in itself valid norm, to which the will of the Gods subsumes itself; in the other, first there is the will or freedom, and the reason that a thing appears to be good simply defers at all that it expresses an unconditional affirmation in itself of the Gods. Plato, as later Tom-

motive of action may come consider it as something that faces adds to the end, like a ἑΤριγύρονον τὴν ἐξέτασιν, as the resonance of the individual in as is a perihelion act (*Ethylica Nicomachea*, X, 4, 1174b, 32). However, Aristotle first adds. the condition, that this act is conformed to a nature (*ibid.* VII, 13(12), 1153a, 14), w h i c h , as will be seen, is to be surpassed; s e c o n d l y , though not very distinctly (cf. O. Hamelin, *Le système d'Ansiate*, Paris, 1920, pp. 289-290), it goes to free fatality from pleasure to make it the slave of the intellect in asserting-contrary to what will have to be argued, taking up a demand distinctly posed by Fichte (*Sit tenie lire*, S.W. ed. E.E. Fichte, you. IV, p. 124)-that one desires because one represents the desirable, and not vice versa (*Metaphysics*, XXII (A), 7, 1072a, 29).

(15) The bealo English Giovanni Duns Scotus (1265c.-1308), though being Franciscan, sought to reconcile the doctrines of his order, of clear imprint Augustinian e neoplatonica, with those of the school Dominican which were based on St. Thomas' interpretation of Aristotele (Ed.).

Aquinas, decided in favor of the first case, that is, he admitted that things were willed by the Gods because they were good in themselves, without realizing that then those whom he continued to call Gods were reduced to mere creatures, who had to go and learn from a higher norm what was good or evil - the true God being in truth the *lawgiver*, that is, the one who, as creator of the law, cannot, in any way, be subject to a law. This was seen by Duns Scotus, who went precisely to affirm the other option, namely, that the naked power of God-that is, an absolute freedom drawing from nothing its own determination-was the only criterion whence then resulted, as a consequence, the value or disvalue of certain things or actions (16). That is, Duns Scotus' God is the Lord and the creator of good and evil, the Platonic God is a slave of good or evil and yet a shadow of God. This being the case, there is no need to insist further to make it clear that one must decide between morality and freedom, as between two *absolutely incompatible* dimensions of consciousness: morality, as such, invariably implies dependence and absence of the individual from the point of unconditional legislation, so that it remains excluded in the clearest way from the concept of power. The spirit, is beyond all morality. The ego, which is sufficient to itself, recognizes no other criterion of value except that which flows from its own unconditional, arbitrary will; the intrinsic imperativeness of any one element is for it an empty word. For him has value what he wills, and solely because he wills it: to use an Indian term, he is the *svechchhàchàri*.

Now what was said for good and evil can be extended to the logical truth and to the concept of nature in general. It is only recently, namely with Rickert (17) and Windelband (18), that we have become aware of the essentially *moral* character of logical truth. What seems logically self-evident to us has in fact always a character of absolute imperati- life, nullifying all agility of subjective arbitrariness. It appears to shine in an eternal order, which imposes itself on the self as soon as the latter learns it. That is to say, logical truth is not experienced by the ego as an absolute position that, insofar as it proceeds from his will, he should understand that if it is so, when he willed it, it could also be otherwise, but rather as something imperative, as something that univocally enchains.

(16) G. Duns Scotus, *hi magisirum sententiarum*, I, disi. 39, quaest. 1.

(17) Heinrich Rickert (1863-1936), a pupil of Windelband, succeeded him in 1916 to the Heidelberg Chair and to the directorship of the Baden School, which developed the neo-Kantism of the Marburg School into a "philosophy of values," as indicated by Windelband. For Rickert the object of philosophy is the problem of the essence of value and his compilo systematizing these values (Ed.).

(18) Wilhelm Windelband (1848-1915) was one of the promoters of the return to Kant and theorized a "philosophy of values" in opposition to positivism and distinguishing between "science of nature" and "science of spirit." Windelband's philosophy influenced Benedetto Croce's philosophy of spirit in Italy especially in the categories into which it is articulated (Ed.).

mind freedom and allows it absolutely no other alternative. As Bossuet (19) says, truths, at whatever time they appear in a human intellect, will be known: but in knowing them, *it will not thereby make them truths, but will find them to be such*. This is the form, according to which in the logical realm the self experiences its activity. Now what does this mean, except that the "I" does not possess truth, but is possessed by it, except that he is not the lawgiver, but the subject of the realm of rationality? Again in this domain-and perhaps in this more than in any other-the center does not fall in the individual, but outside of him, the fundamental attitude always remaining that of a passive and negative creature, in no way that of the Lord (20). That is, a dilemma arises analogous to that set forth for the inoral and which already aroused famous questions in scholasticism in its reference to God: v.d. are the so-called eternal truths truths because God knows them as such, or does God know them as such because they are already in themselves true? That is, is truth independent of and indifferent to the act of knowing it, or does it result **from the** unconditioned self-determination of it? As long as Fio experiences the logical judgment according to a *Sollen* [duty (possible)] or an impenetrability and not as an act of arbitrariness, as a bare contingent affirmation of his will, the first alternative is the true one, and yet the Platonic exemplarism remains his last word. But then power and, with it, absolute certainty becomes a hollow sound.

And let it not be opposed that it is illegitimate to establish between freedom and necessity an opposition and a relation of antecedence: for, in truth, the identification of freedom and necessity expresses only a refined way of denying freedom, and he who would oppose this would succeed only in an explicit confession that his horizon stops at the concept of nature. For in nature, freedom is one with necessity, in the sense that all activity conforms to an initial determination that is inconvertible even if, on the other hand, only through this activity can it reach its concrete realization. According to such a concept, one only becomes what one is: thus a plant can never be anything other than a plant, a creature from a creature, God from God. Relative differences, that is, those, for example, between man and plant, between God and creature, etc., should not create illusions, since they fall outside the relation of entities with respect to themselves, which, alone, must be assumed in a concrete consideration about freedom. To express it even more clearly: a plant that eternally was compelled to vegetate in nothing would differ from a thought that eternally was compelled to be rational or from an absolute that eternally was compelled to

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

(20) The understanding, says the Spinoza referring to a such conjunction, è pure passion ("*het Verstaan een pure lijdinge is*"): it is not that the "I" affirms or denies, but it is the object to which affirms or denies in the "I" something of itself (*Short Treatise*, c. XVI, ed. Van Vloten, p. 68ff.).

absolute being: the fatality of rationality, perfection and freedom itself is no less fatality than that of gravitating, vegetating, sensitively appetizing. It is clear that those who stop at this point do not even suspect what freedom properly is: its plan is that of the creature-and that its ultimate truth is the becoming of the idea instead of matter, the divine providential plan instead of the chaos of incoherent powers, the development of a logical order instead of the incoercibility of an irrational *élan vital* transmuting into ever new, unpredictable formations-this in nothing changes the matter: since what is to be transformed is not the content, but the elementary *form* of the activity, which is that of a being bound a itself itself. Where in the whole of the indicated situations there always remains, at bottom, a brute foulness, a fate, something of which the ego does not posit the reason and with respect to which he is fundamentally passive. To such a conception already from the Gnostics, further by Plotinus, Eckhart, Schelling, and Secrétan (21) was opposed that of spirit as absolute, indeterminate freedom, that is, not bound by any law or nature, whether rational or moral or material, but arbitrarily creating for itself its own nature and being. In truth, there is spirit only as freedom, and freedom only as *causa sui* and, specifically, that as *causa sui ex nihilo* (22): outside such a value, everything is nature and necessity - opaque matter and

deficient. Insemina, of two things: either there is an initial condition, which uniquely determines freedom and beyond which the "I" is not given pene trare and reassert itself; or the *prius* is an absolute, unconditional freedom, from which all nature, all law and rationality proceeds. In the first case there is *analilicity*: I am what I am, I have the fate of my nature; in the second, *syntheticity*: I am what I want, according to a will that is created absolutely out of nothing. And here we are dealing with two planes separated from each other by an abyss, in relation to which a choice must be made, in order to define Patteg giamento that will illuminate the entire life and experience of the individual, ele- vantcsi to Lord of Yes c of No - to Autarch - that is, sinking into the oblique and cursed life of the creature and the feminine. And, mind you, com promised there are none: there is no place for two in the world: a God. just as, Malebranche noted, he can never create gods.

It thus turns out that one cannot speak of power as long as one recognizes the priority of any law or norm, whether rational or moral or na-

(21) The philosopher Swiss Charles Secrétan (1815-1895) yes can consider a precursor of personalism Christianity. He conceives the philosophy as reflection inner which in this way manifests to man the own freedom: it perhaps is finite because it has natural limili and finds its raison d ' être only if it is affirmed in an infinite freedom represented by God (Ed.).

(22) Once again we must beware of sophistry, whereby from negative or relative freedom - v.d. from not having conditions from something else, from not being coercion - we infer to positive freedom, which implies not having conditions even in oneself - in a pro pria nature or rationality - and therefore being *absolutely* free.

tural, to freedom and yet to the self, until what is good or evil, true or false so, rational or irrational, being or non-being is simply decided by the absolute affirmation of the individual and by nothing but it.

8. Finally, it remains to disillusion those who fantasize about the realization of any power through the exploitation of the forces of nature, proceeding from the applications of the physical-chemical sciences. Bacon already noted that by this way nature is not commanded, except on condition of serving and recognizing it: the infinite affirmation of man through indeterminate series of mechanisms, technical devices, etc. is a *marche de dupes*, it has for its profound truth a homage of servitude and obedience, a profound negation of the principle of the individual. Indeed, one does not have the central affirmation, which is an unconditional domination, without asking anything but one's own power for the success of the action, without accepting laws, but imposing, dominating or raping them: on the contrary, from every point of that situation exhales the recognition of one's own non-reality and of the reality of a foreign power, to which one goes to beg for the success of the action: for example, one will never speak of *moving* a stone, but only of *making it move* by conforming to objective laws that are recognized *a priori*. The act is not *simple*, it does not have within itself, according to possession, but in other the set of conditions, by virtue of which it succeeds; the power therefore does not inherent in it by essence, but by accident: its success rests sur a cambial and sur a contingency. And this, because the presupposition of technique is positive science, which is essentially "extraverted," that is, it does not consider things in their profound interiority, in that root whereby they would go to reconnect with the self and depend directly on it, but rather from the outside, in their phenomenal appearance. Nothing but this extraverted and separative attitude gave an autonomous reality to nature, created, in the set of mechanical laws that govern it, a brute fate that dissolves into nothingness all real consistence and all freedom of the individual. By abstracting in the phenomenon from the spiritual principle, the natural sciences have *precluded* themselves *a priori* from any possibility of providing any positive solution to the problem of potency; which, in principle, requires instead that not knowledge precede and condition the act, but rather that the act precedes and conditions knowledge,

v.d. that, having abolished the relationship of exteriority, one acts from within, from the level of that metaphysical productivity, on which the phenomenon or the physical depends

(23) About the idea, that in order to seriously dominate nature the self must not merely adapt to its determinisms and exploit them, but must instead go back to the source of freedom see E. Boutroux, *De la contingence des lois de la nature*². Paris, 1921. pp. 160-162; H. Keyserling, *Die Philosophie als Kunst*, Darmstadt, 1922, c. XIV. Formerly Meister Eckhart (*Schriften und Predigten*, cit. you. I. pp. 77-78). noted that the perfect è the one that does not takes place for means dialtro, which is simple, which proceeds from a depth into which no "image" has ever penetrated (v.d. which does not have the antecedent of a knowledge):

(23) . Senonché such considerations-no matter how unpleasant and mortifying it will be to several to have to acknowledge it-need to be extended far beyond the realm of mere praxeology; wherever not to self, in absolute affirmation starting from the center, but to something "other"-and that this to the place of the laws of nature is the elemental of a certain magic, the supersensible entities of a certain occultism, the grace of mystic, the subco scient of the Coué's modern method of conscious autosuggestion (24), the divinity, etc., the thing in nothing changes - calls for the success of one's action, according to situations that the formula "not I, but the Father acts in me" sums up, one is not dealing with a power, but with an impotence.

9. However, to such a concept of the individual as Lord, as the center of waves of power, which does not stop at the sphere of mere discursive form, as in the philosophical disciplines, or at that of sentimental and lyrical animation, as in art, or even at that of social communities, as according to Nietzsche's views, but also penetrates to the heart of physical reality and the very realms of supersensible entities, still so little known, seems to oppose a serious objection. Yes, one can in fact say: - Let it be granted that an absolute knowing has power as a condition and furthermore that there is no real power when it is not given to reconnecting it to an unconditioned freedom, enjoyed beyond all law or nature. Senonché can the concrete self actually assert itself in such a situation? You yourself have conceded, in combating abstract idealism, that the individual in mol teplic conjunctions is powerless and deficient: what else does this mean, if not that the "I" is forced to recognize autonomous powers, which he has not posited and which instead impose on him the condition of development for asolute knowledge? But when this is the case, never again claim to the "I" the value of a true power: with the *necessary* recognition of deficiency one in fact accepts an elementary obscurity and fatality, which will weigh like a curse on everything that, in opposition to it, can then be realized; for if at the origin one has something given, if autarky does not already command the beginning, at no other point, which from the initiative in one way or another depends, will it be given to find it as real autarky, that is, as unconditionality.

This is answered first of all by warning that here in no way does it infer from the deficiency proper to the reality of an "Other": this movement of escape, generating the world of autonomous entities of realism, is excluded in the clearest way by the present doctrine, which, as it has

"It is impossible that by an image one should succeed to the *possession* of a thing" (p. 79); "It is enough that a single image should be in the soul, so that from it God departs" (p. 128).

(24) Cf. E. Coué, *The (intousui>li>management consciousness*, Editions Mediterranean, Rome, 1996 (ed.).

said, it does not, according to a naive and "transcendent" use of the principle of causality, defer to other what the self lacks, but everything over which the self has no power it simply recognizes as its non-being or privation and remerò world thus resolves into a body apportioned and articulated in *quanta* of sufficiency and deficiency. The fundamental principle of such a theory is the same one that Michelstaedter took from early Greek wisdom: do not give a person to your deficiency, do not call being your non-being. Second, it is not conceded at all that deficiency is an origi nary datum, imposing itself to the self according to a brute fatality: it indeed arises only in correlation with the arising of a certain exigency and is thus conditioned by the act of freedom that brought this exigency itself to life. In the same way that certain elements of desire are felt to be evil only at the point where a moral will detaches itself from them and con traps itself to them, so all **t h a t** worldly whole which, to one who rises to the sense of the absolute individual, appears as non-being and deprivation, in relation to another attitude-relative to that of the Indian *sàdhanà*, echoed in the various pantheistic mysticisms-may well appear as being and full and actual life. A g a i n , the datum never imposes inconvertible determinations; it is rather a plastic matter, whose form comes to it only from the attitudes that with respect to it the individual takes-and what decides is, in each case, freedom (25). That being said, let us reflect on the final remark of Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* (26), namely, that the very obscurity and indecision of nature is indeed to be regarded as a disposition providential, for if the universe were to reveal clearly to man the path that must be followed, he would be deprived of all real spontaneity and autonomy, he would be reduced from life and free will to an automatism drawing his own determinations not from **w i t h i n** , but from without, by a kind of precisely inconvertible and almost mechanical drive given by knowledge.

That is to say, given that one wanted to place an autonomous will, one would also have to place before and in correlation with it an obscurity, an indeterminacy, an absence of an already given line. Now such a concept can be extended. Suppose that what the absolute freedom of the self affirms as a value is the electrocution of that activity, according to which a subject tears itself away from some of its determinations, this yes contrasts as its negation, from which it then absolutely resurrects and generates itself according to new forms. For such a value to be realized, it is evidently necessary in mind that at some point freedom posits as its negation that which,

(25) That is, the Aristotelian principle is reaffirmed, that matter is relative (*Physics*, II, 2, 194b, 9: τόλν νόό τl q vXn [matter is relative]); but **a l l** being of that which is relative is properly in relation (*Categories*, 8, a, 39: cοτl 8è tò et vai tou; 7ρό<; τl TaÛTÒ Tό) νόό τl nox; èξEiv [F o r relative beings being coincides with being in a certain way in relation to someone]).

(26) E. Kant. *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, part I, book II. ch. II. sec. 9.

with respect to another, earlier stage, was instead affirmation of its power. Now that in which the "I," which is the principle of posing, denies itself, it is clear that it cannot, as such, appear to him except as not posed by him, that is, as *given*, and only at this appearance of a non-being which, though felt as such by the "I," does not result from the "I," will the further affirmation of the "I" according to absoluteness, mentioned above, be possible. The concept of magical idealism *can* thus not be denied at all by the admission of a deprivation: it is enough for the individual with respect to this to affirm himself in a *positive* attitude; that is, he must not flee from his own deficiency, but rather take its burden upon himself and make himself sufficient to it, one must be *able to* recognize it as an essential moment that falls within the order of what one has freely willed. Again in this point practical reason retains primacy. Just as the flame could take up resistance of the fuel in its profound will to actualize itself, to blaze forth, so the self, which wills itself as autarch, can take up in itself its own nonbeing and, to tell the truth, as the matter from which alone it will be able to bring forth the splendor of an absolute life and activity; and as for the flame the fuel would not be, that insofar as it is a thing to be consumed, so the non-being or the antithesis of deprivation and powerlessness which the ego sees gushing forth in itself correlatively and because of its rising to a certain value, is not posited that insofar as it must be denied: it is not, that by not being. For the individual who *knows how to make himself sufficient* at this point, the form of the absolute domain takes up the totality of experience in its concreteness, it is not relegated to this or that privileged stage, but in every phenomenon is experienced, collected, as infinite transcendent power.

10. Such a consideration leads to a final and conclusive step. If nothing exists, except the "I," what can ever be the object of power, if not the "I" itself? And what, in accordance with the situation set forth above, is to be denied, what else can it ever be but again, the self itself, its own substance? - Hence the central concept of magical idealism: as opposed to that which is mere nature, the individual or spirit defines itself not as that which *is*, but as that which *one has*. *To aver*, is to deny oneself as mere existence or position, to nullify oneself and, precisely because of this negative act that transcends all being in the non-being of infinite freedom, to master one's own substance and in one's own substance all substance, to enjoy oneself as the principle eternally irreducible to any form or law. In this sense, as well as according to the profound insight of the Tantras, the function of potency is negation: *Nishedha - Vyâpâra-rupâ Shaki ih* (27). As was already distinctly seen by Lao-tze (28), the individual being is not, not being, consuming itself, eternally tearing itself from itself is, and is

(27) *Yogarâja, kâr. 4, apud J. Woodroffe, Shaki i and Shâkta²*, Madras, 1920, p. 210.

(28) Lao-tze, *// Book of Via and Virtue*, transl. Evola, Lanciano, 1923, pp. XIII, XIV.

According to an absolute being. The principle of power and domination thus defines and realizes, beyond the indeterminate of absolute unmanifested freedom, the very act of the individual and yet is to itself means and ends. The spirit is nothing but the infinite energy that reasserts itself over all those forms in which it coagulates and determines its power, it is nothing but the Heraclitean nûp, the creative and dissolving blaze, which every reality resolves into the absolute, hymn-minable splendor of the center that possesses entirely itself, of him, who is *entity of power*. And inasmuch as everything has been shown to be able to be said to be cono scient according to an absolute knowledge only insofar as in it can be understood the expression of a gesture of power, the whole system of the world, in its splendors as in its miseries, in the infinity of its dive nire vibrated in ever new forms beyond all space and all time, represents nothing other than the phenomenon of the absolute point of freedom, which has willed itself into selfhood. Such is the absolute individual, the Persuaded: enclosed in his simple and motionless unity, he takes pleasure in it and rests in it, loving alone and creating all that he creates out of this solitary love: ó S' eù; Tò eicco otov (pépExat aùiov otov, éauTÒv ayanfioag aùynv %aOapàv, aùxò<; (ov TOVTO, ó/rep Tiyanriæ [He is brought, as it were, into the interior of Himself, as if loving Himself, its pure splendor, for He is precisely what He loves] (29). Every phenomenon proceeds from Him and is consummated in Him, as in the transcendent power that, as unconditioned negativity, thunderbolts in the eternal synthesis of absolute possession (30).

This electrocution, nothing but this, is the individual, from which man, who to the terrible splendor of his own center is insufficient, loves to flee as from the point of absolute death.

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

(30) Cf. F. Schlegel, *Ideen*, ed. minor, no. 131: *der Begeisterung des Vernichtens offenbart sich zuerst der Si nn gbtlicher Schopfung. Nur in der Mine des Todes entzündet sich der Blitz des ewigen Lebens* ("In the joy of destruction the sense of divine creation is first of all manifested. Only in the midst of death is the spark of eternal life kindled!" Novalis, *Schriften*, ed. Heilbom, vol. II, p. 514: "*Der Prozess der Geschichte ist eia Verbrennen*" ("The process of history is a destruction"). Precisely through this negative the positive is realized, according to progressiveness. For a more extended discussion of this capital point, see *Theory of the Absolute Individual*, I. I, § 5; I. II, § 31.

(Book I means *Theory*: pp. 75-96 of the 1927 CD and pp. 67-76 of the 1998 ed. Book II means *Phenomenology*: pp. 334-337 of the ed. 1930 and pp. 289-292 of the ed. 1974 (Ed.)).

III. The supernormal self

In what precedes we have particularly insisted on one point and that is the character of *hypotheticality* or *problematicity* that has the Kantian solution of the problem of possibility of science. Such solution, correctly understood, sounds in fact like this: *if* there must exist for the self a universal knowledge and an absolute certainty, *then* the self must result as a power of cosmic construction. That is, it is a matter of two terms, one being a condition of the other: the one is posited *if* the other is posited. But, it may be asked, is one then actually placed? Kant started from the premise that there is in fact a system of absolute certainty, given by the positive sciences, which remained only to be explained in its possibility; and from it he inferred to the conception of the thinking self as cosmic lawgiver. Senonché the premise is arbitrary. The further development of culture has shown that there is in fact neither a typical experience, which can be framed once and for all in given patterns, nor even less a unique and universal *a priori* knowledge, v.d. such that it does not admit others at itself as equally possible. But if this is the case, universality and absolute certainty no longer result as a datum to be explained, but rather as a mere requirement, as a *Sollen*, and, in consequence, instead of postulating by their *de facto* existence the reality of the other term that would make it comprehensible (v.d. the self as power), it can have justification and objective reality only at the presupposition of the *de facto* existence of this second term itself. Such is the "gnoseological deduction" of magical idealism.

It was seen how at such a point absolute idealists must be rejected *pour une fin de non recevoir* since they, by giving with a kind of ver saying of authority, which, however, lacks executive power, while existing presently that which exists only in their *leste* or in their desire, and thus escaping, at a dipresso like the believer, into a fantastic transcendent tale Ego, not only do not solve the problem, but do not even get as far as it. On the other hand, since normal experience in the main shows a finite, deficient Ego, subject to infinite contingencies, another group of thinkers (suffice it to mention Hartmann and Rougier) (1) have declared that (1)

(1) L. Rougier, op. cit. p. 433ff. E. von Hartmann, *Geschichte der Metaphysik*, Leipzig, 1900. you. *il, passim*, pp. 94. 589, 591.

rato false of fact that human thought is w h a t , according to idea lism, it ought to be (see the principle that gives laws to things), and from this he drew the conclusion that absolute knowledge for man is impossible, that he must content himself with a perpetual promissory note, with a merely probable science conditioned by the contingency of the moment, oscillating between arbitrary prin ciples (H. Poincaré) and ambiguous facts of experience, incapable of giving an unequivocal answer to the queries that are referred to them, as to their judge (Duhem) (2).

Now this latter attitude, while it has the merit and honesty of setting the individual against what he actually is according to that qua lude of life in which in the main he allows himself to live, falls in turn into uni laterality and dogmatism insofar as it claims to assert as impos sible in general and in absolute terms what is instead impossible only ènì TÒ TOXA), in a certain number of cases, *here* and *now*. Except that experience, when taken in the totality of its possible forms and not in the *rou tine* of a mediocre and crystallized generality, disconfirms in t h e clearest way that assertion, from which would follow according to logical necessity the angoscy of a skepticism with regard to knowledge and, with this, t o self- certainty in general. And what is strange, at least for those who do not penetrate the profound dialectic presiding over the development of the various forms in history, is that this disconfirmation was implemented for precisely that discipline which, judging by its intentions, would be the antithesis of idealism: spe rimental science.

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And for a short time now that official science has been resolved to take as its object a complex group of real phenomena, which previously had been kept out of it because they were believed, without any examination, by mere prejudice, to be absurd and imaginary. But already the results of the first researches, to tell the truth conducted according to the coldest positivity, are such as to impose a concept of the possibilities of the human that with that referring to what the Germans call the *Durchschnittsmensch* [middle-class man] has nothing to do. The gloomy world of occultists, magicians, and clairvoyants today is transmuting into a world that, while being as real as

[Eduard von Hartmann (1842-1906) was inspired by Schopenhauer. Hegel and Schelling to theorize an unconscious principle in reality c then develop his own cosmic philosophy with a mystical and spiritualistic background (Ed.)].

(2) Physicist, epistemologist and historian of science, Pierre Duhem (1861 -1916), among the founding ri of conventionalism French, criticized the possibility of so-called "experiments crucial," i.e., those that can falsify one hypothesis by thereby verifying another (Ed.).

(3) When one should doubt the reality of the phenomena ascertained by metapsychic - had occasion to declare recently a researcher suprior to any suspicion.

that of physics (3), surpasses in its objectivity, all that the most jaunty fantasy of a poet would in any time have dared to devise. Then fall one by one those limits that seemed to break inescapably the freedom and substance of the *real* ego, so that to the latter appears in truth to agree, as its possibility already demonstrated by experience in general, all that was instead attributed to the transcendent or transcendental principle.

The sphere of the supernormal can be distinguished into two camps, depending on whether the knowledge factor or the action factor predominates. What can best be done, in order to give an overall idea of the results of the investigation in the field of supernormal knowledge, is to quote a passage from the most recent work on the subject, *La connaissance supranormale* (Paris, 1923) by doti. Osty (4), the valuable fruit of more than ten years of research informed by the most austere positivism. In that passage an attempt is made to create the suggestion of what that individual would be, whose potency contained concentrated and actual the possibility of the various phenomena verified by the author sporadically minded at different subjects: "His body would be penetrable to his consciousness down to the intimacy of its tissues and the vicissitudes of its divine. At every instant the succession of events constituting the texture of his individual life, on this side as well as on the other side of the present point, would be representable in the ordinary way of memories. Birth and death, no more than the field of his direct or indirect sensory perception would enclose its horizon in space and time. He would know a part of the contents of the ground on which he would walk: human beings encountered by their mere presence would reveal to him their thoughts of the moment, the secret of their intellectual, moral, organic personality, that of their relationship life, and the knowledge of their environment, beings and things. According to the circumstances and movements of his own or others' thoughts, he **would** reconnect in space with persons known and unknown to him and take, to a certain degree, knowledge of **their** personalities and lives. He would be informed of the details of a scene effected at a great distance. Applying his strange psychic power over what we call time, he would trace the course of human generations, approaching

the well-known physiologist Carlo Ridici-there would be no reason not to doubt even what is found in the cabinet of the physicist and physiologist.

[Charles Richet (1850-1935), 1913 Nobel Prize winner in medicine with the discovery of anaphylaxis, carried out research on gastric juices, respiration and tuberculosis. He was also very interested in paranormal phenomena, of which he was a famous experimenter and investigator: for them he coined in 1905 the term "metapsychic" in use until it was replaced with "parapsychology." He was appointed honorary president of the International Metapsychic Institute founded in Paris in 1919 (Ed.).]

(4) French physician Eugène Osty (1874-1938) conducted investigations into paranormal phenomena for decades in order to give a scientific explanation without resorting to spiritual theories, dealing mainly with clairvoyance, telepathy, precognition c telekinesis (Ed.)

to any era or scene of the past.... He would know the virtualities that the future will realize" (5) (pp. 263-264). "Such a man," the author continues, "*is a logical possibility*, since he would ultimately be but the polymorphous manifestation of the latent psychic potential, of which the various phenomenal forms have been found scattered" (*id.*) - hence the conclusion that, in speaking of thought, one is speaking of an unknown power, which should not be imprisoned in the conceptions and doctrines of the moment (p. 225).

On the other hand, that is, in the field of predominantly dynamic phenomena, a body of studies on auto-suggestion, hypnosis and mediumship - to all will be familiar with the names of Baudoin, Bernheim, Richet, Schrenck-Notzing, De Rochas, etc. (6) - has ascertained as existing in fact the possibility of acting according to mental forces not only on one's own body and on the body of others to the point of grasping and commanding the various unconscious organic processes that preside over it and of arbitrarily dominating, transmuting or provoking the various affective impressions (pleasures, pains, etc.), but also over external matter according to determinisms irreducible to those known to physique; *ancora*, to produce some plastic substance, to condense and individualize it in forms having the character of life; finally, to dissociate and reintegrate elements of matter, to split one's personality into two distinct entities psychically minded and also spatially (bilocation), to reassert oneself over the law of gravity (levitation), etc. 11 which undoubtedly offers a positive foundation for Osty's assertion that "at the bottom of the human being is so pronounced the attributes with which philosophies have adorned the concept-God: *creative power and knowledge outside of space and time*" and that "no one is authorized to presume what a methodical, progressive investigation will still be able to so prioritize" (cit, p. 224). In fact, in addition to the phenomena studied there are a number of others of a very different kind and of quite different value: such are those specifically referable to the occult sciences - *v.d.* the magical phenomena (fakery, yoghism, mantrism), theurgical and soteric - and mystical experience,

(5) Here arises naturally the problem Of freedom : since prediction implies pre determination, and yet if what is to take place is foreseeable, it is not *possible*, but *necessary*. Here we cannot stop on the question. Suffice it to refer to the results of Osty's investigation on the subject: prediction would be all the more certain, the more it **concerns** events dominated by extraneous forces - natural or collective - and acts proceeding from abitudes, interests e passions. Instead there where it comes into play a more profound affirmation, the spontaneity of a pure will, the prediction is only probable - if not at all impossible. In general: the elements that are predicted *incline*, *determine* only in the case that the self survives in a fixed order of reactions, in that "bundle of habits" of which James speaks [i.e., the psychologist c philosopher William (1842-1910), brother of the writer Henry and founder of the pragmatic theory of knowledge (Ed.)].

(6) Hippolyte Bernheim (1837-1919) was a psychologist French, holder of the Faculty of Medicine of Nancy, which studied hypnotism. Albert von Schrenck-Notzing (1861-1929) was a German doctor ordained in physiology at the University of Munich who also worked on hypnotism and studied the major *mediums* of his time. Eugène De Rochas d'Aiglun (1837-1914) was a French scientist who himself dealt of magnetization , regressive per sonality and the phenomenon of "aura" (Ed.).

with the varied "miraculous" phenomenology connected with the lives of saints and various founders of religions everywhere. The reckoning with so many seemingly fantastic traditions and personalities, so lightly dismissed, is in truth all to be redone. Finally, normal phenomena, such as sleep and dreaming, or subnormal ones, such as hallucination, hysteria, some forms of degeneration and madness, etc., are not to be neglected, as in *massima* has been done by philosophers: they, when studied in their (not physiological or psychological, but) transcendental possibility, enrich with still other degrees of contingency and freedom the power of the real self.

* * *

There is thus a set of facts demonstrating a *mogliche Erfahrung* [possible experience] that sends into ischegge that which the various doctrines of the categories of the specular abstract, in their passion for an absolute evil, have wished to fix dogmatically in a rigid necessity and a lifeless eternity. Space, time, physical causality, laws of nature, etc., no longer appear, at the science of the supernormal, as indispensable conditions for all human experience. On the other hand, the idol of the Absolute collapses in mathematics, which changes from an "apodictic-deductive" system to a "hypothetic-deductive" one, and with non-Euclidean geometries, with non-archimedian arithmetic, with the theory of the transfinite restores the spirit even in the field of the *a priori* to its original agility. Everywhere the supremacy of freedom, of the unconditionally possible over the necessary and the *gesetzmässig* [according to law] is reaffirmed, the rigid opposition of I and non-I, of spirit and matter is broken down, the very context of the laws of nature crumbles upon analysis and shows zones of indeterminacy, into which the individual can graft its own unconditioned will (7).

By abstracting from the deep center of the self, rationalism fixed the spirit in a brute necessity and yet made it decay into a fetish, into a nature dead and opaque to itself. To rationalism, experience itself served as a corrective, for it, by breaking every scheme and necessity of law and imposing the painful and austere experiment of action, forces the ego, which survives itself in the specular void, to the sense of its own freedom and concreteness. Beyond such an antithesis, the synthesis is magical idealism, for which *the criterion of the absolutely certain* is contingency-though certainly not the contingency of empiricism and skepticism. The ego, which makes itself foreign to its concrete power, suffers the freedom inherent in it as a violence, as the incoercible madness of phenomena - and such is the mala contingency of the empiricist and the skeptic. Against this and beyond the waxing that proceeds from it the ego reacts and reasserts its own per-

(7) Cf. the critical work of Boutroux and Bergson and, on the other hand and in connection, the views of the latest subatomic physics.

suasion in the attempt to dominate the phenomenon into an abstract rational necessity, so that the reduction to the necessary now serves him as a criterion of certitude. Beyond this is the penetration of the self as an absolute and concrete power, whence the contingent is internalized and goes to express the very character of the unconditionality of its assertion, which gives things a foundation, beyond which one cannot go (8).

* * *

Positive science, beyond the elementary task of simply ascertaining the reality of supernormal facts, would be charged with the second, to detect the internal determinism of such phenomena and to study how the individual can empower itself to the point of being able to produce them in a voluntary, entirely conscious and sufficient way. Senonché the scientist can never, in truth, solve this further task, when in *himself* he does not generate the object of his science—that here the knowing and the inwardly constructing really fall into one. Of such science, which is identical to magical development, a mention will be made below. For now, it is instead worth making an observation that, from the point of view of the individual, is of capital importance.

It is a fact that most of the supernormal phenomena that modern science has had occasion to observe, occur at a kind of "lowering" of the conscious personality correlative to the taking over come of another entity, at which the one becomes an insubstantial shadow. The characters of intentionality, conscious construction and direction are almost totally missing in such phenomena. Subjects," Osty notes (p. 253), "speak as if moved by an uncontrollable internal force and almost do not become aware of supernormal knowledge until after they have expressed it; their perception," he adds elsewhere, "is made essentially by means of sudden images, which they then try to interpret and translate. Nor does other minds go the thing in many of the cases of supernormal dynamism.

Now a development that aims at the value of certainty as an absolute affirmation of the self would in no way know how to adapt to such a situation, in which the sufficient center of the individual is rather

(8) E therefore clear the relationship of the present theory with empiricism: as this, it denies all knowledge *a priori*, every necessity rationale is deferred to experience. It asserts that *the criterion of the possible is the real, the fact*. But for empiricism, the remission to experience *is passive*, the experiment is worth per se as a sanction by other than the central will: whereas in the present view experience is *active* and "verification" is but the assertion of power, v.d. the assertion which in *itself*, in its own intensity, has the principle of its own demonstration and truth. Cf. W. James. *The Will to Believe*, Longmans, 1897, p. 170: ". *The truths cannot become true until our faith has made them so*" ["Truths cannot become true until our faith has made them so"].

abolished and in so far as one participates in supernormal faculties, in so far as in a certain sense one becomes subnormal, that is, in so far as one falls within that species of undifferentiated cosmic consciousness, of coalescence of object and subject, which defined, in all probability, a very ancient form of existence, anterior to individual consciousness constituted as a self-sufficient center at the power of control, sense of self and will. There are, in a sense, two supernormals, one this side, the other beyond the normal, one anterior to the value of the individual, the other expressing the absolute concreteness and perfection of the individual. 11 supernormal hitherto observed by science is, for the most part, a remnant of the past, a survival, as is also shown by the fact that it is present in beings who are utterly uncultured and devoid of all inner training. It is evident, however, that the broader sphere of consciousness and power, when realized at the cost of the individual principle, when it does not mark the development of the sufficiency of the latter over the whole sphere of its experience-as according to the concept of magical idealism-but its remission to a naturistic universal and submergence in a dreaming and in itself passive consciousness, should in truth be made to fit into a degenerative and regressive process, and in no way could that connection to the position of idealism, from which the present discussion has taken its starting point and in which it places its justification.

IV. The construction of Immortality

To tell the truth, from the foregoing, particularly from what has been set forth in the essay on potency, it is clear to a degree what the view of magical idealism might be regarding the problem of immortality. However, we want to dwell on the question equally, and this is not so much in order to give a new application to the principles already expounded, but rather because the argument is such, as to give rise to a middle term that from the theoretical position of magical idealism leads to that methodological and pragmatic side of it, which will be the subject of the next essay.

The premise is that to speak of an immortality *in general* is to get lost in the clouds. Whether matter, Spirit, transcendental I or other is immortal, this can only offer very little interest to the individual, if in such notions something distinct from the concrete essence of the individual is understood. The "I"-that which uniquely I can call this, which is not a concept, a metaphysical abstraction or a hypothesis but instead a living reality and experience कोटि' ईश्वर' [par excellence]; that which indeed "has no plural" and yet is to be said to be neither universal nor particular, but *unique*,-such an "I" is *this*, the individual, my: v.d. a principle whose absoluteness accruing to him as the thinker -- that is, as the one who, as according to the saying of the *Bṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishad* (II, IV, 14), being the knower can never be known, but only inwardly *possessed* -- vanishes into an empty phantom when detached from that set of determinations -- my body, experience, culture, etc. - in which it appears enmeshed. Of such an actual loss is question for immortality: to admit that the spirit or the "I in general" is immortal at the distinction of this from the individual is, concretely, to deny all immortality not only to this, but also to that. For, assuming that such a "Spirit in general" does not coincide without residue with *me* as the power and center of concrete experience, it can only be a *per me*, v.d. a determination, a peripheral accident of my experience: then the very immortality postulated for it can only be a *per me*, that is, a particular note that I connect to a certain content of my experience (specifically: of my thinking), but which I can in no way guarantee

- unless we fall into the forbidden argument *a constantia subjecti* - when

I already do not presuppose that I, as the foundation of all that is *for me*,
Is immortal.

* * *

Now for those capable of a cold, objective consideration, none of the beliefs of all times seems so absurd and unjust as that which has irradiated especially in Europe in the modern era largely due to Christianity, whereby immortality is presumed to be something that man is entitled to by nature, of which anyone, whatever life he allows himself to live in, can enjoy indifferently. In this experience, in which nothing is had unless one conquers and constructs it, in which any consistence is only the fruit of effort, of tenacious will, of painful creation reasserting itself over the disrupted vicissitude of elemental forces, immortality-this supreme value-would instead be given to man factitiously as a thing, without any merit, before and outside of any of his activities, by a kind of supernatural gift. This conception, the comfort of which indeed flatters the slothful and insubstantial lives of the masses, is contrasted by the teaching of the highest wisdom of all time: from Taoism to Egyptian doctrines, from Vedic and Buddhist positions to Greek, *à la Ecclesiastes* to Stoicism and St. Paul, from Babylonian to Gnostic beliefs (not to mention the mystery and exoterics of all time) (1), transmutes, more or less blatantly, the notion that immortality is instead the privileged gift of those few (2) who, by their greatness, up to it have been able to rise, who, by their power, have been able to *build themselves* in it; the oblique and formless mass of the weak, of those who go aimlessly, fanned by chance and foreign forces, have no immortality just as, according to what has been said, they have no accurate knowledge: insubstantial shadows, the darkness and oblivion of Hades is their place, the wheel of rebirths always different and yet always the same in their insignificance, that is, dissolution in universal forces or in an indistinct becoming, is their fate.

* * *

/My purpose of giving a concrete individuation to this concept of immortality as something to be constructed, one can take up the observations mentioned above. For the common man, there is no awareness of I, except in correlation with the body; there is no subject except in correlation with an object (i.e., sensible perceptions) and on the substratum of determinations

(1) For quotations in this regard see, for example, A. Reghini, *Zx sacred and step words*, Todi, s.d., pp. 58-80, 197ff.

(2) The "few" are then reduced in the present doctrine to a "one."

organic. This correlation for the normal man is the condition of self-consciousness: where it ceases, where the world of sensible and organic impressions fails, there is sleep and similar states of non-being of the self. This correlation in the great majority of cases also masks a tacit subordination: the conscious self is foreign to the great bulk of his life; as according to the well-known saying of James, he lives at the surface of himself: the totality of those organic systems (lymphatic, circulatory, etc.) that permanently condition the use of his conscious faculties

- than those from whence proceeds to some extent the direction of the physical (a brain lesion throws into nothingness the consciousness of the highest philosopher or man of action as that of the last redneck)-the deep root of his being falls almost entirely out of his control and power. He who presides over it is not the individual, but an obscure entity, amalgamant with the deep whole of his passionality, over which the individual itself can do nothing or almost nothing. Now the unity which lives as a body, and which is the inseparable correlative of any conscious life of which it is peripetized to speak concretely *in normal man*, is subject to such laws, that it, at a certain moment, must fatally be diverted into the whirlwind of the elements; and as the will of the ego remains outside the principle of the said organic unity, so it is utterly powerless against such laws and yet against its destiny of dissolution. How then can man logically aspire to immortality, so long as the only life of which he is capable is that at every moment conditioned by a physical correlative not only, but according to an elemental attitude of passivity with respect to it?

Those who can interpenetrate with the thoughts sketched here succeed at the immediate

evidence of two points: man is not immortal, that to the extent that he makes himself so and yet that he makes the mortal so. This movement cannot be accomplished, until the ego, at the correlation with the physique and the passionality, knows how to create itself in an attitude of *positivity*, in a level of an autonomously *determining* entity instead of a *determined one* - that is, in a life in the body such that, in its own formation, it is independent of the body and of all impressions that come from it. This is the basis for the essential work, which would consist in gradually winning over to the conscious self that obscure entity governing all its organic functions and all its affective powers, in order to go on to entirely dominate the body, which then, and then only, will be able to call *its own* body. Only he who to his own life is not passive, but on it knows how to reassert himself autonomously - and this, mind you, not in order to escape and estrange himself in a fantastic world (such as that of art, philosophy, religions and visionaries) split off and juxtaposed to his physical concreteness, but rather to reassert himself over it according to an infinite existence that dominates it entirely and makes it the docile and plastic instrument of the spirit or the individual, thus scorning the laws of life and death of which he has made himself the Lord-only he is immortality (3). In truth, the "kingdom of heaven" exists only insofar as I

we make become *here*, on earth. True immortality is not escape from *mor* such, but triumph over this *within* this, it is the *flower of* the mortal that is not *given*, but is to be created from this, to be concretely constructed by a consummation in the autarky of that passive and material nature that is the body of the $\pi\acute{o}\iota\sigma$ ^ $\pi\iota\omicron\varsigma$; [lifeless] individual. This concept was referred to by the alchemists when they spoke of the transmutation of the vile metal into gold (4); and to such an individual, who is Absolute Individual as an *immortal body*, referred, beyond the general and elementary theory of the "second birth" or "birth from above," for example, the Taoist conception of the *Chenjen*, those Vedic and Buddhist ones already cited of the *Risili* and *deiV Ahrat* - beings with self-generating incorruptible bodies - those gnostic and docetic ones about the "spiritual body" of the Christ and the "Vestment of Glory," finally that of Fichte concerning the term of his *Bestimmung des Menschen* [determination of man].

That the "immortal body" should not be naively understood as a privileged material formation should just be noted. The character of immortality does not properly belong to the body, but to the different function - which is a function of freedom-in which it is entirely resolved. It is *com* taken then why in various esoteric schools it is called the "body of activity," "body of freedom," "*seminarum* of the innumerable bodies" such a body: in fact, the infinite, unconditioned possibility of creating itself from itself body, the pure power ($\alpha\nu\omicron\pi\sigma\nu\omicron\gamma\ \alpha\pi\tau\iota\tau\omicron\gamma$ [ineffable man]) gathered in itself and *for suasa* within which the contingent human realization goes to live is what constitutes it. In this sense, the body is no longer material, but spiritual, however, not because it consists of more subtle elements, such as a certain theo-

(3) It is important to note this, that the locus of the process toward concrete self-realization è a higher "dimension" of the totally indifferent to the whole of pseudovalues in in which lives lavolgare humanity. Beautiful feelings, morality, culture, sharpness intellectual, genius artistic, devotion, etc. - everything that applies nothing almost in order to the above task, since for this it is not question of passing from one species to another within the same genus (of the genus of the human in the strict sense), but of passing from one genus to another. Those who have a suspicion of *the ace/aff positivity* and conciseness of the work, *know* all that is to say, are not scandalized, like Diogenes, by the assertion that a man who is at all immo ral, because he was initiated in Eleusis, has in order to death a better fate than an Agesilaus or an Epaminondas.

(4) In alchemical symbolism, so profound and yet so little penetrated, the stage of realization of a point of autonomy at at correlations sensitive è referred to as "dissociation of mixture e separation of the thin from the dense" o "extraction of mercury." the other phase, of reaffirmationc dital autonomy over the organic whole, runs instead to the "solution or reduction of the dense and earthy by the mercurium." Such is the process for "first-degree medicine"; that of "second-degree" implies the transition of affirmation from the microcosmic to the macrocosmic order, according to the rhythm that will be set forth in the following essay.

(Evola would devote to alchemy a series of writings published in *Ur-Krur* in 1927-1929, later taken up in *La Tradizione ermetica*, Laterza, Bari, 1931, the first analysis in a simbo- lico- traditional sense interpreting it as a typical Western "realizational via" (Ed.).

sofia according to a naive materialism considers, but rather because at the various elements the ego is no longer passive, but experiences their formations as an expression of its unconditioned will, which therefore as it can maintain eternally one and the same body, can instead change infinitely infinitely many in them always holding firm the one individual consciousness or identity-as according to the truth hidden beneath the myth of transformations and transmigration. Such a body therefore is to be said to be made not of matter but, *literally*, of freedom and power.

Thus the immortal body is the body of the magical self. To delve deeper into its es without it is not possible, without first expounding the methodology of magick, to which therefore the "construction of immortality," as well as that of asolute knowledge, goes to pin. For the time being, one wishes to envisage only one particular side of the problem, specifically concerning the overcoming of heterogeneity - and for this purpose it is worth referring to the *Kun- dali-yoga* of the Indian *Shakti-tantra* system, which Sir John Woodroffe had the merit of making known to Europe through a series of translations and studies (5). The basic premise of such disciplines can be traced back to the Platonic theory of Androgyny. The insufficiency of the individual to itself, whereby its center falls out of the deep organic power of its own body, has for concrete expression the fatality of heterogeneration, that is, the impotence of the self to give itself a body from itself. In woman the individual in a certain sense sees the embodiment of that which transcends his power and only by connecting to which he can come to a creation (hence the profound truth of the instance of those eschatological doctrines which in the de facto existence - in *Dasein* - of the feminine principle as such see injustice and radical evil, the violence of that which is not to be). The mortality of the individual, the necessity of heterogeneration, and the splitting of the generating power in the sexual relation would thus be three sympathetic aspects of the same logical situation. 11 *Tantrahâstra* states that what the normal man calls will is but a dull and powerless reflection of the true nature of will, which is *concrete power of creation (kriyâshakti)* present in him in the form of generating power; and it exhibits a discipline-which the marvelous phenomena of yoghism in a certain way vouchsafes-by which the conscious self goes to settle down in the power of generation, which lies curled up in the depths of its organic entity, and to take pos sex from it, in order that it no longer goes to vibrate on a principle external to it - sur ETEpov - but rather *fold in on itself* and then make itself the instrument for conquest and resolution in the consciousness and freedom of the various centers that govern and form the organism. When the generating power detaches itself from the extraverted direction and in itself mediates, when, to use the

(5) Cf. specifically A. Avalon. *The Serpent Power*, London, 1919 (/X. Avalon is a pseudonym of Woodroffe).

language of Western esotericism, the "waters of the Great Jordan" no longer flow toward the "downward" but toward the "upward," then the generation of men or animal yields to that of gods or spiritual. Thus it is said that the individual who has wholly carried out the *Kundali-yoga* process has overcome heterogeneration in self-generation and self-cathexis and, sufficient to itself, is power capable of freely creating its own body from itself - in order to experience in the mortal finiteness of this the very life of the infinite and immortality (6).

Therefore, it should be noted that such disciplines are extremely perilous, indeed absolutely not to be recommended, when the ego has not, by adequate preparation, made itself entirely sufficient to its own cosmic power, so that it can subsist there where it goes to consume in itself the various formations correlative to its normal and finite existence: the ego which still rests its substance on the passive life in the sensible and the particular would be by the unleashed power of the *Kundali* burned and **annihilated**: the passing into the absolute life of life, which is not life, cannot be worth

(6) From here arises a light to understand the meaning of a certain chastity. It is clear that at the one who goes inwardly making himself sufficient to the power of own body, everything that one connects to heterogeneration loses any necessity. Rightly says É. Lévi, (*Histoire de la Magie*, ed.

Alcan, p. 158): "*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 hiérophantes. Répandre sa vie dans des embrassements humains c'est jeter des racines dans la tombe*" ["To struggle against the attraction of generation was to exercise oneself to overcome death, and supreme chastity was the most glorious crown proffered to the hierophants. To spread one's life in human amplexes is to take root in the grave."] See 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 fut parfaite, il faudrait qu'aucune partie détachée de l'organisme ne puisse vivre séparément. Mais la reproduction deviendrait alors impossible* [sterility is indeed a uniform phenomenon at the progress in the path of initiation]. *Qu'est-elle, en effet, si non la reconstitution d'un organisme nouveau avec un fragment détaché de l'ancien? L'individualité loge donc son ennemi chez elle. Le besoin qu'elle éprouve de se perpétuer dans le temps la condonne et ne l'empêche jamais de plonger dans l'espace*" ["It may be said that, if the tendency to individuation is present everywhere in the organized world, it is everywhere combated by means of the tendency to reproduction. For individuality to be perfect, it would be necessary that each separate part of the organism could live separately. But reproduction would then become impossible. What is it, indeed, but the reconstitution of a new organism with a separate fragment of the old? Individuality thus harbors its own enemy within itself. Its need to perpetuate itself in time condemns it to never be complete in space."] The internal sense and reason of certain elements went per due, so that of chastity, the effect of an internal realization, it became a purpose and the brute coercion of an external norm, capable only of producing the extensive patho-logical phenomenology illuminated by the modern theory of *refoulement* (Freud). As Spinoza sharply notes (*Short Treatise*, ed. cit., c. XXVI, p. 93) it is not by suppressing the passions that one comes to the knowledge of God, but it is by knowing God that the passions really fail. To deny the negative by *V affirmation* of the positive and not by opposition to that - such is one of the fundamental maxims for self-actualization.

for this than as death, whence it is said that no man, as such, can endure God without dying. At the present point, therefore, the need to give a nod to the entire method of magical idealism is grafted in.

* * *

It has already been said why, in spite of what science is finding to be concretely possible in regard to the influence of the mental on the physical and organic, one should be granted the right to regard these and similar horizons of self-realization as chimeras, myths & fantasies. One does not doubt for a moment that at this point many are not tenacious to use abundantly of such a right. These should, however, be so loyal to themselves, as to persuade themselves that then chimeras, myths and fantasies are also, and to a higher degree, all those conceptions that culminate and adulate their nullity with the flattery of those supreme values - such as immortality - which indeed, according to justice, are inherent only in the power and sufficiency of those who, by their unyielding will, have been able to create themselves up to the point of the absolute individual.

[A forthcoming study (7) has been devoted to the *Tantra-yoga* system, to which we refer. For the Tantras the principle of the Absolute is *powerlessness* (*Shakti* - one with Shiva), of which the world would be the act. In this act a series of degrees is distinguished, which are hierarchized in the order from the most subtle to the most dense, an order that could ultimately be equivalent to that from the most abstract and formless to the most intense. These degrees represent the various "dementing" elements, the transcendental principles of distinct cosmic planes, and are designated by the *Tantras* with a series of Deities. Now there is a perfect congruence between man's body and the structure of the cosmos: the principles that preside over what appears phenomenically as nature, v.d. the Deities, are found present there, albeit in an obscured and dormant form, in a series of centers (*chakras*) that repeat the order of manifestation and that on the other hand govern the various organic functions. The deiract limit, which macrocosmically has the "earth" as its symbol, corresponds in the body to the generating force. The purpose of *Tantra-yoga* is to bring to actuality (*bhàva*) those deities, of which the human body is to be said, in a certain way and Aristotelian mind, to be the potency. The power of *kundalini*, detached from heterogeneration and impugned, is the organ by which this work is accomplished. The individual, whose body is made wholly living in it, is indistinguishable from the *mahàshakti*, whence potency is the function according to which he goes to experience the whole world.

(7) The "study forthcoming" is obviously *The Man as Power*, always published by Atanór the year following to the *Essays*, then rewritten in the years 1930s and not published until in 1949 by Mouth as *The Yoga of power*. The latest edition critical, with an introduction by Pio Filippini-Ronconi, appeared in this series in 1994. An anastatic reprint of the original *Man as Power* came out from Edizioni Mediterranee in 1988 (ed.).

To tell the truth, every deity for the *Tantras* is twinned, has a positive and a passive aspect (masculine and feminine): but these aspects are reduced and resolved into a present simplicity at the point where they are invested by the *kundalini*. This leads to the general theory of the *purification of the elements* (*bhūtaśuddhi*), in which all initiatory wisdom is summarized. This purification is a metaphysical whole-mind concept; one must detach from it in the clearest way all moralistic meanings. Impure is that element, which is not only itself, but which a "other" defiles: that which does not exist *in* actuality, which is not perfect act, but which, in order to come *into* actuality, needs correlation to another - like the sight of the object, like the animal generation of the feminine principle - is impure. To purify, means to eliminate the "other" with which Covenants are imbued and of which, in its privation, it suffers violence (the object, for example, violates life), i.e., to render the high wholly sufficient (*pūṇa*) and positive v.d. to give itself to itself according to unconditionality. Thus purification in the order of generation is Pautogeneration, the function of the immortal body (*Kundalini-yoga*)\ in the order of perception, it is productive insight, which will be discussed later (*Jñāni-yoga*)\ in the order of respiration, it is a set of practices in which the process is thus ordered, from retaining carbon to with it autonomously constructing the body (*Prāṇa-yoga*). When alchemists speak of *solving* the "earth" with "mercurio," they allude precisely to this consummation of passivity and deprivation in the active principle of a sufficient affirmation. The purity, the intangible simplicity of being that is whole insofar as it is *possession*, insofar as it has within itself its own principle, such is the extreme instance of every initiation. It hardly needs to be warned that most of those who speak of exoteric sciences today do not understand any of this perfectly].

V. The essence of magical development

ὅτι 'Eyd) eina ©eoi àree.

[that I said, You are gods I

JOHN, ME, 34.

What distinguishes magical idealism, is its essentially practical character: its fundamental requirement is not to substitute one intellectual worldview for another, but to create in the individual a new "dimension" and a new depth of life. Certainly, it does not fall into an abstract juxtaposition of the theoretical and the practical; it already in the theoretical and the cognitive as such-and thus in that in which alone it is given to reveal itself to a reader-sees a degree of creative activity, however, it believes that such a degree represents only a sketch, a beginning of gesture with respect to a deeper stage of realization, which is that of the magical or practical proper, in which the former must continue and complete itself. The re-lowering of the "being" of ontology and gnoseology to

"ought to be" and the enhancement of the activity of value judgment, in which the same theoretical judgment is thus transfigured, up to a judgment of existence, to a cosmically creative act of faith, such is the essence of the present doctrine. Whoever, therefore, is unable to reduce the principles of magical idealism to forces acting within *it*, to profound exigencies that drive it toward a concrete and living realization, those kill said idealism in the most forbidding of rhetoric. He is here most welcome who can really say to himself, "If there were no magic, I, today, must create one for myself" (1).

(1) E very expressive the following anecdote Indian.
Undiscipleasked his master spiritual, togetherwith with whom he he
was bathing, when finally would could realize *Rahman*. The
master, for all response, gave him immersed his headstands under water
and thus compelled him until he, feeling asphyxiated, freed himself and resurfaced: then he said,
"When in you the desire to realize *Brahman* is as intense and deep as that which has now prompted
you to reaffirm material life-only then will it have satisfaction." This applies to the whole of magical
development: as long as the will and desire for realization remain mental shadows, until they equal,
penetrating the whole being, the intensity of that dark and irrational power that asserts itself at the
bottom of our organism,

Now to the problem of magical development. The reader's attention is drawn to this, that what follows has in itself its own justification. There is no need to invoke either revelation, personal experience, or the authority of an initiate, a "master," or a tradition. The individual can perfectly understand for himself the meaning and convenience of the various steps, for they proceed immediately from the consistency of the will itself to its deep aspiration for self-realization. Conversely, rest assured that those who feel the need to make it known that he is an initiate, those who shroud magical methodology with veils of mystery and the occult, those who resort to the "ineffable" and "higher faculties"-such as clairvoyance, clairsaudience, etc. - to justify their teachings, those either are mystifiers, that is, one who, while realizing, only to a meager or confused degree has experienced the immanent meaning and reason of what they have realized. The reader will be able to recognize elements here that figure both in Indian Yoga, in Western esoteric traditions, and in modern theosophy, specifically in Blawatsky and Steiner: only he will find them somewhat purified, reduced to their inner meaning and to their bare transcendental logicity, so that they connect into an organism, which in itself has the principle of its own consistency.

1

To tell the truth, the methodology of magical idealism starts from certain pre poses, by which the terms of the problem, which it is made to solve, are set. The first of these is factual resistance of an antithesis in general to freedom, v.d. of a deficiency of the self. It has already been mentioned how such a *factual* existence can transmute into an existence *of right*, v.d. into a condition included in the very concept of power. The second premise, equally in accordance with experience, is that such an antithesis is not a pure indeterminate, but instead is articulated in a system of formations. The full justification of this second premise will be expounded in the second book of the work *Theory of the Absolute Individual* (2), in which it is shown how the various categories according to which the antithesis is factually articulated-such as nature and the world of culture-are correlative to the realization of particular values, presupposed by the refinement of the self as individual. The sense

there is no concrete result to be expected. Rightly notes Jacobi, that man cannot be improved by ideas or reasoning; that to this he must *be organized* and yet *organize himself* (cf. the Garve passage in F.E. Jacobi, *Ueber die Le lire Spinoza* Anh. VII).

- (2) There one refers to part of the work that will be referred to as *Phenomenology of the individualabsolute* (Mouth, 'forino, 1930). The indication of "book" is evidently for

"part," the work being conceived as a whole, although it was later published in two tomes given its original bulk of over 700 pages (Ed.).

general of such justification is as follows: The "I," in order to *possess itself* must, in a first, ideal moment *be*, that is, place itself simply or according to immediacy or spontaneity, which leads to a set of productions having as its limit the perfection of being; if not, the "I" passes such a limit, thus bathes itself in non-being and thereby realizes the principle of *per se*, - of reflection and imagining. From the consummation of being in reflection (science, philosophy, religion, art, etc.) proceeds the concretization of such a principle, which goes into a mediated consciousness of its own substance and which, as such, is properly a *person*. Senonché the perfection of the world of reflection or person, correlative to that of being, implies a similar transition. The pure self-consciousness of reflection is in fact a distinguishing from itself a real power and freedom, of which it is precisely reflection. Such power is *individual V*. Thus the need for the individual is revealed in the opposition of the pure, still formless principle of power and freedom to the articulated world of reflection, which, as such, is felt as in itself empty, as a phenomenon and, in relation to such a principle, as deprivation. To redeem such a world of phenomenon and necessity into a reality of power and freedom, to restore to it *within the value of the 'autarch* those powers of cosmic construction that have gone eclipsed at the moment of the wrenching of the principle of *per se* or reflection from the world of being, such is the task of magick (3). 11 which confirms the conception of real experience as proposed in the first of the present essays: on the one hand, a reality, to which the self, from the point of view of the perfection of reflection

- v.d. according to idealistic gnoseology-it is sufficient, on the other hand, the self as

pure principle of persuasion; finally, the deficiency of the self to that reality from the standpoint not of reflection but of persuasion, v.d. of power and freedom. Hence, two important corollaries:

1) What appears as phenomenon and in antithesis is an original power of the *fio*, in which consciousness, from the point of view of "being" and freedom, has been partially obscured. To use a mathematical image: it is a derivative, of which the magical must make the integral, returning it to the function.

2) The ego is thus inwardly formed by a set of categories on which its world in general gravitates and which, in particular, provides the *principium individuationis* to the world of reflection. As the *Tantras* of the Kashmiri school express it, "*vartamanāvabhasānām bhāvānām avabhasanam antahsthiivafim eva ghatete vahirāirnanā*" = that which appears

(3) How can the principle of determination that these stages already by themselves incorporate and confirm with the internal articulations of each be reconciled with the fundamental affirmed of arbitrariness or unconditional freedom - even that is found expounded in the *Theory of the Absolute Individual*. 1. I, § 6 (Appendix); 1. II, Introd. and § 31.

[Book I means *Theory*: the Appendix is on pp. 123-137 of the 1927 ed. and pp. 71-93 of ed. 1998. The Book 11 è *Phenomenology*: the introduction e the § 31 are at pp. 1-19 and 334-337 of the 1930 ed. and pp. 15-30 and 289-292 of the 1974 ed. (Ed.).]

on the outside it appears so only because it exists [congruently] on the inside. Ta li categories should not be understood intellectually, but rather activistically, as a body of dynamic powers, desires, deep and obscure wills, etc. - which one wants to designate by the Indian term *saniskàra*.

The fundamental principle of magickalism is that the way in which we perceive the world does *not* constitute an extreme instance, that it is not an inconvertible in-itself, but a phenomenon, corresponding to the pure power of the self: then acting in the transcendental plane on the *saniskàra*, we are given to remove the conditions under which reality goes to appear and thus the concrete experience of the universe. Finally, it remains to be noted that the *saniskàra* itself consists of two principles, correlative respectively to the world of being and the world of person, the first absolute, the other particular or finite. The reason for this, which can only be alluded to here, is that with the principle of reflection comes freedom and with this a principle of *divisibility*: freedom, to be such, breaks up the organic unity of perfect being into a multiplicity, into a system of possible, each of which - and yet also that which is actually willed and which will found the personal *saniskàra* - is thus a particular one; so that it to the universal of being grafts a deforming and finitizing principle. This point is very important to keep in mind.

The magical or individual self is the principle of the absolute, unconditional

pose. His deficiency in relation to the world reflects the fact that he finds himself experiencing his own *saniskàra* as an immediacy, as a phenomenon, thus as a *quid* that, compared to the character of absolute mediation that instead informs such an ego, he suffers as a non-essence. The meaning of the preliminary stage of magical development is this: to recreate from nothingness through an act of conscious and unconditional freedom the various powers of *saniskàra*, of which the sensible is an apparition, however, not by identifying with them-as was the case in the world of being or spontaneity-but with respect to each of them by distinguishing or freeing himself according to a higher power of selfhood. This also means: resolving the phenomenon into the various transcendental causes by means of such a creative act, that these causes appear as external, as distanced and eliminated with respect to a deeper dimension of the self which, through this very act and in correlation with each of them, comes into existence (4). Or again: externalizing the inner according to freedom by inwardly, mediating and integrating the outer.

This phase can be referred to as *cathartic*: in fact, through such a movement the self goes to distinguish itself from the various particular formations of the *saniskàra* constitutive his personality and thus to reconstruct himself adequate to the power

(4) This is the profound sense of *magical evocation*, of making appear, in intuitive reality, the "gods." Power over them is based on the power of that distinctive-or rather, self-distinguishing-act on which rests the possibility of their appearance.

absolute or cosmic being. Now since at the substratum of the pure phenomenal appearance of a given thing three degrees or depths of the principle that manifests itself therein may be successively considered, namely, the simple dynamic power, the concept that forms that power, and, finally, the absolute freedom from which that conception arises, this process of integration-which is also one of distinction and elimination-will have three stages. At the end of it, the individual has entirely resolved the formal antithesis that is relative to his personality and, autarch of the objective power, can in the very sphere of the universal reaffirm its mediation in an entity of pure power or pure magical realization. However, on this side of these two stages there is a first one, which may be called one of *preparation*: it does not actually lead to any magical agitation, but it is worthwhile to propitiate in the self dispositions, which will be indispensable for it to reassert itself in actual development. Let us begin by saying something about this preliminary stage.

2

The purpose of preparation is twofold: to confirm the absolute autonomy of the ego center and to generate the principle of wholly active action. Thus, at first, the experience of negation or "trial by fire" is posited. The ego habitually consists in so much as it draws support and assurance from a quantity of peripheral elements (the totality of experience, science, culture, affections, faiths, etc.), on which it therefore makes its certainty depend. Now he must be able to gird to himself his own consistency even when this set of supports fails him. He must destroy every "other" and, in the midst of the universal disintegration, remain equally firm and whole: that is, he must generate in himself the power to give himself life by means of the fire and catastrophe of all his own life, as life connected to an external or "other." Thus he must invest every form in negative power: deny all faith, violate every law both moral and social, despise every feeling of humanity, every love and generosity, every passion, reassert himself in opposition to science and speculation in a relentless and all-pervading active skepticism, finally push himself to the point of conscious and reasoned madness. In a word: he must to himself make himself the *estre ma reason* - the Stygian "*ich habe meine Sache aufnichts gestellt*" ["I have placed my house on nothingness"] must become to him a living reality (5).

(5) Here he takes a motif already alluded to: the "purification of the elements," what the Indians call *bhūtaśuddhi*, what in alchemy corresponds to the "liberation of metals" and in Masonic esotericism to the "roughing of stone" (cf. O. Wirth, *Le symbolisme hermétique*, Paris, 1909, pp. 36-38) invests both what is called "good" and what is called "bad." Cf. Shiva Chandra, *Principles of Tantra*, London, 1916, vol. II, p. LXXXVH. It is necessary to cleanse oneself completely. One addiction is no better than another. This is also a central motif of Christian Gnosticism.

Magical idealism affirms that such a test is absolutely indispensable for all further unfolding to be experienced within the value of the autarch. The horror and disvalue that can instinctively be felt deep inside for such a precept proceeds only from an internal unknowing *fear*; warns the one who experiences it that he is not yet sufficient to himself and yet here it can serve as a measure for everyone. The absence of such an experience distinguishes mysticism from magick: the mystic can enact a process of elevation, whereby he likewise resolves the antithesis and thus goes to live inwardly in the universal powers; however, this life he does not live within the form of the Lord, he does not in it reaffirm the individual and the unconditioned: he interpenetrates with the universal laws, becomes one with them - but he does not realize himself as ruler beyond them. Thus while the mystic can simply penetrate and experience the becoming of, for example, a plant, in his spiritual process the magician, beyond that, can command it and direct it at his will. This ability is given to him only by the general force in the trial by fire, which indeed constitutes the *Tongebung* [tone] of the whole development.

Senonché the individual with the trial by fire has made himself independent of the various determinations only in a relative way: he actually needs them in order to deny them and thereby reaffirm his own persuasion. The negating function itself makes him almost dependent. And from this dependence he frees himself only by detaching from himself, by eliminating the negative power - not by wanting it, not by attributing it to himself, but simply by undergoing it, by receiving it as something foreign and transcendent to his will, while in opposition to it always reaffirming his own consistence. Such is the "proof of suffering": in it remains the condition of abiding at the negation of one's own life, but insofar as the negation no longer has the ego as its author, the ego is made free from dependence on the object to be negated. Hence the value of Stoicism and Christian resignation; hence a way to understand why various saints invoked suffering as a divine grace. Effectively says Blondel: "To accept suffering in and of itself, to consent with it, to seek it, to love it, to make it the mark and the very object of generous and disinterested love, to place perfect faith in the sorrowful passion, to be active even in death, to make of every act a death and of death itself the act par excellence, here is the triumph of the will that still baffles nature which in fact engenders in man a new and more than human life" (6).

11 leading to the last and hardest stage of preparation, concerning *V active action*. The ego has made itself autonomous as pure essence: now it must be made so also as an act. The action that is performed with a view to a certain result, that which starts from a certain interest of the ego in a thing and which thus has for its object not the thing in itself, but the thing as referred to the ego-as appetite-witnesses an insufficient center, is action

(6) M. Blondel, *L'action*, transl. it., Florence, s.d., vol. II, pp. 229-230.

Imbued with passion. To want a thing for oneself is to let the "I" be taken by **t h e** object of volition and thus to renounce *a priori* actually *having it*. Likewise, violent and passionate action against things testifies to the fact that they have a *priori* for the self a reality c, to tell the truth, precisely as an antithesis, and thus fails to overcome the antithesis, but only to exacerbate and reconfirm it and to deny the plane of H osstf/wra self-determination. By raping things, one is actually only going to rape the self, since this implies jolting the self out of the point that it has nothing against itself. The fundamental principle of magick is that to really have a thing, one must want it *not for the 'I' but for o n e s e l f*, that is, to *love it*; that to desire, and preclude oneself from the way to realization; that violence is the way of t h e weak and powerless, love and gentleness that of the strong and lordly. This is the profound doctrine of Daoism: not to want to have for the sake of having, to give for the sake of possessing, to yield for the sake of dominating, to sacrifice for the sake of realization (7); it is the famous concept of *wei wu wei* or "acting without acting"-key to supernatural working faith-that is, of acting that does not overwhelm and lose to itself the centrality of the I To, but takes place within an ego that does not identify with it, that in it keeps itself detached and still as its Lord, that therefore properly does not want, but rather abandons, gives. The "gesture" of giving gives *the sense of* absolute action. Love is the magical force that frees the self from the rigid and contracted crystal of that particular affirmation by which it remains engaged in the world of the given, and that makes it capable of expanding outward, in waves of a new subtle force, with respect to which nothing is, that cannot be dominated or abated, since it acts from within things, assuming their very person, but prolonging it in a principle inwardly superior to it (8). Hence the profound sense and value of the maxims of humility, submission, abnegation, detachment, and remission to "God" of one's own will. The shedding of all pride, a life interpenetrated with true humility and self-denial, the constant death to one's own will are tasks to which indeed the individual does not conform unless he generates himself into a power infinitely superior a that required for a any madness of denial and destruction. This is a hard test, which nevertheless costs t u r e s the prerequisite for the path of the dominator: only by the act by which one goes about bending and mortifying the deepest substance of will and ego, does the principle of sufficient action arise, the organ that will have to resolve the world antithesis in the very body of the autarch, for this realizes

(7) Lao-tze, (rad. cit., *passim*, and c. VII.

(8) This subtle power corresponds to the "contactless possession" spoken of in Laoist esotericism, and to the "Force" of arcane XI of the Tarot, which, in the symbol o f a woman effortlessly opening the jaws of a raging lion, exhibits precisely the mode of spiritual causality, mistress of all violent force and all physical determinism or power. He who can truly win, says Lao-tze again (c. LXXVI). d o e s not need to fight.

a plane of the "I" that is superior to the "I" in that it is correlative to an antithesis and yet is also superior to the antithesis itself.

The third test is thus that of "love": it is no longer to consist in the abstract negation of self - which is the negativity, the deprivation of a thing - but in that deeper negation of self, which is the existence *in* itself of a thing, v.d. the thing as the object of unconditional love. Here it is not a matter of destroying, infringing or agitating, but of building oneself up at every moment, through a renewed act of love and renunciation, sur a plane higher than oneself, so that the impassibility of the mere spectator or, rather, of the Lord, *within* any storm or turmoil whether internal or external, is possible. Mind you: this is not that indifference, which is negation of passion, v.d. which is a determination that is on the same level as this, but rather the indifference that does not need to exclude anything, that maintains itself even within the greatest upheaval or tension of affections and endeavors - and here indeed more than elsewhere - insofar as it is the higher and immobile dimension of the self within its own activity in general. The maxim of non-resistance alludes to such a superior realization: nothing more than water, says Laotze, is yielding and seconding, but, at the same time, nothing better than it can overcome the strong and the rigid: it is indomitable because it is adaptive to everything (I).

Here, however, one must be wary of Hypostatizing these three proofs into sufficient purposes in themselves. It is true that ultimately the negative moment is that of the Absolute and that only in it does the experience of the autarchia thunder forth. As Gnostic Valentinus expresses it, "inasmuch as you dissolve all things and are not yourselves dissolved, you are the Lords of all creation and all corruption" (11). However, the negativity of the "trial by fire" is simply a degree connected to the *given* world of the person and, as such, to be surpassed. Likewise, one should not be attracted by the flattery of Stoic sufficiency, by the indifference of value in the face of pain, by the real negation which, while experiencing it, the self does not recognize as *evil* (as moral evil): for in truth, suffering is always a sign of imperfection, and the judgment of value must not be contrasted with a judgment of existence; that is, one must not contrast the subjective steadfastness of "ought to be" with the objective *reality* of a being that has no value and on which it cannot, but rather one must empower oneself to the point where the judgment of existence and the judgment of value fall into the same place, that what is immediately reflects what ought to be, by virtue of legislation, which is also creation. Finally, one should not understand love, respect, devotion, etc. as ends in themselves, but only as means to realize a superior power of the will. Thus one must be aware that the *og getto* of such dispositions of mind is always a pretext and a *poste riuse*

(I). LXXVIII.

(11) *Apud* Clement of Alexandria, *Sfrontata*, IV, 13, 90.

is not that resistance of a value in itself in things and individuals is the cause of the ego's respect or love, but vice versa, that value is produced by these feelings, which, in turn, must be aroused in service of a certain moment of self-realization (12). Whether there is in general something, which the self can respect, whether it is the God of Light or the God of Darkness or even an X at will that to which one defers one's will, this does not matter: for, in discipline, the act does not count for its *matter*, yes for its *form*.

3

After that, one can say about the meaning of the purification stage. In due course it was seen how the antithesis of abstract idealism consists in that, that the self is not sufficient to a part of its own activity: resistance of a sensible world is the reflection and effect of such a deficiency, which, in this respect, is to be said to be a category or, more properly, a *c o n d i t i o n* or form of perception. Empirically, such conjunction appears in the passivity of sensible perceiving, which is a receiving, a motion from outside to within (*empfinden*) according to the coercion from outside of the sensible object, which results as given, as enchainning the faculty of the person and transcending its conscious freedom; as has already been repeatedly noted, it cannot fail to perceive what it perceives, perceive what it does not perceive, or, again, arbitrarily transmute perception. In this way the activity of the self *appears*. Senonché, this state of affairs is simply a phenomenon, a contingent formation of possible experience that appends to a given will of the ego and thus cannot but transmute itself when this fails. Now the essence of magical development is to substitute for the sensible and passive form of perception another active and positive one, no longer receiving, but generating the object with an affirmation from within to without--this is the essential thing--permeated with freedom. To express it in Aristotelian language: it is a matter of bringing the function of perception from the imperfect act to the perfect act.

This transformation implies two moments: the first is that in which the self is created in the power to abstract itself from sensible perceptions, to be able to voluntarily exclude them from consciousness and yet still consist in this non-being according to a principle that, thereby, is guaranteed as existing even independently of the fundamental correlation to the object (this is the hinted separation of the subtle from the dense and impure

(12) For magical idealism, morality is a means, never an end: it does not count for its own sake, but insofar as by it the will can enhance its own affirmation and mediation. There is "heteronomy" as long as one places the end of the will in other than the will itself (Nietzsche).

Hermeticism speaks of). The second is that according to which of the various powers of the senses thus liberated, purified, folded back upon themselves, they become organs no longer of reception, but of production of the perceptions, therefore, of things. Here it is perhaps worth recalling again the presupposition of the principle of the àfeality of the sensible mode of perception: that is, there are no transcendent causes, things existing in themselves that affect the faculties, the sensible object is a mere phenomenon, and the true *principium individuationis* of the indeterminate possibility of experience according to the sensible or passive mode resides in the interior of the self, in the deep body of tendencies, desires, etc., or *samskàra*. Now such a *principium individuationis* remains latent in the first stage -- of restraint -- and then again provides the particular formation and content to the new productive, or positive, mode of perception. Only then will the absolute abstraction of *samskàra*, called "seedless *samādhi*" by Patanjali, take place. The permanence of the identical *samskàra* thus provides, throughout the purification stage, the foundation of material congruence between the contents of the two experiences, the sensible and the magical.

About the first moment. It takes the self a great deal of energy to free itself of the violence of sensory impressions and this can only be conquered by patient, orderly discipline. The active moment of the ego in perceiving must be progressively enhanced: at the faculty of restraining or excluding sensible perceptions and accidental courses of associations--that think the ego more than the ego thinks them--(*pratyahàra*), the faculty of being able to concentrate on a single sensation or object or feeling, excluding from consciousness all the rest (*dhàrana*)\ a higher degree of active power is demanded by the further step, whereby the object which, alone, is to live in the mind is not to be supplied by sensible impressions or even to be an image drawn from them, but is to have a purely ideal substance, and yet it is to be possible to give to it, by the internal energy of the self, as much reality and life as that which was given to the other by the sensible stimulus (*dhyàna*). At this point the mind, when it has been fortified by passing the tests of preparation, especially the test of detachment, can find in itself sufficient energy to complete the last moment of abstraction, to eliminate even the support of the ideal object and join only with its bare power (*samādhi* - with "seeds" or with *samskàra* = *chittashuddi*) (13).

Turning to the second moment of the process, to give an idea of the nature of the organ of the new active form of perception, we can refer to the power of imagination and, more precisely, to that of suggestion. When in the hypnotic phenomenon the subject *experiences* with a vividness that in nothing yields, indeed exceeds that relative to a sensible impression, what is imposed on him by the hypnotist, he makes use of a

(13) Patanjali, *Yogasutras*, from compare with R. Steiner, *Geheimwissenschaft in Umriss*², Leipzig, 1910, c. V. p. 278 c ff., and with Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*.

active power of position, of a new way of perceiving permeated with freedom and producing from within—which is precisely what runs **parallel to** the exigency, mentioned above. Certainly, thinking about suggestion and pen sars to a realm of illusion for several is one and the same. Nevertheless, these do not realize that it all boils down to a question *of intensity*: that the sensible world itself can be considered as a kind of powerful crystallized and stiffened hypnosis, and the note of "true," added to the term "allucination" in Taine's famous definition of the world, can be recon ducted to the degree of intensity and relative persistence (14): a reality is a powerful and constant al lucination, just as hallucination is a weak and fleeting reality. This proceeds immediately from the idealistic premise: one sop first f aporia of the "thing-in-itself," one remits the reality of the world to categorical activity, and furthermore one admits the possibility of reaffirming freedom on it, then one has no way of relegating the concept of reality to a privileged phenomenon and depreciating the world of imagination, in truth, it *may* be a power of equal dignity to that of sensible perceiving, only it stands to it in the relation of the active to the passive. On the other hand, it should be noted that, for now, there is no question of transforming the *content* of experience, for example, of perceiving, by virtue of the power of suggestion, a donkey instead of a tree. Indeed, the process up to *samādhi* is not one of agitation, but, only, of retension: c suggestion or imagination, which continues it, does not bring a new content, but rather the same, as it corresponds to the *sani-skāra*, but conditioned by a new form of perception: that is, it is not a matter of perceiving a donkey in the place of a tree, but of always perceiving a tree, but no longer passively, but actively, productively: the tree, in the new form, does not exist for the ego, unless it is posi tively produced from within (just as scientific psychology has ascertained to occur in cases of supernormal knowledge) just as it was not before, unless it was excited by external sensory perceptions (15). An "invariant,

(14) Perception, for Taine, is a "true hallucination." The concept of suggestion is the medium that connects idea and reality, internal experience and external experience, so that it is na tural that the magic organ is made of it. Of a thing I can, in a first degree, have the simple and pale mental image; beyond that, I can make it vivid in my imagination; in third place I can perceive it outwardly as a hallucination subjective; in fourth, I can act on other consciousnesses so that they also perceive it (collective hallucination). The same power, continued in a more intense affirmation that invests the level of physical being, becomes *objective* and, as such, is magical act, Magician is one who knows, as it were say, *suggest the same matter*: this, dalui dominated in its processes, takes the forms he wants. In the series there are no leaps. L*objectivity is the inten sive limit of the subjective statement, the point at which the act possesses itself entirely.

(15) For those who *uiV* inner *agility*, coming to them from a sense of the relativity of the form of their own experience, joins a presentiment of the mode of "effortless action" proper to the transcendental plane, this reversal ceases to be something so extraordinary. To use a happy imagine of A. Reghini, the thing happens as in those mechanisms of transmission of motion by pulley, in which the small movement that

an elemental body of Xóyot oneppaTiKoi is maintained through the two forms, and of the magical resolution of this it is not to be spoken of, until the self has externalized, eliminated and distinguished from itself-and thereby inwardly and gerar chically overcome-all of its own *samskàra*.

Another case of productive perceiving is given by dreaming. Senonché the matter of the dream is not produced by the ego according to sufficiency: rather than dreaming, he is dreamed. For the causes of dreaming are either repecussions of abnormal organic states, or symbolic transcriptions of sensible impressions, or, finally, as Freud has shown it, creations by subconscious affective conati which, simply rejected rather than resolved by the waking ego, create in the dream world their satisfaction in spite of it. That is, the active form of perception is in the dream exploited to the utmost by a life that, far from deferring to the value of freedom, is part of what the preparatory discipline of purification and emancipation must overcome. Thus, as the ego progresses into the higher dimension, a greater awareness and a power of dominion and direction is realized in the dream, and if this, at first, because of the greater internal energy realized by the fio, acquires a character of great sharpness, at a later moment, struck at its irrational and oblique roots, it fails and blossoms into a pure, undifferentiated awareness, correlative to *samàdhi*. The ego, having created itself in a higher plane and indifferent to that of sensible perceiving, remains conscious even there where this perceiving fails, that is, in sleep. And this is the first magical realization. The epithet "Perfect Awakened One" to the Buddha has not only simbo lical but also literal value. In sleep, reduced to pure, undifferentiated light of consciousness (*anonta-jyotih*) later resurfaces and takes shape--by the effect of *samskàra*--the world, in a new kind of dream, essentially and entirely active, purified and autonomous. The state offered by sleep is very propitious for the first experiences of the new mode of perception: it in a way protects the nascent formations from the violence of sensory im pressions, whose force they have not yet entirely egua gliated. Nevertheless, the ego must further submerge the physical waking world in the world gushing forth from its producing mentality, must actively recreate from within, without any external stimulus and with freedom, the world system and with this autonomous reproduction supplant the sensitively conditioned reality of that. To this end, it is necessary to ade guage the subjective power of imagination to the intensity of that which remains hallucinated and almost magnetized by the objective: it is necessary to *detach* freedom from this and reduce f imagination from being merely the maker of inconsi-

door this from his wheel to the other parallel so that immediately the
direction of the in tera transmission remains reversed.

{.Su Arturo Reghini e the his relationship with Evola, cf. J.
Evola, *Imperialism paganism*.

Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome, 2(X)4, Appendix I (ed.).

stent and subjective to objective power. Or, again, as paradoxical as this may sound: all reality is to be transmuted into a dream after having denied it in sleep, the being of the antithesis is to be submerged in a non-being and from this it is to 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 bark to itself opaque.

At this point, there appears in the clearest way the necessity of the prope deutic of the most absolute purification, so that the world, as it gushes forth *neìV anonta-jyotih* from the latent body of *saniskàra*, will not be agitated and deformed by powers of personal arbitrariness, which here would have unconditional efficiency and in the chaos they would produce, would preclude all avenues to the further dimensions of power. Imagination must here be made pure and cleansed as crystal. On the other hand it must be entirely positive. In the hypnotic phenomenon, cited for mere clarification, there is instead a passive imagination, it repeats the situation of sensible perceiving with the only difference being that in place of the physical stimulus there is the menial command of the hypnotist. What is needed, is to substitute *the* hypnotist with his own positive initiative, overcoming that *absolute Enipffindung* [absolute sensibility] Novalisian (16), which also underlies most of the phenomena of faith. Those who deal with magic, can easily realize, given that they reflect (which, to tell the truth, happens only in exceptional cases), how its organ is, fundamentally, the imagination, how the whole of ceremonial, ritual, symbolic, etc., is but a *mise en scène*, based on profound laws of the psychology of the subconscious, apt to excite and energize to the highest degree the power of *the* imagination. That is to say, such an ensemble represents the necessary substitute for those who do not know how to arouse by means of a positive, central initiative the powers of imagination, but come to this only indirectly, by the suggestion of a complex of extrinsic elements. Consider on how many unstable factors (varying with the age, beliefs, the individual and his state, etc.) the suggestive phenomenon depends, then it will be understood how contingent is the success of ceremonial magic and, therefore, how the absolute positivity and systematic development of it is conditioned by the reduction of the heterosuggesting element to the autosuggesting one, that is, to that which remits to a positive self-determination, to a self-creating faith and to itself entirely sufficient. Moreover, heterosuggestion, in the main, turns to powers proper to the world of the person, so that in relativistic phenomena there is an insuperable confusion of the objective and the merely fantastic and arousals of blind forces with respect to which only in exceptional cases can *the* point of autarky really be maintained. The requirement, that the imagination must make itself detersed and transparent (the "translucent" of *Kabbalah*) so that in its penetration of the "Great magical agent"

(16) Novalis, *Schriften*, ed. cit., voi. II. p. 101.

rather than exalts correlatives of the objective world do not, by the obstruction of its dross, engender extravagances and reveries (17), bump against Pellemento of heterosuggestion precisely to ceremonial magic, which can only be addressed to the imagination as a blind power and dark entity of the affective.

Here the justification of the "proof of a more" results in the clearest way. It is necessary, in fact, to know how to assimilate oneself (in *dhàrana* and *dhyàna*) to the antithetical objective world, to mold one's interiority on it to the exclusion of all personal affirmation, and this in order to be able to conserve objectivity even where the physical world or the world of phenomenon fails and the principle of perception is instead freedom. The magician - like the saggio of Aristippus - must be the one, whose life is equally regulated, even when no law would piti exist - otherwise he makes himself a prisoner of a world of parvenches that in no way he could recognize as such and that would preclude further development, whereby he really can make himself the arbiter of the "analogy" spoken of in magic. The new experience is constructed by abstracting, through *samyàna* (this is what the Patanjali calls the set of *dhàrana*, *dhyàpa* and *samàdhi*), from the sensible object, with which one has placed oneself preliminarily in a sympathetic relationship according to an act of love, and then reproducing it from within, as something in which the absolutely subjective, as such, is also immediately objective.

The pure, indeterminate possibility or fabric of the new experience (*anonta-tyotih*) is called "Astral Light" or "Great Magical Agent" by Western occultism. It constitutes the elemental substratum in which the various stages of purification and realization take place, which it is now necessary to briefly mention.

The world, as reemerging in activity in the "astral light," appears, in its immediacy, as a *dynamic* or elemental *world*. In it the various determinations are immediately experienced in their transparence in a dynamic function that produces them. This function is understood in the very substance of the "I," it exists only within an act of the "I" and as a moment of its interiority: on the other hand, in it is always recognized the character of reality and objectivity relative to the sensible thing or phenomenon it resolves. That is to say, exteriority is experienced in interiority, indeed here the ego is only insofar as it is dynamically realized outside. The ego overcomes and resolves positively that concrete incarnation of itself, which is correlative to sensible determinations, insofar as it comes out of itself and is able to feel inwardly and productively everything that was previously opposed to it as the external world: the more he is capable of a kind of sensitivity to external things, analogous to that in which the poet dramatizes and humanizes nature with his state of mind, however absolutely objective - referring to things in themselves -, the more he makes concrete

(17) See A.E. Waite, *The mysteries of magic*², London, 1897, p. 68.

his autonomy and freedom. He is now inward-and according to an inwardness that is absolute because it is redeemed in the value of autarky and stronger than any contin gence-only to the extent that inward resterno. To realize this experience, c requires great intrepidity: it is as if to renounce all terra firma c to launch oneself outside oneself, into the abyss and tene bre - and this is opposed by an unspeakable terror. One understands then how necessary, to overcome such a step, the habit of self-denial and dedication. To win the world to freedom, one must have the courage to leap out of oneself. Small egoism, contracted and enclosed in an empty center, expresses nothing but fear and insufficiency for the creative power of the ego: one does not know how to create, one does not know how to assert oneself in that positive power that would transfigure the sensible world into the world of freedom precisely because of this egoism, this fear for t h e pure activity o f love as for a death, for this radical "avarice" - as Lao-tze called it

(18). Active faith, spiritual creative energy is, essentially, £%- aTexaig, transcending oneself. The intrepidity to throw oneself beyond oneself is the generating organ of the dynamic inondo, as well as of the other suprasensibles worlds, and those who cannot make themselves sufficient to it, those who fear to lose themselves, remain in a stratum of empty consistency or in the plane of theTnoTÉpripa [deprivation]. Here it is literally true that those who wish to save their life will lose it and that only so much as those who give it will make it truly living.

Now to fictionalize the exterior is also a projecting, a detaching from oneself of the interior. Dynamic formations, insofar as they refer to an objective, are distinguished from the "I," whereby the new world comes to represent the aesthe- rization of the same transcendental body of the *samskàra*, in its first power of simple efficient dynamism. Beyond the phenomenon the "I," then, creates with its own substance-from within itself-the "first inte gral" of that, that is, the varied dynamic function from which that derives. But by producing itself and objectifying itself in the dynamic inondo -- insofar as it constructs itself as the energy capable of actually doing that -- the "I" gene ra with respect to the efficient force of its *samskàra* into a magical principle, that is, into a principle that is inwardly superior to it. Just as every object corresponds to a subject, every objectification of the interior rea lizes a principle deeper than that which is objectified and which is free from it, which is no longer conditioned by it but instead conditions it. By projecting its own dynamism, by making it an objectification, the self therefore purifies itself of it and makes itself its ruler.

The transition to further experience can be made understandable as follows. In the previous point, the self must extrapolate its internal, transcen-

(18) Thracians, cited above, p. XIV. See G Ribcinont-Dessaignes, *L'empereur de Chine*, Paris, 1921,

p. 56: "Un homme peni-il et re Dieu? - Oni - Lequel? - La sphere est retraetée, le cent re s'est irradiò" ["Can a man possibly be God? - Yes - And which one? - The sphere is disavowed, the center has radiated"].

dental dynamism-this is the requirement: senonché this very projection requires dynamism, which, it, does not remain projected. Instead, the exigency wants *any* transcendental dynamism to be extrapolated, if sovereignty on the efficient plane of *satnskara* is to be absolute. Now it is clear that this exigency does not remain satisfied by a mere projecting of this projecting faculty, for this leads to a vicious circle: rather, by a new way in which projecting in general is experienced. This new way must elevate the distinguishing to a new power, must, in a sense, distance it from itself. Now the distinguishing that gave rise to the dynamic world was immediately relitigated to the self and took place according to a direction from within to without. It follows that when the activity within which that subjective becomes and is formed, which immediately is also objective, is no longer experienced as a producing starting from the ego, but rather as a receiving verse, as a welcoming, as a coming together from outside, when the direction is reversed c is understood almost as a pronouncing of the fogjective toward and within the ego, then the distinguishing itself would certainly remain distinct and externalized. 11 world that is thus generated in the "great magical agent" is the one known to a certain mysticism and to the neo-rosacrucianism as the "world of inspiration," to Indian esotericism as the lower *Devakan*. The form of perception in it therefore transforms from centrifugal to centripetal, remaining nevertheless quite distinct from the sensible in that it is here intimate with the whole process, in that this process is that of creative productivity itself the dynamic world, however almost as contemplated from the differentiated, experienced as reflected, and thus reversed, by a specific. There is as it were an expressing of things in the self, but the self is intimately interpenetrated and present at the very point whence the expression proceeds, for this point is but that centrality, inherent to it at the dynamic world, exteriorized. By which a further distinction and liberation is realized. For in the determinations of the new world we no longer have the simple dynamic function, but together with it the higher principle to it from which it was made possible is objectified and externalized: that is, we have units in themselves distinct and yet mediated. Now the efficiency mediated and conjoined to the innermost principle, by which it is conditioned, is, properly, the concept, as *conceiving*. Thus the world that now appears before the self is like a living language in which a body of meanings conceives and expresses itself: it reveals and embodies the inner profundity of the *samskàra* at the moment of its forming into a set of exigencies, values, and original reasons (19). Subjective takes the sense of

(19) This moment of magical experience is particularly considered by the *Man-trashàstra*, who sees in the totality of things the material formation (*sthūia*) of the actions of a cosmic verb (*parashabda*), v.d. of a living power of objective expression. Of this human language would be but a reflection correlative to that materiality and moreover warped by the various influences of race, time, etc. 11 *Mantrayoga* tends to take the self beyond such a reflection, to affirm it in that "language of the Gods"

mirror of the elemental personality: everything reveals the profound reason from which it was originally brought into existence *for* the self, so that the whole of the world is worth to it as the concrete matter for its transcendental self-recognition. But this recognizing itself is also a distinguishing. The ego realizes this knowledge insofar as still a deeper layer makes it objective and liberates and eliminates from itself and, as the *subject* of the new experience, goes to possess itself in a center that to what is known is inwardly superior. "This is you," "This nevertheless is another," such are the principles that in one are realized at this stage and to which the sense of that test that occultism connects with the so-called "Guardian of the threshold" is pinned.

This leads to the last, supreme stage of purification. In the dynamic and in the world of the verb the "I" has detached itself from the *samskāra* considered in its two first transcendental powers beyond mere phenomenon, that is, considered as immediate efficiency and as reflex-conceive: except that in addition to these two powers there is still one more, relating to the bare principle of egoity. This power constitutes the center of the person and is correlative to the existence of the totality of the world in general, as the world appurtenant to the formation of the person. Now since the principle of the individual is the passing beyond the world of the person, so, according to its requirement, it is necessary that the very heart of the *samskāra*, the very bare center of the person be projected, be felt by the ego as something contingent upon him, as an external thing, of which he is associate. The ego must have with respect to that which formerly constituted his deepest centrality the same feeling he had for a thing of the sensible external world. He must externalize his own Ego: for he then of this makes himself the unconditional cause out of nothingness, for by this he realizes the point of the one who is not, who is not passive to his own existence, but who his existence creates out of nothingness according to an absolute act-which every *entity* has therefore as material, made of freedom. Only then is the self internally purified, only then is he the Lord transcendent of the world since, by externalizing it, he has transcended in the totality of his powers the transcendental function or *samskāra* of the person, to which the world remits all its substance.

So at the point where the self makes itself appear before itself, the cathartic is accomplished and the doors are opened for pure magical realization. That the potency, that the act absolutely (i.e., not purely *formaliter*, but also *materialiter*) sufficient to itself before this experience is but an illusion and, therefore, how the various magical possibilities that can be acquired apart from the methodical process of self-liberation

(*hiranyagarbha-shabda*) that commands the production process of things. See J. Woodroffe, *The Garland of Letters, Studies in the Mantrashastra*, Madras, 1922. This of the rest will be discussed in the work on the Tantras mentioned above.

tion, which has been exposed, should fatally succeed in being affected by a hidden moment of passivity, now appears clear. Only in the one who is the cause of himself from nothing, if he has resolved the bare principle of being - the self - into liberality, who therefore to himself is contingent, does power as the value of autarchia have a concrete meaning.

Before moving on, it is worth making a general note on the cognitive side of the cathartic process, also for the purpose of showing how it concretely enhances the idealistic premise. It is that magical idealism, beyond its stage of theoretical presentation, fully agrees with Eastern gnoseology. According to this, the fundamental type of knowledge is that of direct (*aparokshajnàna*) or actual (*anubhàva*) experience so that it holds to an elementary empiricism and excludes as at all problematic and abstract any induction or inference beyond the actual datum. That is, it does not pose a "thing in itself" behind the phenomenon as the true reality, but says real so much what is currently experienced: however, it admits the possibility of various forms of experience, to each of which a certain reality is correlative, which are hierarchized down to an absolute experience, which is that of *Risiti*, only in relation to which *there is* an absolute reality. The principles of such a gnoseology are thus that to know is not to think, but to *be* the thing known according to actuality and possession, and that the character of actuality is not inherent in a certain reality, but rather in a certain way of experiencing reality: it is the eternity realized in itself by the *Risili* that by pouring itself upon **t h e** universe transfigures it *sub specie aeternitatis*: it is eternal 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 process of integration is synthetic-from less to more-v.d. the various transcendental functions, of which the phenomenon will turn out to be the "derivative," *do not exist prior to the act of integration that posits them*. If the phenomenon is to defer to a dynamism, this to a concept and this to a subjective entity, it is necessary for the individual to project into the phenomenon self as dynamism, signification and I. The world exists as dynamism, signification, Ego only when - *sit venia verbis* - the individual casts self, elaborated into the potentials convenient to the respective points, within the empty form of the phenomenon. The *actual* existence of a spiritual world, unfolding in an eternal ether, thus proceeds solely from the process of self-liberation or purification of the ego. Specifically: at the point where the individual has become capable of exteriorizing his ego, he acquires the possibility of *experiencing* the real as a set of subjective entities or inner centers of freedom. Such is the stage of intuition or cosmic consciousness (EVCUGU;). Superior to itself, the I between descends then the necessity of a particular inconvertible individuation: he is a *continuum* that maintains itself in unity within the discontinuum of infinite individual consciousnesses, into which he can project himself, and which he continues in a higher dimension, just as the submarine mass of a continent continues and unifies the multiplicity of separate islands emerging from the waters. The point of autarky is that of penetration, in light and pos-

perfect sex, of that mystery that lies behind the act of self-consciousness of those who have themselves according to necessity, that such self-consciousness-as Schelling would recognize it-is a lamp that illuminates only in front, but behind leaves the deepest darkness (20). Here, then, to know is to project *fin* inside beings, to transfer one's interiority from one individuation into another - *intus-ire*. This world of knowing, referred to its possibility, gives the sign of the accomplished realization of that which is assiduously detached or magical principle.

[Implicit in what has been said in previous essays about the gnoseological presupposition of magical idealism is *solipsism*. That is, one cannot in any way admit the existence of a multiplicity of subjects each having equal reality and dignity of my subject. Since that bare and immanent certainty which, alone, I can call Ego, is *unmultiplicable*, it is an absolute experience which mediates everything and which, it, by nothing is mediated - whereupon to speak of an "other" Ego is contradiction in terms: the "other" Ego in fact, as "other," is no longer Ego, that is, it is no longer a centrality and subjectivity, but something mediated. But, as such, it is conditioned by the one Ego, since this, like the immediate *когда* is $\wedge o/qv$, is the power and presupposition of all mediation. In short: the other is not an I, but a particular object of my experience, a peripheral element into which the note of subjectivity is projected. That being the case, it is clear that one cannot admit that the "other" Ego has the same metaphysical dignity as the one Ego and a real and autonomous existence that on the condition of falling into irreflexion, v.d. of immersing oneself in the object that poses forgetting oneself as subject and condition of posing and yet of the object itself. It can also be admitted that the one ego is an abstraction out of relation to an experience in which various objects are accompanied by the note of subjectivity: but this *correlation of fact* does not exclude, indeed implies, a *subordination of right*. As the Pythagoreans already noted, every number is such by virtue of the One: the many, without a principle that relates them, would not even be many, but many separate units. Thus two consciousnesses, which were absolutely two, would not be two, but one consciousness and one incommunicable consciousness, that is, one consciousness. Whence it is that the multiplicity of consciousnesses implies a higher consciousness, in which are contained

- as the limbs in the unity of the body. Now the fundamental question is: where does the emphasis of the "I"-understood as that immultiplicable experience mentioned above-fall
- on the relation (v.d. on that which includes all the terms), i.e. sur one of the elements related?

What decides the alternative is an act of freedom. Magical idealism decides for the first case and yet places the self in that which understands everything and which is taken by nothing. Senonché this understanding is not to be understood as something presently perfect: the whole of experience is yes the body of the ego (and the latter cannot therefore disregard it and isolate itself), but a body in the process of organizing itself, a body affected by *placet* of deprivation and not entirely dominated, unified and transparent in the pure principle of autarky. Rather, perfect unity is the *terminus ad quem* of magical development. Now along that development it is possible to *experience*

as I - that is, to actualize in the central principle of one's being - what instead in the order of sensory experience was but a particular object to which only by inference - as a hypothesis and an explanatory principle - was the note of subjectivity connected.

It is that consciousness is not a static point, but admits degrees of depth and intensity. Deepening, going beyond I's "being" of a particular individual - that is, by making itself from individuated consciousness that individuating consciousness which, as such, is indifferent to infinite individuations-the individual can *experience* itself in a multiplicity of subjects without thereby moving from itself (this is the sense of the initiatory "we," whose *caput mortuum* is the royal and pontifical "we"). But even in this point *subordination* is the last instance: the "I" remains the higher principle that stands to the various subjects in which it experiences itself, as to the various functions of a body of entelechy or organic principle thereof.

Between the person and the "universal Subject" there is thus no otherness, but continuity and progressiveness: the person is the universal Subject in potency and the universal Subject is the act of the person. That is, one should not give as already existing presently beyond the consciousness of the individual the point at which the various subjects are one according to a perfect organic synthesis. The distance between me and "others"-the fact that I cannot say to my whole experience, "I," but suffer instead the violence of a distinction-is but the symbol of the distance between me and myself, is but the character of privation inherent in that which is in power. It is now necessary to start from this privation and beyond it to affirm God: only then will the God, the subject of subjects, the monad of monads, exist. The meaning of this, can be expressed with Eckhart: "I - the Universal - raise all creatures from their consciousness to mine so that in me they become unity" (21). As if the totality of beings to whom my experience is bound and who resist me were inorganic matter, asking my power for unity, the point that will make it life, persuasion. Christ alludes to this when, in the *apocryphal Acts of John*, he speaks of the "Gathering of the members of the ineffable" (22). Otherwise, as the extreme instance and principle of the absolute remains for

personal of sensible experience and beyond the contingencies of this there is nothing else. Once again the process is *synthetic*. *One does* not have as a twig that goes to recognize itself in the plant - already existing beyond the finiteness of its consciousness and presupposing itself to it - and that in such a recognition goes to communicate with other finite subjects or twigs that coexisted with it in the plant (as well as according to E. Carpenter's view): it is rather to be said that the branch creates out of nothing or from itself, progressively, that more perfect unity that is the tree and thereby gradually gives to "others" a reality that they, as others, did not have before. The concept of the

(21) Meister Eckhart, *cd. cit.*, vol. I, p. 164: cf. vol. I, p. 163: "All creatures hold gift to their supreme perfection, all aspire to pass from life to substance: all carry into the my reason to become reason. And I - E Unique - I reduce Of born again creatures to God! Think therefore each, what he does."-About the Eckhartian concept of *Vernunft*, which, like Xryog's concept of early Greek wisdom is borrowed with the concept of sufficiency, cf. *id.*, p. 167: "In the calm desert of divinity (*Gottheit* - opposed to *Goths* as the pause to its own effect) in which nothing is ever penetrated, in the indistinct silence that rests motionless in itself and yet moves all things - in that beings have their reason (*vernünftig leben*)."

(22) M.R. James, *Apocrypha Anecdota*, Cambridge, 1897, Series II, p. 13ff.; cf. the similar passage *dcIV Evangel of Éva* in Epiphanius (Dindorf edition, XXVI. 3).

progress from a deprivation to a sufficiency that did not already exist before or alongside the act that realizes it, this is, as noted above, the focus of the present doctrine].

4

Through catharsis, the self has recreated its *satnskàra*, that is, its own transcendental personality: by distinguishing itself from it, it has made become according to freedom that particular whole by which the principle of the for-itself or reflection was reaffirmed and concretized beyond the world of being. All that has become—that is, the spiritual world—could never live without the freedom and power of the individual, which is wanted in the value of sufficiency. However, what has become up to the point of cosmic consciousness is still a world of phenomena and semblance since, according to what has moreover been said in the previous essays, only *within* the act of absolute sufficiency does a determination acquire absolute reality, only such an act frees it from mala contingency and makes it shine in the unconditional. Senonché the possibility of such an act arises only at the end of the process of catharsis. And so that when the "I" does not go further, in the realization proper, he may fall back into a naive supra-sensible realism, v.d. he may believe that the form of eternity reveals to him entities existent in themselves and of equal, or even higher, dignity than the individual power of experience: where all this does not appear, that inasmuch as by its appearance it postulates a principle inwardly superior to the whole of the spiritual world, in relation to which this world is contingent. Here the mystic stops: he identifies with the spiritual world and conforms to the laws of cosmic becoming, beyond which he does not reassert himself: the resolution of the microcosm in the macrocosm and, with it, "free necessity" is his final word. The magician, on the other hand, goes further: he, insofar as he holds himself conspeuous in the principle of posing, *realizes* that nature is not necessary at all and thereby achieves supreme liberation (*mahàmukti*), oneness (*kai-valya*) the "seedless *samadhi*" (23). The principles of such a solution are:

"I am not I" (i.e.: I am not the *existing* self, but its power) therefore, "I am not my body" (or *saniskàra*, i.e., I am not nature)

(24) and finally, "Neither do I *exist*" (i.e.: I am the unconditional cause of my existence, I am contingent to myself, my being is material to freedom) (25).

Let us dwell for a minute more on this most important point. A conception has reappeared in modern philosophy, which already created serious preoccupu-

(23) See Patanjali, loc. cit., HI, 49, 50; 54. 55.

(24) Vale just note that here "nature" or "body" means the whole metaphysical of the world (e.g., the Hegelian idea) additionally reduced to real experience.

(25) *Sàmkhya Karika*, LXIV.

paations in early Greek speculation. Such a conception is that of the *rationality of being*. The reason in the whole of the things can comprehend well what they are, can entirely delve into and construct conceptually their essence, the "what" they are, but that things *are*, their bare existence, this is an impenetrable fact, which can be accepted but not explained, before which mere reason stops (26). That is, the actual *existence* of the rational is radically an irrational, something irreducible to logical being. Hence Hegel pointed (from the logical point of view) to pure being as pure nothingness (27); likewise the Greek, in his love of the pure rational, saw in existence an injustice (Anaximander), that which is not or, rather, that which ought not to be (Parmenides), the principle of evil or disorder (dmpov - that is KotKOrtoióv, Plato); and, as for that which provides the fundamental experience of being - the self -, the Carlyle reaffirms the àXoyog in challenging the philosopher to explain not this or that *clothing of mine*, this or that law, but, in general, why *I am here* (28). Now the need for magick is this: to reduce pure being by brute fact, by necessity opaque transcendent the power of the self, to act of freedom; making being to itself contingent by reaffirming the "I" this side of it; in short, constructing the "I" as the cause of being from nothingness. And here one understands why Laotze connects the attributes of "emptiness" and "non-being" to the Perfect and how, from the depth of the consciousness of the Perfect, he can say that all being has its foundation in non-being. Likewise, one understands the much-troubled concept of *maya*, which for *Tantra* signifies illusion and, at the same point, creative power; and, finally, one understands the meaning of the supreme body of the Buddha, of Dharmakàya, defined as the principle of nonexistence that is the basis of all reality and, therefore, of the Buddhist dot trine of universal emptiness (*shunyatàvada*).

It was seen how at the end of the catharsis process a such an unconditional principle, which resolves being. The ultimate stage of magical realization consists in the actualization in a concrete, mediated body of such a principle, which, for the time being, is by no means indeterminate. For it, freedom, as well as *formal* freedom - such as that relating to the simple form of **p e r c e p t i o n**, which, however, always has a certain content that conforms to *samskàra* - becomes

(26) Cf. G Simmel, *Schopenhauer und Nietzsche. Ein Vortragszyklus*², Leipzig, 1920, IH; F.W. Schelling, *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, S.W., t. 10, p. 149 c scg.

(27) *Ih. Id.* G Hegel, *Encyk. derph. Wissenschaften*, § 87.

(28) N. Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, 1.1, ed. J.M. Dent, p. 37. Cf. Serner, *Letzte Locke- rung*, I, 2°: "Ww diirfte das erste Gehirn, das auf dem Globus geri et, getan haben? Vermutlich erstaunte es iiber sein Anwesenheit und wusste mit sich und dem schmutzigen Vehikel unter seinen Fiissen nichts anzufangen" ("What could the first brain that appeared on the globe have foully? Presumably he marveled at his own presence and did not know how to start with himself and the dirty firm vehicle his feet."). On the *necessity*, in the self, of one's own affirmation, Blondel then bases his entire construction, which ends, as it is nolo, in the transcendent God of theism.

also *material*, i.e. capable of producing any content or object of experience.

The meaning of this second phase is thus the reaffirmation of the power of the unconditioned according to the three degrees of transcendental mediation that defined the three worlds of *samskāra*'s externalization-the dynamic, the verb, and the intuition worlds: a dynamism, a conception function, and an inwardness are to be drawn from the "illusion" or *māyā* as entities *literally* made of freedom, contingency or arbitrariness. A such work is understood as the "redemption of the world" or the construction of the immortal body or magic body. A great temptation is indeed relative to the point of liberation: the self, which realizes the contingency of nature to itself, may feel that it has come to the end of development and immerse itself in that pure, unfinished finality of self that Hināyan Buddhism designated as *nirvāṇa*. By this he would indeed give up the body of his concreteness that can only come to him from reaffirming the need, which gave rise to the transcendental self itself, in some all experience real of the individual. Occultism calls this temptation the "great guardian of the threshold": to super it, is to understand that there is for the magical principle an ulterior and living perfection, and that this is only conquered by creating itself in that energy where it takes back the world from the non-being of illusion, in which it was submerged by the "Freed," and to it is given an absolute being by means of causality from nothingness, of which purification has generated the naked principle. Such is the meaning of the "redemption of the world": it is the proof of the absolute non-reality of the world performed through the recreation of it from nothingness according to arbitrariness and coincides with the fulfillment of the magical self in a concrete mediation. It is then understood why the "magical body" or of "freedom" (the designation "body" is here, of course, taken in the sense at all metaphorical) is called the "cosmic body" and why Daoism has designated by the term *Phankhoatu* (which, literally, means "Book of things in return" or in "restitution"-compare the concept of "Final Restitution" in Valentinian gnosis) the secret treatise containing the principles of high magic. The moralistic meaning that the *nir-manakāya* (= the one who renounces *nirvāṇa*) would go to sacrifice himself out of sheer piety for mankind proves how the highest wisdom can be mortified and rendered unrecognizable in a *caput mortuū* dirty and opaque to its transcendental signification.

In the magical phase what in discursiveness was the faculty of judgment is thus an unconditioned or arbitrary act of cosmic creation. The phenomenon being here represented by the experience of the world of intuition, the first moment is that in which such judgment has for its object--that is, resolves--the dynamic world; the second and third correspond respectively to the creation of mediated powers of conception, and of interiority. All this new world is constituted not only formally, but also materially, of *māyā* or freedom: by actualizing it, the self is actualized into three powers - chia mate by modern Rosicrucianism Spiritual I, Spirit of Life and

Man-Spirit, from Indian esotericism *Ishvara*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Virai* and that, in one respect, correspond to the Trikàya, or threefold mode of the Buddha of the Mahàyànic school-powers that go to make up his magical body. If in the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and the personal one wants to understand the figurations of the various moments of the power between descendent, from the brute phenomenon dead to itself to pure inwardness: then we have a way of understanding the further individuation of the concept of the magical body contained in the teaching, that *Ishvara*, *Hiranyagarbha* and *Virai* are equivalent respectively to the vegetable, animal and personal principles of what was the external world as resolved in the central function of the autarch: asserting itself according to unconditionality in the dynamic principle beyond the phenomenon of the spiritual realm right at the point of intuition, the self has, in the its experience in general, resolved, nullified or redeemed minerality and according to such a function is *Virar*. similarly for the other two principles. Here it should perhaps be recalled that the reality of the various formations of experience appertains to the varied relation according to which certain functions of consciousness are experienced, so that to say that, for example, minerality is annulled is only to say that the self has placed itself with respect to the relevant function in another relation, such that that function is no longer experienced "minerally," but in another way, hierarchically superior to it. And that the various kingdoms of nature are mere phenomena: their disappearance means that the principle of separation that distances them from the "I" is overcome and that the "I" takes them back into itself and regenerates in the principle of freedom the functions from which they were produced. Another thing must be remembered: a human body, insofar as it comprises the four principles, can serve as immediate matter and, almost, as the lever for the cosmic work of creating the magical body, and this is because it is the resolution of the transcendental function or metaphysical root of the elements, which is the same behind the various phenomena in which they manifest themselves

(29) : waves in *really* solving for example, the plant function of the own body, is at the same point resolved vegetality in general in the- entire macrocosm. Magical action is, in its essence, *objective*, macrocosmic: which distrusts the naïve conception, that the immortal body is a particular sublimated body, existing *among* moki others, which are not immortal: it is instead the very infinity of bodies, experienced, however, from the height of the immortal un/y of a productively free function. In this sense, the body of the absolute individual is the universe, gradually as a system of vegetality, animality and personality-and its development is the uni-

(29) Which appears explicitly and very suggestively in a Mithriac ritual (A. Dietrich, *Ethe Mithraliturgie*, Leipzig, 1903, in.), in which the perfect coq>o is referred to the various elements in their original, immortal, and freedom-giving function ("elemental origin of my origin," "elemental substance of my substance," "immortal Water, Solid, Air," etc., from cf. with the metaphysical value of the various elements according to Indian doctrines in J. Woodroffe, *The Garland of Letters*. cit. c. XXX, XXXI).

versal. It is then understood why Tesoterica understood the immortal body as a *glory*, as the vehicle of all the higher powers of the cosmos, for in the Gnostic hymn of the Pearl, the "Robe of Glory" is sealed with the Names, that is, with the powers of the divine hierarchy, beginning with the King of Kings (30). Western occultism calls Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan the cosmic states corresponding to the regeneration of the three mentioned principles and yet to the ar- bilary, universal power to create dynamic entities, life beings and free individualities. Just as mortal man draws life from the ingestion of food, so immortal man, the dvTpOMoc dpprjTog, draws life from the unconditional creation of beings from nothing. Power is his matter. The limbs of his extreme perfection are the reflection of his absoluteness in infinite spiritual individualities (since to the degree of the spirit now remains elevated *every* cosmic function), which the magical self as the creator of them, with holds and dominates from the height of a principle inwardly superior to them as the entelechy of the present body comprehends and dominates its corpuscles; circulating, transmuting in them and at once transcending them in the simplicity of an eternal thunderbolt.

* * *

This is the essence of magical development: a closer logical deduction and a more articulate identification of its individual stages will be set forth in the third epoch of the second book of the work *Theorem of the Individual Asso lute* (31). Further methodological hints will be given on the occasion of the exposition of the Tantric doctrine in the essay: *The World as Power* (32). Here, finally, a caveat must be made.

In no way must the potency, the magical principle be experienced as if it were a transcendent condition, to which the inviduous must subsume himself, if he is to achieve persuasion, self-confirmation. This indeed would constitute an escape from the self, and once the point of centrality is lost, in no way is there any hope of regaining it along the direction thus generated and leading further and further away from it. Power is not to be wanted, sought or desired - this would lead to heteronomy or dependence -

(30) G.R.S. Mead, *The Doctrines of the Subite Body in Western Tradition*, London, 1919, p. 110 e ff. "It (the body spiritual) not was a body in any order of bodies subtle..., but rather the source of all possibility of incorporation, the *seed-rium* from which all such bodies could be produced. They (the Christian and pagan Gnostics) argued that the resurrection body is a body of freedom and no longer a body of crushing life. The great change wrought by the "resurrection" was fundamental; it freed man from the straits of 'fate,' from the dominion of 'rulers.'"

(31) Cf. J. Evola, *Phenomenology dell'Individuo absolute*. Mouth, Turin, 1930, pp. 236-337; Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome, 1974, pp. 211-292 (ed.).

(32) The reference is most likely to the three-part essay that Evola later published under the title *The Problem of East and West and the Theory of Knowledge According to the Otters*, in *Ultra* of May, July and September 1925 (Ed.).

it must not precede self-affirmation, but identify with it. That is, persuasion must be as the *prius*, so rather than being conditioned by the whole process, it is presupposed by it as a condition of its own possibility (33). As noted above, *perfect possessio* is not so much a privileged stage, but rather a way, a form of experiencing any stage and yet the whole process. It could be said that it is, *lun go* the way to fulfillment, eternally present *formaliter*, if even *mate rial iter* falls properly at the point where the internal consistence has elevated itself to that potency, for which the judgment of existence remains resolved without residue in the judgment of value, that is, in which the verb, immediately as such, *is* flesh. Yet even this distinction, legitimate on one level, conceals a residue of abstraction. For it prescind from the actual character of persuasion, whereby this is neither the antecedent A nor a consequent B, but *V interval*, the dazzling according to which the I, in giving birth to B, reaffirms itself as the negation of A, as *having itself, possessing itself* against a *being of* its own. When the focus of the self is centered in this interval that unity or simplicity, which contains in absolute synthesis the power of the whole development, from the most elementary forms of **t h e** realm of being to the most glorious forms of magical realization, that value on which, according to **t h e** expounded argument of final causes, everything gravitates, shines forth. "In the in weary, endless wheel of *Brahman* wanders, trepidatious, the individual because, and until, he feels the lord of the wheel (*chakravarti*) as other than himself: but at the point of his recognizing himself in that self which eternally turns the wheel, he immediately realizes the peace of immortality" (34).

(33) If, therefore, one understands in potency a means of the ego to give itself that certainty it lacks, one fully agrees with Weininger in saying that its meaning is escape, virtual slavery, fear, refuge from an inner decadence. But by this route no one will ever succeed nem less than a grain of real power.

(34) *Shvetāshvatara Upanishad*, I, 6.

VI. Contemporary needs toward magical idealism

A need that has surfaced repeatedly in these pages is to show how the conception of magical idealism goes on according to logical continuity and integrating the most advanced positions that modern Western speculation has conquered. Such a need is now to be given specific, direct satisfaction by considering a group of thinkers among the most significant in contemporary culture, noting the underlying pro motive that informs their conceptions and finally showing how, when that motive was given free efficiency, within their own systems

- and without in any way violating its existing parts, but rather bringing them to a greater organic perfection - we succeed in those statements, which have been sketched in what precedes.

However, one must first fully understand the meaning of this *deductions* *historical* of idealism magic. È that if one conceive the history as existing in itself, as imposing therefore the brute fatality of a group of *given* elements by which, in one way or another, the present moment would come to be conditioned, a demonstration of the historical necessity of magical idealism in truth could only count as a true refutation of magical idealism itself, since the fundamental principle of this doctrine is absolute, unconditional self-determination. Which cannot therefore take place if against the self stands something that is simply given to it, something that stands there without participation of its will. Things are quite otherwise, however, when we hold fast to the principle *de l'ideality* of time and, with it, of history. If time is not a thing in itself but - as Kant taught it - a category, if it is simply a way in which the self orders the matter of representation which therefore, in itself, is neither temporal nor intemporal, does not exist in a before nor an after - then the phantom of a fatal determination by the past vanishes into nothingness: for in that case it remains true, on the other hand, that insofar as the past exists only within the act-which in itself, in this respect, is to be understood as a temporal goal-by which I make my varying affirmation appear temporally, not the past conditions or determines the present, but the present conditions or determines the past. The past remains simply a note by which I identify a part of my present experience, since a pas

salò *in itself*, v.d. a past that falls outside, that is not the object, of my actual experience is gnoseologically an absurdity and a non-being. From which it follows that history is nothing but a way in which the self projects onto the canvas of time, I would say almost as in a mythical figuration, what he finds himself wanting internally and intemporally. Creator of history, in the present historical moment the individual thus experiences only the point-limit of his own affirmation. The theory of the ideality of time thus makes history a plastic and in itself indifferent faculty of freedom-no longer a tyrannical fate that violates the individual, but rather a docile creature that he dominates and that unfailingly mirrors and confirms to him *a posteriori* what he *a priori* and metahistorically goes on to affirm: indeed, properly, it should be said that history is none other than the very faculty of freedom to reflect and prove *a posteriori*, along the category of time, its determination which occurred *a priori* at an intemporal point e meta-historical. The "deduction historical" è always something that comes later, an ἐκτείνωσις, and its necessity is but the phenomenon of freedom that determines it unconditionally.

That said, the historical necessity of magical idealism can be shown without such an assumption implying contradiction. It arises as the *synthesis* of a dialecticism, in which *the thesis* is the rationalism of Romantic philosophy which, exhausting itself in a conceptual world abstracted from reality and individuality, generated *antitheses* of materialism and positivism (1). By the consummation of theses in antithesis the empty ideality was filled with a concrete content whereby, at the end of the Hegelian left (Stirner, Nietzsche), it gave birth to the affirmation of the real individual in the value of the unconditioned. Let this principle of synthesis be developed, then one is led to the concept of an individual affirmation such that in the very plane of the real world presented antithetically by the positive sciences it establishes that sufficiency to that mediation, of which in the abstract world of the rational only the lifeless image had yet been known. As the rationalistic *thesis* culminated in an idealization of the real, so of the *synthesis* of magical idealism is postulated a realization of the ideal (which is then the true derealization of the real), that is, a power of the individual as real as was the being and determination of nature studied by the antithetical moment of science.

(1) 11 passage of the Hegelian "Logos," whereby this acquires its concreteness, is not that in the nature, internal to the pure sphere of logic, the *Encyclopedia of sciences philosophic*, but rather that of the entire Hegelianism, through the "left Hegelian." in the sciences of nature, with the organs own at which e falling out of pure conceptual apriorism went to a determined awareness of concrete reality.

1. Charles Michelstaedter

Those in whom with dazzling splendor and in intense reality of life the demand of the real individual toward absolute value, toward *persuasion*, was affirmed in the modern age: Those who in the clearest way by breaking all the compromises with which Fio to himself deficient masks his *à0tog ptog* has been able to bring life to its end, forcing it to that of which man more than anything else in the world is *terrified*: to stand before itself, to recognize itself, to measure itself at last against that point which, alone, is the point of *value*, of ether - is Carlo Michelstaedter.

Earlier we have already had occasion to mention certain positionalities, which, however, in Michelstaedter are found affirmed with such force, and almost such tragicness, that his work by far transcends the frameworks of abstract discursive exposition. The fundamental point on which that work centers is the requirement of "persuasion," that is, of the absolute sufficiency to itself of the self, understood as the *real* principle of the individual. Now the concept of persuasion is by Michelstaedter essentially identified as the *negation of correlations*: there where Fio not in himself, but in an "other" places the principle of his own consistence, there where his life is conditioned to him by things c by relations, there where there is any element of dependence and need - there, there is no persuasion, but deficiency, death of value. Value, is only that which exists for itself, which does not demand from anything the principle of its own life and power - *V autarchy*. Thus not only the totality of life made up of needs, affections, social conventions, intellectual trappings, etc., but also the bodily organism itself and the very system of nature (which is understood as generated, in its infinitely recurring spatio-temporal development, by the interminable gravitation with which deficiency pursues being which, however, insofar as it seeks it outside itself, it will never succeed in possessing) (2) is taken up in the sphere of non-value.

The self that persuades itself to be insofar as it *continues*, that is, insofar as it keeps itself out of the fullness of a present possession and defers its persuasion to a following moment, on which it thus becomes dependent; Fio flees to himself in every present, which one does not *have* but seeks and *desires*, and which, however, in no future can ever be had, since the future is the very symbol of his deprivation, the shadow that runs along with the one who flees according to a distance from the body of his reality that is kept at every point immu tate, such is for Michelstaedter the meaning of everyday life but, in one, the non-value, that which is not to be. Against such a situation, the voice of persuasion is: to consist, to resist with all one's life at every point the deficiency, not to yield to life-which itself lacks, cer-

(2) C. Michelstaedter, *Persuasion and Rhetoric*, cit. p. 5.

cando out or into the future - not to ask, but to clench in one's fist the es sere: *not to go, but to stay* (3). While the deficiency "accelerates time always anxious about the future and mutates an empty present with the next, the stability of the individual pre-occupies infinite time in actuality and arrests time. His steadiness is a vertiginous way for others who are in the current. His every moment is a century of the life of others-until he makes a flame of himself and comes to consist in the last present (4)." To individuate such a point, it is very important to understand the nature of the correlation that is contained in the premises: given that the world is understood as generalo from the direction of deficiency, of which it is almost the concrete embodiment (and in this the idealistic instance remains satisfied, indeed enhanced in a signifier, that the genesis of the real here, as in Buddhism, is connected to a moment of value, to a direction of the will) is an illusion pen sare that the point of persuasion can be realized for an abstract inner, subjective consistere in a value that, as in the Stoic, would have in contrast a being (nature) such that, though it has no value, it is. He who asks for persuasion must instead rise to a mon dial responsibility; the work of persuasion is, essentially, *cosmic*. That is, I must not flee from my deficiency -- that is, from the world -- but take it upon myself, adjust to its burden and redeem it. Indeed, the Michelstaedter says, "You cannot say you are persuaded as long as some thing still is, which is not persuaded," and he mentions persuasion as aU'"extreme consciousness of one who is one with things, has in himself all things: cv OVVE/ÉI; (5)." The concrete point of persuasion would thus have the sense of *cosmic consummation*.

It may serve, to illuminate Michelstaedter's central problem, to reconnect the concept of insufficiency to the Aristotelian concept of *imperfect act*. At the imperfect or impure is that of the powers that do not come of themselves (KÓC0' orinò) to*actuality, but to this are in need of the concurrence of something else. Such, for example, is the high of sensible perception, in it the power of perception not being sufficient to itself, not producing from itself the perceptions, but to this needing the correlation to the object. Now the fundamental point, to which Michelstaedter's position is connected, is this: that the act imperfect does not resolves the deprivation of the self which apparent lies, it actually reconfirms it. The ego for example is thirsty: as long as he drinks, he will continue to be thirsty, for he by drinking will confirm the point of the one who is not sufficient to his own life, but who in order to live needs "something else," which is not *ma va*: the water and the rest are but symbols of his deficiency (on this attention must be fixed: *one does not desire because there is a deprivation de ir esse re, but there is a deprivation of being because one desires* - and, secondly: *it is not that there is a desire for example*

(3) C. Michelstaedter, *The Dialogue of the Saltile*, Genoa, 1912, pp. 57-58.

(4) *Ib.* p. 58, and C. Michelstaedter, *Persuasion and Rhetoric*, cit. p. 56.

(5) C. Michelstaedter, *Persuasion and Rhetoric*. cit. p. 91.

thirst, *because there are certain things* e.g. water, *but the desired things, as well as the privation of the Weave that drives toward them, are created at a birth from desire to a relative, which therefore is the prius that creates the correlation as well as its two terms* v.d. deprivation and relative object, thirst and water), and insofar as it feeds on it and *asks for* life from it, Fio feeds only on its own deprivation and abides in it, fleeing from that *pure* or perfect anus, that eternal water, of which Christ speaks (6), whereby every thirst, as well as every other deprivation, will be forever vanquished. This longing, this dark conatus that brings Fio outward - toward I "other" - is what generates the system of finite and contingent reality. The persuasion, which goes to burn at the point of the asso lute consistence, of the pure being-in-itself such a conatus therefore also has the sense of a consummation of the world.

Now it is on the meaning of such consummation that we need to understand. Here various consequences arise, which Michelstaedter has not fully carried out. Indeed, all to say that I must not escape my deficiency means, among other things, to say that I *must* recognize myself as the creative function of the world: the justification of idealism (i.e., of the system that says the world is posited by the self) according to a moral imperative follows. But the world, according to the premise, is recognized as a negation of value. From the general imperative to *redi mere* the world, to assume the person of deficiency, then proceeds, again as a moral postulate, i.e., not as a theoretical *ascertainment*, but as the object of a morally imperative affirmation--of a practicality--a second point, namely, that the negation of value itself *must* be recognized in a certain way as a value. This point is important. For if I understand the desire that spawned the world as a *given* brute, as an irrational absolute, it is evident that persuasion, being conceived as a negation of it, goes to *depend on* it, so it is not in itself unconditionally sufficient but instead owes its life to an "other," which allows it in becoming negated to assert itself. In such a case, v.d. in the case that craving itself is not to be taken up in an order included in the affirmation of value but remains absolutely a *given*, persuasion would thus not be persuasion at all--the initial mystery would inexorably damage its perfection into an illusion. Therefore as a moral postulate it must be admitted that the antithesis itself participates in value in a certain way. But in what way? This question leads to the vivification of the concept of persuasion into a dynamic principle. For it is clear that if persuasion appeals not to a pure, unrelated sufficiency - that is, to a *state* - but to sufficiency as the negation of an insufficiency - that is, to an *act*, to a *relation* - the antithesis certainly has value and is *spie gated*: that is, Fio *must* at first posit deprivation, non-value,

(6) *John*, IV, 14-15 "Whoever drinks of this water will still thirst, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst for ever; rather the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of eternal life."

albeit under the condition that it is posited only so that it should be denied, for this act of denial, and this alone, brings out the value of persuasion. Senonché, what does it mean to deny the antithesis - which here is as valid as saying: nature? Remember that for Michelstaedter, nature is non-value insofar as it is a symbol, an embodiment of the ego's flight from current self-possession, insofar as it is correlative to an imperfect or impure act. It is therefore not quistion to annul this or that determination, for with that one would strike only the effect, not the transcendental root of non-value; nem less than to nullify in general all action, since t h e antithesis is not action as in general action, but action as escape from self, in when "going," and it is not necessarily the case that every action is such. Rather, what needs to be resolved is the passive, heteronomous, extraverted mode of action. Now the negation of such a mode is constituted by that of sufficient action, or action according to potency, as was previously expounded. Living according to a perfect possession every act and thus transfigure the whole of the world deter mination until it expresses nothing but the very body of the infinitapote- *stas*, of the absolute individual made of power, such then is the meaning of cosmic con sumation. Just as the concreteness of "rhetoric" is the development of the **w o r l d o f** dependence and necessity, so the concreteness of persuasion is the development of the world of the autarch as cosmic ruler, and the point of naked negation is only the neutral point (*laya*), between the two phases.

The development of Michelstaedter's views in magical idealism thus results according to logical continuity. Instead, Michelstaedter remained somewhat stuck in indeterminate negation, and this, in large part, because he did not fix himself sufficiently on that, that finite and infinite is not a particular object or action, but a particular way of experiencing any particular object or action. The true Lord does not, in general, need to deny (in the sense of nullifying) and, under the pretext of making it absolute, exile life into an unmoving undifferentiated unity or electrocution: the creative act, the act of power-which is not an act of desire or violence, but an act of gift-instead of destroying the perfect possession, witnesses and reconfirms it. It is that Michelstaedter, enraptured according to immediacy in the terrible intensity in which he experienced the need for absolute value, could not give it a concrete body and yet unfold it in the doctrine of power (7): to which one can perhaps relate the tragic end of his mortal existence.

[However, it is Michelstaedter's good to make the statement, that "we do not want to know in relation to what things man has determined himself, but *how he* has determined himself:

(7) It is worth justnoting howin the connection of the concept of power to that of autarky (cf. supra, p. 63 e ff.), idealism magicovercomes the objection made to it, that it in power goes to create a condition for persuasion and yet a new retoric. Even inside the process the persuasion remains, in delta doctrine, always the first ideal of power and the condition of its possibility, just as meaning remains the first ideal of expression, in which it nevertheless acquires body and concreteness.

what the relationship was" (*Unpublished Writings*. Excerpt from No. 5, 1922, of *La Ronda*, p. 17; cf. *Persuasion and Rhetoric*, p. 32): i.e.: beyond the act, the/b/vzw or the *value* according to which it is experienced by the individual. In truth, the pure logical mind relation is to some extent *indeterminate*, and value is a higher dimension in which it is identified. A *allo merit* of Michelstaedter is precisely to have reaffirmed the consideration according to value in the metaphysical order: the "retoric" and the "way to persuasion," in fact, are discernible not from a merely logical point of view (for the very "going" of the deficiency as "identical repetition of an identical situation" has itself immobility, permanence for its deepest meaning), but from the point of view of value. Now from this point magical idealism finds of extreme importance the fact that Michelstaedter in a certain way recognizes *that there are two ways*: this duplicity is itself a value; since the affirmation of persuasion cannot be valid as an affirmation of a freedom, as an *infinite* affirmation, when in itself it does not have the consciousness that on its power is also contained, *and according to indifference*, the possibility of an affirmation of the same non-value as value: free and infinite being only the Lord of Yes and No (cf. on this: *Theory of Absolute in dividuo*, 1.1, §. 1-5 [pp. 13-95 ed. 1927; pp. 31-76 ed. 1998]). The other justification of the antithesis, mentioned above, evidently presupposes the positive option for "persuasion"].

2. Otto Braun

If in Michelstaedter the moment of the absolute affirmation of value predominates, which, almost folded in on its own inner, stultifying intensity, renounces in a certain way a concrete body, in Otto Braun, on the other hand, the aspect of efficient power, of the transformation of value into absolute force operating within the very bosom of the antithesis of brute reality, comes essentially to the fore. Braun's short life, as it is revealed to us by fragments of a diary and letters, thus rises - at the quarrel between reality and absolute will that already overwhelmed and broke the noble lives of a Rimbaud, a Nietzsche, a Weininger and Michelstaedter himself - to the value of a symbol.

In Braun, it is not question of a philosophy-when by this is meant. an arid and abstract conceptual architecture; also a set of judgments of a depth and lucidity all the more extraordinary when one thinks that they flowed from a beardless child, and the testimonies of an intense and exquisite sensibility pass into the background: what in him instead fundamentally interests and constitutes as a precursor sign of a new epoch, is the grandiose spectacle of the self-creation of a titanic will, of an unwavering faith, of a demiurgic power so that value becomes life, absolute reality. "God," he says (8), "wants to become a body,

(8) O. Braun, *Aus nachgelassenen Schriften eines Fröhvollendeten*, herausgeg. Von J. Vogelstein, Berlin, 1921, p. 182.

And therefore needs man." This man who will realize the God is the future man, the modern Hero. "Be a titan"; gospel of the will - so already sounds the commandment to the 11-year-old Braun.

Almost by a sure instinct already as a child it appeared clear to him what was the right place for real progress in the history of the spirit: whence he vigorously opposed, as against "something criminal and even diabolical," the resurgence of religious sentiment whereby, fleeing from one's task, one goes to confirm one's sloth in the flight into an imagined transcendence or into old and outdated forms. Similarly, he cares little for fanatical mysticism and specular emptiness: "the rest of us nowadays have neither the right nor the time to be mystics: we need people who are committed to life and powerful in action in order to bring something new to fruition, for something new is approaching, I feel it" (p. 31). A fundamental theme of his is the will to be of this earthly world, wholly of this world (p. 39) not already to accept it, but to tame and recreate it. The elaboration of an active, creative, synthetic power whereby the real becomes all transparent with a spiritual value, this he felt on his way; and this way he wanted unwaveringly to follow, arousing, plasmating, hammering all those energies into which his adolescence blossomed, eagerly absorbing all that nature and culture could offer him, and then recasting it in that form, in that unique value, which he had set himself.

"To transform *all* that comes, conforming it to *my* purpose: in this consists for me the freedom of the will" (p. 148). He thus clearly understands the necessity of accommodating those forces, whereby only the "ought to be" can also *be* and the empty Stoic stiffening can be overcome: he posits himself as a Tesser commandment capable of great passions, however under such self-mastery, that as on a putting his hand on a lever depends their infrenouncing or unleashing. And in this also lies the key to understanding the coexistence, at the rigid discipline of the will, of a vast sense for the life of art and nature. He himself was aware that he was deepening in the intuition of things, for by this he aimed at becoming aware of the elementary degree of that formative power, which was the raw material of the future hero and which already resonated in him when, as a boy, he launched himself into mad nocturnal races through the forests under the tempesta. But this primordial energy Braun felt that he absolutely had to *mediate*: he sensed the inevitable dispersion inherent in the mere accumulation and multiplication of experiences and the richness of matter subsumed in the closed form of individuality: "be sufficient to yourself"-solitude of the One as the condition of genius-and even went so far as to distrust the "passive activity," from the enthusiasm of creation and inspiration that has us, more than we have him, to replace it with the pure form of volition, the entirely unbridled and conscious production. Thus, when the war broke out in

European, in it he knew saw therein a means to discipline himself, to master himself, to become manly and to find in himself the fullness, the power and the beauty for that prodigious existence to which he aspired: whence in the same order

naments of service he knew how to evaluate the symbol of that "discipline of the spirit, intimately inflamed with passion, but outwardly rigid and tem meadow like steel, containing in magnificent measure the boundlessness of the infinite" (p. 150). After all, the very adherence to the idea of homeland was understood by him as provisional, as a mere stepping-stone in order to later master a larger reality: "not until the roots have branched deep into the mother clods and absorbed with loving greed the juice of the homeland, can the foliage without harm expand farther." It is certain, however, that sometimes his youth and ardor caused the means to transmute into ends for him. In any case, the ordeal was fatal: a grenade broke on the fields of France his life not yet twenty years old.

Therefore it is perhaps to be considered that for that "sign of a value" for that

"symbol" that Braun carlylianly dreamed of being, very little he would have been able to add to what he had already experienced and what can be known through his notes and letters; for, as mentioned above, the profound, essential value of Braun's figure results only from a *formal* point of view: as pure self-consciousness of an absolute power and will. When, on the other hand, one went to see what immedia tely this power and will aimed at in Braun's consciousness, one finds oneself in somewhat dubious positions. It is certain that the goal he **cherished**, and to which he set out to devote a vast body of work, was the state: to the religious, the poet and the sage he contrasted the hero, and hero for him, nowadays, meant statesman - albeit warning that as statesman he radically conceived of something other than what the mind is currently led to by this term (p. 162). In any case, what was the type of state in which his hero's substance was to be enacted does not seem very clear: on the one hand Braun refers to a partico lare meaning of socialism, on the other to Greek tyranny, the Napoleonic and Nietzschean type of domi nator without making explicit how these two moments could be reconciled. Whichever way, the way is false. In truth, one brings the will to will itself entirely, to possess itself in its deepest transcendental essence, then the illusion of domination over other beings, as realized in the social sphere, appears. Before one can truly dominate others, one must be able to dominate oneself, and that is to possess one's entire body-this six-foot-tall body in which, at Buddha's saying,

"is contained the **world**, **the** origin of the world, the consummation of the world.

and the way that leads to the consummation of the world": the Nietzschean dominator, whom a vile brain congestion or the brute violence of a bullet or blade can throw into non-being, is but the irony of the dominator. Only from the height of the body entirely resolved in freedom, of the *Mahàyàna's sambhogakàya*. is it possible to dominate and live not purely the beings of a land, but the infinite beings as members of the one cohypus of the self, as the expression and realization of its power and selfhood.

Another and greater defect, accentuated in Braun in his later years, is the *transcendence of value*. He sometimes felt the titanic will in man subordinated to a higher dutifulness, he humbled the self in the subsumption to a task, to a mission that seemed to proceed to him almost from a demon, from a higher power: "if I do not adapt myself to the will of the age, the epoch will have to adapt itself well to my will and I therefore become what I am! *And this is not the decree of a titanic will*, it is rather a devout and humble obedience to that high demon, etc." (p. 162). "We are destined to *serve the deity*" (p. 182). Which, indeed, would lead sur a very dangerous slope. Yet it is well Braun who had wondered "whether the gods are but symbols of our will and represent a sudden irruption of vital energy, arrived at the supreme degree, into the corporeal world so that the idea in a certain guise forms the organism" (pp. 95-96), and "whether the titans had won, whether Christ was but one of them" (p. 103).

It is that Braun, absorbed in the principle of power-in-act, in a certain way shifted the focus of the self *after* the point of original centrality: and yet in the unconditionality of this he could not entirely recognize himself (don de the sense of duty)-just as on the other hand Michelstaedter, in his passion for the absolute, central consist, in a certain way alienated the power of sufficient action. Let the two positions be understood as complementary to each other, let the gesture of power and the point of persuasion and autarky be united in an inseparable unity, then we have a way of understanding the principle of that synthesis which, along the path that magical idealism has taken over from initiatory wisdom, will be able to bring about a new, inaudita epoch in the history of the spirit.

3. *John Gentile*

Modern idealism can be defined thus: a profound need toward absolute self-realization, which, however, the self does not assume immediately in its interiority, but simply *knows*, learning it from the outside in the phenomenon it determines in the abstractly rational order. In Giovanni Gentile this situation appears particularly starkly: in him the effort to embrace and dominate the whole of the world in an immanent principle reaches its perfection; but, on the other hand, this principle remains a mere ideal entity, it is the already criticized "I transcendental" and yet of that profound individual power that lived for example in Michelstaedter it expresses only the dull reflection. If Gentile could truly call the "I" the "pure act" of his rationalism, then he would find himself appearing not as the university professor, whose "actua-

(9) The reform of 16 July 1923, when Dear was been minister of Public Education during the period 1922-1924 (Ed.).

lity" has as its limitation the reform of school curricula (9), but as that cosmic centrality which esoterica points to, for example, in the types of the *rishi*, *yoghin*, Christ and Buddha. This is the whole difference between 1 "current idea lism" and magical idealism. Now since the pure rational in itself can never have its own justification, it can be shown how the Gentile system is based sur a brute fact, which, however, as such, contradicts its principle: whence a crisis, to which no solution can be given, unless one passes from the first idealism to the second.

11 Gentile's fundamental principle is taken up by Hegel and is espri me by saying that a pure immediate, a pure being is gnoseologically an absurdity, that the condition of all being is an *act* that posits it for the self. From which follows the priority of the category of the act over any content of experience. Such an act is of course that of the gnoseolo gic subject, the impersonal thinking self. Now the thinker implies a thought. About the concept of thought, however, Gentile falls into a compromise: he distinguishes a "logic of the thinker" with its own laws (relating to "nature") from the "dialectic of the thinker," that is, from the concrete and actual process of thinking and knowing. But if nothing is, except as *mediated*, the "pen sate" is nothing outside a *logic* of the thought that mediates it, which in turn is inconceivable outside the concrete process of thinking, i.e., the actuality of the thinker himself. Thus there is no way to really distinguish a logic of the thought (or "abstract logos"), governed by laws of its own, from the pro cess of the thinking (or "concrete logos"): those laws can only appear as particular formations of the concreteness of the thinking. It is not worth saying that the abstract logos is but the abstract understanding or thought of the concrete logos (I), for here the difficulty would arise again in the quistion of how such an abstract thought is possible given that it, unthought, evaporates into nothingness; thought, it ceases to be abstract, and becomes a species of the kind of the concrete logos itself. The concept of

"thought" and "fact" thus turns out to be affected by the same contradiction as the Kantian noumenon and is resolved in the concept of the in gene ral determination of the thinker. One then has this situation: on the one hand, the thinker o

"pure act" remains the single category, capable of taking into itself every phenomena; on the other hand, we must try to deduce from it a principle of deter mination, so that it actually accounts for the multiplicity and diver sity of the phenomena themselves, which it goes on to absorb. To this end Gentile makes himself to consider the "dialectic of concrete logos." To think," he says, "as a self-position, is to distinguish oneself, that is, to extinguish in an object or non-I the abstract, punctual identity of the I (v.d. to determine oneself) and, in then recognizing oneself in this determination or object, to mediate oneself, to be as it.

(10) G. Gentile, *System of logic as a theory of knowing*, Bari, 1923, voi. II, p. 121.

As self-science. But recognition by restoring immediate, punctual identity results in a vibratory process to the infinite.

The internal distancing relative to self-synthesis, to the posing of the "I" as such, would thus explain the genesis of determination: but the bad thing is that it does not explain itself. Indeed, the Gentile gives no foundation for this, because the "I," in general, distances an "other" from itself, and then also because in this

"other" is not mirrored exactly as, for example, according to Athanasius' divine trinity (11). In other words, of becoming in Gentile one finds a mere *exposition*, not a *transcendental deduction*, the *sense of* it does not result in any way; it remains a being of fact, not a being of law, and the necessity that is connected to it apodictically cannot prove *nir* then other than from an empirical suggestion. *That is to say, it turns out that this side of the Logic lies a problem of value*, which, however, by Gentile is neglected at all. Since the concept of the Aristotelian God who enjoys himself in the eternal identity of his act or that of the unmanifested *shakti* of the Tantras offer no *a priori* inconceivability, it is to be asked why the spirit should become (or *be* becoming). If it is answered that a spirit that does not objectify itself and yet does not become would not be self-consciousness, spirit, but nature, it is retorted that even when such an answer would be something more than a petition of principle, in reality nature would instead be a spirit that as such, being eternally compelled to objectify itself and become, in nothing would be unlike the plant that, as such, can only vegetate. Now every "nature" presupposes, in its essential determinacy, a law onde is that determinate nature and not another, but every law a lawgiver which, as such, cannot be, it, subject to a law. It is that for Gentile, fixed on the plane of the specular abstract, the dimension of the legislator can have no meaning: Believing that problems remain solved by a pure transporting them from the "metaphysics of **b e i n g**" to that of "knowing," believing that a certain determination of experience must succeed more comprehensible when at the place of substance one calls it "thought," he then defers to becoming as to an inescapable nature of thinking, not realizing that by so doing he raises a thousand question marks to substitute for them a thousand times greater one. Will it be noticed that the objection presupposes the "abstract" point of view which, by making the act an object, forecloses the way of understanding it? Then it will be retorted that such an instance, very dear to Gentile, is worthless, because it gratuitously demands that we assume as an explanatory principle what is made by the opponent matter of problem; secondly, that in the intoxicated coalescence of the ego to its act problems are not only not solved,

(11) Father and doctor of the Church, Athanasius of Alexandria (295c.-373), during the first council ecumenical of history, that of Nicea convened by the emperor Constantine in 325, had a part essential in the definition of full divinity of Christ in the consubstantial rapport between Father and Son (Ed.).

but one does not even reach as far as them, and that by swallowing the obscurila one is under the illusion of having dissolved it. Since "present consciousness" is understood as the form that takes up all phenomena, 1 adhering absolutely to it means, as we shall say, adhering to the same world, allowing oneself to live by it and thus going to end up in a kind of passive mysticism which then, in con creto, is identified with an absolute, stupefied phenomenism. On the other hand, according to his own principles, Gentile could well assume the stated objection precisely because it is "abstract" (and an objection, insofar as it does not identify with his doctrine, for 1* actuali ista will always and *a priori* be "abstract") in order to counter to it, taken as an antithesis, create itself "concretely" in a new synthesis. But precisely this is the critical point: for when the annalist really did this, he would be forced to transcend the plane of the rational and assert the *arbitrary dc\V* principle.

Which can be clarified as follows. What, for those who own themselves in the naked

creative center of the Ego, appears as a gesture of unconditional freedom, by those who instead hold to the peripheral plane of the discursive it is experienced as a logical necessity, as the inescapable imperativeness of a *Sollen* [duty], as the *vis a tergo* of a duty and a law: the arbitrary affirmation, insofar as it is experienced as it were from the outside, passively, appears as truth or logical stringency, as apodicticity. In accordance with this, Gentile understands the formula I = not-I, in which he summarizes the process of concrete logos, as the "ultimate and unconditional condition of all thought" (p. 68) without realizing that a condition can never be unconditional and either the I is really *normative sui*. and then any law can only be contingent and an "unconditionally imperative character of the law of concrete logos" (p. 78) becomes an empty sound (12); or else there is a limit, or law indifferent to the power of the ego, only by virtue of which it is such (as *VAusschluss* [opposition] of Fichte's philosophy) and finally postulated by the *impotence* of being or thinking itself otherwise, if even not properly affirmable in gnoseological premises; and then one might as well confess oneself a creature and turn to religion-that one idol is no better than another. It is not worth objecting, with Rickert (13), that the negation of the imperativeness of the law would be a special case of this in the sense that it is in so far wanting as it is recognized as worthy of choice over the opposite alternative of adherence to the law (p. 79), since this presupposes accorded what is in question, v.d. that no *real* negation can be given, that it is not possible to reaffirm itself beyond the factual *datum*

(12) It is clear that with the proposition, "all thinking is the utterance of truth, which would have no value if it were not to be preferred and if it did not therefore present itself as unconditionally imperative with respect to its opposite" (loc. cit, p. 300), it is reconstructed as *alV Euthyphro* platonic e a Thomas Aquinas - v.d. to the assertion that the things do not have value because they are wanted, but are wanted because they are given a value in themselves, existing in them independently of the self.

(13) H. Rickert. *Der Gegenstand der Erkenntnis*, Tübingen und Leipzig, 1904, p. 130.

of the law *in general* of *Sollen* -, that the way of living the act according to *Sollen* represents an extreme instance. Difficulty, this, which reappears on another side, namely at the problem, of how in general possibility is the same philosophy deiract. For, of the two one: either the ego is wholly interpenetrated with its activity, and then it cannot embrace it with a synthetic gaze and discover its *general* law but rather, lost in it, can only apprehend its unpredictable, incoercible contingency of the moment; that is to say, the self, almost extolling itself from itself, can know said law, but then the contingency of it is also conceded, for with this it becomes a "thought," a distinct and thus remains inwardly surpassed in the principle that makes such a distinction possible - surpassing this, mind you, which, by hypothesis, has nothing to do with the surpassings internal to that law and contemplated by it. Gentile has seen the difficulty and, having discarded the second option, seeks to make himself sufficient for the other, saying that if he acknowledges that he has given with his doctrine not the thinking person per se, but a *concept* of the thinking person, and that is, not the thinking person but *a* thought, he also concedes the relativity and l'abstractness" of such a "concept of the self-concept" (and that is, of his entire philosophy) and is ready to abandon it to the untamable becoming of dialecticism (p. 148), the its itself *Logic* understanding as a mere stage, and as abstract as all the others (pp. 320-322). But the parade is false: relativity, remission to the becoming of the spirit is precisely the content precipitous to the Gentile concept of the self-concept, to that "thought" in which the Gentile - *here, now* - conceives and makes die the "pen sante," whereby this relativity is the hypocrisy of exclusivity and dogmatism, this pretended going out of oneself, this sacrifice accomplishes nothing more than a standing still, in the closed circle of the contingency of the moment, avenge out of oneself one's own reason.

If the solution is to be *real*, if the vicious circle is to be broken, then it is necessary that the transition is not from one concept to another, from a "thought" to a other, *but rather that deir entire dimension of the logical-discursive consciousness into the higher or deeper one of the absolute freedom*; then it is necessary to overcome the creaturely concept of the identity of freedom of law, the *vis a tergo* of the *Sollen*, and to recognize oneself in that unconditional principle with respect to which the act itself is *a* fact and which indeed stands at the principle of Gentile philosophy at a remove in the same relation that the Gnostics intended between the spiritual principle and the demiurgic principle.

And this is a supremely significant situation: from the rational itself arises the instance of its own surpassing: the discursive consciousness itself requires the ego to go beyond it, if it wishes to penetrate to the depths that thought which resolves the world to him in an immanent principle. As Abbagnano (14) acutely notes, that true thought, *pen-*

(14) N. Abbagnano, *Le sorgenti irrazionali dal pensiero*, Naples. 1923. p. 89.

sant, can never become an object of itself, that it can never be *thought*, what else does it mean, except that it falls outside the plane of the rational? Thus the effort to contract into thought all reality and all life has been turned upside down in a vacuum (15): the very act of celebrating the ultimate power of thought implies that we transcend it into a non-rational. However, a new question arises here: what is the *meaning of* this non-rational? That is, in what relation is the self to this non-rational? Such a point is important because it defines the position of magical idealism with respect to irrationalism. When the non-rational (to which therefore must be referred the foundation of rational law, of the logical *Sollen*: any rationality would be the effect of a profound non-rational, but arbitrary assertion) for the ego is like a blind and incoercible power, which he in no way can direct and dominate and of which he feels like a scattered accident in an indefinite unpredictable becoming, it is indeed to be held that the passage beyond the rational is not yet entirely accomplished, that the ego still looks at the *fiXoyov* from the outside, that he does not penetrate and *possess* himself at the center of the original and unconditional principle of creation. The irrationalism that proceeds from such a situation is that of Schopenhauer, Bergson, Le Roy (16), Abbagnano, etc., and it is confused with a kind of vivified empiricism: it marks the moment of transit, in which the ego has already detached itself from the hallucination about the pure logical and turned to the profound potency whence the logical arises, but on the other hand it has not yet sunk into this potency, whence it experiences it only passively. On the other hand, for those who have absolutely possessed **themselves in** it, the *àXoyov* indicates only the unduality of their will, autarky. Therefore, beyond the abstract intellectual, between the one who lives his life as lord and ruler and the one who feels therein only as a demonic force of a nature that to itself is passive and that has outside itself its reason (certainly, not in the rationalistic sense of the word, but in the Greek one, used of Michelstaedter) - short: of a spontaneity - there is still a gulf (17). It is clear that when the

(15) /W., p.90.

(16) The French philosopher Edouard Le Roy (1870-1954) developed Bergson's theses on the "momentum vitality" and saw the reality as momentum and a evolving resolving the matter in the present. He too, at equal of Poincaré, considered the thought scientific as incapable of grasping true reality (Ed.).

(17) Abbagnano made to magical idealism this objection, that the same situation or requirement of autarky can at last end be considered as nothing more than a moment particular in the infinite, incoercible becoming of the life: a that one can all retort, with the same right, that the experimenting life as infinite, incoercible becoming can instead be regarded as the object of a particular volition of the autark -- that, for that matter, a contingency that was forced to be eternally and only contingency, would not then be a true contingency. As can be seen, one is brought to the question of the *plane* or dimension, which to the individual goes to stand as the ultimate reason. Once red glasses are welded to one's eyes, one naturally has a way of seeing as red what might not even be red.

sorpassamelo of the rational takes place in connection with their impulse to persuasion, which in rationalism had manifested itself as a will to tame in thought all reality, only to the point of life lived according to autarky is referred the principle that can give the logical its justification: and that therefore in magical idealism should be understood the further dimension, in which the positions of Gentile philosophy are integrated.

That being the case, let us go on to fix definitively what is ultimately the inherent *value* of modern idealism from Kant down to Royce, Weber and Gentile. The fundamental principle is that *spontaneity is one thing, freedom is another*; one thing is the activity of which one simply has the principle in oneself (and such is, according to the well-known Aristotelian definition, spontaneity), another fatality of which the self, in addition to having the principle in itself, stands to this in *relation of possession*. In spontaneity, the possible is identical with the real in the sense that the act has the form of an absolute being-bound-to-itself, of an inconvertible compulsion, of a brute happening: in short, in it the principle is *passive* with respect to itself. In freedom, on the other hand, the possible is *not* identical with the real; a point of autarky, of real possibility (not of *δὲν* but of *potestas*) dominates the act as the extreme reason for its being or non-being, its being thus or its being other-minded; whereby the real will be said to be contingent on the possible-and this not because of deprivation, but because of the perfection and possession of the principle of actualization. Relatedly: it is one thing not to have conditions from something else (v.d. not to be *cocrito*, the *negative* freedom proper precisely to spontaneity, to the false *cause sui* spinoziana); it is another to have no conditions at all, to be *positively* free, which implies the absence even of internal determination and the arbitrariness (non-inconvertibility) of the act. *Now in so far as and to that extent a being is an I, it is freedom and not spontaneity.*

Once this is understood, when the idealist, against any contingency of experience-for example, against an ocean-he says he posited, it is clear that he refers not to a freedom but to a spontaneity. In fact, he refers to mere representation, to that elementary absence (*GvyKaTaOeotg*) whereby, in general, we become aware (*to be aware*) of things, an absenteeism which, if it is a *necessary* condition for all reality, as reality, for the self, is far from being even condition *sufficient*. Indeed, in representation there is no subordination of reality to possibility; the self is passive to its own act, not so much affirming things as they affirm themselves in him. Like passion or emotion, the representation is indeed something of his own, which is intimate to him and which he draws from within himself (and up to here comes the legitimacy of the instance of idealism, moreover fulfilled since Leibniz), but it is not *him*, since the "I" cannot be said to give it freely to himself, since he does not stand to the determinations of it in a relation of *unconditional* casualness and possession. Consequently, *in as much as the idealistic reduction of nature to a position of the "I" succeeds, in as much as one reduces the "I" itself to nature,*

that is, insofar as of *queir Ego*, which is freedom, nothing is known or, rather, it is done as if nothing were known, and, with obvious paralogism, the concept of *Ego* is borrowed with that of the principle of spontaneity-which is then in truth that of nature. Whereby the meaning of the idealistic: "Ego posits non-ego" is, in fact:

"Nature poses itself," or more simply, "A world is (*ist by*)."

The key to such a doctrine is thus spinozism. But spinozism, dedogmatized, leads to phenomenalism. And this is demonstrated by the very history of idealism. In Kant if in the transposition of the individual self to the impersonal "*Ich denke*" [I think] and to the "*Bewusstsein in allgemein*" [consciousness in general] there is the first step toward the dissolution of freedom, there still remains, however, a residue of interiority by virtue of the opposition of the limit of the thing-in-itself to the activity of the *a priori* synthesis. The progress of the theory of immanence on this dualism is likewise that of the *détente* of individual affirmation. Fichte's *Ego* does not absorb the non-*Ego* (the Kantian thing-in-itself) than by becoming the abstract *Ich-heit* [egoity] perishing in the world of the preconscious (*yorbewusst*). The Hegelian Idea does not reaffirm the logical principle over that set of concrete determinations that the monochromatic

Schellingian "philosophy of identity" let fall out of itself that provided it admitted in itself the *ETÉpov*, 1st "other," to become dialectical, to say rational and free those contingent determinations of things that being simply *given*, standing to the self in a relation of *violence*, according to justice will have to be said to be only irrational (in the Greek sense of the term). And finally, at the ruin of the "philosophy of nature" and the heterological *Ohnmacht der Natur* [impotence of nature] on the one hand, on the other by the failure of the ideal of *a priori* knowledge in the order of the positive sciences (at the reduction of geometry and mechanics from *a priori* deductive sciences to experimental sciences - whence the presupposition of the Kantian critique collapses) there is the final collapse of the individual into the irrational becoming of phenomena, with which self-consciousness itself is made to coincide, without residue and further mediation. The ego does not become the form that dominates (gnoseologically) the contingency of phenomena lo - Schlegelian "*Chaos ausserhalb des Systems*" [chaos outside the system]-that as the actual consciousness of the Gentile's philosophies, v.d. than as the absolute adherence to the act of spontaneity according to which things become and are affirmed in the "I"-and yet, so as mentioned above, by a kind of passive mysticism that concretely identifies with an absolute, stupefied phenomenalism.

It has already been mentioned in the second essay that beyond the identification of

reality and will (= possibility) there remains the question, whether will is the criterion of reality or whether reality is the criterion of will - that is, whether what takes place is said to be real because it is willed (and yet real only insofar as it can be said to be willed, in the rest remaining non-real as the correlative of a *deprivation of will*), or whether it is said to be willed because it is real v.d. because of the simple, irrational fact of its being there (*Dasein*), of its brute *TÒ ÓTV*. it has been shown that only the second alternative agrees with actualism insofar as it does not rise to a *doctrine of power* or *idealism*

magical. The being it posits as of right does not pose it so than because it finds it as of fact: *miissen* [duty (absolute)] is the truth and foundation of its *sollen* [duty (possible)] (18). Similarly, since a large part of the happenings of experience in general *cannot* be traced back to a principle of conscious deliberation, of predetermination intentional on the part of the real self (and this can be proved at any instant to the idealist, given that he purposely does not wish to cheat himself) (19), from that subjective activity from which things are made to stand one must abstract the characters of finality and conscious predetermination-unless one prefers to pass (as according to the logical consequence that Hartmann has drawn precisely from the premises of transcendental philosophy) to a *philosophy of the unconscious*. Finally, since of an equally vast complex of phenomena no logical etiological construction can be given even a *posteriori* (the pen of prof. Krug is still waiting to be deduced), the logicity proper to this cosmogonic function of the self must be reduced to a *minimum*, to an abstract generality, to a universal emptiness that is equally adequate to the specificity of the infinite distinctions - to which precisely the character of the logic proper to the pure Gentile act responds, which being able to say indifferently of mourning, is as if it were said of nothing, is a sack that can equally well contain everything (20). Empty indeterminacy from the logical point of view - *emptiness*, *materialiter*, irrationality, - *inintentionality*, *actualism*, *passivity*, *pure spontaneity* consumed all in the various "here-nows" - such then are the notes that define the function, in which the doctrine of immanence has believed to recognize its supreme celebration, given that one has the courage to think it through to the end.

In Spinoza that blind spontaneity of what cannot be but what is, of what is passive with respect to its own nature - whereby the self is reduced to a vain and incomprehensible shadow - was God; in Gentile this God is known in its truth and explicitly becomes the nature, the incoherent **folly** of phenomena so that the relevant doctrine is identified, beyond all logical paraphernalia, with that of Bergson. In the immanence as in the other the individual does not *consist* but *yields*, *does* not dominate things but loses itself in them and *dissolves* in a drunken coalescence that lowers it back to a demonic principle. Such is the way of corruption, the self-ironizing of the immanentist instance.

(18) Already Schelling, in his *Second Philosophy (Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie)*, S.W., i. X, p. 152 ff.) had observed that if the Hegelian Idea *passes* into nature, the cause of this is not an internal necessity of it, logically deducible, but only the fact of the actual existence of a nature.

(19) See above, pp. 50-52.

(20) Gentile, *op. cit.*, p. 119, says explicitly, that pure *Tatto* is like the common denominator of every concept or determination. Now from mathematics it is known that in the equations of a common denominator (given that it is not null) one can make abstraction, leaving it the problems as they are.

In conclusion. It has been said that mere representational activity is a necessary but not sufficient condition of the reality of things, *given that they are referred to an I*. I can say that I place things, but insofar as I am spontaneity, *not* insofar as I am an I, namely freedom. Now to say that I, as Ego or sufficient principle, *am* Kriq, cannot recognize myself as the *unconditioned* cause of representations (v.d. of nature), does *not at all mean that these representations are caused by*

"other" (from real or existing things in themselves) *but, simply, that I am insufficient to a part of my activity, which is still spontaneity-that such a part is not yet MORALIZED, that the self, as freedom, suffers a PRIVATION in it*. Hence realism, as has been said, must be rejected *pour une fin de non recevoir*. When then can the principle of idealism, which *Vlo* poses things, be truly affirmed? When the individual has transformed the obscure passion of the world into a body of freedom, v.d. when he has turned the form according to which he experiences representational activity from spontaneity, from coincidence of reality and possibility, to unconditional, arbitrary causality -- to *power*. *In the face of this task, the idealist instead figge: to the real or magical act, to the act that, possessing them, annuls things, he substitutes the discursive act, which recognizes them and rests on them. He calls being its non-being, he calls real what, being deprivation of its power, he should instead, according to justice, call unreal, and so he confirms this deprivation, adulterates it, and incestuously feeds on it. Insufficient to the point of the "I," he abdicates, and melts down on things; and "rationality," "historicity," "concrete freedom," the "transcendental ego," etc., are but so many names for this escape, are but the symbols of his impotence, that values given according to violence to what, in relation to the point of the "I" and morality (in the Weiningerian and Michelstaedterian sense of the term) is non-value - death and obscurity: nature.*

4. Octavius Hamelin (21)

Gentile's system discursively exposes the generic function for which the world would be taken up in the immanent rational principle; on the other hand, it has been seen how his conception, thought through, goes on to postulate the "I" as a metatheoretical principle of absolute, arbitrary freedom. It has been noted again that that function (the "pure act") in Gentile remains something empty of itself indistinct, a night, in comparison with which what

(21) Octave Hamelin (1856-1907), a leading exponent of idealism in France, was a student of Charles Renouvier. From 1884 he taught philosophy at the University of Bordeaux and from 1905 ancient philosophy at the Sorbonne and École Normale Supérieure in Paris. He died by drowning in an attempt to save a man who had fallen overboard. His capital work is: *Essai sur les éléments principatix de la représentation* (1907) (Ed.).

Hegel saw in Schelling's Absolute-"in which all cows are black"-becomes meridian light: c this is not because it abolishes distinction, but because it is uniform and indifferent distinction, that is, equally adequate to the specificity of the infinite distinctions it takes up, as in a sack. Thus arises the task of integrating actual idealism firstly by adapting it according to an articulated body of values and meanings to the concrete distinctions of experience, and secondly by reaffirming in it the principle of absolute freedom. Which leads to the consideration of the philosophy of one of the most powerful thinkers of the present age, though admittedly little known in Italy, of Octavius Hamelin who, like Braun and Michelstaedter, a tragic fate still broke in the fullness of his life.

The fundamental principle of Hamelin is *relation*: there is nothing intelligible, except *in relation* to something, that is distinct from it. To take, is to distinguish. Senonché the relation is understood in a way that is at all immanent and activist, that is, not as if distincts are already given in themselves that enable thought to think, but on the sense that the distinction-and thus the distinct-is generated by the very energy of thinking or *intelligere*. And the same effort to understand a given element that gives rise against it to a distinct-which prior to this act did not exist-that delimits it and that by placing itself at the same time in relation to it, makes it intelligible. Thus the point of understanding is the synthesis or *relation* of two distincts, a synthesis which, in turn, by a need for further understanding, may call or counterpose a new distinct, with which it integrates and illuminates itself in a higher synthesis, and so on. The originality of such a principle and its difference from that of the Hegelian dialectic (which is "dialectic of contradictors" not of "contraries") lies in the character of *conciseness*, of positive constructiveness of the process it defines: that is, the antithesis does not deny or exclude the thesis, but rather composes and adds to it, integrates it; and this, because of this: That the supreme being is not understood by Hamelin platonically and Hegelianally as the universal, which is realized by the successive negation of the particular (for the particular, in its determination, with respect to such a universal is a negation: *omnis determinatio negatio est*), but, Aristotelianly, as the individual, which is realized by the *development* of an elementary and indeterminate being according to ever increasing and original degrees of perfection, determination and actuality (22). By virtue of the Hamelinian principle of the distinct. the universal

(22) The concept fundamental of the Hamelin, which he has resumed from Aristotle, to which here, as seen, he adheres entirely, is that the finite and the determinate is not something *contradictory* so as, with the Spinoza, the Hegel had asserted, but something of *incomplete*: it does not itself deny in itself, but already possesses being to some degree. Thus the transition from it to the absolute is not that from non-being to being, but that from an incomplete degree of being to its perfection - so that the process is not one of negation, but of composition, of integration, of intensification, that is, it is something fundamentally *positive* and *progressive*, - a series not of nega-

which for the Platonizing rationalists (and all rationalism, of necessity, can only be Platonism) was the point of arrival, is made the point of departure, the poorest degree of reality which, by means of a synthetical development-from the simplest to the most complex, from the least to the most-tends to be posited in the individual as in its perfection. Thus, starting from such a principle, Hamelin goes on to construct a kind of ideal history of the world that equals in ingenuity the daring cosmogonies of Romantic philosophy while at no point losing contact with concrete experience and the results of the positive sciences, indeed animating and individualizing them. From the exigence of being to understand itself ever more deeply through the principle of relation, springs the genetic reason for the various elements of representation or categories. Thus the indeterminate relation of being and non-being develops in number and time, this in space and movement, from which it passes to quality and the process of alteration; the process of alteration finally continues and integrates itself in specification, causality, and finality to culminate in the supreme synthesis of freedom, self-conscious and lady-like personality. Only in the personality, understood as the center of absolute freedom, as an unconditionally born *act*, is being able to wield itself, to possess itself: the *for-self*. the absolute reflexion of the person that in a certain way tears itself away from being and against necessity, which is the law of being itself, affirms freedom, such is, for Hamelin, the point at which the universal process is logically consummated.

Here it should be immediately noted, to prevent a justified objection, that the Ha-

melin explicitly rejects the idea of a cosmic thought, of an impersonal "I think," unfolding automatically according to laws that, in their brute essence, would be as unintelligible as matter itself (p. 452). The

"relation" is for him immanent to the conscious and free center and need not be substantiated in an entity or law of its own: even the categories logically anterior to the personality must be considered as consciousness, in more or less distinct degrees. Therefore, in contrast to Hegel, the priority of freedom over the various constructed categories is reaffirmed: these certainly constitute the body of the spirit, but a body that is manageable and agile, a body with which the self interpenetrates but of which it also, as freedom, dominates the entire chaining process (p. 450). However, Hamelin does not carry this assertion through to its final consequences. The spirit, he says, at first constructs being according to determinism, since according to the general principle of the distinct,

zioni but of statements the develops (O. Hamelin, *Essai sur les éléments principaux de la représentation*, Paris, 1907. pp. 32-36). If, on the other hand, it is posited that the finite as such is absolutely non-being, the process can only have a *regressive catar tic* character. that is, it is forced to presuppose being as existing already presently beyond the non-being of the finite, so that it is revealed when a negation negates that negation which is the finite-and such is the theory of Platonism. - For the reconciliation of negation and progressivity in the present doctrine, see above p. 66. note 30.

only in the face of being fulfilled and caught in the bonds of necessity can he understand himself as freedom or contingency. Freedom would thus be conditioned by determinism if not as a higher principle, at least as a correlative or elemental degree. Thus the question remains: is freedom, if even materially conditioned by determinism, then also the condition of this condition, the ideal *prius* that generates it in view of its own realization? That is to say: what stands first, freedom or the law of distinction? is freedom *ima* category, albeit the supreme one, of the process, or is it that which contains and from which it draws finite process life? or, finally: does the spirit construct its own freedom (understood as the ultimate term of category development) freely or according to necessity?

It is clear that when (as at various times Hamelin seems inclined to think, see, for example, p. 382) one does not recognize arbitrariness on this side of the whole process and as the ground from which the whole dialectic edifice draws substance, there is no way to seriously exorcise the rationalistic specter of a pure subjectless reason, from the automatism of which at some moment the self and freedom would come to be produced-no one knows how. That is, let us be clear: a necessarily produced freedom, a **f r e e d o m**, which is such under conditions, is an irony of freedom: the produced freedom cannot call itself such if the process of its construction turns out to be **n e c e s s a r y**, determined by a superior and unconditional law (such as that of Fichte's *Sittenlehre* [Doctrine of Customs], based on the imperative: "freedom must be" rather than arbitrarily willed). That is, it is required that as a supreme and original principle the absolute contingency be recognized, a freedom such that, with respect to it, that realized by the process of the relation is but *one* option among possible ones. That said, if one is not to end up in a vicious circle and if indeed the spirit-understood not as an abstract hypostasis, but as the principle of freedom of the person-must be everything and must encompass everything (p. 450), one must get such an idea of the process that the principle of an absolute, eternal synthesis and that of progressive development can be internally reconciled. Thus we come to a problem (moreover, one that has already appeared in the philosophy of the *shakti-tantras* with the need to reconcile in an absolute unity - *Brahman* - the immobile consciousness - *Shiva* or *Chit* - and the dynamic power - *Shakti*; and in the *Mahàyàna* with the doctrine that *samsàra* = becoming and *nirvana* are but two coexisting faces of a single reality that is *shunyatà* = "emptiness") that is central to magical idealism and to which this proposed the concept of autarky as an *interval*, a **c o n c e p t** that can be said to be the very one of the Hamelinian relationship as it is spie gated or experienced as the very gesture of freedom and possession.

One final deduction remains to be made. Hamelin, insofar as in the free act of the person, understood as an unconditioned choice, posits the perfection of being, clearly sees that the criterion of the reality of things consists in their being willed by the I, that it is only the free act of the I that from *possible* (which remain in the categories dialectically

anterior to the point of the person) makes them properly *real* (and in this pass in accordance with his principle, he correctly sees not a leap but the continuous transition from a poorer to a more intense power of being) (pp. 401-402). But then the principle of his morality: "will entirely your own will" also means: "*actualize* the world in*absolute being" and, as an *act* for him is as valid as saying freedom: "make the world *exist*, by the consummation of its necessity in freedom v.d. by making yourself an *entity of power*" (23). Such would be the logical conclusion of the system, which would then fully agree with the principle, "do not give a person to your deficiency, to your non-freedom" as enunciated by Michel- staedter and as developed in what precedes. But to the Hamelin this inference escapes, that is, he recoils before it. Insofar as he holds to the real center of the person, he does not fall into the Royce and Gentile loophole of defining as *my* will that which is relative to the irrational and necessity- permeated being of things, and which to my real will effectively is an intruder in which it cannot and should not recognize itself; but, on the other hand, recognizing the deficiency of the concrete will with respect to the world, he leaves the question open and hints - albeit with many reservations and showing that he is the first to realize how unsatisfactory such a solution is - at theism (pp. 456-457). Had he instead held fast to the imperative of his morality-"you want entirely your own pure will"-then he would have understood that mere personhood is not the end point, that beyond it other categories are to be constructed, relating to the consummation of the world of being in the world of freedom or its actualization-in other words: to the construction of the magical. To. And since he recognizes that with the advent of the point of freedom from the coexistence and composing of the distinct we pass to the exclusion of the contradictory, he would also have understood that the principle of this further phase can only be that of negation, by which - beyond his *conditionis* constructed by the dialectic of the distinct according to necessity - would go to generate the affirmation-

(23) The Hamelin rightly observes as Kant, "faithful to the traditions of a logic much more concerned with the extension of concepts than with their content, understood as the form of knowledge what peripateticism regarded there rather as matter, namely the general; e, inversely, the matter of knowing was for Kant the particular e the individual, in short the concrete, of which Aristotle had made and tended to make the formal and essential of the things" (op. cit, p. 10). That is: the locus of the act, which for Aristotle was the individual and the real, for Kant is the universal and the rational. Thus in Kant, as in all idealism unfolded by him, the act has the sense of an escape from the world, of a lowering of the real into the universal void of the concept-in a new $\kappa\omicron\alpha\pi\omicron\upsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$. Where in concrete or magical idealism, the act has the opposite direction, from the ideal to the real: it has the rational as an abstract matter, as a power, of which the act is what Kant calls the matter Of the intuition i.e. the $\chi\omicron\omicron\epsilon$ TI, the concrete world; its meaning is thus the fulfillment of the "I" as the Kantian "intuitive intellect," is the consummation of that passivity with which sensible perception is mixed, insofar as it does not produce from itself, according to sufficiency and arbitrarily, its object or matter, in the principle of an absolute or magical position.

tion of the self as a "cosmic body" or "body made of freedom" and "power." It is that Hamelin merely posits the antithesis of determinism or nature and against it the pure principle of freedom, without, however, making himself to *mediate* this, that is, to make it entirely sufficient and co-extensive with his anti-thesis; so that the last phase of his dialectic is in truth but the first of a further development (24), which is that considered by the methodology of magics, and only at the term of which is to be understood the point at which being, possessing itself entirely as an absolute Individual, logically consummates universal becoming.

5. Hermann Keyserling

The tendencies, sparked by Hermann Keyserling, which in Germany gave rise to the so-called "Wisdom School" are interesting for this, that they aim to transfigure intellectual synthesis itself into the metathetical principle of freedom and thus to shift the center of the self this side of the *vis to the back of* rational imperativeness and all necessity in general, without thereby abolishing the plane of concrete experience.

Key to Keyserling's views is the phenomenon of understanding. Consider the point at which the self says to itself, "I have understood." It is essentially a point of spontaneity, freedom and inwardness: there is no way to compel one to understanding. It on the other hand has a mystical-illuminative character: one seeks to *experience* the moment of "signification," not of this or that meaning, but of the signification in general, of the pure element of understanding conditioning all understanding, then one will feel that something ineffable shines in it, something that, while containing and resting on it, absolutely transcends the set of means and forms by which it was propitiated. This mystical 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 (25)-but the inverse is also true, namely, that being understood, inwardly understood is always the condition for any thing to have existence for the self (p. 60) and that therefore the synthetic function of understanding is, by right, the absolute *prius*, the basis, or *apriori* of all our experience, if

(24) Actually, the Hamelin within the shadow of theism, hints at the idea of further development of there from the person finite, which however does not constructs dialectically: Hegel nets the finitude of human freedom to a "fall," which however the ego is called upon to redeem in a process, in which its own mortal nature would have to be overcome (pp. 465- 467). But the hint remains in the mythological state. The need to understand what signifies immortality, what are its conditions concrete and which the method of its construction, does not appear at all in his work.

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

albeit according to very different degrees. Now since it is absurd to speak of a meaning existing in things independently of the "I" (nothing has meaning in itself but everything can acquire it, p. 188) and since the understanding is always and essentially interwoven with spontaneity and interiority, it seems clear that with this Keyserling goes on to define a function, capable of reaffirming over the entire sphere of human experience the principle of the free and creative "I. Then what - and this is Keyserling's progress, already outlined by Novalis, on the

Kant's "*a priori* synthesis" which, as everyone knows, is preconscious (*vorbewusst*), impersonal and abstractly intellectual - here the understanding counts as an *unconditioned* and immanent power of the *real self*, it is not a concept, but an actual element of interiority. It follows that the whole world takes on the character of an expressive medium, a symbolic matter that the self must invest, animate and almost recreate by the act of its understanding.

The distinction between nature and spirit is thus reduced to that between abstract expressive medium and expressive medium entirely resolved in the actuality of a signification (p. 43). Lamateria, thenecessity would be but the *deprivation* (GTépìpu;) of meaning, the brute "letter" opaque to itself. However, even reduced to this form, such a distinction must be explained. It is that sense, in its essence of profound subjectivity and in law, is absolute freedom: but, in expressing itself, it cannot but crystallize in a given inconvertible body, cannot but make decay into necessity (i.e., into an automatic course) that unconditional principle in which it is enjoyed - as in a kind of flashing - in the pure moment of self-determination, of the creative conception hovering between the "not yet" of the possible and the form in which the possible itself now goes to assert itself (pp. 102, 114, 371). The appropriate means of expression, i.e., nature and necessity, consists of nothing but previous processes of self-expression already exhausted and sustained by mechanical repetition (pp. 350-351); from which, however, the spirit resurrects itself in conceiving itself according to a deeper meaning, which it then goes on to express and embody by using precisely that matter, in which its previous freedom has coagulated and made automatic - and the process continues toward an ever deeper meaning or interiority, correlative to an ever richer, more organic and articulate body of expression. Hence arises the notion that the various natural or historical laws are semiotic laws of grammar and syntax, which he who lives in the deep plane of meaning does not need to deny, but only to master inwardly, as spirit dominates the matter in which he goes to incorporate his creature.

This leads to the problem of human "type." It, according to Keyserling (p. 358), is not to be referred to art, religion, or philosophy. Artists are, typically, *mediums*: that greatness that speaks in, or through, them almost never coincides with their conscious person. As for religion, it must be excluded because, as such, it imports a principle of authority and dogmatism on the one hand, of dependence and passivity on the other, which is incompatible with the character of autonomous, individual affirmation that has been attached to "meaning." Still less do we

can defer to the thinker, who keeps himself thick 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 one understands therein a synthesis of life and science in individual creator unity. What is essential is that the ego does not make itself the slave of an abstract knowledge, but inwardly produces it in living reality; that it no longer survives in an ideality that an abyss separates from concrete reality, but rather makes itself within the world and *expresses itself in it*, in it fully embodies what it conceives in the deep plane of meaning. Hence the type of the Knower becomes likewise that of the Lord: and this evidently not in relation to a brute power, but in relation to the principle that is inwardly superior to the totality of life, that commands it and shapes it from above the power of freedom (p. 364). And the deeper the plane in which understanding is realized, the more perfectly and completely the self dominates and commands the totality of the various forces (natural, social, etc.) which it thus takes up as the matter of its "language."

It is clear from this development that Keyserling is talking about "sense" and "comprehend" in a rather metaphorical way, to give a suggestion of a certain function, which is then, to tell the truth, reaffirmed by him in the mixture of all concrete powers of the intent and external experience.

Evidently in the doctrine of "sense" the problem of knowledge is closely connected to the problem of power; which is solved by Keyserling through the theory of *levels of consciousness*. The premise is that, already mentioned and proper to idealism, that every objective depends on a subjective, that things are as we are or, rather, as we place ourselves. To want to dominate the world from the outside, that is, by acting in the plane of idea and physical determinisms, is an impossible and contradictory assumption (p. 385): but well otherwise are things when the self goes to bring its action into the deep plane of transcendental causes, into the sphere of the "sense" which is that incorporeality which conditions the corporeal and which, it, by nothing is conditioned. Human freedom in its highest aspect consists in that, that it depends on us where the accent of our consciousness goes. We can place this accent in the world of phenomenon, where there is no place for real initiative, that is, at the point of the original creative function, whose principle is freedom and *possibility*. In other words: every phenomenon never constitutes an extreme instance, but presupposes a spiritual power to which we defer its reason and consistency: when we place ourselves with this power in a relation of otherness, when we do not *understand* it, it appears to us as an inflexible fatality; when on the other hand we are reaffirmed in that divine spark which immanates the individual and is the profound source of his life, that world which previously held us in iron bondage becomes, by a quiet transformation, our instrument (26)

(26) Here there would be the question of whether the spiritual principle that, acting as the

(p. 165; *Die Philosophie als Kunst*, pp. 213,223,226). Then it will be possible to deter unconditionally the form in which reality is to appear to us, to actually experience the given not as an extreme instance, but as something plastic that meekly reflects what the self conceives in the region of sense. "Representation creates reality, and not vice versa"; "the faculty of representation is unconditioned"; "the I can, by means of a shift in the level of consciousness, possess itself in this faculty"-such, then, are the principles of Keyserling's doctrine of potency as already of that proper to Pesotericism and certain Western schools of magic (27).

Added to this is the fundamental point, although not as distinctly stated as Michelstaedter's: namely, that the individual must rise to a sense of absolute responsibility, must make himself sufficient to his own life, and this not only in the order of the subjective proper, but also in the order of the cosmic, of the universal. The ego must make itself the ultimate reason and must be able to take upon itself the burden of world responsibility, without attempting to defer it to another: since only on the condition of assuming the person can he hope to overcome fate in freedom (pp. 483-486).

The main merit of the "School of Wisdom" is to have affirmed the following.

that what matters is not to procure new knowledge or experience, but to shift the *level of* one's personality, to bring the center of the ego sur another plane or dimension in which the relation to one's activity is that of possession and unconditional determination (p. 499). In this it fully agrees with magical idealism, and even more so when it points to such a plane as that of the Lord. In contrast, the concept of "meaning" requires more individuation. Indeed, the question arises: what is the *meaning of* this "sense"? For it is fine about its generic mystical and self-creating side: but when the dialectic of expression mentioned above is grafted onto it, things get complicated. "Sense" understood as a fatality of expressing itself, objectifying itself, reaffirming itself in new expressions, etc., is what there can be least comprehensible and in nothing yields to the brute given

mediator between I and non-I, gives possibility to potency, *already exists* behind the phenomenon, or is something to be created out of it, with a progress from a less intense act to a more intense one. The potency in the first case would inherent in the I *by accident* - v.d. it would not inherent in the I insofar as it is simply I, but in the I insofar as it is the I that defers to an "other" (the "elemental" of magic, the *devout*, etc.); - in the second case, on the other hand, *essentially*, v.d. would be his thing, his creation and possession. It seems that K. of this problem, important among all, does not even suspect it.

(27) For example at C. Agrippa (*De occulta philosophia*, I, I) is found said that the assumption of magic c resistance of three worlds - elemental, celestial c intellectual - placed in hierarchy: "Since each inferior is governed by its superior and receives its influence, so magicians believe that one can naturally penetrate through the same degrees and for each of those worlds down to the same 'archetypal world,' the builder and ruler of all things, and from there act not only on natural powers, but also arouse new ones."

Of the dialectical law to which rationalism is subject. Here, too, a freedom must well be affirmed beyond the whole process. On the other hand, in order to organically connect the process itself -- understood as the ever-deepening self-penetration of meaning -- to the principle of the Lord, it is necessary to understand this dynamically, v.d. to place it properly *in the V interval* in which the self goes to transcend its freedom that has become an objectivity, in order to reaffirm a principle eternally irreducible to the ether. Then the "com take," the "sense" would have for its deepest meaning the posse dersi, the realization of the self in pure present essence in an ever more perfect way. *Autarky* would thus be the key to the process, the value in which the original freedom willed itself - a consequence, this, that Keyserling adumbrates, when he hints at the principle that one must render oneself to oneself the ultimate reason, that one must rise to the sense of world responsibility, take upon oneself the "fate," make oneself sufficient to it and resolve it in the principle of the Lord. Moreover, once it is posited that determinism, rigidity is what constitutes the antithetical moment as such of matter for expression, it follows that the reaffirmation of the principle of sense - which is freedom - on it can only have a negative character - of *de realization*, of agitation, of the dissolution of all necessity in the contingent and the agile - whereby the idea of a substratum of material necessity, of laws both albeit restricted to only "grammar" or "language" (the same languages of rest change, transforming themselves according to various needs) cannot **ultimately** be maintained, and the idea of a world system wholly penetrated by the function of "sense" (p. 33) is mutated with the idea of the "body of freedom" that is also the "body of negation." With Heraclitus, with Novalis, with Bhagavan Das (28), and with the conception advocated here, it is necessary to intend the world process as a *burning* and its immanent purpose as the fulfillment of the self as an *entity of pure negativity* - v.d. of pure contingency and absolute possession.

If one wished, one could still make several more serious objections to Keyserling, to which the asystematic and "symphonic" character of his expositions also lends itself: in specie, with regard to history, whose *ideality* he does not fully understand, and which he therefore often treats from an empirical point of view, indeed transcending the plane of "sense." Hence while on the one hand he affirms that not historical fact creates "sense," but "sense" creates historical fact (p. 293), on the other hand, like Croce, he acknowledges all but given historical determinisms that impose, epoch by epoch, the ineradicable condition for sense to be able to incorporate itself and become concrete (29). One thinks of the Keyserlingian principle that sense is not, that

(28) Novalis. ed. cit., voi. II, pp. 58,336. Bhagavan Das, *The Science of the Self*, Madras, 1922, *passim*.

(29) Op. cit. *passim*, e H. Keyserling, *Die Philosophie als Kunst*, Darmstadt, 1922, pp. 22,30-32, 70-72. where one finds the legitimate need, that the ideal should not remain foreign to reality, but should know how to embed itself in the world of the age and be embodied in it; but of this ex-

insofar as it is expressed, and one will realize how dangerous the position is and how instead - given that one holds fast to the principle, that nothing is that is not to some extent understood and that understanding has for its inseparable attribute freedom - the right way would be to deny the *real* anteriority of any historical condition, and thus of the entire past or antecedent *storic* make an absolutely formless matter, the individuation of which is not *given* or *found*, but *rests* solely on the unconditioned metahistorical determination of meaning-that is, to make of it a conditioned and no longer a conditional.

But this is not the case here. It mattered only to note the ingenious Keyserlingian interpretation of the function of "sense," according to which understanding is taken off the rational and peripheral plane and compromised with the principle of deep self-realization and power.

empirical and *factual* evidence, the *meaning* must be understood-and, indeed, so that one is not jolted from the position of freedom, which is such, that it does not tolerate compromise.

Appendix

On the meaning of ultra-modern art

[It is perhaps good to preface this Appendix with a mention of the criterion of aesthetic criticism adopted by the writer. This criterion rejects both "contentism" and the

"formalism." Contentism and formalism are in fact generic criteria, powerless to grasp the aesthetic phenomenon in its specificity and in the identifications of its specificity. Since art never proves anything: it is not that a certain content by the fact that it is given artistically acquires characters of certainty, morality, practicality, etc., which it already did not have in itself; so that it must be said that the judgment according to content is condemned to grasp what in art is not art-it is therefore not aesthetic judgment, but theoretical, moral, etc. But just as the "intention" of the artist is not of interest, neither is his technical "skill" - translativity and expressive - since the question of having expressed and realized or not is not specific to art, but can arise for any other form of culture with equal right. And the question exclusively restricted to form should be left - to use a saying of Boltzmann (1) - to tailors and shoemakers.

Such criteria are not only generic and abstract, but of the thing they touch only mind the phenomenon; of the *meaning, of the meaning of* art, of what it in general represents for the "I," they say nothing: the *value* of art insofar as it is art and nothing else, falls entirely out of their purview. Instead, the principle, which has been adopted, is precisely that of the consideration of the function according to which the ego lives its activity, of the meaning that this activity has for it. Let us denote the act in general - that is, the act independently of both what it brings into existence (contentism) and the lesser or greater perfection of this bringing into existence - as *form*: then it can be said that what is of interest is *the form of the form* (so understood). That is, one has an eminently transcendental point of view, apart from which there is no hope of grasping phenomena in their individual intimacy and deep meaning-that is, of overcoming the phenomenon in *spirit* or *value*.

It is evident that such a principle can be applied to art as to any other determination of consciousness: but this is not because it is an indifferent genre, but because it represents a plastic organ, capable of assuming the

(1) The physicist Austrian Ludwig Boltzmann (1844-1906) was supporter of theory atomica of matter and the hypothetical character of scientific knowledge, which in no way constitutes a "truth irrefutable." leaning thus for the method deductive more than for the inductive one (Ed.).

person of the various elements and to account entirely for the individuality of them. For it arises a distinct determination of art against all that it is not; and, within it, the possibility of grasping irreducibly original moments there where, according to other principles, it could appear but an indifferent point.

This criterion informs the treatment of modern art, which follows; as does the hierarchical ordering of the various categories (both "objective," such as space, time, quantity, etc., and subjective, such as science, philosophy, religion, etc.) that will be set forth in *The Theory of the Absolute Individual*.

That at the value of the individual or autarky the situation whence in the main the so-called "great art" was born must appear as something not at all negative, is something that can be clear to everyone. For in the "great art" the artist in so much was productive, and productive according to an objective, unanimously recognized value, insofar as he surrendered himself to the inspiration, the intuition, the throb of life of the universal, insofar as he allowed himself to be possessed to act almost by a higher force (the *pavias*, the *genius* of the ancients and of the aesthetics of Kant and Schelling) of which he knew nothing after all and which in the very moment of creation had him as an organ and unconscious instrument (2). Since, therefore, in such a situation it was not so much the self that produced art, but rather it was Part that was produced within him, at the empowerment of individual consciousness and the demand of this for absolute sufficiency—so characteristic of the last epoch—there was, according to logical necessity, a crisis of aesthetic consciousness; and from the problem of overcoming this fundamental femininity and medianity of the artist and, therefore, of accomplishing an art which, while being such, had individual value, arose that determination which may be referred to as *modern art* and, in its ultimate potency, as *abstract art*, a determination which, because of the radical difference of the function according to which the principle of the ego lives out its production, a *qualitative* gulf separates from what had previously been completed as art in general. The organ of the new art is to be seen on the principle of *absolute formalism*, according to which the classical relationship between content and expressive medium is completely overturned: where in the

"great art" the medium of expression remained strictly subordinate to the revelation of an objective and transcendent content, in the new form the accent is instead made to fall on the expressive medium and to this it goes to suborder, as medium or raw material every content. That is, the paradox is posed, whereby the form is made the content and the content instead the

(2) With reference to such a connection, already in a youthful work (J. Evola. *Arie astratte*, Rome, 1920, p. 8), in sketching the concept of art as an individual fact, one had occasion to come to the scandalous statement, that "sincere" artist who, shipwrecked in the "divine instant" of inspiration, creates almost in the grip of an indomitable, the "real" work of art—and the dog who carried by instinct jumps on the bitch, are basically, at the point of value, the same thing.

matter, contingent for the expression of form: that is to say, in which there is no expression merely because there is something that by means of it wants hands to fest itself, but something is manifested, solely as a function of the pure will to express, as a function of form, for the solitary love of this form alone.

Hence the name *abstract art*', abstract in that it no longer has any an object proper-whether it be a situation of nature or a state of feeling or even an idea-to be communicated and enlivened, to which the expressive medium remains subordinate, what it expresses being nothing more than pure expressiveness itself, beating out the rhythm of a pure inner freedom. The work of art has here a simply *harmonic* (in the musical sense) value, one would like to say almost *algebraic*; resulting from nothing more than a counterpoint and orchestration of imagery and pa role, that is, of sounds, of tonalities and chords, or even of lines and colo rs, it, in a certain sense, *no longer means anything* and the artist invites the viewer, by pointing out, not to look for a concrete object or idea yet, but rather to feel vaguely, to let himself be imbued by the rhythms, the vague sense and *&UV apprehension* exhaling from his compositions, having taken that par ticular attitude that is required for a not merely sentimental, but properly harmonic, understanding of a symphony.

Now since the priority of content over the medium of expression in clas sical art was but a reflection of that situation, for which the artist in himself was nothing and in so far created, insofar as he made himself an unconscious and passive instrument of a universal that expressed itself through him, this reversal of the relationship, whereby the pure means of expression is erected to self-sufficiency, comes to testify to the shifting of the center to the individual, the celebration, in the aesthetic sphere, of an autonomy c however the overcoming of that attitude, whereby the unconditional and the universal were understood as something objec tive, falling before the concrete power of the ego. In short: the individual in the

"great art" was the expressive organ of the God and, with that, was not yet pro prly individual, lo: on the verge of realizing himself as such, he detaches himself from the womb of the universal, from which the content of his creations previously flowed to him, and, having shifted the center onto himself, he finds himself intending in the same expressive medium-which previously existed at the service of the èTEpov, of the "genius" falling beyond his consciousness-an end in itself, an autonomous faculty to which creation must defer its extreme reason.

Which can equally be expressed from another point of view. As in particularly clearly saw Schelling, in classical art the factor of the conscious will of the individual remained a *minimum*: artistic p r o d u c t i o n revealed and embodied infinitely more than had been consciously intended by the artist, who therefore did not so much go to express a certain value or situation of beauty already clearly possessed *a priori*, but rather saw it flow unexpectedly from his work from there and often even in spite of what he had intended to do, rapped in *a posteriori* amazement, almost like a *grace*, from the

his creature. Hence also the reason for the oft-noted fact that frequently artists (and however more passionately and deeply they are such) are the people least capable of understanding the value of their own works. What Wundt (3) called "heterogenesis of ends" has in classical art an unconditional efficiency. In this sense the artist, as noted with Keyserling, is typically a *medium*, he, as a conscious individuality, is absent at the still formless point of absolute creativity from which the formative power departs; he is passive to that power, which operates in him almost unconsciously and thus in him not as an *author and creator* but as in a worker or demiurge. That is, the fire of consciousness falls *after* creative restant proper: and there where it asserts itself, it finds an infinite disproportion between what the artist has produced and what he has willed. The more, in past art, the production is per slice, the greater this disproportion, the more it seems that the individual will is reduced to a *minimum*, goes to shrink and mettersi from side to give itself entirely to the power transcendent which fecundates it and that through it will actualize the value of the infinite. Now the exigence of art as an individual value reacted in the sharpest way to such a situation, and already with Novalis and, in a certain respect, with Wagner, against the work of art as *genius* asserted the work of art as *will*. Thus within the formations that were generated from the organ of art (abstract, that is, from absolute formalism) these two exigencies were also agitated: reaffirming the self conscious in the point original of aesthetic creation and, secondly, to dominate within the will the entire work, to reframe the will on that halo of the unconscious and transcendent that gushed beyond all its affirmation (4). Now the process of immanence - of consummation of "genius" in the individual and of medium or feminine art in an individual or positive art - was accomplished, in modern aesthetics, according to various stages, parallel to the progressive appropriation and resolution

(3) Psychologist e philosopher, Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920) was professor at the University Leipzig from 1875. He was responsible for the technical and experimental foundations of the new psychological science also publishing the first journal of the genre in 1881. In 1879 he founded the first laboratory of psychology experimental. He supported also his own "philosophical psychology" (Ed.).

(4) This requirement is, at present and with distinct consciousness, advocated by A. Onofri, and we hope to see it soon expounded by him in a complete theoretical treatment. We would not, however, know how to agree with the way in which this author, in his poetic production, sought to make himself sufficient to it, since in it the principle of pure art is transcended, with it that of pure freedom (which, as we shall see, will instead be affirmed by Dadaism) and poetry is made to experience a certain content, to which, in the opinion of the writer, an appropriate form is not art, but magical affirmation.

[On the personal and intellectual relations between Julius Evola and Arturo Onofri (1885-1928), a metaphysically and religiously inspired poet and writer who was deeply influenced by Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophy, see J. Evola and A. Onofri, *Esotericism and Poetry*, edited by M. Beraldo, Fondazione Julius Evola, Rome, 2000 (ed.).]

in pure subjective freedom of the principle of the ineffable transcendent; stages, of which it will not be useless to give a brief mention here, not least because they attend still a scoria, theoretical understanding.

Just as panlogism was counterpoised by materialism, so the *Weltentfremdung* [estrangement from the world] of Romantic art was counterpoised by the crude concreteness and immanence of aesthetic realism or verism; and in the antithesis in which the two poles mutually consummated their truth, the infinite began to transmute as the consciousness and intimacy of the individual, whereby *symbolism* came into existence; and in the further development of symbolism nothing else comes to expression but the process of inwardness and possession of that universal to which previously the artist religiously remitted his light, and which, when the ego began to awaken to the sense of its own autonomy, breaking the bond of tradition and *deiV humanitas* in which it lived self almost as in a dream, could not but appear as an immense, oppressive mystery. The consummation of that mystery on subjectivity and yet the dissolution of the traditional coalescence of the self with the universal, thus exhausts the immanent and secret rationality of the development of contemporary art.

1. In *symbolism* there is *V immediate* appearance of the principle of the for malism above. The world of external experience is reduced to symbolic matter, to a sign, and beyond it arises a new consciousness woven into jousts of relations and secret sympathies, into symphonic ineffabilities. But, in the first moment (Verlaine), this position cannot be realized in its purity, since nature is still present; indeed, it is only by attracting toward its mediation (in its nonetheless offering support to that which has surpassed it) that the artist is to become aware of that infinity of musicality that as well, in fact, is already proper to the individual - nor could this mediation be dispensed with until the self itself had overcome that immediate diateness of its new being which, as such, remained conditioned by (nature's) mediation and connected to it.

2. As a propaedeutic to the new art as autonomous, there was thus a need for a negative and painful work of self-emancipation, a death in life and a life in death so that the self, through self-consumption, enjoyed itself as of unconditional power. Such was the commanding value of the work of the so-called "cursed poets," in particular Rimbaud: a continuous tearing and burning in everything, an unspeakable passion and orgasm for that I or higher principle which, as Rimbaud himself expressed it (5), "is another."

(5) In the letters published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française* (October 1912), where we find-

3. *NeiV analogism* properly called of Mallarmé this phase is exhausted: there is now nothing in it but music and blue. Content is gone, and beyond it all lies the subtle and all-pervading realm of analogy, of relationships, of secret sympathies (6). Wind and fire give rise to a magical and clear calm. By which the original instance has been realized in fulfillment but, in and by the same point, it turns out to be itself an abstraction: Mallarmé's poetry is of an icy, stupefying interiority and loses, more than it realizes, the individual principle in the golden enchantment of rhythms and the algebra of images. The magician has dissolved in his own enchantment. Situation, this, which is still a sign of a broader meaning: for if analogism, through the resolution of content in the symbol went to realize the elementary substance of the individual in the aesthetic seat, with that it also found itself saturating every sign of the new existence of an infinite mystery. Immanent to the revelation of subjectivity was found immanent, in Symbolist lyricism, the feeling of the ineffable as for an obscurity, for an irreducible mystery - for, in truth, in it the objective infinite to which Romanticism had rhetorically vibrated had come to inner experimentation: but, in relation to the subject and as living now within it, it could only be felt as a negativity - for precisely negativity was the ancient *genius* of meditative art with respect to the individual principle. The abstraction and deprivation of the accomplished formalism of Mallarmé and the dark, tragic, elusive weight, which in Maeterlinck sickens the deepest interiority, are thus two complementary aspects of an identical logical situation. And the self, again, is another.

4. In vain does *Cubism* try to infuse sufficiency into the abstract analogistic individual world by denying the subjective fantastic and the indefinite evocative and by resuming-through the so-called technique of "equivalents"- the pre-aesthetic concreteness (i.e., that correlative to real experience), taken, however, no longer according to the given order, but recreated and composed in

his central requirement should also be exposed: "... *Toutes les formes d'ainour, de souffrance, de jote; il [the poet] cherche lui même, il épuise en lui tous les poisons, pour ri 'en garder (pieles 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 crime], le grand pigs! - et le supreme Savant!*" (p. 572) ["All forms of love, of suffering, of joy; he (the poet) seeks himself, consumes in himself all poisons, to retain only their quintessences. Ineffable torture where he needs moon faith, all superhuman strength, where he it becomes among all the great swine, the great criminal, the great cursed - the supreme Sage!"].

(6) Poetry, he says in *La musique et les lettres*, is r/itezi of things, idea counting for him as harmony, whereby art is the creator of symphonic relations between things: "pyro- technique," he says, "no moins que métaphysique, ce point de vue; mais un feu d'artifice, à l'hauteiir et à l'exemple de la pensée, épanouit la réjouissance idéale" ["pyrotechnic no less than metaphysical, this point of view; but a firework, at the height and example of thought, cheers up the ideal feast."].

an architectonic following only the free and inner aesthetic formation of the individual: in vain, because that concreteness is something factual, so in truth it is such only when it is according to the brute order immediately given mind. Of such vanity the consciousness becomes aware, whence the artist, who is burned by the curse of exteriority and the deprivation of his interiority, rushes at last - to stifle his anguish - into matter, into immediate nature; and at the unrestrained orgy in it - in the struggle, in the *dinamismo*, in the "lyrical obsession of matter" (7), in the vertigo of situation, speed and sex - he seeks, renewing in a certain way the solution of a Dionysian pantheism, to prove to himself his own concreteness. According to such a conjunction he posits *futurism* - of which impressionism, sensism and primitivism may be considered elementary degrees, not entirely current in their motif.

5. But futurism has immanent in itself its dissolution and *trapas* so; for if the "I" in it has come to a content, it is not so through a passive and mute annihilation into something extraneous, but instead insofar as he himself has become, as the creator of unconditioned and instinctive forms, a brute and factual force that overcomes in a certain way its immediacy in expression-in the bewilderment and trumpeting of "words in liberty"-and that at every moment is dissatisfied with its naturalness and driven into a recurrent and anguished preoccupation with the "new. Thus, through the negation of pure analogistic interiority, the self faces, at the death of futurism, the concrete and central interiority, the consciousness that he is in himself, as pure power of pure form, a free, unconditioned creator.

6. For the futurist's brute instinctiveness, in mediating itself, transmutes into *expressionism*. Here consciousness has its center no longer in the value of a nature, but in that of an ego: except that it does not yet dare to grasp its realm, and remains there, *listening movedly to* itself in the first, intimate moment of creation, which immediately *afterwards* seeks to attribute to itself and, in doing so, to prove to itself its own centrality, reproducing it in itself as an artist *espressionista*, v.d. as the creator of a form that transpires of an immediate, elementary interiority. However, the fulfillment of the process occurs only in *Dadaism*.

7. The principle of this tendency is that it is not worth substituting for worlds of formation other worlds of formation, albeit more interpenetrated with freedom and interiority: what is of interest to that *radicalism of* his that makes it the most significant tendency of all contemporary aesthetics, is instead the effective displacement of the ego to the absolute center. Rimbaud's work, though determined by the aspiration for the direct possession of the creator ego, had in concrete only served to consume and bring down the rind of the outermost flesh so that, with the world of "illuminations," beyond the air

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

grave of nature and *deiV humanitas*, an ether opened up, into which the self could penetrate as free lord. Now in post-Rembaudian art the artist, affected by his new possibility as magician-creator, instead of availing himself of this liberation to realize the "I" in centrality, exploited it to construct new super- or hypersensitive worlds for himself: but with that he fell into a new form of eccentric consciousness, with that he continued, to use an image of Rimbaud himself, to feel "brass" only upon *waking up* in trom ba function. It is, on the other hand, to the primordial and unconditional principle that Dadaism tended: it was not a matter for it of substituting one yévcrtg for another (or, at least, this must not be the final instance), but of absolutely abolishing that consciousness, which in art is only, insofar as it is *already* form or categorization, which awakens only at the moment of formation - of the work - and at the earlier or deeper moment of forming is absent or passive. To pose this demand, is to pose, within aesthetic consciousness, the problem of freedom, and that is to contrast the *determinately* free self - v.d. to that which in its *naturare* the work is only "*natura signata*" and, as such, already *naturalized* and which, in accordance with the eccentric prince, was still present in expressionism - with the self as center and thus as arbitrariness or unconditionality.

8. Insofar as Dadaism turns to consummate this antithesis, it stands in a first moment according to the theme of negation: the ego, through the arbitrary agitation and the increasing rarefaction and disorganization of the world of aesthetic formations, tries to resolve determination in itself, as in the form of pure freedom. Except that consciousness realizes the deception concealed in such a solution and which we have already had occasion to expose sur another plane (8): for the "I" in so far as it is *polemic*, v.d. in so far as it lapses from true, absolute freedom and, by its negating function, places itself on the same level as that which it opposes, by which it is pre-occupied. Negation thus, in its deepest sense, goes to betray the need. That is, it appears that "*le vrai Dada est contre Dada*", hence the transition into the theme of indifference.

9. Drawn by its dialectic, aesthetic consciousness renounces the contradictory direction of the previous moment of mere negation, desists in a certain way from the violent affirmation of the unconditioned principle, and insofar as it absorbs "*avec délice mais sans gaia*" the given prepoetic experience, it is "*dans la piaine*." This movement, which seems to bear the eclissi, actually enacts the autonomy and liberation-and therefore the truth-of the unconditioned principle; and, in the field of the determinate or, rather, within it, indeterminacy, indifference. Pure freedom through self-denial has arrived at absolute being; consciousness, which before was the empty "ought-to-be" of the unconditioned, now enjoys this in freedom and in concrete form. And the "*piaine*" - that is, the spectacle

(8) See above, pp. 88-89.

of real experience not in a lyrical or symbolic remake, but in its bare being-there, which, immediately as prepoetic experience, now, v.d. pel dadaist, *can* unconditionally apply as an object of poetry - reveals the self transmuting in every determination as lability, as elusiveness, as the power to give everything value or non-value (9), to be and not be indifferently. The simultaneous and punctual coexistence of opposites, the hovering beyond identity and contradiction itself, the unspeakable fluctuating in the "*grande banche pleine de miei et d'excrément*" the impossibility, of discerning between the various degrees of light (10), become the phenomenon in which the possession of unconditional freedom is revealed (11).

By which the perfection of exigency is realized. The infinite, the genius, the great halo transcending individual consciousness and will, absorbed at first and thus felt as mystery (Maeterlinck) within the personal intimacy of analogical consciousness, is in a second moment mastered and reduced to the very consciousness of the individual as unconditioned freedom.

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It is a very difficult thing to give an idea of the spiritual state that runs sponde to the latest achievements of abstract art, as well as to be able in any way to get not only to penetrate and experience them, but also only to present their value, when one is not very familiar with the technique

(9) T. Tzara, *Manifest de l'amour faible et de l'amour amer*, in *Sept manifestes dada*. Paris, 1924: "*Le mensonge us rade, je Parrete, il devient véri té. C'est ainsi que toni est pareri et toni est sans pareri*" ["The lie circulates, I stop it, it becomes truth. It is thus that everything is equal and everything is without equal."]. Also by Tzara are the expressions in French quoted above, *ibid.*, p. 75: "*L'anti-dadaisme est une maladie: la self-clepto- manie, l'état no miai de l'hoïnme est dada. Mais les vrais dadas soni cantre dada*" ["Anti-Dadaism is a disease: self-cleptomania, the normal state of man is dada. But the real dada are anti dada"].

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

(11) È important note the difference, indeed the opposition, between Dadaism e futurism, which stand between them as instinctiveness and autarky, as absolute immediacy and as absolute mediation; and, correlatively, the error into which rather naively various critics (for example the Gori e the Flora) in the reduce the Dadaism to a Bergsonism - reduction which instead succeeds for futurism, Dadaism can reconnect, if at all, to the Stimer: its principle is the individual, understood as absolute possession and as a will with dizonata--cold and arbitrary--whereas in Bergson and futurism the individual is dissolved in the momentum of universal life, is made a brute and eccentric force of nature.

We insist on this distinction-which can be vouchsafed by long and direct adherence with works and authors-because it reflects in its own way in aesthetics that between magical idealism (which to some extent corresponds to Dadaism) and irrationalism.

[Evola polemicized with Gino Gori in the newspaper *L'Impero*: see J. Evola, *Writings on avant-garde art*. edited by E. Valente, Julius Evola Foundation, Rome, 1994 (ed.)].

of "pure art" as well as to have down within himself a certain realized degree [of] that extremely inner and rarefied consciousness to which the author is perjured (for only the like can understand the like). Whoever, lacking such conditions, approaches abstract art as he might approach, for example, that of a Shelley or a Beethoven, can find in it nothing but an incoherent and incomprehensible whole, and then he will have to well disdain and wonder at the very possibility of such manifestations.

Abstract consciousness, realized by the latest aesthetics, is in fact another plane - almost another dimension - of the spirit, which with that in which so much practical and sentimental daily life takes place, so much resounding value on the "great cries of tragic humanity," has nothing to do; and the way to it is hard and painful, for along it it is necessary to burn all that habitually counts to men as the most intimate and truest life. If, therefore, one were to ask for a point of comparison, one could perhaps only point to it in some mystics, for example, in the inwardly haloed and coldly burning mind of a Ruysbroeck and an Eckhart (12). In abstract art, however, such a value is not, as in these two authors, a uniform and solitary light, but is exhaled solely by an incoherent complex of dark, intimate, alarmed vital states which, as if lost in a diaphanous atmosphere in which a sense of dream or delirium is slowly transmuting and clarifying itself to a solar rarefaction, have sounds and motions in themselves inexplicable. A logic absolutely different from everyday logic governs this sphere: in it all the most familiar and glorious lights become palid like the faint vegetations of the dungeons, the common will there bar glue as if intoxicated, the very words emanate an incomprehensible sense of a foreign language. One would say that in it all reality disintegrates, pumped of its life by extreme rarefaction, and reenters an elemental chaos "dry and burning, blazing and monotonous." But to those who have wholly penetrated abstract art, it appears that this incoherence, this madness is but an appearance, behind which lives in a metallic luminosity the sense of the absolute freedom of the self; that it is but a last thin robe that veils and, with this, reveals the possession in the aesthetic seat of that formless and unconditioned purity, which is the naked power and origin of all form and order. Art becomes here, essentially, self-revelation.

This can be shown from another point of view. As mentioned, for the tendencies with which the development of abstract art ends mourning *may* be what Cocteau refers to as the "object of poetry": the aesthetic value is contingent, and the artist can with it enhance at his will a

(12) They are among the greatest mystics of the Middle Ages: the German Johannes Eckhart, known as Meister (Master) Eckhart (1260c.-1327), who took up the neo-Platonic tradition of Proclus and the theology of Dionysius Areopagitus and Scotus Eriugena; and the Flemish Jan Ruysbroeck or Ruusbroec (1293-1381), who fused Christian monastic asceticism with Eckhart's German mysticism (Ed.)

any determination, whether it is constructed by the various expressive means properly aesthetic, or whether it instead remains an element immediately drawn from vulgar experience. Thus it has come to be argued that both the *Mona Lisa* and a streetcar ticket pasted on a cardboard *can* be to an equal degree works of art for *Dada*. This from the point of view of the author. Now from the viewer's point of view it can be considered.

- not so much for its intrinsic value but rather in view of what may come from the answer -1 objection, that given even that one succeeds in reasoning that extreme sensitivity and abstraction that are necessary in order not to see in the latest achievements of abstract art nothing but oddities and inconsistencies, there remains the question of knowing how, given that there is no longer any concrete basis, one can be assured of having penetrated real mind what the author has experienced and that instead everyone does not understand in his own moiety.

Now Tristan Tzara, initiator of the Dada movement, exhibits in the already cited *Manifeste de l'amourfaible et de l'amour amer* (p. 77) this strange rule for making a Dadaist poem.

"Take a newspaper, a scissors and, in this newspaper, an article of the length you wish to give your poem. Cut out the article and then, carefully, each of the words in it and place them in a sacchetto. Shake gently. Finally, take the clippings one after the other and copy conscientiously. // *poem will resemble you*. And there you have an infinitely original writer of enchanting sensibility, though not yet understood by the masses."

This is not a mockery: overcome there the deliberately paradoxal form - to which the Dadaists furiously hold - and then in it is found a profound truth: namely, that not the author, but the viewer is the creator of the work of art (Wilde), that aesthetic value does not exist in itself in the work of art, but is conceivable only as a function of an interpretation and recreation so that it depends *a priori* on the individual will, such as the various determinations of feeling and culture have formed it. Artistic is indeed not to be said of a certain work in itself but of a certain function of the ego, according to which it makes a given object of its experience become what will then be called a work of art. Now experience, has in normal man only a very little degree of freedom: it is in preference drawn, like a force along the line of least resistance, to a certain class of objects-which are those which are then, by a more or less explicit convention, fixed as the "true" and universal works, of art; and this, because its power is inwardly formed into determinations to a certain extent uniform and persistent, to which the ego of the normal man adheres and beyond which he does not give himself the trouble to reassert a free life. As in a certain way Kant saw it in the *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, the universal recognition as beautiful of some works of art and, it may be added, of some objects of experience in general as works of art, has for its sole foundation that subjective of being the power of judgment of

men conformed in given determinations in an almost analogous way in everyone. Now suppose that the individual has raised himself to such a degree of autarchia that he can abstract himself from all determinations of culture, sentiment, and inheritance—that is, of that congenital and almost always unconscious taken party with which one stands before pictures and poems in addition to the *a priori* idea, fertile with autosuggesting facts, *that one actually has to do with art*—and that he can thus *disirrigidate* the power of aesthetic judgment and make it absolutely dependent on his own will: then it becomes clear that "artistic" and "beautiful" will no longer be a particular and almost fatal group of objects, but that everything will be a mirror in which he can find himself: and the very poem constructed according to Tzara's rule *will be*, or rather, *can* become truly a poem and *my* poem (13).

From a strictly idealistic point of view, the creative process of attribution of aesthetic values is indeed to be considered as identical for a Dadaist work of art as for a classical one. The difference lies in this: that at the moment of the fixity of certain determinations in the judgment, the opera of art turns out to be in a certain way given, it imposes itself almost by itself, and understanding is in a certain way automatic. Thus the *ancien regime* work of art allows but a very small number of alternatives to the viewer's freedom. The thing, on the other hand, changes completely in modern art, insofar as the principle of it is, as we have seen, freedom: the more one goes toward the last stages of abstract art, the less in the work the value has a character of fatality, the less the artistic is presented as *fact*, and the more instead the spectator is held to a real spontaneity, to a free reconstruction of what is presented before him is to have any meaning for him. So that in the ultimate art what is presented to the spectator in itself is literally nothing, the very support of objective correspondence is lost, and if the spectator from such does not literally become an author, aesthetic value remains an empty word. But there is more: the most modern art is as it has been said such, that to become an author one cannot, except by overcoming all rigid determination of the faculty of judgment, making oneself sufficient to an indeterminate freedom, capable of aesthetically transfiguring every determination in an indifferent way. Hence, in those who know how to follow and comprehend it in its development, modern art rises to the value of a true cathartic; in its extreme point, the work of art in saying to the viewer, "make yourself an author!" also says: "experience yourself as naked, unconditional freedom, as that, for which everything can be indifferently ugly or beautiful as soon as you wish!" Hence its moral value.

(13) In accordance with this, in the aforementioned *Abstract Art* it has been argued that the *consensus gentium*, the universal recognition attests not the value, but the disvalue of an aesthetic judgment; since the more it has value the more it is individual, v.d. the more its statement is *unique*, irreducible to any uniformity. To this Tilgher could perhaps assent, pushing his theory of art as originality to the depths.

...

The highly original and daring work of T. Tzara, G. Ribemont-Dessaignes, H. Arp, K. Schwitters, and Kandinsky (14) may be said to seal with a definitive affirmation that whole complex of tendencies which, beginning with Novalis and F. Schlegel, operated in various ways, and often unconsciously, in modern aesthetics for the realization of art as an individual value. On the other hand, it marks a point-limit: in a certain sense both art *propiamente*, and art in general as expression, in it accomplishes its own dissolution-something that was after all understood in full awareness by Dadaism. It is that since by art is meant that activity, which has essential characters of mediumship and subordination of the self through spontaneity and genius to a universal, modern consciousness, in which the principle of autonomous individuality has been affirmed, has placed a barrier, beyond which art cannot continue, other than as the consummation of itself as such. Hence the opinion of those who, fixed in a traditional order, in opposition to modern art assert that one no longer has to deal with *l'arte*, or that art is dead, is quite understandable: to tell the truth, from Symbolism to Dadaism we are dealing with schools that in their intimate essence are at all metatartistic, when not even anti-artistic. But this proceeds from historical necessity and has a *priori* value.

It is that art, according to his concept, is the residue of a life made of spontaneity, anterior still to the very principle of the *person*, and just as instinct is gradually being consumed in the mediation of reason and will, so it is destined to disappear as an outdated category at new forms of spiritual development and that continue and carry in themselves its truth. Senonché the phase and *gesture of its* "appearing-its selfing and self-ironizing in abstract art-itself realizes to the self an experience full of meaning. The rhythm of regaining according to freedom at the original and inner point of each *porre*, of overcoming all "grace" in absolute positivity and, thus, of reasserting one's will over what transcended it and conditioned its fruitful production, is in fact, to tell the truth, the very rhythm of magical realization. Thus modern art-or the consumption of art-which is built on such a rhythm, goes to give the self the sense of this realization in a formal anticipation or imagine, that is, in an affirmation limited to the field of subjective imagination, sounds, words and colors. Only in such a field, falling outside the objective power of reality, does the "I," in Dadaism, experience the fulfillment of absolute freedom, albeit with an accentuation of life and interiority that is lacking in the experience realized on a similar plane by the development of speculation up to transcendental idealism. Already Novalis, by contrast

(14) For all these Dadaists see *Julius Evola's Letters to Tristan Tzara (1919- 1923)*, edited by E. Valento, Julius Evola Foundation, Rome, 1991 (ed.).

to those who reproached poets for jousting in their imagination at their own will with the real world, he asserted that poets in reality are still far from e-sager enough; that they only dimly suspect the magic of their language; that they still do not know that they are amusing themselves with fantasy just as a child amuses himself with his father's magic wand - ignorant of what forces are subject to them, what worlds must obey them (15). Should the artist go to deepen that need, which caused him to generate modern art, then he will find himself led to reaffirm that rhythm of liberation and self-assertion -- which he learned in aesthetics -- in the deeper dimension of real life, and thus to understand, with Lao-tze (16), art itself as the motionless pawing or propedeutic (*Lehrjahre* [years of in-signing], Novalis said) of further momentum. Since the realm of the

"grace" is far from being confined to the realm of aesthetic production: just as the will of the mediumistic artist is made productive by a fecon employer principle that falls outside of it, so every act in the life of the nor evil individual presupposes, for its success, a set of laws and determinisms (physical and physiological), which add to him as a transcendence, as something of which he has no principle within himself. Now to adapt the will to itself and to its own effect, to make it perfect no longer in the sphere of artistic creation but in that of everyday real life, is to turn to magical idealism. The categories of this are what the ideal history of spirilo is continued in beyond modern art (17). Future poetry **will be what is** expressed by its very word (KOTIGK; from TV notes): action; the self itself, *V self-creation*, will be the object of the future work of art. 11 perpetuation of art, outside of that and after the experience fulfilled

(18) realized by modern aesthetics, it can no longer represent more than a *piétiner sur place*, a return or survival-in any case the self-matism of a dead (roncone cut off from development.

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

(16) Lao-tze, (rad. cit., c. XLV.

(17) The hierarchical place of the categorization of art in relation to the other categories of culture and that of absolute self-realization, as well as the general construction of the various stages of the process of the individual in their totality will be set forth in the work: *Theory of the Absolute Individual*.

(18) Such statement of accomplishment will sound strange a those who Bread not intends *for mally*, as category e symbol of unacerta experience spiritual, but rather *material mind*. according to a criterion placed in the artistic production itself. Those who go on to ask modern art for the "masterpiece" remain stuck at this material standard of consid ration 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 accomplished work, but in the realization of a new way of experiencing the aesthetic function (i.e., no longer according to spontaneity c religiosity, but according to the domainof the individual) with respect to which realization what is produced represents a secondary and negligible moment. Now this realization has been by the development described above achieved i n all desirable perfection.

THEORY OF THE ABSOLUTE INDIVIDUAL

Foreword

The new edition of the present work requires some clarifications to clarify its meaning, scope and intention, both with regard to the readers to whom it is properly dedicated, and with regard to those who, on the other hand, have followed our other books, which have come out in the meantime, quite different in method and subject matter.

These more recent works are in fact concerned with an essentially superrational order, the proper organ for which is not the concept, but the symbol and myth, in close connection with what may come either from tradition, in a special sense, or subjectively from an adequate transformation of one's own being. All this is not philosophy; on the contrary, it is such that it has a reality and meaning absolutely independent of all forms of speculation and, in general, of the system of reflection.

Instead, the present is intended to be a purely philosophical work, in the modern sense of the term; it therefore proceeds essentially by the methods of discursive thought. However, as the relation between its object and the spiritual world to which we have devoted our other works exists, in the terms of a kind of introduction, of propaedeutics. Superfluous to those who by a special qualification and vocation have been made partakers of traditional and metaphysical knowledge, it may, on the other hand, retain its significance for those who have followed modern philosophical thought in its special phase, considering its problems in the terms not of a mere dialectical exercise, but of the reflection of a profound need, being bold enough to draw, from this, all the consequences.

Philosophy, to which we allude, is *V idealism*, in the special sense that such a term has as an immanentist system deduced from the post-Kantian critical development of the problem of

knowledge. It has been argued that the difference between idealism and other directions of thought is not qualitative

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but quantitative to correspond to the opposition between one degree of critical awareness and others, intensively inferior to it; that all philosophy, whether it wants to or not, is idealism (1), so that when it posits itself as a non-idealism it is merely an idealism not entirely self-conscious. In this respect, idealism has believed that it can represent not a particular moment in the history of philosophy, but almost the conclusion of it.

This claim of idealism could also be justified if the formal standpoint of critical-epistemological thought is taken as the last resort. And in the present work we shall collect in a conclusive form the most essential dialectical arguments that refer to so. Senonché idealism, in turn, will appear to us as a point, not of arrival but of departure, not as a solution but as a problem. And we will affix this further requirement: to think idealism through to the end, to determine what it is necessarily led to when it absolutely assumes its original impulse. Idealism will appear to us, after all, as an elementary degree which it is a matter of understanding and developing through the consideration of what is incomplete and equivocal in it. But by that route we will reach a point of crisis. Lachelier had this to write: "Philosophy..., is the reflection that has come to recognize its own insufficiency and the need for an absolute act starting from within." This applies eminently to philosophy as idealism. By various routes, this is precisely what will be arrived at here: to postulate a passage beyond discursive thought and philosophy as a condition for the maximum problems of it, as they arise in a coherent and inflexible doctrine of immanence, to receive an unambiguous solution. And so it will be seen that a *possible* passage to that spiritual and, in general, superrational and metaphysical world, no longer tied to intellectual speculations, which we have dealt with in most of our other works, presents itself. We say "possible" passage: because whether or not to make it is an entirely undetermined thing: it depends on the qualification and vocation of the individual. Nor is it certain that to all those who *want it it will succeed*. Indeed to mention it only in passing, this not being the place for such considerations - the habit of philosophy as abstract critical thinking if, on the one hand, it may be a propitious condition as to clarity and orientation, on the other hand it goes to constitute a negative factor as to what is required to practically adapt oneself to that superordinate domain.

Our intention, therefore, has been to make the present work take this last step in Western speculation, so that it approaches

(1) G. Hegel. *Wissensch. der Logik* 2, I, 163; *Enzyklop. der philos. Wissenschaften*, § 55, Zus..

to the point beyond which without a "qualitative leap" -- to use this expression of Kierkegaard's -- one cannot go. And by not going forward, in the field of philosophy there is nothing but a marking of the pace, a byzantine and a relapse, by a loosening of tension and a weakening of inner courage, into positions of compromise or already overcome. And this, after all, is what the whole of the most recent speculation, developed after classical idealism or alongside it, shows us: flaky, spurious forms, ended up in a dead-end specialism, incapable of great syntheses, reflecting a fearful analysis under the guise of "science," or

expressions of disorientation due to an inner crisis. Today's philosophy presents crepuscular traits, such as to suggest, that the epoch of philosophical speculation in general (an *epoche* which - despite what is supposed in the general history of civilization - began only at the intense of a given cycle) is now tending to come to an end in order to give way to *other* forms of man's reaction before the world, whether superior or inferior to it, in any case of a predominantly practical character.

Tonizing to our specific object, it is appropriate to hint as of now in what direction the mentioned integration of idealism will go. And to this it will be necessary to make first of all a consideration of principle.

That a system-creating *venne* is simply a critical philosophical thought is something impersonal, developing almost automatically according to a necessity and a *logical vis of* itself - this is a view that can now be considered outmoded; outmoded is the myth of a thought that has absolutely no "presuppositions," such an ideal of "objectivity" not being able to be realized even in the order of pure logic and pure mathematics. Already a Fichte had noted that, depending on what one is, one forms a certain philosophy and not another. In general, the rational has its reason and *principium individuationis* not in itself, but in an impulse springing from a deeper layer of being. Various considerations contained in the body of this work will clarify this view, which, moreover, is also susceptible to being verified - if one may say so - experimentally, by an analysis of the ultimate criteria and the tacit, undeductible presuppositions on which the various systems in the history of speculation have been founded (2). Thus all philosophy, in the last resort, is always a symbol, the expressive sign of a tendency which precedes it and which in itself is irreducible to the rational domain: most of the time, it belongs to the irrational (in which case a simple psychology of philosophy becomes possible), in others to the superrational (3). Thus it can

(2) valuable work in this regard is N. Bagnano, *Le sorgenti irrazionali del pensiero*, Naples, 1923. See also . Gruenbauin, *Herrschen u. Lichen als Grundmoti e der philos. Weltanschauungen*, Bonn. 1925. Partial contributions can also be found scattered throughout Nietzsche.

(3) 11 case of superrational roots occurs mainly when the systems are defined.

make a fundamental distinction regarding philosophies or, to put it better, philosophers: one can simply be "acted upon" by one of such impulses, so much so that one hardly notices it and simply develops that system of thought or world that corresponds to it; or one can directly and consciously assume the original *vis*, which then goes to give a greater character of coherence and, above all, a special *active* tone to the philosophy that one makes one's own and that through the rational organ one intends to inform to a maximum of necessity.

This is true of any system, thus also of idealism. If, therefore, one asks what impulse one will and what meaning lie at the basis of this current of thought, the answer is quite simple: in it is expressed the individual's need toward absolute self-assertion, in himself in the ambit of the whole world, in which he finds himself living. The deepest *ratio essendi* of such a conception is a will to be and, at bottom, to dominate. This is already quite explicitly apparent from the fact that the demand for absolute certainty as immanent, detached from all extrinsic criteria and from all confident deference to a transcendent system of the world, has been, ever since Descartes, the center and spring of all its further development—the gnosological problem in its modern critical form (which is its problem par excellence) being only a consequence of it. In the negation of every "other" as a result of the logical investigation of the possibility of knowing and, at the same time, as a necessary condition for a system of absolute certainty, there is the appearance, reflected in the world of ideas, of a profound impulse to being, value and dominion, to which man has awakened. In more ways than one, it is thus a Nietzsche, a Weininger, a Michelstaedter who give their meaning to a Descartes, a Berkeley, a Kant and a Fichte.

Those who come to recognize in this way the prerational root that forms the foundation of idealism, and actively assume it, must nevertheless come to a curious observation: idealism, in its historical development up to what is usually called absolute idealism, leads almost to a reversal of the initial impulse, a reversal that only a complex of fictions masks and therefore makes tolerable. In fact, on the one hand, conceptions informed by an increasingly rigorous theoretical immanentism succeed one another, up to views, such as those of Weber and Gentile, that are very poor as philosophies but interesting as symptoms; on the other hand, and

in correspondence, we witness, however, a progressive estrangement of the elements elaborated as conditions of experience and certainty from the center and living reality of the individual. Such conditions are in fact not tied to that real subject that I am, to the self as personality, but to the hypostasise

include in the atmosphere of a "traditional" cycle of civilization, which then present explicitly dogmatic assumptions. of a pure logical subject - the "thought in general" of Kant, the "Absolute I" of Fichte, the "Idea" of Hegel, the "Knowledge" of Weber, the "Pure Act" of Gentile - subject, to which end up being attributed such characters, that it goes to result as the de facto negation of what is most individual in the individual. Generally speaking, The "other" - the external reality or non-ego - is not resolved by the philosophy in question except to the extent that it identifies without residue the ego with the idea, with a knowing subject. Not to admit such an identification, to consider it arbitrary and deplorable, is to recognize the incompleteness of idealism, to discover the insufficiency of what it represents in relation to the need or will that produced it and to which it owes its meaning.

The concrete individual, if it is reason and knowledge, is also - and eminently - freedom and will. To what extent and under what conditions can the position of idealism be maintained by not discarding, that is, holding fast to the living totality of the individual? This is the problem to be solved. To that extent, it is necessary to carry further the demand that generated idealism, so that it can also invest the domains that fall outside the logical and gnoseological order, if abstractly understood. Not only as idea and knowledge, but also as will, power and freedom, the "I" must find itself completely reconciled in and for itself, not only in law, but also in fact, in the system of its integrally considered experience: even in this assumption the idealistic motive of self-sufficiency and reduction of the "other" should be able to reassert itself, to the extent that the position already achieved can be maintained. And this means: a transition of the philosophy of immanence from a theory of the abstract transcendental to a path toward *V Absolute Individual*.

In particular, there are three points where we will try to integrate idealism here:

(a) Determination of the concept of *absolute freedom with regard to* what is to be eminently regarded as spirit, etc. This is the fundamental point. The individual being is marked by an excess of freedom over necessity, whatever that may be; its wielding, unfolding and rising and asserting itself to the level of value is linked to a growing, precise awareness of this attribute. This, however, goes to pose a clear incompatibility with a recurring motif in various forms in abstract idealism, so much so that it often counts as its organ, namely, the promiscuity between freedom and necessity (the *Notwendigkeit*(s) of the post-Kantian Romantic school, the "concrete freedom" of Italian neo-Hegelianism).

(b) Connection of the critical procedure with the postulate procedure. Critical consideration of the problems of the theory of immanence will frequently lead to points that, in themselves, are indeterminate: it is a given stance of the ego that goes to define, in such cases, a direction

zione instead of another c thus also positing the principle and possibility of certain developments in the speculative process. This will then occur in an eminent form at the critical point represented by our theory of "deprivation" in its connection to the critique of realism: here we will have the already mentioned postulation of a high and the principle of a new series falling beyond the domain of speculation in general.

(c) As a conclusion of the last idealism, we see that the idea does not dominate the whole of experience except on the condition of making itself absolutely indeterminate, of making the universal emptiness of Weberian "Knowing," Gentilian "Pure Act," or Bergsonian "duration" something purely formal, which can take up all sorts of things equally well. This indeterminacy must be overcome. The immanent principle must be able to account for the main qualification and possibilities of experience in an articulated system of meanings and values. Which is as much as to say that the demand proper to the "doctrines of categories" and the "philosophies of nature" of post-Kantian transcendental speculation must be revived and properly developed. Hence a *Phenomenology of the 'Absolute Individual'* which we shall follow up with the *General Theory* of it contained in the present volume. It will be seen, however, that this development is possible, and it can be justified against the criticisms that already caused 1 deductive systems now mentioned to be abandoned, only on the basis of a given direction, linked to the sphere of absolute positions and itself presupposing a given determination of the will.

The integration of transcendental idealism according to these views exhausts the task we have set ourselves in the philosophical sphere (4). We hope to have put, in accomplishing it, enough intellectual radicalism that the proposed end will be achieved, namely: to make one of the most significant currents of Western speculation take a final step, reaching the point, at which a rupture must take place and a transition take place. All that relates to the higher order, no longer of (j)ixoo4)ia but of oo<|)ia and action in the inner and essential sense, to the extent of our possibility, has been in various ways, in principles and applications - up to those of a determined metaphysics of history and civilization outlined in our other works.

J. E.

(4) As an introduction to it must be considered our *Essays on Magical Idealism* > Atanòr. Todi-Rome. 1925.

Introduction

On the concept of value

The first task of a complete doctrine of immanence is to define the concept and the state, which in the order of the problem of certainty represent the extreme instance, that beyond which no further criterion can be thought of.

Such is for us the concept of the state of *value*, defined, in general, by the absolute relation between the bare principle of the ego and what, in the experience or consciousness of the ego, is distinct from such a principle. If we designate that distinct as *being*, value remains defined as the formula in which the relation between ego and being is presented as unconditioned, as something that admits of no further mediation.

What is to be understood as the "bare principle of the self" will be specified below. As for *Husserl*, it, at the ideal limit of its concept, is all that in experience, whether internal or external, is simply present, the pure fact, for as a "being" (*Da-sein*) independent of the powers of the "E" and of any relation to a meaning: which is thus indeed unconditioned, but according to an unconditionedness signifying deprivation of condition. Now, value is generally defined as the subjective mediation of such unconditionedness, its being, that is, resolved in the "essence" the transpiring of the "e" in what in being as being is in and of itself as "other"-necessarily, in fact, without further reason.

It follows from this that the nature of the two concepts of being and value of which we speak is *essentially formal*, by form meaning the manner or function according to which a given determination of consciousness or experience is experienced by the self. Being and value are the limits of the sphere of the possible.

bilious qualities of living and experiencing; indifferent to their object, they essentially mark levels of the spirit.

At the limit, value can be understood as the complete resolution of what is "matter" (the determinacy of a given content of experience) into what is "form." Indeed, *the absolute* relation that defines it requires that *born what* a given qualification of experience is internalized, is consumed without residue - as it were - in a *flashing of the spirit* - in a pure act identical to the apprehension of meaning. As absolute, the relation proper to value is, in itself, *identical* and *simple*. However, to give a suggestion as to its essence, three aspects of it can be considered.

First, consider in the deepest intimacy the point at which, in regard to something, one says to oneself, "I have understood." In it appears a moment of perfect transparency, that is, a moment in which in the thing itself is reconciled only with self. Understanding is, of course, always an understanding of something; but both the "what" one has understood and the concept or intellectual synthesis in the strict sense, with respect to the moment of pure meaning, already turn out to be something secondary and material. In understanding something can be grasped as a simplicity, which in all understandings remains equal to itself and which, while having it for correlative, transcends the "being" of the object. And one can experience the phenomenon of the understanding not so that the emphasis falls on the thing understood, in which case one would remain at the level proper to empirical, intellectual or rational consciousness, but so that the thing understood is worth only for the bare simplicity made of the act that is presupposed to it and that in itself consumes it. In the latter case the point of understanding communicates with that of value. In the order of knowing, constitutes an extreme instance: the relation of a thing as cognitively assumed with itself is absolute: there is an immediacy, signifying not deprivation but perfection of condition (1). On the other hand, it is essentially something individual, inner and living: the conceptual synthesis, the noetic moment have the character of abstract objectivity and impersonality, but the point of signification, if it can lean on it, goes through it and transcends it also, and stands to it already as act to power, soul to body. The logical-conceptual understanding is already something extroverted, non-central to that transparency to itself, which is meaning. Which stands as a correlative and resolution of the immediacy of being, since, like experience

(1) The immediacy of the meaning has often suggested the use of the symbol of seeing. of vision, in terms derived from the root *ido vid*; which is preserved in the current English expression "I see" in the sense of: "I understood." Cf. the saying of F. Schlegel (*Athenaunifragmente*, ed. Minor, no. 339), "*Sinn. dersich selbstsieht. ird Geist*" ("The sense that sees itself becomes spirit*"); and the considerations made on "sense" by H. Keyserling, *Schopferische Erkenntnis*, Darmstadt, 1922.

Of this, of the mere *ón*, it cannot be communicated; but it is substantiated by act, it is eminently *KaO'* I will have.e

In another form. e sam relation is realized in the experience of *possession*, of *pure domination*. There is a way of considering the one and the other in the inner seat, such, that to them the object, while remaining a necessary correlative, remains in a certain way indifferent.e That possession, which is perfect dominion, loves only itself and, about the object, annihilates it, in a relation of identity-difference: in the "being" in question the "E" transpires in a pure and absolute repossession-again, something simple and active is manifested. The *posse*, the evidence of "I can" and yet *power* is the closest extrinsication of this state.e

As a third point, there is a possible aspect of the will, which is not will of this or that, but will of itself, pure, absolute determination; in it the will holds and to itself imposes itself, fertilizing itself in and for itself and having essentially itself for the foundation of its own affirmation and pleasure. Here, again, there is something simple, and what comes into existence, or is assumed, as a function of such possible determination remains conjoined to the self according to an absolute relation.e

Now the three phenomena mentioned here to some extent communicate. Understanding implies dominance, identity-distinction with respect to all the elements that meaning encompasses and resolves, and the point of pure determining itself implies in turn an evidence-meaning, as persuasion. Generally, something identical can be experienced in the three cases: the distinction does not concern the deepest point, but the object as still somewhat distinct from the relation that takes it up; in the act, that which is matter and not the form as it is form; in the relation itself, the moment of deprivation still variously present, not that according to which the self remains effectively reconciled only with itself and which, as such, in multiplications cannot in any way multiply or modify itself. There where this reduction to the identical is effected one achieves precisely what we mean by *value*.

It in the order of knowledge thus appears as sense; in the practical order as bare will and as dominion and potestas in both cases, essentially, as a reduction of the unconditionedness of "being" (*dXoyoc*; = privative unconditionedness) to the unconditionedness of the self (*Xóyoc*; = positive unconditionedness). And this defines the plane of absolute certainty, of the pure rule of law or state of justice.e

It is clear that this plan has as its essential presupposition the principle of *freedom*. To it the spirit can only come by absolute spontaneity, by an inner movement that cannot be matured from anything and that proceeds from pure initiative. Secondly, everything that is taken up as a function of value, as such, without further mediation, is likewise materialized in freedom. This can be clarified as follows.e

Already in common experience it appears that if given conjunctures impose themselves according to necessity on man, it nevertheless depends on his free initiative how they are experienced, the meaning connected with them in a word: their form. About this, the self is extreme instance to itself, it has no support and no excuse. Now let us turn to that higher power of that which corresponds to the point of value.e

Let us assume, for example, its appearance as "meaning." It is not possible to understand the transition to meaning unless one presupposes, to some extent, its presence in its antecedent. That is, one would not in any way give an understanding, if representing itself, the purely existential perception, were not already an understanding, albeit in its own way and in an elementary power or degree. Therefore, in the phenomenon of understanding, as well as in that of possession and pure will, the simple unity is already at the beginning, it does not

presuppose being but is by right presupposed to it; rather than being understood by the terms of a given relation, it is that which understands and underlies them. In general, given that form as a value is, in any way and to any extent, present in an experience, it by right presupposes the whole experience. And the consequence of this is as follows: that where the moment of *necessity* was still present, it could only be so as a particular element of being, conjoined to the self according to absolute relation, that is, in this respect, as something *willed* and incorporating, in its own way, a *sense*. Conversely, wherever there is real interval, i.e., non-coextensiveness, between the form of experience and experience itself, this can only mean that the "I" does not live at the level of value, that what he experiences is not assumed by him at the deepest point, at which he is simple-absolute individual and only himself; that, therefore, to a certain extent, *he is external to himself*.

That the having, the object, an ideal character constitutes the condition for a certainty of knowledge around it, is the view of idealism, which, moreover, we ourselves will reformulate further on. Now it must be added that nothing would know to be experienced that does not already incorporate, to some degree, the moment of value, that participation in value, even if at a moment of "deprivation," is the transcendental condition for the possibility of all certainty and knowledge. Thus a concept of the "category" is presented, which goes beyond the incompletely formal one of Kant and also that, completely formal but exhausted on the plane of the purely gnosological subject, of post-Kantian absolute idealism. Both the plan of sense (knowledge-meaning) and that of *dxoyov*, of real being, are taken up there. If as a philosopher was defined the one who possesses a reaction organ for the totality of being (Georg Simmel), the organ, whose reaction of the self as an absolute individual, stands to define the one who goes to shift its center to the level of value, determining a further power of form, of the transcendental conditioning principle of certainty and experience. It thus results in an affinity between such a point of view and that which underlies the highest forms of asceticism, for in the ascetic, apart from the extrinsic elements and the frequent incompletely immanent assumption of the unconditioned, it is precisely a living stance in the face of all life, of experience in the totality of its real and possible forms.

Not without relation to this, it remains to understand the point at which the *problem of value* may arise. No particular indication is needed as to whether there is a world, in which mere existence exhausts validity in a generic sense. Senonché this very order of a life passive to itself *may be* a solution of the problem. In what is in fact is valid, precisely as being, without further mediation, in law, and presence, insofar as it is simply presence (being there) contains the criterion of validity. On the one hand this situation may come to be regarded as a negation of the problem, because to the unconditioned relation which defines it and which has just now been alluded to the *e*, by hypothesis, is not determinatively present. But on the other hand it is to be asked whether this absence itself is original or reflects a special significance for its proceeding from the special nature of an absolute relation in which said situation *may* be assumed.

Thus, on the boundary of the pure existential datum, there arises an ambiguity that is itself significant. It makes it possible to say that the problem of value contains in itself its own mediation; the point of its arising constitutes an absolute beginning, because at "being" the problem is not posed; but *if* the problem is posed, being as being is no longer posed; it—as we shall later see more from near—appears not as an antecedent, but as a possibility of value, thus as a thing that an absolute relation conditions and dissolves. In such a case the non-pursuit of the problem can only be worth it as a particular solution and everything would remain closed.

in a circle. It would remain, therefore, only to know how it is possible, in general, for the problem to arise - and this is a question to which, evidently, no answer can be given other than by referral to the already mentioned act of absolute freedom, to an act, of which not so much as further reason *can*, as *should not be* closed, because all reasons come only *afterwards*.

Thus, in this regard, a kind of double motion occurs. When the will of value is placed, the "I" is, so to speak, freed from the world, all conditionality is suspended. Simultaneously, precisely because *by* right but only *by* right - the form takes up everything, everything goes to gravitate to the I, and this has no refuge: he becomes a *center of universal responsibility* and in the circle he has drawn around himself demanding absolute certainty, demanding value, every matter must sublimate to complete transparency.

It is now a matter of analyzing and explicating everything connected with such a turnaround.

Section One

From the empirical state of existence

Considering the common experience of the world, as its elementary condition may be considered *knowing*, in its most generic sense of awareness of a certain static or dynamic determination. Moreover, it is customary to distinguish object from subject, a distinction, which is legitimate, unless one understands its terms properly.

1.e The "objective," positively, can only be the consciousness of its aspect of determinacy,

of qualification; the subjective, this same consciousness taken instead according to its aspect of awareness or certainty in general. To consider things in this way is to formulate the idealistic thesis in its most elementary form, which turns out to be of almost trivial evidence as soon as attention is brought to it. For it is a self-evident thing, the inconceivability of an object that was defined by an absolute otherness with respect to the subject of experience; that all the determinations by which and with which the object is known - to whatever order they refer, including its own possible relative "ascent," its dependence on or independence from the "I" - are and are certain insofar as they are particular determinations of consciousness, in the knot of which what is called reality is mutated without residue. Which can also be expressed by saying that *identity* is the elementary datum, the original substance of knowing. Determinacy - the objective - instead of binding itself to a direct perception or sensation may proceed from judgment, inference, position; but, in any case, that it remains simply the "known," thus precisely simple phenomenon of consciousness - this is a proposition in itself self-evident, to which one cannot

not adhere without falling into contradiction. Thus the critique of realism is quite simple and well-known: it refutes itself at the very point of claiming truth. For if it is true, as it claims, that the idea or thought is a different thing from the real, that the object exists in itself, realism itself, which in any case can be nothing but an idea or system of ideas, can in no way prove the congruence of its conception with the system of reality (1). Therefore, if it is real, it refutes itself: the real of which, according to sensible discourse, it speaks, falls in one way or another within the experience of the subject.

Thus the subject as consciousness presents itself as the ether that underlies all that world, which is its world. It is not included in the world, but this within him, and within him it unfolds. The well-known formula of transcendental idealism corresponding to this is: // *world is my representation*, in representing understood to include not only imagining and perceiving, but also every datum elaborated by the faculties of reflection, inasmuch as this datum will still be, *in primis et ante omnia*, a simple determinacy of consciousness. In this first degree, moreover, idealism is a one with the experimental positivism and rigorous phenomenalism.

2.e The second point to be fixed is that the subjective principle as such is defined by its being-act. Consciousness is not like a wax, which can bear a mark imprinted by the Testem; in it every being is connected to a noticing, and therefore to a folding back upon itself (ovYKaTódeatg) and, finally, to an assent (ùvaKàpipic), whatever the degree. Without an elemental act there is no object in the self and for the self. Absolute passivity is inconceivable - an assumption is, in any case, necessary, and this is still an act, even when the object is a passion or a pure sensation. The immediacy that a content of consciousness may present can only express the immediateness of mediation, that is, of the corresponding act of consciousness: it refers to a special mode of this act - whereby the genus of actuality extends to those limits where, in twilight fringes, barely the light of consciousness is brought.

3.e Proceeding in the examination of the conditions of experience in general, we come to a third point. What is objective has borrowed it with what is determinacy, qualification. It is not that there is no determination for the self, that is, there is no consciousness of

determination, if that which becomes determined-the self does not transcend determination itself, so that to itself by opposing itself it perceives, it makes its limitation become *to itself* as such. If consciousness did not transcend it, determination would vanish, this would iden-

(1) Cf. the same Aristotelian myth, that when "quiddities" should be other than things, there would be no science of beings, and that of which there could be science would not be (*Metaph.*, 7, 6. 1031^a. 3). For a modern critique of realism in this same sense see J. Royce, *The World and the Individual*, New York, 1908. vol. 1, ch. iii.

would typify with the totality of the self lost in it and thereby deny itself as such. Considering now the second point, namely, the always necessary correlativity of an act to every determination (i.e., to every object), the new condition in the analysis of possible experience in general comes to have this more particular formulation: in contrast to the "E" as objectifying and qualifying actuality always stands, by right, *re* as *infinity*, as indeterminate possibility: and only in function of this conjuncture is the object determinately. The moment proper to the subject therefore remains thus defined: it is the elementary principle of every object of experience, however insofar as in every objectivity it irreducibly holds itself beyond the limit that this defines, that is, it opposes itself as power in the act of determination. It can also be said: it is but the indeterminate of "determining" immanent in every determination.

Examination of the elementary conditions of the possibility of experience in general leads to this duality. It is the given, the most original being, whose meaning must be understood, which must be resolved as a function of *value*.

That the object of experience in general counts as determinacy connected with a given tense is self-evident: otherwise the self would be *all about* the object, it would be plunged into it so that the very speaking of *an* object would be meaningless. If the very fact that one speaks of *an* object, instead of *several* objects, and, on the other hand, that from one object one *passes* to another the ebb and flow of the qualifications of experience - posits the transcendence of the "I" and in *infinity*, in the unexhausted power of representing, of "posing for oneself" or actuality in a generic sense defines what is, properly, the subjective. A tension has also been hinted at, for it is a matter of maintaining a limit and, at the same time (*one act*), of overcoming it. The distinction is immanent in every qualification: it has a logical character as a condition of possibility, but not only a logical one: to the subjective, more than not as a concept, corresponds the *sense of the* infinite and of the possibility that always again bursts forth within every determinacy.

If by *X* we express a qualification of consciousness (i.e., that which, elementarily, is any object, any form and any movement), by *J* the assumption or mediation related to it, by *S* the power or infinity of the self, by *D* the sign of transcendental implication, we shall have:

$$XjA \cdot 7S$$

formula, this one, that summarizes the position of integral idealism which we will have to take up later.

Section Two

Steps to the problem of the individual

We shall now show that the duality found as an elementary datum of experience is but a symbol of the *problem of the indivisible* and that, as such, it is real only because it is necessary. According to another aspect it can also be said: its imposition in logic reflects only the postulation of a task.

The concrete meaning of what appears as an abstract condition of experience is thus that an infinity, an absoluteness necessarily, if even obscurely, asserts itself as soon as an objectivity is in correlation with it. This means, on the one hand, to nullify every phantom of infinity connected with the external world, every motion of anguish and dismay that certain aspects of the spectacle of things can engender. And also every abandonment, every passion, every abdication and every denial, existing only as moments of an experience according to the conditionality $X \rightarrow A \text{ or } S$, in them always again, irreducibly, flashes everywhere that which is the root of the subjective, of the self. But, on the other hand, the proper of immediate experience is that such a point of irreducible infinity is given only in correlation with a varied system of determinations, the relation of which to it is mostly extrinsic and contingent. The substance of the existential datum is thus revealed, rather than as an abstract duality, as a conflict, as the tension between two elements, opposed and yet actually constrained in a single point (1). Now, feeling the need to *impu~*

(1) It is worth noting the correspondence of this view to the original meanings of the terms "subject" and "object": *sub-jectum* is that which lies beneath, the substratum, i.e., the elemental matter, the background (of all that is); *ob-jectum* (like the German *Gegenstand*) is that which lies against, which opposes, which resists.

gnate this dilacerated matter, to render rational this irrational unity in which humane consciousness finds itself, is as much as to pose the problem of value. Obscurely, deafeningly stirring in every being as soon as it thinks, acts or craves, it comes to its perfect expression only at the point at which a distinct consciousness of the antithetical nature of the elementary datum is realized-which is as much as to say: at the point at which what is *to* be thought logically and gnoseologically as a condition of experience is realized in a lived experience.e

It is a question, therefore, of putting an end to that oblique and almost semi-waking state that usually characterizes common resistance, even in many of its forms considered superior;e in this regard, one can also speak of the living of the ego on its original obscure act by which, having placed a kind of promiscuity with objective f, it enjoys subjectivity in the form of ae forgetfulness of subjectivity. ef it is from being, the antithesis, felt in a confused and indirect way that the insubstantiality of all such life derives, that beings in general appear as shadows, unaware of what they are, what they want and what they do at all times - this, in turn, proceedse precisely from an elementary, indistinct coalescence with the objective. Now, the antithesis, the irrationality is felt in its existential warmth only at the point where the sense of the subjective principle is laid bare. This inner movement excites it and reveals it, and with thate itself ends the fog, the order of the Platonic "thing that is and that is not."e

And it is important to point out the character of *radical contingency* of this absolute assuming consciousness of the self -- it is the same one, already considered in discussing the problem of value in general. en fact, consciousness *can* continue to enjoy its form as ae negation of form. ef the inner motion now mentioned takes place, it takes place absolutelye from itself, in a fre dom that assumes and resolves the "you must" proper to logical necessity.e

The contradiction of things on the one hand, on the other hand given situations related to pain, misfortune or misery, have often been regarded as incitements to the ego's withdrawale into itself and awakening. Certainly, all of this, in its possibility, speaks of the oppositione betwe n the essence of the ego and determinacy, an opposition that already acquires ae particular prominence here; but, in truth, this opposition being uniformly present as ae transcendental condition at the moment when every objective is, the quistion does not concerne such its more or less implied presence, but its naked, precise, absolute assumption, whiche requires pure initiative and, one might even say, represents *an extranatural beginning*. Out ofe the contradictions between the detennined phenomenal nations may indeed be propitiated ae system of science, and out of the "pain of the world" may be derived a religion or practice ine which the self as such is no less absent and oblique than in ordinary existence - indeed, infinite are the avenues of evasion, rhetoric and substitution, in the world of men. But before the individual by an unconditional motion assumes the essence of the self, nothing can have anye meaning of *value* - whence this act is a boundary separating two incommunicable worlds.e
Once e

occurred, it seems that there is expressed there only a recognition of what already was, as bringing back to! the center what was already contained in fact at the periphery; that it therefore proceeds from the simple reflection of the self on that experience, which is his experience and outside of which for him there can be nothing. But this very thing confirms the aforementioned contingency of the movement which, as *real*, stands at its trace, constituted precisely by logical necessity, as an act to potentiality.e

Section Three

Of the ego principleI

The assumption, of disentangling the bare principle of the subjective is frustrated when one merely moves from one given order of *determinations* to another; for example, by turning away from the field of so-called "external" experience to affix oneself to that of internal experience, or by detaching oneself from the qualification of "fact" to that of act. Since objectivity means nothing but determination, it is not a matter of moving *in extension*, remaining in the genus of detennineness, but of proceeding in *depth*, transcending not this ore that particular detennineness, but detennineness in general. As according to Plotinus'saying, wherever the soul still sees a form, it knows that there is something else to be desired (1). The ego reveals itself only by making a radical abstraction.e

In general: every experience is inseparably and uniformly accompanied by the note, implicit or explicit, of being *my* experience; self-reference is the elementary category ore condition, without which no reality is conceivable. Now detach this principle of self-reference from any particular content in order to fold it, in a certain way, into itself. Then you will have e = I, that is, an *absolute relation* that is, at one and the same time, naked experience, somethinge simple and unnamable, *in which the transcendental and rempirical coincide*. This experience in the eminent sense or par excellence mediates everything, and, it, by nothing is mediated; ite is like canvas, on which then all particular experiences are drawn.e

(1) Plotino. *Enneads*. VII. vii, 32; V, iii, 17.

It is what we match called the "naked principle of the individual"; fitting it is, here" to speak of individual rather than personality, spirit or otherwise; since etymologically individual is that which admits of no division or alteration.

Nothing else can be said of such a principle except negatively, that is, pointing to all that it is *not*.

(1) *Ego is not thought*. Especially in the system of idealism, thought means nothing more than the *I* of the formula *X A or 5*; that is, it expresses the generic form of mediation. But here *q* ÒÉ vóqmc TÒ voqgara, an indeterminate thought beyond its particular acts is not practically conceivable and, theoretically, can mean nothing but the generic form, or genus, of determinacy. Thus the principle of the subjective is an empty name if it is not understood in such a way that it transcends such a principle, which remains determined by correlation to being.

This point can be explored further as follows. The partial formula *X or A* means that the object is not before it is posited (= that it "becomes" in and for the self). But, at the same time, what in the subject corresponds to the object is nothing before it is posited, positing the object. There is thus an objectivity and a subjectivity that are created at the same point where one can almost say reciprocally, functionally, since if there is no thought before thinking, so there is no thought as thinking before its actual determinate thinking: as such it comes into being, the *e*, only with the birth of the thought. Moreover, idealistically, the thought is any content of experience.

This subjectivity or thought in general evidently cannot be the bare principle of the individual. And since it comes and must be conceived as an act, the distinction cannot be other than that between an act and the *power of* actuality (or of positing, or of making become for itself). Now, what must this potency mean? As distinguished from the determinate and the actual, it is of course indeterminate to the possible; but with reference to the fact, that the character of *A* in the *Aea j* is activity, power remains specifically defined as indifference to posing and non-posing, to determining or non-determining oneself in a given object, to passing or not passing into the state of objective actuality: that is, it remains defined as *pure freedom*.

To sum up: the distinction between subject and object is not understood in its true terms, or, to put it better, it is not arrived at, in general, as far as a real distinction of object and subject has value as a problem is not posed -, except when, having traced the object back to a qualification of consciousness and having seen the substance of this in the determinacy of an act in general, one comes to the opposition between the "E" as indeterminate and the "e" as actual or thinking subject, between the "I" as "indifferent possibility," as indifference to posing and non-posing, and that- for or thinking subject which lives only as a function of determining and

thus of a correlation more or less affected by a moment of internal necessity.e

There is an idealism that reduces itself to a kind of phenomenalism, presuming, however, unlike phenomenalism, to *explain* anything. It is that idealism which merely traces the reality of reality back to its ideality, that is, substituting for the data of experience in general (in which, moreover, the internal experience must also be included) as many "acts" of thought, without, however, admitting anything other than the thinking actuality. But if one remains at this point, reducing the thing to subjectivity only reduces subjectivity to a thing, not solving, but rather exasperating the initial gnoseological mystery. Indeed, one cannot understand how it doubles-to call them that-constituted by as many thought-acts should turn out to be more intelligible than the existential data corresponding to them. And how the assumption of those who, having to count, would begin by doubling, to use this Aristotelian expression (2). To overcome phenomenalism we must begin by going back to what we have called the bare principle of the individual, which transcends the order of thought. And, this, a point that is well worth fixing right now.e

It is a fact that habitually, rather than not thinking thought, we allow ourselves to be thought by it. Now, a well-founded suspicion arises that precisely such a situation serves as a basis for the confused immanentist conceptions, where a "making" of thought is assumed as an explanatory principle (B. Spaventa). Moreover, already the formula "the thought that is made" is equivocal: since if what is made is already thought, if its principle falls within the extension of the genus "thought," its "becoming" is a pure fiction and that proposition "the thought that is made" is not - in Kantian terms - synthetic but not at all analytic, there is no passing over, but a mere development. But if thought "is made" in earnest, if its passage from non-being to essence is really a synthesis, one must not antedate thought itself, as, with a paralogism, the formula that "thought is made" suggests; rather, one must put thought back to a power that in itself is not already thought, determination, determined actuality, but pure possibility, power that directly grasps itself as *esse* - and say not that thought "is" made, but that *esse* becomes thought.e But then, in considering the problems that arise about the relations between such a higher principle as freedom and the order of determinations ("ideal" or otherwise) according to their moment, variously present, of contingency and existential necessity, we see what is required of a philosophy that really wants to *explain* and that does not exhaust itself, apart from dialectical sleights of hand, in a transposed phenomenalism.e

(2) The relations between the principle of the individual and thought can be further clarified by considering the Cartesian "*cogito ergo sum*." And it is well known that Descartes used the term *cogitare* not so much in the specific sense

(3) *Metaph. I (A), 9, 990 b, 2.*

of act of reflection, a in a generic sense coinciding with the noticing of something in both external and internal experience (whence also the inclusion of the dream in the formulation of his "radical doubt") (3), epperò, at a remove, with the *ouyKaTdfteGig* of the Stoics and with the second term *j A* of our formula. But even posed this there remain two ways, as the development of later philosophy has confirmed. One is the path of rationalism. Here the Cartesian formula would express the identity of *fio* being with logical being, and of the certainty of me with the thought of me, whereby the whole would be reduced to the simple self-witnessing that thought makes of its own being (4). Thought would then be the *absolutoprius*, the *a posterius* placed and conditioned by it. Fichte, going all the way down this path, asserted that it is not the "e" or man who thinks, but "knowledge" (5)-the "I" would be but the "phenomenon" of a knowledge reflecting on itself (6). Thus the Kantian view is exaggerated, already according to which all experience or knowledge being conditioned by the categories of transcendental thought, this would apply in the same regards to the "I. Moreover, referring to the Cartesian *cogito*, the subject, because it is affirmed through *cogitating*, would in fact be an object, and those who would place it before thinking in the order of conditions as something substantial would invert the proper relations, would be subject to the dogmatic inclination whereby, "reified" that which is a product of the mental act, of it is made the conditioner of that which actually conditions it - of thought itself.

The second possible interpretation of the Cartesian formula is when it is contested that it has the character of an inference related to logical categories, an inference of which "I am" and "I" are the result. There is, indeed, in rationalism the misunderstanding of borrowing that "I," e which, as mediated, is not the "I," but *Vi ea* or *concept of* the "I," and, properly speaking, the indeterminate form of logical being, of the objective or determinacy as it may be, with that "I," e which is an immediate. But the *cogito* can also be understood in the terms of a pure, direct transparency of the "e" to itself, of a testimony that the "e" makes of itself through thought, which is but in and for it. In that case it is evident that the logical relation. Elementary mentale fact from which the *I*-idea arises is, in fact, already conditioned by the real e, and if in the Cartesian formula referring to ordinary experience it is not permissible to detach the e from thought, even so it does not detract from the fact that the two terms of the correlation are immediately perceived according to a dignity *welle*

(4) R. Descartes, *Princ. philos.*, I, § 9.

(5) Cf. L. Weber. *Vers le positivisme absolu par l'idéalisme*, Paris, 1902, ch. IV, II. p. 161.

(6) *Transzendente Logik* S.W., ed. H. Fichte, vol. IX. pp. 120-1; cf. p. 327.

(7) As for the ego, it would be but the "phenomenon" generated by a knowledge that reflects on itself (op. cit., p. 343).

different. After all, in the position of rationalism, just as in that of phenomenism, one is subject to the suggestion of the mode of spatial representations-which Maine de Biran (7) had warned against so that the spectator is absorbed by the spectacle to such a degree that he forgets his own presence so as not to let what is before him in semblance of a thing to himself. It is an abstract attitude that must be overcome and with a method really suited to its object, with a method that is metaphysical and psychological at the same time. Here the center of an experience, truly unique and basic because it, *while remaining an immediate fact of consciousness and, to tell the truth, the only one that is absolutely immediate - also has the*

ignity of a principle of law in the sense of critical philosophy (8). That possession of the subject as such within thought is not a psychological experience in the strict sense, should one reduce psychology to the contingent play of mental modifications and corresponding functions in a conditioned being, but, in a certain way, a *transcendental experience*. This designation expresses in the closest Tesser way, the "I," the bare principle of the individual, that which is ce said: an immediate datum of consciousness and, at the same time, a principle of law, a dignitye in the order of conditions - *scientia certa et clamans conscientia* - and to it, in our doctrine, must be referred the sense of the Cartesian formula.e

Of course, here we must forestall rationalism, which is ready to make specious objectionse having a purely grammatical basis. Indeed, it is sheer sophistic subtlety to advance that ine saying that the "I" precedes thought, one goes on to define the "I" as a function of a "before-e then," i.e., the category of time, and that in saying that the "I" generates thought, one resorts toe the category of causality, so much so as to fall into a petition of principle: the notes of bothe theTanterity and of being a cause proceeding from logical categories. Once again the "e" defined *as* antecedent or *as* cause would not be the conditioner, but the conditioned, a thoughte or content of thought, and yet not an in-self but a "phenomenon" (9). Truth, on the other hand, ise

(8) *Oeu res de Maine de Biran*, ed. Nauville, voi. I. p. 39.

(9) Cf. M. de Biran, *Oeu res*, cit., voi. Ili, p. 408: "This original fact of consciousness and existence rings together the conditions c the characters proper to the principle of human science. Caught in ourselves, it implies that feeling of evidence, which cannot but e reflected in all truths which derive their certainty from it. Indeed, how could there e any truth, if it were permissible or possible to question for a moment only this first immediate internal experience which manifests the /o to itself, as a free, identical, permanent force or cause, before, during and after the transient acts or sensations which it determines or which accompany its exercise? Force, internal causality, free activity, like the person existence it constitutes, is but a primary, immedi te apperception, a fact of feeling. To discuss this fact, to claim to deduce it from some prior principle, to seek its how, is to ask what one knows or not to know what one asks."

(10) It is the o jection raised y Brunschvicg [*L'expérience humaine ei la causalité phy- sique*, Paris, 1922, n. 18-19] in referring precisely to that passage of Maino de Biran. that those determinations belonge toeae figurative andesymbolicmode of expression.e The antecedence ofthe cannot have anything properly temporal, just as es speaking of the as the determining principle, as of the power of the act, the logical category of causality is not used.e Instead, the one and the other element are givenedirectlye in termse of eaesuperrationale xperience which, strictly speaking, admitse of no designation.e Ego, which is the I, has no enames, precisely because any name would come to e from a category of thought and yet would e qualified outside of at, which, as the power of the act standing beyond all thought, scapes all definitione and es nothinge bute/. Subject, in which categories exist, it existse only ine itselfe and yete ite is not affirmede (note predicated) of anything.e It is not that it cannot but must not be said, so that the best suggestione could still be givene by the Eckhartian: "Ein Nichts, ein unsagbares Nichts: ich bini" (10).e It was already a well-known theme of Upanishadic speculation that, that the "seer is not se n, the hearer is not heard, the thinker is not thought, the knower is not known.... et is your selfe (âtmd), the immortal, eternal ruler (11). That the pure subject cannot, itself, ever fall under a "knowledge," this proceede analytically from etso wne definition.e Precisely and the fact, that the thinkinge as such never being able to be thoughte cannot be said to be more, properly, thought ande thate nevertheless ate verrye pointe thoughte cannot prescind frome ite ande make itselfe autonomous without losing all meaning ande dissolving into nothingness, precisely and this rests the axiom, that the "I," while manifesting atse itself ande the act that eposits logical being ande defines the lement of the objective (the "cogito" suche ase or A accordinge toe rationalistic interpretation), is strictly irreducible to it.e

The "I," of course, is not "known" (*who* would know it?) and one cannot *say say* "what"e (*what*) it is and what can be known and said is not the "I"; but with respect to it one can doe something better than to think or "know" it, that is, one can *possess it, be it*, in absolute

immanence. Thus the bare principle of the individual is not a mystery, something elusive and impenetrable, a "noumenon" and an unknowable in the bad sense of transcendental phenomenalism. And exactly the opposite, it is the evidence itself, and for it the ancient saying can be repeated: οἷον τὸ ΟΚÓΤΟτ; οὐκ αὐτο, ΟΚÒΤΟC; ἐοικὼς, ἀλλὰ' ὅρι οὐκ ἐστὶν ([RCC (12).e

3. The extrovert tendency that paralyzes the deepest instance underlying idealism needs to be snared in every recess. Thus, after establishing, through the examination of the Cartesian *"cogito,"* that the bare prin-

(11) "A nothing, an unspeakable nothing: I am!" (Ed.).

(12) *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-upanishad*, 111, 7, 23.

(13) "Is darkness is not darkness in itself, but by the fact that it is not light" (Ed.).

ciple of the individual is not to be identified with thought, it must be affirmed that it is not to be identified either with *V self-consciousness* should this be understood to mean something other or more than the absolute, unutterable immanence inherent in the point: "I am." There is in fact a self-consciousness which in transcendental philosophy does not correspond at all to the subject, but, again, to the generic form of the objective or determinacy, so that the development given to that philosophy by neo-Hegelianism, up to the assertion that self-consciousness is nothing if not the mere reflection of the particular contents by which consciousness is gradually determined (13), is entirely consistent. Against this it must be posited that the self is not "self-consciousness," but rather—as a Stinner would say—possesses *self-consciousness*: self-consciousness is itself a still being outside itself, a seeing exteriority, a seeing a correlative manifestation to a given order of qualifications and conditions, which it assumes, whereby there is a traditional speculation which has rightly seen in self-consciousness taken in this sense the first principle of self-limitation. These considerations are not superfluous because of the fact that with self-consciousness the trick of rationalistic criticism, just mentioned above, has been repeated: reversing the relations, self-consciousness as a transcendental principle has been understood as that by which the individual is (14). No wonder then, that we come to the conclusion (the image is Schelling's own), that self-consciousness is like a lantern which cannot illuminate everything before it in the system of knowledge, but which leaves behind it the thickest darkness. *The center remains empty.* Again, here it is a matter of banishing abstract entities and, practically, turning away from *looking at* oneself to penetrate and hold oneself in pure, central being. But this is scary, what one is usually afraid of. Schopenhauer says exactly that at the point where one sets aside the thought attached to the categories that determine the order of "phenomena," the world as representation, and tries to penetrate the essence of the thing, one recoils as if before an anguished darkness.

Moreover, when the point of immanence is not placed at the principle, one will never know how to arrive at it again. By abstraction, from that, from the unnamable self, one will, yes, be able to deduce a "self-consciousness in general," but the reverse step is absurd, and the ultimate instance will then be a world of Apollonian semblances in the sense given by Nietzsche to this term: a world, that is, detached from the deep, intensive, irrational substratum of reality, and already bound to the fundamental antithesis that only the laying bare of the pure principle of the self arouses.

(14) 13) Cf. G. Gentile, *Summary of Pedagogy*, Bari, 1914, vol. I, p. I, ch. III, c. *General Theory of Spirit as a Pure Act*, Pisa, 1916. *passim* (now both in: *Complete Works*, Sansoni, Florence, 1942).

(15) W.J. Schelling. *Der transzendente Idealismus*, S.W., ed. 1858, vol. III, p. 374.

The "*cogito*" interpreted in rationalistic terms thus expresses, as a *sense*, the formula of *non-centrality*: the "I" is not self, but *thought of* self, does not possess itself, but is apprehended, is to itself imagine, representation (15). But this and, by and large, the basis on which modern critical philosophy developed. Having identified certainty with logical resistance, the system of reason, understood as the set of conditions for "objective" knowledge, was what absolute being was borrowed with: a conjuncture, this, that appears sharply already in Kant. As for the subject, it, on this path, was to coincide without residue with the process of the making of knowledge (16). And since immanence meant conditioning things through "thought in general," considering it as the ultimate term in the series of conditions, so it becomes clear what we have already hinted at, namely, that from Descartes onward the progress of this philosophy coincided with that of a progressive negation of the principle of the "I," eppurò, in fact, with the construction of the worst of transcendences. The condition of the possibility of objective knowledge is, in this framework, the translation to the Kantian "I think," a principle that takes up all categories but which, it, inexorably eschews possession, external, as c. as impersonal thinking, to itself.e

As a development of what was alluded to earlier: the exit from a world of empty forms implies a *distinction*, that is, admitting that something exists *beyond* thought and the being that is proper to it (*esse essentiae*). For that philosophy that identifies the self with thought this "beyond" becomes something transcendent, the very assertion of which leads to obvious aporias (such as already the case for the Kantian noumenon). Instead, the present doctrine, by identifying the "I" with this "beyond" from thought makes it the immanent absolute, the nearest evidence, and exorcises for real the present, if logically elusive, phantom of the "thing-in-itself"; as transcendent, if at all, it understands thought, when, under the pressure of problems that cannot be solved, this is hypostatized into a universal thought resting on itself.e But since our doctrine denies this abstraction, it is possible for it to maintain the distinction demanded by any *philosophy of the real* at the same time as the critical standpoint of immanence.e

As for transcendental philosophies, it can be noted as of now that they, by their very nature, are compelled to admit more or less explicitly certain *a priori* determinate facts, which they do not and cannot explain, which they assume de facto and on which, on the other hand, the possibility of their various deductions is based. (I) their point of reference being the rational principle, which, essentially, is determination, such doctrines suddenly awaken among the determinate forms of "pure thought" and, if they are consistent, must repress any vague vagueness of explanation as to their genesis and

(16) 15) For an understanding of "cogito" thus interpreted as a way to corruption c to 'i- norganicity. see C. Michelstaedter, *La persuasione e la retorica*, Genoa, 1912, pp. 67- 77.

(17) L. Weber. *Kers lepositivisme*, cit. c. VII. p. 334.

to the necessity that informs their specific determinacy, since, given the premise, this would imply a vicious circle, any explanation of those forms having to presuppose and use them. Being, causality, space, time, etc., having become, as categories, ultimate presuppositions of all thought, have their explanation in their very existence, that is, they are because they are (17), that is, they are without a why. But if this is the case, why should the transcendental presence of a given category be more comprehensible and "rational" than the flashing and determining of any phenomenon of nature? As it has already been said: empiricism and rationalism belong, *mutatis mutandis*, to the same level of consciousness. One moves one degree further inward, one speaks of the "category" (i.e.: one *must* speak of it, if the problem of critical philosophy is to be solved), but the categories being inseparable from the matter of that experience which they imprint and make such that of it a science is possible, the consciousness of the I is resolved without residue in the light whereof the spectacle of things becomes (= phenomenalism). Indeed, a Weber goes on to consistently admit that if one were to ask for an explanation of the elements of knowing, one should with equal reason also ask for one for all the particular syntheses of experience, and since he believes that a "transcendental deduction" would lead to an order of determinations which, in the final analysis, would itself need to be explained as much as the very order of actual experience to which it is substituted (which, at the level of rationalism, is equally accurate), he believes he can infer, that the whole system of knowledge, in its various articulations, is absolutely explained ... in itself and for itself; where the legitimate conclusion would be that such a process is but a kind of incomprehensible dream by which the "I" passively allows itself to be dreamed; of which, however, one will have to study the meaning precisely in order to the possibility of its eventual "being for the I."

In particular, and with some relation to what has been said about the principle of self-awareness, one should not be deluded by those systems

(18) 17) See L. Weber, *Kv.s le positivisme*, cit. c.. VII. XX. pp. 387-8: "By severing the last connections of experience with a rude reality, we left the concept as such unexplained, and we used it as a category, that is, as an irreducible mode of the idea by means of which existence is given in the statement of it"; c. VII. II. p. 326: "The results were obtained by the deductive method, starting from the principle of necessary being and making abstraction of the *given*, but excluding the irreducible and indispensable data for all knowledge and all reflection, which are the categories mentioned above (being, space, time, and cause)."; c. IV, XVII. p. 199: "How it (causality) appears in knowing, that is, how it becomes the essential object of the existence of the non-ego which acts and develops independently of the ego, we shall not, likewise, attempt to explain, this being an element of Knowing and a primary datum of reflection. To explain the origin of the notion of cause would be to want to explain science and consequently being: a nonsense"; c. IV, XVII, p. 198: "Being coincident with the idea, and the idea implies the whole series of its modes and further determinations. Science is a system of ideas, it is therefore, too close-knit, knows, a prime datum and, indeed, the only irreducible datum." Only Weber is cited as the one who most honestly thought through to the end the premise of rationalism. But the quotations could easily be multiplied.

idealistic, in which one has the air of not presupposing that F "E"; since the "I" in them is already *Vi ea* of the "E," and as Bergson noted it in the case of Fichte's philosophy, the deduction of categories from the unity of the pure thinking act succeeds only insofar as there is already condensed potentially and surreptitiously all that was intended to be deduced and which already reflects the form of the intellectual processes (18). Thus it arises for example as a truth in itself self-evident this, that the "spirit is." Senonché the evidence recognized to such a proposition is immediately transferred to a determinacy, which in itself is not at all self-evident, at which there are various others equally conceivable and which therefore cannot be justified without connection to a sufficient meaning and reason. To cite just one example, the spirit does not "is"-it is said if from an in-self there is not detached a per-self, which, however, must recognize itself in that in order to fulfill itself, in the end, in an in-self and per-self: *Fe* "being of the spirit is to alienate itself from itself and in this alienation from itself to realize itself as self-consciousness, reflection, return to itself." And so on. Now who does not see that in this is given much more and, in one, much less than what is meant when one apodictically admits that "spirit is"? For one does not have the mere power of the subjective but its determination according to such a law, that its explication seems, at a dipresso, capable of containing and explaining *a priori* the whole system of the real, but which nevertheless is in no way understood analytically in the concept of that power; and it is such a determination that one would like to pass off as a first principle, without reflecting that every determination is that given determination by a law, which in turn constitutes a problem as to the foundation of its being this and not another (19).e

As a matter of fact, such paralogsms are not felt because the law or formation assumed as a priori is the hypostasis of the mode of human thought, which to the rationalist, by the wholly empirical suggestion proper to that which is habitual to us, appears inherently self-evident; whence it is that the consummation, effected by some, of the ontological residues of Hegelism in a pure "theory of mentality" is certainly informed by coherence. This, however, does not change anything: in the theory of mentality itself, the statement "the spirit is" only highlights more directly the aforementioned situation, only weans-

(19) J. Lagncau, *Écrits*, Paris. 1924. p. 301: "This purported element (Fichte's *Fio*, Lachclier's idea of truth) being an idea is compounded, and all the more so, as far as it seems to be origin . By positing it, one does not make a hypothesis, it is a *fact that* one goes to express. Any purported deduction that will then be made will again be nothing more than a fact that will be recognized: now, either the connection will be arbitrary, and then there is no deduction, or the new fact was included in the first, and then a simple analysis is made."

(20) 19) Thus Hegel, in his *Phiiomenologie des Geistes*, gives no foundation not only as to why, in general, subjectivity *must* arrive at the form of the concept, but as to why to so much is necessary "a long way" (ed. Lasson, p. 19) c, then, precisely *that* described (which certainly does not present itself to the mind to the exclusion, as inconceivable, of any other different), with *those* given stations being reconnessc to a "nature of the soul" (p. 55).

lure that one *accepts* the passive subjection to a nature (that of human mentality), rather than challenging it in value & explaining it (20). Hence, it is only because one has first removed one's eyes that one does not realize that the "immanent law of thought," the "dialecticism of the Spirit," and all other such *names* conceal, at their bottom, a mystery: and mysteries are not solved by *perden- dovisi*.

Regarding then the argument, that it is contradictory to demand an explanation of rationale nature, because it could only be given as a function of the forms of this same nature, we repeat that it only holds true on a certain plane, that is, given the inner attitude that precisely defines rationalism. Certainly, when the extreme instance was the cognitive form, no *deduction* of knowing would be possible, but only an *exposition* of it, and the way to understand the genesis and *meaning* of the various categories would remain precluded. But this closed circle action can open it. In this regard Bergson points out, with an image, that in the event that one had never seen a man swim, one could perhaps say that swimming is an impossible thing, for to learn to swim one must begin by holding oneself on the water, and consequently already know how to swim. And the reasoning will nail you to dry land. No different is the self-barring of rationalism. It is a knot that should not be untied, but rather cut (21).

Lagneau is credited with a scheme that, apart from some transpositions, can be used by us as well. He points to a first phase, in which "pure reason," so to speak, underwent itself: it was spontaneously in action, it was awareness and science of its objects, not of itself. This applies to ancient metaphysics (22). The second is the stage of critical philosophy, in which if it comes to such self-awareness, pure reason nevertheless stops at a *noting* of its own forms, laws and structures, does not rise to a free, active *understanding* of them. Beyond this, Lagneau points to the further stage of what he calls "moral idealism" (or "ethical rationalism"); here the idea of a metaphysics is presented, in which objective pure reason comes, in the necessity that is intrinsic to it, to be explained by means of subjective practical reason, that is, by means of will and freedom. This, for us, means properly: by an ascent back to that deep center of the self, where logic is in the form of a will in act, pure reason itself and the whole of its forms will be explained and we will free ourselves from it by showing precisely that neither its objective products (external experience, nature, the "world as representation"), nor its intent for us

(21) About the idea of "*natural* laws of reason - nature" at the root of the subjective, see J.G. Fichte, *Sittenlehre*^ cil. voi. IV, I, 1, § 7, p. 101.

(22)) H. Bergson. *L'évolution créatrice*. Paris. 1920. p. 210 (tr. it.: *L'évolution créatrice*, Milan 1949).

(23) Of course, considered from the modern critical point of view: here does not enter into question the view that the ancient metaphysics are justified in function not of what in them is. in general, "philosophy," but of what it brings back to superrational and traditional content.

transcendentale
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But this overcoming of the system of reflection, the extent of which Lagncau did not fully realize, has for its first condition the realization of the naked principle of the individual;e something that will have to be further specified against another possible limitation.e

4.eRecently a current of thought has arisen whose organ would seem to be precisely thate direct assumption of what is deeper than the reflexive forms, mentioned just now. et is the philosophy of the irrational, of "Life" and intuition, largely defined as a reaction againste rationalism c intellectualism. Now, one would not know how to adjust to the need, from whiche the problem of value arises, should one stop at this plane and confuse the bare principle of the individual with what such conceptions suppose to be the ultimate fund of reality, *VUrgrund*.

Here we can consider the same view as Schopenhauer, who, as is well known, beyond the dimension of the "world as representation," conceived that of the "world as will." He notede that beyond what is given through the categories of reflection there subsists, in the speciale regards of one's own being, the possibility of having a direct and essential knowledge, concerning no longer the "phenomenon," but the being, the in-self. And what is then revealede to us would be the *will* (properly: the "will to live"). And just as the will thus turns out to be the inner side of what is outwardly presented as our body, likewise, by extension and analogy, one can suppose a will as the background, also, of what is my representation of other beings, of nature and the world in general, and concludes in the affirmation of a cosmic will as ae universal essence.e

Now, already as a method here there is a deviation, and not an integration, of the transcendental philosophy of immanence. In fact, integration would have taken place only if ine the function of will were understood the logical forms through which the spectacle of the world is defined; instead, the world of such forms or categories is, for Schopenhauer, detachee from that of will, it arises almost by jato, to phenomenalize it - and it is not as the root of the transcendental "E" or the Kantian "e think" that will, by Schopenhauer, is conceived: we have recalled that, for Schopenhauer, there is no apperception of the pure subject. Instead, the xperience of which he speaks concerns a very low order and, after all, not at all empirical; ite refers to the organic world of one's corporeality. For the *central* sense of *the self*, there is noe place in the Schopenhauerian conception. Individuality itself in it is reduced to a fragment or episode of the general will to live projected outward as the in-self of the natural world. Indeed, the illusionistic theme of the Kantian ego-phenomenon is retained, since the will would appeare in the form of individuals only illusory- menle. by the work of the categories that produce the "world as rappre

sentation." In any case, what was found by converging in oneself is to be said to be something that lies more below the person as an individuality than beyond it. In fact, even in simple psychological terms there is already a misunderstanding when Schopenhauer speaks of "will"; to express what he means we should instead use the term craving, instinct, desire, impulse. And this not only has nothing to do with the naked ego principle, but not even with what is normally, in everyone, the will as such. Rather, it is, properly, what in certain circumstances of life is affirmed when we give in and what its will fails.

Therefore, with slight transposition of terms the same applies to the other entities foregrounded by the antintellectualist and irrationalist philosophies. And wanting to interpret transcendently what they have found, it may be said that these are hypostases reflecting what, in terms of experience, is the sense of the terms *J A f* the formula *X or A J S* on the plane of pure factual existence of direct, indistinct promiscuity with the object. That is, we want to say that, in order to get an idea of the kind of the act by which at a given level experience becomes for the self, the nearest suggestion—and we shall see this below more in part—would be given to us precisely by what the irrationalists understand as the principle of "Life" or the "will to live." Such philosophies thus simply highlight the background of the conditioned world, at a particular affective moment due to the plane in which they end. And when they substantiate that element or background in the terms of an objective universal force, they discard, they betray the principle of immanence.

Therefore, in this regard, too, it is necessary to create distance: in the incontrovertible compulsion of "Life" and of the Bergsonian *vi tal clan* itself, there is nothing that is or has the character of *lo*; one does not have, in this, the point of the infinite and unconditioned transcendental, but rather of that which draws its own reality from determinacy and act in the sign of an extroversion, after all, no less execrable than that which defines rationalism. Of *ae* having in itself, according to possession, its own principle, here in no way can be questioned. Even to raise to concept what is only an obscure sensation of a wholly empirical order of "psychological," one always comes to this fundamental opposition: on the one hand, the act, in which the possible is identical with the real; on the other hand, that in which the real is contingent with respect to the possible, in which, that is, a point of selfhood, of actual possibility dominates the act as the extreme, unconditional reason for its being and its note being, its being thus or its being otherwise. The relationship between the plane of "Life" and the plane not only of the self, but already of the true will, must be conceived in these terms. Thus, it is not in the "vital" sphere and that of the irrational that one must pass, when one feels the insufficiency of mere mental forms. Rather, this sphere constitutes a barrier to what is the true transcendental principle. For those who hold fast to the exigency, from which idealism has derived its life, the only

positive contribution of this current is thus that already indicated: not the conception of a "Life" or will to live external and transcendent to the individual, as the substance in itself of what the "world as representation" is, but rather the possibility of indicating, in the instinctive and necessitated "Life" and will to live, that which makes one understand the sense or mode of transcendental activity, whence precisely much of the "world as representation" derives. But as long as the "I" is entangled in this activity, and even more so where it experiences it directly in the subjective forms in the strict sense of the "vital" world of instincts and desire, the problem of value is not yet posed and the seat of the center is still deserted.

A particular variant of irrationalism is the *philosophy of intuition*, advocated mainly by Bergson. It is therefore necessary to understand ourselves about what intuition is. Correctly, it is but the mediation in the form of immediacy and the gnosological correlative of the most elementary degree of the existential datum in no way this datum resolved. The latter, if at all, should be brought back to what medieval philosophy called *intuitio intellectualis* and which lies in a direction precisely opposite to that of the irrationalist method. That method, after all, expresses a regression of the intellectual element into the sensible, indeed infrarational, on the basis of a kind of melting of the center of the ego, of which the Bergsonian conception of "duration" is the most characteristic expression: a regression conducted to such a point, that some representatives of that philosophy have ended up associating "Life" with the unconscious or subconscious. If Leibniz conceived to be, the "sensation" element of a perception, the differential or residue of indistinctness in it for the intellect, modern intuitionism is precisely to this subrational element grasped where it presents an exaggerated intensiveness that addresses it exchanges its confused immediacy for the transparency proper to value and meaning. In terms of ancient Hellenic traditions, it might well be said that this is the way to the "underworld," not the way to the luminous "upper world."

About the views set forth in this section reference can be made to the so-called "philosophy of existence" (*Existenzialphilosophie*) (23). In such a philosophy the concept of "existence" approaches what was defined by us in the beginning as the elementary datum of empirical consciousness. Human existence is conceived by them as the unity of the implications of the relation to self and the relation to other: it is the physical and individual presence of the *I* in time and the conditioned world, which is simultaneously the metaphysical presence of being, the transcendent, the unconditioned, and the not-this in the self. In

(24) The following considerations have been added to the present second edition. In regard to certain correspondences with the problematic already formulated in the first edition, which came out in 1927, it should be noted that the author was not then aware of existentialist philosophy, which, moreover, only later was to draw attention to itself (cf. *Riding the Tiger*, Milan¹, 1973, pp. 79-104). (Now: Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome⁴, 1995. pp. 77-96 ed.).

Kierkegaard this is given precisely in the terms of the encounter, as irrational as it is real, of two worlds which exclude and contradict each other at the very point where they imply and witness to each other: "Inexistence" being a center that of individual consciousness and, at the same time, of being, and the "existential" relation being such that it cannot question itself without questioning being, the super-individual, nor question being, the super-individual, without questioning myself. The act, the *presence of the one* is also, according to G. Marcel's expression, the act, the presence of the other.

Such philosophy gives special emphasis to what has been expounded by us so far when it emphasizes the *principle of the implication of the positive in the negative: the limit directly implies the having no limit, the finite implies the non-finite, lack the fullness, absence the presence*. Jaspers points to the dialectical situation by which failure itself (*das Scheitern*) tells of possession, short of a transposition of plane of consciousness, and formulates the principle of being already present in the search what is sought - as if to repeat the well-known mystical saying, "You would not seek me if you did not already have me in you." In Sartre's formulations, moreover, the notion of functionality of "utility" is used to reinforce a similar view, to show that freedom, the unconditioned, is implied at the very point where everything to which, abstractly, one ascribes conditional character can concretely make itself known.

All this thus reproduces and reinforces the ideas set forth in the previous section; only we, in addition, have shown that the relations of implication can already be justified in terms of transcendental philosophy and of simple phenomenology-existentialism, and this regard, is characterized only by the special emphasis on the emotional moment and lived experience. However, there is a relevant divergence between existentialism and the theory of the absolute individual, a divergence due to the attitude of eccentricity ("non-centrality") prevalent in the former. If the immanent implies the transcendent, the negative the positive, the conditioned the unconditioned, yet existentially this transcendent, this positive, this unconditioned receive the characteristics of *other* than the self. At the same point at which it reveals itself to him as more intimate to self than self, the center of the ego does not fall into it: as more or less happens in mystical and generally religious experience. One Jaspers, for example, will explicitly say that with respect to transcendence one stands in a state of "infinite dependence." This is undermined according to *one direction* what in the existential datum refers instead to the coexistence of two directions, two possibilities, two attitudes, only thus acquiring a meaning of *value*.

For while preserving the duality, the contradiction, why not consider oneself, of the two terms, as that for which *Valtro* by me appears to be rather all that is finite, individual, human? The situation of paradox, of *coincidentia oppositorum*, of absurdity brought out by the philosophy in question in the existential fact is an unstable situation, a situation ideally of transition, which postulates a choice, a differentiation of ways, as according to what we will say further. It cannot be hypostatized into an ontological structure and one cannot stop at it in order to build a system upon it.

This, moreover, is demonstrated in part by the very development of the existentialist current, which beyond the original Kierkegaardian position has differentiated into two branches, one of transcendental intonation (p. cs. Barth), the other of relatively immanentist intonation (p. cs. Heidegger). But both appear only as partial perspectives from that proper to a theory of the absolute Individual.

5. So far, the main domains in which one should not stop when one wants to penetrate the naked principle of the individual have been indicated. Let us assume that this penetration has taken place. Then the antithesis and the problematic element latent in common existence become distinct and actual: and that which is pure power and which, in essence, remains always and only such, in contrast to the "other" excited by such a movement becomes susceptible to assume given notes. Such notes are therefore something relative, but these proceed from the very nature of empirical consciousness, which is structurally determined by duality. However, this certainly does not mean that said notes are nothing more than logical determinations.

To tell the truth, even here presents itself the conjuncture proper to a transcendental philosophy that, at one and the same time, wishes to be a system of experience. logical deduction leads to positions, the rational necessity of which stands only to indicate the direction of possible internal acts, and where these occur, the corresponding ideal contents are freed from mediation and it happens that the logical notes take on a mere symbolic value: they no longer *construct* a concept, but rather *translate* an experience of which they are only evocative signs.

That said, the main points that, transcendently, *must be* thought of for the subjective in its opposition to the "other" are as follows. While the "other" appears coine temporality, the subjective is defined as the point of the *elerrtopresent*, as that which neither was nor will be, but, simply, is, nor ever leaves that condition. Of this the transcendental justification is that the possibility *experience of* a time (thus also of all that is development, sequence and history) postulates a point that is freed from becoming; without such a point, the relation of a "before" to a "then" could not take place, nor the *transition* from one to the other; instead, there would be a multiplicity of present atoms, each closed within itself, which in no way could give rise to the experience of a continuous temporal succession. And then it is evident that where one considers the temporal sequence as change, as a succession of the different, as "alteration" in the Aristotelian sense, the subjective remains posited, in particular, as the unchanging or permanent, under a similar consideration.

11 third point is *simplicity* or immateriality or inextensiveness: it is, this, the transcendental correlative of the experience of space, that is, of the "other" or being in its spatial quality, in its quality of "very" or discrete. Spatial perception is always a synthesis of the very, which for its possibility presupposes, on the subject's side, the intaxial one c itruna- e

ferial as the form and substratum of every relationship, as the principle that resumes quantitye in a quality.e

The subjective has, in particular, the note of *uziZc/7à*; as pure presence of self to self, it is without a second, it does not admit multiplication, it is inconvertible, it is without similars. etc is the absolute "this" which, irreducibly, is also the "not-this," when by "this" is meant precisely the mere existential quality, of whatever order it is: that which characterizes the tangible, the measurable, the numerable. This requires no special elucidations, returning to the already exposed, generic identity-difference condition of the relation.e

In its own right, it could be considered the note of simplicity in its special aspect of *incoercibility*; here there is no need to stop, since it does not define itself, properly, in antithetical terms. It is clear, however, that what is simple is also impenetrable and incoercible.e Already the word *individuimi* expresses that which cannot be divided; an external action, should it be conceivable, to really impose itself on its absolute "no" would have to break it, that is, destroy it. In addition one must remember the fundamental note already indicated for the naked power of the self, that of indeterminate possibility. Hence, if on the one hand, with reference to the transposition of the most elementary gnoseological condition, the entry into the closed sphere of the ego is always conditioned by an assent, on the other hand, beyond this formal element as a common denominator, the ego, according to the note now indicated, can make its own the indomability of water: that of being able to assume, in principle, any form, while remaining equal to itself. And this aspect to define the subjective as opposed to what in the Ejective corresponds to the generic moment of necessity of inconvertibility. But this point will have its proper development later, in its proper place.e

One can stop, for now, at these points. *These* logical determinations close the reflecting self as if in a circle. They point out to him what he is by right, and yet what he is obliged to assume - with an image: they point to the throne to which he is destined, without escape and without excuse, on which, arousing himself, he must slumber. It is evident that what Fichte already said about the self from his doctrine may happen here, namely, that the common consciousness will be able to recognize itself less in the characters now defined for the subjective as such than in a piece of lava from a lunar volcano. Others will be able to think instead of the transposition of the attributes referred to divinity. In which case the words of a "seeker of God" should be recalled: "I have gone round and searched everywhere in the world and have not found You: for You were within and I without, You were near me and I was far from myself (24).e

(24) Tauler, *Inst. diw*, Paris, 155S, ch. XXVI11. Same expressions in Augustine. *Conf.*, X, 27.

Section Four

Value of the human condition

Let us take an overall look at the foregoing. Beginning with the empirical state of existence, the conditions of possibility of what in it represents the most elementary datum were studied and, by that route, an irreducible duality was found by *right* - that is, it was postulated. Then the need was posed to make this same duality become *de facto*, in distinct awareness, and it was realized that to this must be laid bare the pure principle of the individual. Thus an act of absolute freedom was postulated and, as a trace for it, gradually indicated that to which this principle must *not* be identified. The *reality of* the original antithesis is correlative to this act of freedom: so that as a datum of consciousness the foundation of opposites as opposites and this act fall at the same point.

But this is the point of *H' à Xoyov*, of the irrational *par excellence*. Empirical consciousness does in fact present determinations. These, simply, *are*, without further mediation. It is the given, to which, in general, the proposition, "There is a world," can be made to correspond. Now as soon as something is posited, the "I" is likewise posited. But if the "I" is posited, determinacy in the form in which it results in empirical consciousness would by right be excluded: it cannot be. No compromise is possible here. It cannot be said that the sense of absoluteness, of infinity, of central certainty to which the individual has awakened is an illusion. Having arrived at it, there is no turning back: because it is known that without it there would generally be no consciousness of determination and because, on the other hand, it would remain to be explained not only how this illusion is possible, but also, and essentially, in what way a creature

titude whatever to the assertion, that what is presupposed by any certainty is an illusion. But, on the other hand, the individual either is, or it is not. To limit him is to deny him. In an integral grasp of consciousness he can only be the absolute individual.

Determination exists; the possibility of determination is convertiblely postulated of the subjective; the essence of the subjective postulates, with equal necessity, the negativity of determination as it is factually actual in it as a given of experience—this is the truth (and the problematicity) of the human condition: in it a violence joins at a point, beyond which there is no going back, being by right and being by fact, value and non-value, absolute and finite, freedom and necessity. In it, consciousness is absolutely ambiguity, oscillation, tension, antitheticalness: that in which it re-lights life is also that for which it suffers death. This is the *fact*, the elementary *ÓTi* - the first "being" to be resolved into "value."

For this purpose let us assume from a new, more formal point of view what the antithesis is based on. In empirical consciousness taken in itself the antithesis *does* not yet exist, that is, it does not exist in the terms that give rise to the antithetical problematicity: it lives there instead according to a formless and irrational unity, in which the restless and obtuse movement, it is the ambiguity of things and of the world of contingency in general that appears as the positive. This irrational unity is broken at the point when with the absolute act of freedom the form of being in law arises in consciousness: this, in investing immediate experience, immediately dissolves the relation and the *ànèipov* is replaced by the polarity of contradictors. Hence the fundamental point, already indicated, where the key to the question is implicit: the coexistence of the contradictors *as such* is not given directly, but is determined against the absolute *ε*: *it is that, in which the act of absolute freedom* (for this corresponds to the posing of the individual) *determines what, in general, may be its antecedent*. It follows that the problem of the "value" of empirical consciousness in general passes into that of seeing whether the connection of the form of the unconditioned posing with the arising, in actual coexistence, of the contradictories of finite and infinite, of freedom and necessity, and so on, can itself, immediately as such, understand itself as necessary, as something that *must* be.

Now this second question is resolved—and positively resolved almost by itself. To say that the act, by which the individual arises, is unconditioned is to say that it can occur and also not occur and that these opposite possibilities coexist *a priori* absolutely, in an indifferent unity. The antecedent of the act, as an act of freedom, can thus only be thought of as a coexistence of contradictors—of being and non-being, of value and non-value. Therefore, it is clear that this antecedent in and of itself does not exist: it is antecedent only as a function of the act; this act is the true antecedent, and the antecedent is instead a consequent, which depends on it. However, given that the act of freedom occurs, it goes to connect

tervised in the manner of an inseparable correlative, its presence in the other sensitizing - and almost dramatizing - that acts as a witness of itself, precisely as an unconditioned act. Therefore, the fact that the absolute posing of the individual is connected to the consciousness of an antithesis, *is not a fact, but a "value"*, the connection can claim the characters of freedom's absolute relation to itself as meaning, as possession and as act.

The problematicity discovered through critical analysis of the conditions of immediate experience, while it seemed to represent an inexplicable violence, is thus what immediately elevates the empirical state of existence to the value of a meaning or symbol, to a thing that is in fact only because it is in law. The elementary "given" - the fact that "there is a world" - thus remains elevated to elementary value: in the conflict and unity of contradictors, the individual recognizes a moment internal to his or her own posing - *the reflection of the 'unconditionality of this moment*, which becomes real only *if* and insofar as this posing is real. But, on the other hand, the oscillation of certainty between being and non-being cannot be fixed or hypostatized. The act itself as such, as its affirmation, is also its negation: it can only be maintained as an "abstract ideal moment"-the affirmation of the individual formally contains it already resolved. And it is this resolution that now needs to be understood when it has to apply not only formally, but also in a real, existential sense.

The first element of freedom as such is the indifference of posing and non-posing: hence the justification of the correlative as a pure form of the contradictory and the problematic and its connection to freedom itself in a value relation. Now this connection is a synthesis, which postulates a further individuation. Beyond the element, now indicated, of freedom, there is in fact a second: *value, which has the fatality of the positive, is not value'*, the absolute and freedom, if *they are only* and unconditionally absolute and freedom, are neither one nor the other. In a word, the infinite, which is truly such, is not that which is passive to itself and which is gripped by its infinity almost as by a fatal nature therefore not as by a perfection but as by the powerlessness of being other than what it is - but rather that which is unity of the finite and of the infinite, that which is the lord and power of Yes and No; in accordance with this, the value which is value, is *Indifference* of value and non-value. Thus, beyond the first moment of contingency, inherent in the fact of posing or not posing in general, there is a second, relating to posing as affirmation and posing as negation. This second moment provides the further individuation that was sought for the synthesis between problematic antecedent and affirmation and the resolution of that in the latter.

Value, then, as an unconditional relation, is twinned into a positive and a negative, to which it is presupposed as indifference. Now the

moments of subject and object, of being in law and being in fact, of in finite and determinacy, finally: of freedom and necessity co-present in empirical consciousness, beyond the formal side of contradiction are precisely the reflections of this twinning. But by now the act takes place: the one point is affirmed, the other denied; the contradiction is resolved: it no longer exists except in the fact that the affirmation is absolute transparency of freedom - namely, that the affirmation of freedom is such only if it implies the possibility of the affirmation of non-freedom, and vice versa; that in the possibility of the affirmation of necessity an original freedom is also postulated. Relationship experienced as affirmation or negation. Two opposing meanings of the same element precisely, so that this element is only and purely itself - e-unconditioned - and in such an understanding, that if the one, rather than the other, is brought to actuality and reality, this can only be explained as a function of an *absolute arbitrium* - this is the perfect consummation of the antecedent of the act, and therefore of the situation of experience given in value.e

The "I," as an individual, may also not be: and this non-being of his is not a fantastic essence or antemond, but rather the very immediacy of the given life, the obliquity of the "thing that is and is not," the receipt of non-value in unity with its obtuse and latent contradiction; all this, *in itself*, is negation of the individual, is that *πῶς* which, according to Parmenides' word, by no violence can ever be made to rise to being: non-being which, as is clear, is such insofar as it is "being," insofar as it is empirical existentiality in which consciousness is deepened and resolved without residue - in other words: insofar as it is devoid of the relation by which it is non-being, since this would resolve it into contradiction and give rise to the conjuncture, of which we have spoken.e

Beyond indeterminacy, by an unconditioned act the individual can give himself to himself.e In this the element of value is placed: this positivity makes an act of itself, of its unconditioned nature, taking up in itself affirmation and negation as two indifferent possibilities, to which it is equally adequate. Thus arises the point of an *opting*; and the choice is the further individuation of the act of absolute freedom, which has postulated itself in order, precisely, to its being such. In reference to the elements of empirical consciousness, these options can be defined as "positing-in-other-its-own-principle" and "positing-in-itself-its-own-principle"; that is, as the point of identification, remission and dependence on the objective understood as the principle of what is real - as opposed to the point of *consisting* in the subjective and of resolving and burning in it the objective. Here it is essentially a matter of *formal* determinations, of *ways* according to which the relationship is experienced. It should then be remembered that here the two directions apply equally as an affirmation of the self: value is already presupposed, and value and non-value relative to either case are simply species of it, in which it - and the power of the individual - is articulated and conjoined only with itself, as unconditioned.e

These two directions constitute the apriori or fundamental forms, from which any life or experience can be conditioned and can derive its meaning; they generate two universes, which an impassable boundary divides.

It follows from the foregoing how important it is to fix it well, that what the self originally finds as given is the conflict or the problematic of finite and infinite coexisting. Certainly, when one is satisfied with simple concepts one has various ways of making said opposition vanish: one can say, for example, that if refreshed has against it the finite it is not infinite, but is also finite; that the concept of the infinite, thought through, implies, yes, the finite, but only as a mediation which it, positing itself, denies; and so on. Things are otherwise, however, for that infinity which binds itself to the bare experience of the power of the self. Then the contrast manifests itself actual and real at every point of experience, since the world to which man awakens is such that innumerable determinations persist at the very point that within them whales, as the subjectivity to which they refer, the infinite; as also, on the other hand, that real experience of *this*, which has *this* world before it.

The point at which infinity is not an idea, a metaphysical abstraction, but a living reality, has for its correlative determinacy: to each point is given with equal evidence the self as absolute and, at the same time, as limited (1) - such is the irreducible irrationality of immediate experience. Now, we have seen how precisely this contradictory nature is what can resolve the *given* human state of existence in general into a *value*. Instead, philosophies that strive to eliminate the disagreement through dialectical expedients actually end up in positions constituting the net antithesis of the concept of value itself. As a typical example, we can point here again to certain aspects of the theory of the transcendental self, which tie in with the false turn we have already charged in the development of post-Kantian philosophy.

A kind of splitting of the self is characteristic in this philosophy: there is considered on the one hand an "empirical self," on the other a "transcendental self." The two terms are almost never clearly defined, partly because the distinction is sometimes maintained, sometimes, instead, abolished, following reasons of convenience.

(1) Cf. E. Boutroux, *De la contingence des lois de la nature*, Paris, 1921. p. 156: "Abandonning the external point of view according to which things appear as fixed and limited realities, in order to re-enter the depths of ourselves grasping, if possible, our being at its source, we find that freedom is an infinite power. We have a sense of this power whenever we truly act. Our acts do not realize it, cannot realize it, and so we ourselves are not such a power. But it exists, being the root of our beings." Jacobi, *Ueber die Lehre Spinozas*, *Anh.* VII: "I take man as a whole, without breaking him down, and find that his consciousness consists of two original representations: the representation of the *conditioned* and that of the *unconditioned*. They are inseparably connected, however in such a way that the representation of the conditioned implies that of the unconditioned and can only be given in this."

Indeed, this oscillation is what enables the attempt to cheaply reduce the irrational datum of experience.

Meanwhile, it is good to fix a point. The ego, understood as that absolute experience and that bare centrality that besieges everything and, it, by nothing is mediated, is unmultipliable; it has no second. Therefore where one distinguishes an empirical ego from a transcendental ego, if not both, at least one of them must be not an abstraction-an "abstract ego" being a contradiction in terms-but absolutely a nothingness, something of which only the mere verbal expression is held up.

That being the case, would the real self be the transcendental self of idealism? As has been said, the fundamental character of the real self is to be only experience, immediate evidence. Now, such is certainly not the transcendental self, which, far from being an immediate datum of consciousness, is a concept constructed by speculation at a certain point in the history of philosophy in relation to the problem of knowledge. Of course, a note of logical necessity goes with it - one that has already been exhaustively said: reflection posits it as of right, once certain premises have been established. But, to keep strictly within the domain of pure experience, even this "positing" is a mere fact of consciousness, which has as its basis of reality only in the presupposition of the *reality of* corresponding faculties, of the faculties of the individual, which refer back to the directly perceptible self. Thus it is necessary to establish in what actual relation the latter ego properly stands to what he posits and postulates. Generally speaking, it is not possible to reify or hypostatize the transcendental self and evade the problem by saying that only it is, and that what has been called the real ego and of which man can really speak is only an illusion or-to use a favorite term of such a philosophy-an "abstraction." Such a position, again from the experimental point of view, would fall under the criticism that strikes monist dogmatic philosophy when it asserts that only divine substance is real and the world is illusion: one must ask here *who* makes such an assertion, that is, whether it is the divine substance itself that speaks, or an illusory being of the world, and whether the latter is the case, and evident that what an illusory being says will itself be illusory, indeed illusory to the second power. In much the same terms the assertion, that what is real is the transcendental substantiated self, is that the concrete self is an illusion, in the case of a difference between the two is immediately nullified by an intimate contradiction.

So, again: how should one conceive of the relationship between the transcendental self and the real self, with the existential antithesis to which it is bound? Here we observe the aforementioned shift that does not dialectically resolve the antithesis except by ruining the point of value. Willing it or not, idealistic speculation has gone here and there beyond the purely gnosological order by conferring more or less explicitly on the transcendental principle the characters of a power that generates and determines reality. Two consequences immediately proceed from this, however.

The first is a stripping away of the character of *experienceability* from the transcendental "I" to the same extent that it is precisely gone to be understood more than as a logical or ideal principle. Already by Kant, the transcendental function of the "constructive imagination," the legislator of nature, is distinguished from the reproductive imagination, the generator of discursive knowledge which, alone, is attributable to the conscious center of the "I" and which of that only grasps the traces and imprints. For even if, in order to explain the possibility of objective knowledge and, in general, of synthetic *a priori* judgments, one were to admit the formal identity of the process that generates things with the humane intellectual process, or process of knowledge (whereby the categories would be forms not only of this, but also of the object), this is far from aver as a consequence, that it is the humane intellect that *actually* generates (one means: in order not only to *have* essence, to their notice

content, but also to their *existence*) things. But it is clear that here, with the problem about the possibility of communication between these two processes, the gnosological problem arises again intact, which is not solved either by the analogous Thomistic dualism or by the Leibnizian formula of the pre-established harmony. The proper of the idealism of the post-Kantian period is not to make the productive principle of things a transcendence, not to situate it outside the "I," but to recognize it by right as a function of the "e"; but since such a function does not result directly to consciousness, since it does not allow itself to be grasped by the real "I" at the moment of its existentially determining productive virtue, said idealism must understand it as a subjective function, yes, but an *unconscious* or *preconscious* one. The possibility of objective knowledge would then be given by a "reminiscence" of the transcendental cosmogonic moment of the "I"-from whence it can be seen that one only overcomes scholastic Aristotelianism to take refuge in Plato (2). But such a position has little solidity when one does not resolutely address the problem in its new form, that is, as a problem of the relations between the conscious and the unconscious in the ego. And the only possible solution would be:

(2) For quotations on this subject one is spoiled for choice. Cf. J.C. Fichte, *Sittenlehre*, cit., p. 1, where it is stated that the self as identity can only be argued not grasped directly. W.J. Schelling, *Der transzendentale Idealismus*, cit. pp. 527-8: "We place the origin of the so-called a priori concepts beyond consciousness, where the origin of the objective world also falls for us." The philosophizing ego, says Fichte (*Ueber den Begriff der Wissenschaftslehre*, cit. § 7) is certainly not the legislator of the spirit, but its historiographer; for him it is not a question of the real, pure and unconditioned producing, but of finding and raising to consciousness, of consciously repeating in the ideal seat those acts of self as that rationality, which constantly *realiter* a priori the world in an unconscious and necessary way (cf. pp. 82, 242; and *Sittenlehre*, p. 90; and Schelling, *Der transzendentale Idealismus*, cit. p. 397 where he remits the perfection of philosophy to the absolute identity of the series of ideas findings with that of the corresponding real acts. Similarly, in Hegel the cycle of the pure "Logos" of the formative powers of nature, while immanent to the idea, falls in a period prior to individual consciousness). As such, philosophy is a "*transzendente Erinnerung*" ["transcendental recollection"]. W.J. Schelling, *Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, cit., vol. X, p. 95: "*Die Philosophie ist insofern nichts anderes als eine Anamnese, Erinnerung dessen, was es in seinem allgemeinen (seinem individuellen) Sein getan und gelitten hat: ein Ergebnis, das mit bekannten platonischen Ansichten... übereinstimmt*" ["Philosophy is nothing but an anamnesis, a recollection of what one has done in one's general (pre-individual) being: a result that... agrees with known Platonic views"].

denying the unconscious as a distinct principle, speaking of a subconscious rather than an unconscious, and seeing in it a domain susceptible, under given conditions, to be elevated to consciousness, to be made, that is, the object of possible experience, and thus to be aggregated to the realm of what is, properly, Ego: and such, as will be seen, is our view. Otherwise, the theory of "transcendental reminiscence" falls under criticism of the kind of E. von Hartmann's (3): the recalled element not being, as such, already actual in consciousness and the transcendental function not resulting directly, everything can be reduced to a merely verisimilar reconstruction *a posteriori*, that is, to an inductive procedure that would like to be something more only by the addition of an indeterminate and almost mystical feeling. Therefore, the concrete result of this whole order of ideas is as follows: if the transcendental principle is to be posited, one is forced, from the point of view of immediate experience, to pose it as *non-conscious*. The rest falls into an order of postulations, which falls outside those considered by idealism as philosophy: they are postulations concerning possible transformations of ordinary consciousness, thus not the field of transcendental speculation, but that of transcendental action. And that must be set aside here.

And now to the second consequence. What constitutes antithesis as such? It has been seen: it is essentially the assumption of the ego in its radical character of freedom and unconditionedness. This "I," at the level of ordinary experience finds itself caught up in a set of determinations which he cannot reconnect to himself as unconditioned, which he, that is,

cannot say that he willed and willed according to a will that is extreme reason to himself. Certainly, these determinations are not imposed on him *ab extra*, nor are they critically supportable views, such as Berkeley's, i.e., that they are mere images or representations transmitted by another, more powerful mind, such as the divine mind: from the purely cognitive and critical point of view they are posited by him, nothing but the subjective act (= *D A*) being their substance. But precisely in this lies the contradiction: the self in the very sense of its own activity finds itself as dilacerated, the act that forms the basis of its representation of the real is *its own*, but still it is not *him*, since in it he experiences himself as bound to himself, as necessitated, and yet as distanced from the point of the unconditioned with which the naked power of the individual is properly borrowed - he experiences himself there not as a free will, but, to use a term of Secrétan, as a "willed will." Now, if by the criterion of the possible one posits the necessary, if one denies any difference between will and knowledge, if one affirms that the *real* will of the self is to be identified without residue with the objectifying actuality and that, as to that will which undergoes determination as violence and in all that it actually wills, by this it can feel contradicted, broken or disappointed, it is but an "abstraction" or illusion, which precisely in that which imposes itself on it or which disappoints it must recognize its truth and its deepest aspiration - then it is evident that

(3) E. von Hartmann, *Geschichte der Metaphysik*, Leipzig, 1902, vol. II. p. 95. See *Schellings philosophisches System*, pp. 29-51.

the antithesis fails: it fails for the simple fact that this has as a condition the rise of the ego to the consciousness of its pure principle, its, let us say, extranatural element, where, with those presuppositions, the individual is returned without residue to nature, in a confirmation of the oblique coalescence proper to H^aXoyo^{\wedge} , to the "thing that there and is not." Now, exactly this is the solution imposed on the forms of idealistic philosophy, to which we allude (4). The overall result is thus: translation to a transcendental activity to be thought of not only as unconscious or subconscious, hence in-

(4) Cf. J. Royce, *The World and the Individual*, cit., vol. 1, p. 129, cf. p. 121: "The object that defeats my partial and fragmentary will is. *ipso facto*, my whole will, my final purpose, my total determinative and definitively expressed intention"; p. 130: "My will, as it is now transiently incorporated, may fail in some partial way of realization, but only because I fail to perceive my true will entirely." Royce thus turns within a vicious circle: in order to maintain the thesis of his gnoseology, namely that the reality of things consists in their being wholly willed, he is forced to posit not that a ϕ exists because it is willed, according to a free and real will of the self, but rather that the ϕ is willed because it exists: factual existence is thus what should teach what was "really" willed, and thus the *ratio cognoscendi* of the individual will: a will is constructed, which is an embodiment of the negation of the true will. Moreover, if for Royce the true will is that which is recognized in the fact, and if on the other hand for him the degree of perfect determination of the will and the fact of certainty, of knowledge and perfect consciousness are identical, it is clear that the fact becomes the ultimate criterion, and thus that as the basis of such a doctrine it reveals a vulgar empiricism. And again: inasmuch as that which I want according to consciousness, in the case of a conflict with the real, is called unconsciousness or illusion, and inasmuch as a wanting other than that I cannot assume it to be other than unconscious, there is the paradoxical movement, according to which that which is unconscious is placed as conscious in an eminent sense and goes to damn as unconscious that which alone can be held in me as conscious. Cf. for the identity of happened and wanted. G. Hegel, *Phänomen des Geistes*, cit. p. 299; cf. M. Blondel, *L'action* (tr. il.: *L'action*. Florence, 1921, vol. 1, p. 159): "Even when man seems to be subject to antecedent or consequent necessity, these conditions are merely subordinate means to his *secret* aspiration"; and to say that Blondel is wary of the sophistry of "not wanting all that one wants, and persuading oneself that one wants it while one does not want it and knows it" (vol. II p. 205). The most drastic expressions are found in Italian neo-Hegelianism: "The particular individual does nothing, produces nothing, and is not free at all, because, on the

contrary, c limited by his physiological constitution, by the objects that surround him, by the physical laws that he cannot change at his pleasure, etc. ccc. And the will, in the psychological sense, as a faculty distinct from knowledge, can never be productive and free absolutely, because it is limited precisely by knowledge and its data, which it cannot remove, alter or remake. But when from the will and acting of the empirical individual (?) one moves to the category c to the concept of will, then all the limits placed on productivity and freedom vanish, because *doing* and *acting* is also that of the physiological and physiological forces constituting the body c the world of the empirical individual, and *doing* and *acting* is also the knowing c. in short, *all the limitations that the empirical will encountered are instead affirmations and productions of the (...) transcendental will: which, therefore, realizes in itself alone the attributes of freedom c productivity that we had wrongly attributed to the empirical individual*" (M. Casotti, *Saggio di una concezione idealistica della storia*. Florence, s.d., p. 224. The emphasis is ours). It is clear that this

rior to the level of what properly defines personal resistance (first point), but also soe determined in its concept, as to exclude the true point of freedom c from being necessitye identical with freedom, possibility identical with reality (second point). et is in this way thate one is *compelled to* think of the transcendental function if it is to measure itself against th existential order; and in equal measure one is compelled to identify with such a transcendental function the self - which means degrading it, because the objectively determining "cosmic" features of that function do not take away that, as to *mode*, it fallse beyond what is properly subjective. et has thus come to what we properly wanted toe demonstrate. The conclusion is the denial of the very concept of value, a denial that have almost the character of a verdict: the "I" as such *must not* be posited - or, formulating ite differently: *if* the dialectical arrangement proper to this transcendental philosophy is to holde itself up and count as a satisfactory closed system, *then* the "I" must not be posited.e

If it arises instead, this whole contrived construction blows up and f irrational, existentiale antithetical reasserts itself. This irrational *must* be. Those who cannot provoke and sustain itse vision, who cannot assume it, drop the elementary condition for achieving the state ofe *absolute justice*.

Specifically: the*~~t~~ that is the self is neither the "empirical" nor the "transcendental" one spoken of in idealism, one and the other being two concepts constructed *pour causes* and existing only in the philosopher's head. The real self is not the empirical one, because, as have be n said repeatedly, although it lives among infinite determinations, it is not a "thought," ae *posterius*, but the directly apperceived central point that is presupposed to every concept or experience. et is not the transcendental, because, as we have seen just now, this one ise compelled to determine with notations that represent the negation of all that is properly subjective. The genesis of these two fictitious notions and the oscillation between Moon and the other of them has a purely *practical root*, it reflects in the sphere of thought the fact, thate one does *not know how to go beyond a limiline*. One does not recognize it; thus, insisting one positions, one struggles in a dead-end stre t.e

The view of the simplest philosophy, which notes the finitude of the human person and yet goes on to recognize a supernatural dignity in it, sees shining in it as freedom a principle irreducible to any "nature," is more in conformity in this regard to what the theory of the Absolute dndividual~~e~~positse~~ase~~the ~~startinge~~pointe~~of~~the ~~world~~ofevalue-thane~~those~~ "transcendental" views.e

In order to the human state of existence there is a view from the so-called *Corpus Hermeicum*. taken up by Pico della Mirandola: it says that man, conceived in the totality ofe his possibilities, is above divine beings because, together with the immortal nature, to whiche these are bound, he unites the mortal one - this is another way of expressing the coexistence of opposites as an elementary value and the basis of the justification of the human condition.e

"concrete will" defined in similar terms - from! the experiment point of view does tutt one with pure natural necessity, deprived also of a per-sc. so that it *kno*s of itself necessity. On this. we sha l return l ter (sect.

Section Five

The "way of the other" as a value

The determination of absolute freedom—which here will be called "objective option"—can be defined by the principle: "Being is placed in the other than itself." It is, this, a movement, which in its realization develops the principle of *desire, indefinite becoming, necessity* and *phenomenality*.

1.e Not consisting in itself and being only as a function of the object or *other*, here means *desire*. Of that which is other as immediacy of determination we know that the basis is that act, in which between possible and actual there is no distance, interval or discontinuity. To posit the objective as that for which the subjective is, therefore, means absolute assent to such an act and position as a function of it of that which, by right, acts as the center. Thus is defined the passive relation proper to an infinity, which is not that of a determining, but that of a going out, of a being for the activity directed, rushed toward the other, absorbed in it, lost in it. The "I," here, is not (does not pose as) the *Lor* of acting; he instead *asks* himself to! Page; only this, as an objective act or direct spontaneity, gives him confirmation, gives him value. From the self, he fries; the self is posited, is experienced as negation. Hence, *as an experience*, it can be said that here the already indicated formula of transcendental implications is reversed: the truth of the way of the other is *S or A or X*. Such is the substratum of the world of desire and the world as desire.e

2.e However, it is evident that the autonomy of the subject, should it be understood in abstractly logical terms, would immediately contradicte

the very condition for a determinateness or objectivity in general, any consciousness of determinateness implying that of what simultaneously transcends the limit. Thus the result would be not the affirmation but the negation of the objective. But, concretely, the situation is different: the negation, here, is itself an act - a *determinate* and *differentiated* act - which, as such, cannot but go on to reproduce the fundamental duality. Which is as much to say: on the one hand the objective remains confirmed, on the other hand it considering the initial will of the *e* - appears imbued with non-being, because the subjective returns to limit it, to deny it as that absolute and exclusive objectivity which, in this option, incorporates value. The act by which the self denies itself and dissolves from itself implies and confirms its potency; there is, thus, a differential which, inseparable from the objectivity of the object as willed, will only be able to rise eternally, but which, in relation to what is here posited as basic value, is experienced as a deficiency and almost a curse, [immersing the *e* in the object will always leave a residue and in it will live that infinite deficiency of the object as absolute object, in which is reflected the negation which the *I* infinitely seeks to realize in itself. This residue the *e* here turns to push it and resolve it into the objective. But, in it projected, it is deadly fore-determination, which only in being limited according to identity-difference by the power of the ego retains its own nature - and pushes it into instability, change, the motion of "alteration" (of becoming other): it makes it *elusive*. The absolute objectivity-value of the world of desire is thus distanced in the terms of a *future*, it, at every point, lives only as suspended to the next act in which the ego sees its completed realization. But this act, as such, contradicts it and distances it from itself, and here it must point to a new act according to a process that can only be *recurrent*. The way of the "other," or objective option, thus gives rise to a becoming-the absolute object exists only as a *task*, to which only the indefinite process of the objective is adequate. The subjective which, by denying itself, also determines the crisis of the object, in order to resolve the life that flows to it from that denial and which would frustrate its will (as the will of this option) in a new denial - in this restlessness, in this situation of instability, in this *continuous* and indefinite motion must therefore properly be understood the secret and fundamental principle of the becoming of the object. Violating determinacy in trying to give it an infinite content, a deprivation equally invests the subjective and the objective and blurs them into a single destiny through the middle term of becoming according to dependence. Thus, in this option, one no longer has object and subject in opposition: they are united in the transmutation of an actuality that has its reason, its limit, outside itself. The "madness of the phenomenon," the elusive element of becoming, is generated by the affirmation of the absolute object, that is, the object in which the character of the subjects is wanted.

Taking then as a reference the concept of desire, it is in the terms now said that the internal contradiction proper to it in the world of the ego is made clear, that whereby its essential character is inexhaustibility, insatiability, the creation of the potentiality of new desire in the very act of its apparent satisfaction, of its leading the ego to seek itself, to feel, to enjoy itself in the other. & thus acts, in desire, will to life and will to death. And this is the intended counterpart of the crisis of being, of the flight of things, of the being-not-essence that defines the concept and the Stivante; of becoming.

3.11 character of *necessity* proceeds from the fact that remitting the certainty of self to the finding of self in the object implies precisely a *continuous* motion. At the plunging into the objective overpowering fate, whereby the beloved dissolves in the intercourse, each point does not incorporate value other than by remitting itself, repelling itself, procrastinating in the next. Only in this *dependence*, in this infinite *continuity* can the objective option have reality: it implies the principle of recurrence, so that, once posited, the fatality of infinite analysis is presupposed in the act. For a halt, the self would find itself bounced back to that center from which it had turned away as from insufficiency and obscurity, and would experience the contradicted and diluted value, the non-solution of the initial *desire*. Every interruption of the series here would uniformly show that everything before is nothing, that at no point is there a possession but always a wondering. Hence, the self *depends on* action; this is presupposed to him according to an infinite interval: action, which does not apply to its form, but to its matter, that is, which does not want itself for itself, but for its object, so that by its object it is rather to be said to be willed-action, which is like an absorbed demiurgicity in an eternally repelling and eternally devouring *Tévément*. In this respect, becoming is the substance of the self: he, absolutely, *is* (according to an analytic "is") the becoming of forms. Precisely because everything that every division of this continuum leaves behind has positivity and "is" only subordinate to the future limit which, as such, is other; precisely because the initial affirmation is not identifiable with any finite act, where it would rather find its own contradiction but only an indeterminate development of the protracted actuality beyond any assignable limit can make it sufficient to itself; because every present moment has reality and meaning only in its reference to the totality of the process, which is infinite - precisely because of this *necessity is the goddess of this world*. The ego here is nothing outside absolute assent to the actuality that gradually leads it to identify with experience and the flow of it. To detach, to cease and stop for an instant could only precipitate into nothingness - as if by a short circuit - the whole system, and yet also the substratum of it, value as remission.

to the objective, as desire: the value of being that poses itself in the other as negation.e

4.eWhat has been said can also be expounded in terms of knowledge. As an objective moment has previously been indicated that which is proper to thought or concept, so that the option, according to which the "E" remits the certainty of itself to objectivity, can also have this meaning: the "E" is but insofar as it knows itself. The "E," rather than *being* directly as the pure power of the individual, seeks itself as the content of a mediation, of a cognitive or representational act: it posits itself as self-knowledge, wants itself as known. Such a situation can have its dramatization in the ancient myth of Narcissus, in which the fascination exerted by the- the reflected image of Narcissus himself also reprises the moment of "desire" already indicated for this direction, while the symbolic death of Narcissus at the act of going toward such an image and embracing it highlights the autonegation that lies at the root of this movement. As a pattern, it is clear that the subject, as soon as it is known, ceases to be subject and becomes object: what is achieved is thus the negation of what was intended, and self-knowledge, as the adaptation of the objective to the subjective, is subtracted as an act; only the infinite development of knowing, the infinite task according to the already indicated generative recurrence of the *continuum of becoming*, is adequate to it (1). Here, too, the act, instead of giving the self, eternally diverts it from itself, makes it a distance to itself; once again the process mutates with the completeness of an analysis understood as the perennial reaffirmation of the cognitive form on the power of the center, which the infinity, the indeterminate possibility proper to it makes elusive. The principle of dependence, therefore, also presents itself in these terms: self-consciousness is that which is bound to a given content, it is that which flashes with the thought of it; the subject is only such as consciousness of the determinate contents in which the process gradually unfolds by consuming the possibilities which each particular determinacy or representation gradually drops out of itself. Hence derives the note of *phenomenality*. A *flowing consciousness of phenomena* exhausts the self and, outside of it, here there is only Terror of nothingness. Under this view, becoming presents itself as becoming of images and forms experienced in promiscuity of object and subject.e Important point is to establish the relation of this precisely to the extroverted motion of identification, of desire: it is it that makes the center empty, that makes being external to itself, that determines the crisis of both object and subject. A world that was that

(1) Cf. B. Spaventa. *Logic and Metaphysics*, Laterza, Bari, 1911, p. 178: "This saying: I *am* the thinking and not being able to grasp as thinking-this restlessness, this being that is restlessness itself, this is becoming. I cannot grasp the act--becoming, thinking--as high, energy, telling us almost *agens*: the high grasped there is no more act."

of pure, detached contemplation, a world in which determination had before it the pure, impassive presence of the self would be a liberated world, a world under species not of becoming but of being.

To sum up. Value, insofar as it is such perfectly, resumes its own negation, hence the possibility of the affirmative option of the ego and the determination of the power of the ego as desire. To desire this option is to arouse the principle of the alteration and becoming of the objective. Such a becoming incorporates the infinite analysis of the autonegative or self-consuming act and mutates with the transmuting of a consciousness bound to the phenomenal continuum.

With the concept of the objective option, the theory of the absolute individual has a way, then, of accounting for the element of becoming, necessity, and phenomenal consciousness, and, to tell the truth, not even in its mere possibility, but also, and essentially, in its possibility as *value*. Here views that have been considered previously seem to reappear in part, both in the domain of irrationalism and in that of an idealistic pseudo-immanentism. The difference, however, is clearly visible. The mentioned philosophies are *passive* with respect to their principle. Despite dialectical expedients whose insubstantiality we have shown and still will show in the face of a truly presuppositionless critique, they are incapable of mastering it, after all, they have it as a mere fact, as something that is because it is, without being able to rise to the point from which it may appear that what "is because is" i.e. without a why-already as such incorporates an aspect of the *c*-value of freedom so as to be possible not in general but properly as an experience of the self.

Our deduction, if we wish, could also apply as a *metaphysics of the fall*. After all, it was already understood by Patristics that it is the possibility of "falling" that proves the perfection of freedom, and this, as we have seen, is precisely the fundamental point of reference. Except that here, since the creaturely conception is not present and no external criterion is conceivable, all value judgments fall, thus also the possibility of understanding the movement in question, as "falling." Instead, there remains the simple concept of a fundamental possibility of spirit, which is determined in a category, in a transcendental condition for a determined mode of experience of self, world, action and passion. In any case, the important thing is this: that wherever one stops at the notion of becoming, one is faced with a doctrine that is mutilated as far as its higher part is concerned, which is then the inner, pre-cosmic part.

As for correspondences with ancient worldviews, it might be recalled on the one hand the Hellenic conception of the "cycle of genesis" *Kùkλòs* *rrjg yevéaeux*; - on the other hand the Hindu conception of the *samsàra*, or forine current. The second has a special significance due to the fact of its linking in the closest way the idea of indefinite becoming (indefinite, because every action- *karma* recurrently generates new action, and every life new life) with the principle of desire or "thirst"; this, in turn, has relation to the prin-

cipation of non-knowing e

(*avidyà*), predominantly explained in terms of a seeking of self in the other; thus the e fundamental terms of the e

"way of the object" are found quite exactly. The Hellenic conception, in turn, is significant for e the correspondence established between the cycle of genesis, or becoming, and the cycle of e *necessity* and for the very image of the circle. For in the circle as a course there is infinity in e the form of the finite, variation subsumed in the identical; in fact, the becoming of the object, e as an identical repetition of an identical situation, is *analytic* and e

static. Its infinity is the infinity of a uniform division. Again in the Hellenic conception, $\nu\chi\rho\epsilon$ does not mean "matter" in the modern sense but is a notion that is conflated with that of ϵ "necessity," of non-essence with respect to absolute being, of the "other" with respect to the ϵ identical: reflected therein is that differential or residual which the direction toward the object ϵ generates in the latter and which manifests itself as the very power - $\beta\acute{o}\nu\alpha\pi\upsilon$; - of alteration and ϵ becoming. ϵ

According to his concept of the possible dimension of the world, becoming is infinite. ϵ has no origin ϵ has no end. ϵ has no origin, because the extroverted, dependent act, which is its generating element, presupposes at every present point an antecedent; it has no end, because of the fact, already emphasized, of the worth, the act, only in an integration of the indefinite developing series. But in turn the infinity of this closed world, where life always begets new life and the satisfaction of desire begets new desire, where there is no dying because autonegation ϵ losing itself at no point can exhaust itself the infinity of this closed world is conditioned, which is as good as saying: becoming itself has *become*. This is precisely true in transcendental reference, on the plane of the absolute individual's options. ϵ in such a reference, however, an end of becoming would also be conceivable - not at a point in the series, but by a resumption in the, so to speak, pre-categorical stasis.

As to the latter point, the mutilo character already charged in the theories assuming

becoming as an absolutely original given is confirmed the moment they also admit the possibility of redemption. Such is, for example, the case for the Schopenhauerian theory of the "negation of the will" and already for the Orphic theory of an exit from the cycle of genesis.^e For the latter, there is a mitigating factor, however, because of its association of conditional existence with the obscure idea of a "guilt" or "fall" which is to say: of transcendental motion.^e But in Schopenhauer's case it is a blatant contradiction to admit that in the world of "will" a real negation of will can be determined, since here "will" (*Wille*) -- that is, what is incorrectly called so, dealing instead with the lust for life and desire -- is not posited as something "become," as something that, though not a temporal sense, has a "before" as a transcendental condition. And it is because of a similar difficulty that most soteriologic doctrines have had no other way out than to introduce the concept or myth of a "savior" *ah extra* or *ex coelo*, which, *after all*, is but a symbolic dramatization of the power of the absolute individual that conditions the very appearance of the world of becoming with the infinitude that is proper to it.^e

With regard to the principle of recurrence, one could refer, as a logical scheme, to the so-called self-representational systems, such as Dedekind presented them and such as Royce interpreted them speculatively (2). In systems of this kind, *reality*, or actualization of a certain well-defined position in itself, immediately implies its indefinitely recurring repetition, with which it mutates, integration being a limit to infinity. The mode of self-knowledge and the passing of the power of love to desire determines exactly such a situation.

Hegelian philosophy is among those that assume the concept of becoming without, however, giving it a foundation of value, returning instead to a kind of rational necessity of the Spinozian type, which is a mere fiction. The Hegelian scheme is that when thought applies itself to a particular content, in the effort to raise it to the form of the absolute which thought is supposed to be immanent to it, that is, to form an absolute concept, it encounters the negative moment, the limit or "other," for which that is precisely particular. Therefore, that content yields, passes into another in which, through dialectical negation, the limit is pushed back further and further and the initial content extends to take up again and again new determinations. After all, not unlike this is the same Fichtian theory of the opposition of "absolute identity," proper to the first principle, to the finite character proper to the second principle of the *Grundlagen der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre*, or, in the elaboration of this thinker's second philosophy, of absolute being to "formal freedom." But in Fichte things are so unclear, that the original twinning of these two principles is understood as a mystery and associated with that of the detachment of the Logos from God, referred to in the Gospel of John (3). As for Hegel, the problems aroused by the deduction of the first categories of his *Logic* are well known. Here the most reasonable view is that "being" (the first category of the system), taken in itself, cannot remain but as such; if it, as Hegel wants, contradicts itself as a concept, proving also "non-existence" and thus passing into "becoming," this happens because an opposition is already presupposed even if of it only "being" or ("identical" is given as the only visible and declared term. The view, according to which pure being could not be *thought* without thereby going on to transform it into non-being, implies, in truth, both the duality of object (or thought) and of subject (or thinking) in the guise of two opposites, and the effort of the former to find itself in the latter, which, by hypothesis, can only push the object itself into crisis and, in the reiteration of the movement, develop it into indefinite becoming. In a word, there remains presupposed not only the situation of existential problematicity, but also the position of the objective option. All this has a *motus*, not for nothing something that proceeds inevitably from the intrinsic necessity of the Idea. That thinking the pure nonetheless born, of which Hegel speaks, is

(2) Cf. R. Dedekind, *Was sind und was sollen die Zahlen*, § 4; J. Royce, *The World and the individual*, cit., appendix to II you.

(3) J.G. Fichte. *Anweisung zum seligen Leben*, lez. 8.

reality is the effort of thought to think the thinker, whose power resurrects by generating indefinite determinations of logical being: a situation, this, which is far from being such that *a priori* any other is inconceivable, even if here the richness and drama of experienced becoming transcend into a series of simple concepts in the dialecticism of their "deduction." That then, strictly speaking, Hegel, once the aforementioned situation of determination was assumed as the last resort, had no justification whatsoever in ending dialectical becoming by conceiving an attainable absolute concept, where the in-self (the power of the subject) is wholly possessed in the per-self (in the form of the object or thought), this is evident and has been recognized more or less by the neo-Hegelians. For if the spirit, or in-self, already in the initial act finds in the other self, there is not becoming in the proper sense, but rather something like the divine trinity according to Athanasius' conception; and if, on the other hand, it finds an irreducible residue, a $\nu\chi\eta$, it is not understood how the situation can at a given point—which always the same law conditions—vary. A limit of the series, as well as an absolute and numerable determination of the terms it accomplishes, is actually thinkable only in another world, in that corresponding to the other option of the absolute individual.

For further reference not on the plane of philosophical interpretations but on the existential one, it will be worth keeping in mind all that can be taken up in the category of the extroverted act, that is, in that in which the self, rather than the subject of it, is its attribute, since from the act he traces the confirmation of himself. This, as noted above, is the typical situation that arises in desire as it is understood in ordinary life. But it is evident that no different pattern repeats itself in a much larger order, in all the varieties of a doing, enjoying or suffering as a function of ends and relations to which the self leans and derives the feeling of self and the meaning of living. Nietzsche spoke of a *deW'apollinistic* world. As noted elsewhere (4), the term chosen is unfortunate and improper; what it is meant to designate, however, remains significant for a sufficiently defined concept. It is about the world of forms generated by an activity that counts as catharsis from the "will" (in the Schopenhauerian sense), of images in which a tension experienced at the center as negativity is diverted and released: it is the aspect of the "way of the other" as phenomenal consciousness, at which, however, the realm of forms proper to "aesthetic" reality is but an irrelevant episode. The extroversion of Nietzschean Apollinism basically takes up every variety of the eternal action, of that action, where an "objective" character conditions the validity and determining character of purposes, motives, meanings. One the mixture that ordinary life is and must be, not only of particular situations, but a whole system of relations can be isolated and individuated that incorporates and actualizes itself.

(4) Evola is referring to the second edition of *Mask and Face of Contemporaneity and Spiritualism* (Laterza, 1949)—which came out while he was revising the text of *Theory*—in which he had added a new chapter, the eighth, where he also discusses Apollinism, which was not present in the first edition (Bocca, 1932) and retained in the third (Edizioni Mediterranee, 1971) (Ed.).

made direction, being in function of something else. Especially in civilizations, such as those of our contemporaries, such a system indeed bears the character of universality. Yet to speak of a world of illusion, pretense and intoxication hiding the chasm of nothingness, ready to open wide at every break in the chain of infinite dependence here is as illegitimate as to speak of a "fall" for the general sense of such an option. This is possible only by an undue interference of viewpoints, by the introduction of a criterion of value external to that of a world that in itself may constitute a closed system.^e

Of mere *presuppositions* abounds, as to the notion of becoming, existentialist philosophy itself (5). In this regard, it should first be mentioned of eccentricity (non-centrality) that, in general, characterizes this philosophy. It is evident, for example, in its two ideas of *anguish* and *guilt*. Sartre's existentialism, having discovered the infinite freedom that constitutes the original fund of existence, can only designate as "anguish" the feeling that arises from reflecting directly on it. From *l'être* being free - he says there is no escape, no evasion, thus showing that he perceives freedom not so much as the liberation of the individual returned to the center of himself, but as a kind of burden, a thing to which one is condemned and for which one is anguished (6). The situation of the self as determination takes on the consistency of a Heidegger and a Jaspers the deontological character of a "guilt." And, this, as speculative gap which again tells of a passivity and non-centrality of self with respect to the original fund of being. It is conceded, in principle, that the determinacy of existence proceeds from an original act of freedom; it represents the actualization of a given possibility, which, however, would imply a "betrayal," excluding all that was equally possible. And this should be felt as "guilt."^e

Not otherwise than as guilt is therefore the exercise of transcendental freedom conceived. Logically and empirically this is so absurd, as if he who, in choosing one woman instead of another, or in deciding to spend his estate in the mountains instead of at the sea, in this feels himself sinful and "fallen." The fact is that such a feeling proceeds from an unassumed transcendence or freedom: from the infinite which is not that of the calm, sovereign and active power of determination, but that which is felt in a certain way from outside: not dominated but looming and urgent as a foreign totality.^e

From which we can presently turn to the existential concept of becoming and temporalization, which is deduced from the discordance of the two terms joined together in the existential situation: the possibilities that are excluded from that only realized in an individual situation, are projected to the die

(5) See Section Three, p. 52-54.

(6) J.P. Sartre. *L'être et le néant*, Paris. 1934. c. I, pp. 65-67, 642. cf. p. 639: "The essential consequence is ... that man, *being condemned to be free*, places the whole *weight* of the world on his shoulders" (emphasis is ours).

outside of it and give rise to a coming out of itself, to a movement aimed at reabsorbing theme and approaching "total presence." Thus time and becoming present themselves as the surrogate of the eternal, of the possible as totality in act. Now, such a situation in existentialists who, like Jaspers, particularly drop emphasis on it, is not inferred. We are confronted with something like an automatic process, determined *a priori* by existential discordance; even less is the particular character, the *meaning* given to the temporalizing process that is conceived, here, according to the traits proper to the objective option: a perpetual chasing after each other without ever reaching each other, a motion that implies deprivation, defect: something inevitable, once determinacy is understood as negation and guilt, and absolute being as decentralized transcendence with respect to the self. Instead, we have analytically accounted for such a situation: moreover, in the terms of a *possibility*. - It itself is an "become," not the given, for the self. And at the temporalization to the subsequent realization of possible exclusions - it can also inherent a different value, a different meaning.

Section Six

Way of the absolute individual

In the second option the self goes to *consist* in the subjective principle; that power, which in the world of desire is turned toward the "other," here becomes an extreme instance to itself. The solution of the antithesis and the point of value are placed in pure self-assertion. Thus, once *Xa* generic determination of experience is called, in the order of the objective option the Tesseract of *X* should be able to be traced back, as to the principle of its possibility, to that pure self-assertion, and the transcendental principle of reality in general for this direction would be, "If the self is posited, *then X* is posited."

Here the first consideration to be made concerns the *principium distinctionis* between *VX* and Ego itself. Such a principle would evidently be difficult to conceive if Tautoaffirmation were immediate, exhausting itself in a single point. But things are not so already for the reason that Tautoaffirmation here is in function of the negation of an antecedent and, properly, of the negation of the objective term included in the existential datum. The principle enunciated above could then be made explicit in the following proposition, "The reality of *Xc* its non-reality and non-reality of *Xis* its reality," and this, indeed, in the terms of a movement, a synthesis; in this, relation and distinction, identity and difference should mutually determine each other. This is with regard to the more abstract, generic condition for an *X*, or determinacy.

After that, we return to the principle expounded in the form "If the self arises, *then X* is posited." Here, evidently, in the first place the question is to be asked: Does the *I*, then, posit itself? - And then: What, in the case, does positing imply?

Of the self according to this option? - that is: what is the content of that "if-then" relation, to which, after all, the foundation and the possibility of value of any A go?

1.e The first point, it hardly needs to be considered. On it, it has already been said. The ego *can* also not pose itself as a value. Its posing or not posing is therefore not something that can be deduced. Rather, it must be said, that the "I," of which we here speak, is that from whose essence the possibility of its non-being is inseparable. To the question: Does the self, then, pose itself? must therefore be answered: The self poses itself *if it poses itself*, that is, its posing, if it occurs, occurs unconditionally. The further step ties in with the very concept of option. The *reality* of the transition from the empirical state of existence to the state of value, as we know, is at one with the *reality* of opting *as such*, this remaining the logically hypothetical movement within which a freedom makes act of itself and determines itself *as such*. It is then probable that from a deepening of the notion of option itself may come light on the content of the "if-then" relation, which was asked as the second point.

2.e Consider more closely what has been said just now. If the transcendental opting is to be *real* according to the meaning given to it, its two directions must each be sufficient to itself, each must exhaust the entire scope of the possible but, in this, stand *moon* to the other in a relation of mutual exclusion and negation. Therefore in its reality as a term of option each of the two directions will not be posited *if within* it and *through* it the other is not also posited and denied. Denoting the two directions by *A* and *B*, *A* will thus not be *if*, as *A*, it is not also *-The* (i.e., the negation of *B* - more precisely: if it is not the synthesis of these two ideal moments: *A* as *-B* and *-B* as *A*), and *B* in turn will not be *B* if, as *B*, it is not also *-A* (if it is not the synthesis of the two ideal moments: *B* as *-A* and *-A* as *B*). A *B* that was indifferent with respect to its opposite, that is, one that, closed within itself, had no opposite at all because of this lack of relation, could evidently not be understood as a term of the opting, about which the discussion here is concerned.

Consider the first option = *A*. In it the ego gains certainty only because of the indefinite actuality according to which the objective develops from its negation (*A* = *-B*). As a value, *A* has nothing preceding it; it is not as if there is a pre-existing *e*, which a second *e* goes to negate: but the one *e* is affirmed for and within a single synthesis of meaning. As seen in the previous section, one is led to a process by the mere fact that every objectification = *A* is also *e* worth, immediately, as a subjective reaffirmation = *B*, although this, because of the very thing that brought it into existence, cannot but be rejected and turned to a recurring consummation in the way toward the absolute object - *A*. Thus *B* is *e*

absolutely internal to A , is (is placed) in A simply because $A = A$.

Now in the second option = B a similar situation must also be encountered. The affirmation of the self, insofar as it must count as a manifestation of a freedom, can only take place as a negation of the opposite possibility. As in A , so also in B both moments of the relation will be generated, but in a different functionality: from each element of subjective affirmation will arise an objective, linked, however, to the condition that it is ultimately only for the realization of the specific value of this option.

The question of knowing now arises, what is the objective moment in B . Having posited the level, from which the option makes sense, the self is already presupposed; it is given (has given itself to itself) beyond existential problematicity. This means that on the direction of A there is no preliminary deduction or production of the subjective moment to be demanded, which in the concretization of it is transformed into the generating power of the heterothetic. For the subjective option things are different: the object as such is not originally given - that is: it must not be, on pain of contradicting and prejudicing *a priori* the point of value according to B . The object then would have to be in him in a certain way produced by self-affirmation itself. That is, it would be necessary to point to a situation, linked to a sense, in which the posing, indeed the *pure* posing, of the self is transmuted into a posing of the object in such a way, that such a landscape may nevertheless be considered inescapable for the very value that defines B . i.e., the second option.

Well, in the very terms of the problem, its solution is indicated. In fact, it is already known that the objective element mutates with that of immediate posing. In this option, the self undoubtedly poses. *With that therefore it negates*, the simple, direct positing of the "I" passes into the positing of its negation, of its "other". The original act of the self cannot, in its immediacy, but reproduce the form of the objective act, where real and possible are identified. The "e,"e posing itself, and simply because it poses itself - or, more precisely: according to that moment which, although it is position of the principle of the individual, is nevertheless, in this, in general, simple, unrestrained position - contrasts its own negation with itself, arouses a substance made of act and devoid of mediation. According to this aspect of the movement is precisely posited that particular synthesis of affirmation and negation which contains the power, the *Stow* of objective becoming. And as a pure pattern the condition is fulfilled, that B implies A c generates A insofar as B is simply itself ($B = B$).

The concrete identification of this situation can be presented in the following terms. The individual as value is defined not by something that is, but by something that *has* self--not by *an existence*, but by a *possession*; pure possession, the bare form of domination, this is its substance, and it is precisely in such terms that the world of option

subjective differs from that of desire. But a possession is inconceivable without a substratum of which it is a possession. The concept of *lord* necessarily implies something, of which one is a lord. Therefore, the ego cannot possess itself, be absolute individuality, if in an elementary and essential ideal moment it does not distinguish itself and is not, simply. Certainly, possession, as an essential absolute mediation, resolves, liberates entirely this substratum; but since indeed *it is but this very resolving*, it needs and must contain it as an element of its synthesis.

This elevates to significance the possibility of the indicated heterothetic moment, that is, the fact, that the element of the way of the other is placed in the immediacy of self-affirmation. Only now, in the meaning to which it is subordinated, the opposite loses its aseity; the function, from which it proceeds, is already commanded by the synthesis; this is what stands before and conditions its negative character, non-existent in the order of the other option. In relation to this, the opposite - the principle of any *X*, of any determinacy - has existence only

as matter for possession; it therefore, properly, is, only for not being. If the objective, whose name is existence, is posited by the I of this option - and it can only be posited, the generic form of it is given with pure positing - *this happens only because the essence of such an I is drawn from the consummation of its existence.*

Thus we arrive at the concept of a letic function and a hete-rotetic (and antithetical) function in mutual causality, of a theticity or identity (position of the self) that immediately distances itself from itself, becomes antitheticality and difference (since pure positing, present immediacy goes to realize J), and of an antitheticality, of a distinguishing, which immediately counts as identity, theticity (since in distancing, in opposing it becomes actual and manifest, the principle that transcends existence as such is realized-which is not self but domain of self-ness which here represents value); Moon and the other are mutually and at once matter and form: the posing that is a distancing and the distancing that is a posing, such are the moments that the subjective synthesis contains according to simplicity. The opposite in it has therefore perverted the distinguishing, it does not become, it lives only in and by that absolute distance that effectuates the unconditioned mediation of the individual, which, as possession, has no life except in exceeding, transcending and devouring its own mediation made of act.

If therefore at first, undistinguishable only ideally, the self by its posing denies itself, precipitates, makes itself objective as a merely "demiurgic" impetus containing the germ of becoming - thus making itself other in relation to what it here fundamentally wants as value - if it in reality only denies itself in order to pose itself, it is only in order not to be - and in denying itself it poses itself: the objective principle no longer incorporating, as in J, a *sense*, it appears empty of value, which now instead stands against it as an abstract condition, which in turn in its own being destroyed has its condition.

A particular aspect of the deduction drawn here can be sensitized in the following way. The problem of the subjective option is the resolution of the other. Now, in the absolutely *a priori* setting, the only "other," equal to *X*, here can only be the possibility of *A*, of the world of the objective option-and this "other" is also given, is implicit in the original existential problematicity that is resolved through opting. Now, if the *e* affirming itself simply excluded/le there would be, in general, something that while possible would have no value - from which would result for the *I* a limitation and a contradiction. It is therefore necessary that the element of the objective option be produced, that its possibility be affirmed, but at the same time denied (precisely by such a production that now belongs to the domain of *B*). Only in this way does *B* become a closed sphere and at its center there is truly infinity, the incoercible possibility of the absolute individual.^e

In summary, it was shown: (tz) how the direction *B*, in its immediate *reality*, in fact implies *J*, i.e., how the pure positing in a certain way is immediately reversed into negation of the subjective; />) how this sort of heterogony of the effect with respect to the end is a moment included by right in the end itself and only goes to signify that the option draws from itself all its own matter; (c) how, according to this meaning, the objective constitutes a mere *opus conditionis*, which is but, that as that in relation to which that which is "an entity of possession" or domination is accomplished; (d) how, if *A* is placed in *B* as a negation in distinguishing or distancing precisely at the moment of mediation and value, in the concrete synthesis of the option the two moments are nevertheless *one*, conditioning and causing each other; (e) that this synthesis of affirmation and negation defines the content of the "if-then" relation, which was sought.^e

Having indicated in these terms the general sense of the subjective option, we can come to a further individuation of it by seeing what the various notes intrinsic to the development of the object statement are resolved into here. Of such notes the principal ones are, as we know, present immediacy, becoming, phenomenality and necessity.^e

Since in a first, generic moment self-affirmation cannot but be direct actuality, the potentiality of that recurrent development, mentioned above, would also be posited in principle. But with the synthesis of affirmation and negation proper to *B* there will be the form of an act having value insofar as it immediately frees itself from itself and is consummated all at an immaterial point, as according to the image of a *fulguratio*. At such a point a given series is taken up in an extratemporal way, it is blazed into a simultaneity. This implies that all that is process no longer has the character of pure, indefinite, recurring flowing proper to the "way of the other"; in the movement there will also have to be realized the reconvergence relative to a grasping, so that the process is at once possession. As a cosmological image, one will have the idea of the infinite demiurge.^e

unleashed egica
 that exce dse
 itself in the still,
 dizzying point of
 domination, in e
 pure distance.e

In particular, it was seen that becoming in the sign of the object has the character of a *continuum*, an infinity of analysis: οἱ τρεῖς ἐποὶς κατὰ βίαια ποιοῖν. This in *B* can only subsist with the reference to that which is "matter," simple condition; becoming here is suspended from the negative moment that contracts and dominates it, arrests dispersion in a simple point. Taken up in the autonegative act, the "interval"-the motion from one point to another-is no longer of dependence, its term has it in itself, possesses it; absolute fluidity is won there in the function of an absolute limit. And through this limit *the self now goes beyond the infinite, it is transfinite*, the infinite he burns - *wanting* determinacy he liberates it in the form of an *infinite act of possession*. Thus the recurrence of the interval is arrested, and the interval itself, is mediated with itself. The sense that interpenetrates and commands the infinitesimal of passing is no longer a asking, a going out, but a having infinitely. In place of the *limit to infinity* proper to the way of the other, here we have *limit as infinity*. In the element of becoming, self-distinction is immanent in *B*, so that it is stillness in movement and movement in stillness, unity that grasps its transcendent identity and its dazzling simplicity made up of value as opposed to distinction, the interval in which there is alteration, the passing from one state to another.e

In every determination being worth as a function of an identifying, an extroverted act lost in itself and of pure punctual assent, it was worth as a simple *phenomenon* exhausting itself in the moment of its lived experience. But in *B* the object (determination) is not *c* but for the subject; it is only insofar as its absolute affirmation makes it exceed and consume it. In itself being, it is not; it is only by passing through, that is, in the situation according to which it *reveals* the subject, the naked transcendent. That which was valid as a phenomenon, at the very point of its determining itself now distances itself from itself and becomes whole, its determinateness reveals the act in which the infinite, almost raping itself, dominates itself, gives itself its supernatural being (its "not being"). And so that in *B's* world every phenomenon acquires, in what it has objective or purely representational character, value as *myth*; its very *reality* refers to something else, makes it transparent with meaning. A world of phenomenon is succeeded by a world of *revelation*.

In these terms, that is, as a function of the transcendent meaning of the limit, there is thus the solution of the antinomy already determined and infinite, between objective and subjective, such as is realized in the second option, on the way to the absolute individual.e

Due to the fact that the two moments, thetical and antithetical, in *B* are simultaneous and mutually cause each other, and therefore that every form of this world immediately includes through the moment of distinguishing, a *grace*

do of the $\alpha\pi\chi\eta\ \acute{\epsilon}\nu\ \alpha\upsilon\epsilon\upsilon\varsigma$, of absolute being, these forines always present a *positive substratum* in the same way that positive-not a "running by deprivation"-is, as noted above, the motion that brings them. Herein lies precisely the difference between the two directions, beyond the formal identity of the element of a negation, proper to both. 11 motion in general - the passing away, the interval - in the first option is valid as a turning away from the central presence as from a deprivation, as a need and desire of the non-being for the being it sees and feels outside itself; thus motion is not positive in itself, but in function of the other in which the actual being, the pure act, is already presupposed. That which is before, is that for which being, precisely, is other; the finite or particular as such does not participate in being, it is separated from being by the logical interval between contradictions. Instead, in the second option, autonegation having for meaning the overcoming and burning of existence in the pure relation that defines possession, every point or state has relation to the pure act and thus being already possesses it.

Thus, prescind from the apex of pure meaning, in which properly there is no becoming, the becoming being taken up therein in an essential eternal simplicity, there arises the image of a process from positive to positive, from one degree of value to another degree more intense and perfect, as in a progressive self-liberation and to rise. It is a development to be said of individuation, in it the self turning to possess itself more and more perfectly by the resolution and violation of that existence, in which, in posing itself, it has distanced itself from itself - that is, in the objective moment inseparable from all actuality. In the order of what has been called "myth" and which takes up the spectacle of a world, it is as a *hierarchy* - a hierarchy of degrees - that therefore arises. It must be well understood in its dual nature. From one point of view, it is a hierarchy of forms commanded by a higher and higher degree of contingency, of free possibility, because that which is "power" as matter and privation and which is gradually purified and burned into the being of the absolute individual, is that actuality in which the possible is identical with the real, and yet that which is inconvertible, fixed, necessary, precipitated, bound to itself. In such a situation, determinacy has the character of privation insofar as it expresses being abstruse according to necessity to a given nature or content, and the powerlessness to possess or actualize anything that this nature or content is not - it is in the same sense that Aristotle points to, for example, the eye as a privation of the plant. So the negation of the letic moment proper to *B* is to be understood as a release from the necessity of a given determination, as a disirrigation and agilization by making itself sufficient to others, which it excluded, and by taking them back into the unity of a deeper and wider possession. *B*'s direction is thus not toward a *material* indeterminacy - determinations are not suppressed, but rather *V inconvertibility* of a given determination or order is suppressed.

Of determinations. In this sense it can be said that the process of the world is a *burning* (I) and that Fire as a symbol is the essence of things: process of *solution*, growing development of contingency from the objective and the spontaneous, dispelling the existing into that which transcends it.

From a second point of view, however, the process also appears as that of a progressive individuation: there is expressed therein an ever-deepening repossession, a stirring up and organizing of an ever larger and more dangerous amount of chaos under the domination and balance of an ever higher and ever freer power. At the synthesis of the two moments proper to *B*, the negation *materia li ter* also manifests itself in a creation: a creation of differences, of qualities, of determinacy and powers from the non-being by which the new initial determinacy or self-identity is surrounded; beyond this, that is, from the theetical moment, a set of others bursts forth, in which circulating power holds one and becomes more and more intense, carried higher and higher by the ever higher wave of unleashed actuality that it fixes and burns in the pure relation of domination: therefore, also increasingly individuated, increasingly distanced from the universal as indeterminate possibility and passive infinity. The individuation of the self, its posing as an absolute individual is such an empowerment by taking hold ever more deeply of its infinite nature in order to actualize it in the excess to this very disorganizing and violating creator, of this thunderbolt release. And, in the cosmological myth, as in the vertiginous wake value traverses a wheel of ever more agile, luminous, defined forms and selves, which it leaves behind, from which, by creating them, it tears itself away to project itself ever further, into ever higher forms, by which the others are attracted and swept away -- according to an immense articulated ladder that ascends all, which becomes more and more immaterial and voracious in this power that comes from above in which it understands itself and transcends itself completely, which in every passing and distinction is actualized eternally identical with itself, naked, simple, infinite, like the very *gesture of freedom*.

One last particular point should be considered. So far two moments of contingency have been postulated: the first concerns rising, or not, to the plane of value; the second concerns positing value as affirmation or negation. In the case of the "way of the other," since this has necessity by law, there is no need to postulate anything else. In the case of the positive option, which is that of freedom in the proper sense, on the other hand, it is necessary to postulate a third factor of contingency in order to determine the absolute limit, that is, the order that must count as the whole and through whose finitude the infinitude of possession will dazzle. And this contingency is as radical as the others. Of the act that proceeds from it it is not that no further reason *can* but *should be* given, being to itself the extreme

(1) Nova is, *Schriften*, ed. Heilbronn. vol. II. p. 514.

reason and out of itself having *nothing*', nothing, not even reposed of that infinity to itself fatal, which like the Spinozian God or the Brahman of Védantine philosophy in every determination would make one see a negation; nothing, not even that "nothing" which of the Christian doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* necessarily becomes a principle in its own real way, subsisting under the act by which God makes the creature and the creation to be, to that these may think themselves distinct from that. For the absolute individual finity means: *being able to be unconditionally what it wants*. What it wills, what it is, absolutely. And so: the finite is the infinite, the full total, the all since all relations come only *after* but it - that which is posited, the Κόσμος, the system of possible experience - is *alone*, is from a *naked* act, free of relations, from an act that conceals uniquely itself as an act of a power that through the limit becomes a value.

Thus the world of the second option is opposed to that of the first as the world of Κέρας to world of the φάνειον. Just as the category of the indefinite and continuous is proper to the latter, so is the category of the determinate and discontinuous proper to the former. The Κόσμος, proper to the former, thus also the hierarchical set of degrees in which it is defined and individuated, is a finite, bounded world, a world in which the flux and the fleeting of becoming are vanquished. Or it can be said, with regard to the two moments, to "matter" and "form": it is a finite and infinite Κόσμος, limited and unlimited at the same time, so that to signify it symbolically as motion could be worth to imagine of the circle and the cyclic law. Such an image is indeed one in which time and becoming in a certain way become space by presenting the closest approximation to the supreme point of view, which grasps only the eternal and the identical in motion and alteration. By which the same image takes on two polar opposite meanings, as are the two options: it has been seen, in fact, that in the "circle of necessity" can express finality of becoming by deprivation generated by placing absolute being in the other. identical form, but a gulf between the two meanings: indefinite of dependence and infinite of possession.

Finally, the concept already mentioned of the *positivity of every point* and every form in *B* evidently relates to that of participation in the absolute limit - and one can speak of a process of individuation by considering not only the whole, but also the individual degrees; within the limit proper to each of them becoming means fulfillment of a partial fullness, this being the condition for the antithetical moment of distinguishing, of the interval which, therefore, here will have its objective expression in a discontinuity. And in each end, in the passing through of each degree, the double meaning of the term Τέλος is incorporated; end (passing through) and fulfillment at once. According to such a view, it can be said that where the "way of the other" is expressed in the world of becoming, that of the absolute individual

is expressed in the world of form and that here in every form the whole possesses itself, every e finite is being and not the other from being.e

According to the value of the second option the self is thus a pure non-excre as pure relation. Schelling in his so-called second philosophy captured such meanings quite distinctly, in a theological projection; in fact, the second philosophy schellinghaila if it fails to a large extent from the critical-immanentist position of the previous phase and unfolds almost as a metaphysics of the pre-Kantian type, even in this form it goes on to define the meanings-base of a doctrine of true freedom and supernatu- rality, meanings which, as resulted from the critique we repeatedly mentioned above, failed in the further development of transcendentale idealism. Schelling (2) writes: "God, *in Himself*, is precisely nothing; He is nothing bute *relation, pure relation*, for He is only the Lord; all that can be said in addition or added makese Him a mere substance. As it were, He actually is but to be the *Lor of being*. He is precisely the only nature that is not taken from itself, that is loosed from itself and yet absolutely free (everything that has the character of substance is taken from itself, is bound to itself). Gode alone has nothing to which he is bound. He is *sui securus* (certain of himself, and yet loose from himself), so *he has* to do only with other-He, it may be said, is wholly *outside himself*, fre from himself *and yet the one who liberates every other*." Schelling continues, commenting on a passage from e. Newton's *Principia philosophiae naturalis mathematica*: "*Deus est vox relativa et a servos refertur* (i.e.: the *divine principle* in God, that by which God is such, in short, what we commonly call the essertZtf of God, does not consist in the substance [in the present theory this would be the self-identity of the letic moment, of pure thetic spontaneity]e but in its dominatio, in the act of its domination)e

Deitas est dominatio Dei non in corpus proprium (this is the opposite of the view, accordinge to which God's relation to the world would be only that proper to a soul of the world by referring to other systems it can be said that God's *dominatio* cannot consist in his being able to pass Himself into a being, to give a being to Himself; even then He would be a nature takene from Himself and therefore *not free from Himself*) *sed in subditos. Deus sine dominio, prò-videntia et cuusis finalibus nihil aliudest eptam fatum et natura*. Providence and final causes -e that is, intentions realized in nature - are only consequences of *domimi*, so we can limite ourselves to the simple proposition: God without domination would be pure fate or pure nature." en this sense the individual as the value of *B* is the transcendent absolutainentc; bute insofar as this domination is not a fact, insofar as Lio, here, is that which gives itself to itself ine the uz/o (in itself contingent) of making itself lord, it is also, at the same time, the absolutelye immanent. Schelling himself, still on the screen of theological hypostasis, noted, moreover, that being and dominion do not constitute an abstract duality but a duality resumed in a livinge and moving unity (3). However, he did note

(2) *Darstelhmng des philosophischen Empirismus*, cit. pp. 260-261.A

(3) *Darstellung*, cit. p. 262.A

adequately grasped the manner and genesis of such a unity, and beyond that, the whole world of such a conception is posited as unique, it does not, by contrast, have the background of *another* possibility, as in the present doctrine; if this is essential in a theory of freedom thought through to the end, it is, however, difficult to formulate in the objectivist terms of a metaphysics and theology one would have to trace a metaphysics and theology simultaneously, a difficulty that does not arise if one retains the viewpoint of immanence originally elected by idealism as absolute positivism.

What has been said about the difference in meaning of the motion or interval of the passage in *A* and *B* respectively has some correspondence with the opposition between dialectics and science as formulated by Aristotle in his well-known polemic against Plato's position. Whereas in dialectics antecedent has the character of the other from being, in Aristotelianly conceived science, which should reflect the very process of nature, the antecedent already participates in being, there is no motion by deprivation (desire), but a positive motion, having its own principle in itself.

Wanting to make sense of the second option in terms of psychological situations and worldview, the most adequate basis might be provided by views of Frederick Nietzsche (4). That such views are legal to a strong emotional moment and a corresponding dramatization, that the asceticism of pure speculative thought is lacking in them and even quite primitive naturalistic conceptions find their place, this should be as little of an impediment, as the theological phantasmata clothed in ideas, such as those of the second Schellingian philosophy, to those who look at the essential, not the accessory and contingent. Now, the essential in Nietzsche brings one back with great approximation to the values indicated above.

That finality in the proper sense prevails only in 4, we have already mentioned: only in *A* do values have the form of the other, so one can ask "to what end?" and can define a system of values and purposes external to the act and necessary for the act to have meaning to be "rational." But from *B's point of view*, the more "rational" the act is, the more it wants something, the more irrational it is, the more it wants nothingness and attempts to a disintegration of the will: there is nothing outside the will, outside the act, from which it could derive its meaning and measure. Wanting, one can conceive in the field not of transcendental, but of psychological experience an intermediate point between the two options in the terms of a moment of crisis, which in Nietzsche is the moment of "nihilism." And the point at which one discovers that all "values" are only semblances from which the will has been juggled and always carried further, in recurrent confirmation of its deficiency - of the deprivation inherent in going to something else - without ever reaching a solution. One realizes that in essence through becoming nothing is realized, nothing is achieved. Thus everything collapses. A pure becoming remains the only reality, with no purpose, no reason or utility. An absolute void, and vibrant powers swirling around objects that no longer exist.

(4) See especially *Wille sur Macht*!, §§ 5, 10, 15, 212, 285; 383. ccc.

In Nietzsche's dramatization, in the face of this knowledge the weak break, the strong, on the other hand, *break*. The strong dispense with truths, purposes and reasons, they shift the center to the will itself and make it the absolute value, *raÛTOTeXqc*; They demonstrate the ability to live in a world in which there is no longer "meaning," no truth, no purpose, no laws, no providence, and to *will* such a world. This is the premise for becoming to be liberal and conjoined to absolute centrality: i.e., justified in each of its moments, infinitely-not already the present as a function of the future, the past as a function of the present, and so *elenio*, identical with itself at every instant: invariable in the sum of its value, i.e.: *without any value*, because there is and *must be* nothing that can serve as a measure or in relation to which the word "value" (as it is commonly understood or as it is defined in *A*) can have any meaning.

Hence the deeper meaning of the Nietzschean doctrine of the "eternal return"-beyond its pseudo-justifications due to assuming it otherwise than as myth and symbol (5). In fact, at this point, as a function of the absolute limit, *becoming as such takes on the character of being*. There is precisely to be referred to an absolute, eternal will, which is all of itself at any moment, which never fails in any act, so that it can say, "Thus I willed, thus still I will, countless other times," yet at every moment it exceeds and goes beyond flashing, in this grasping that which is simple, devoid of becoming. To this extent, in Nietzschean terminology, which is nevertheless also matched by speculative translations of certain aspects of metaphysical experience (6), the world appears *liberated* - it is dissolved from all relations, it is only itself in being, *one act*, the other of itself, absolutely. The best expression of the Nietzschean myth in the emotionally dramatized naturalistic formula is given by the following passage:

"Do you know what "the world" is to me? And a monster of force without beginning or end, a quantity of iron force that neither increases nor decreases, that is not consumed, unchanging in its whole and surrounded by "nothingness" as by a frontier. This inundation is not something vague, nothing that is like an infinite extension but, being a determined force, it is in a determined space and not in an empty space in some part of it. It is force everywhere juggling forces and waves of forces, one and multiple at once, transforming itself eternally in an eternal coming and going, with enormous years of return, with a perpetual flow of its forms, from the simplest to the most complex

(5) The main Nietzschean pseudo-deduction has a statistical character: time being infinite, once the actualization of all cosmic possibilities is exhausted, becoming can only give rise to a repetition and return of what already was. In an indefinite circular recurrence. Here it is evident that while giving the character of infinity to time, one instead arbitrarily assumes a finite number of possibilities and, moreover, one admits the incoercibility of becoming beyond any limit, that is, beyond an exhausted series, as a law as fatal as it is unintelligible.

(6) Cf. J. Evola, *The domain of awakening* (1943), Edizioni Mediterranee. Roma\ 1995.

plexus, turning from that which is most calm, rigid, and cold to that which is most ardent, wild, and contradictory to return again from the manifold to the simplest, affirming self, even in this uniformity that remains the same throughout the years, blessing self because it must eternally return, being a becoming that knows neither satiety nor disgust, nor weariness this world, which is the world as e conceive it, this Dionysian world of retema self-creation and eternal self-destruction, devoid of purpose except for the purpose proper to the bliss of the circle, devoid of will except for the will of the circle that still wants itself and nothing bute itself: this world that e conceive-who has the spirit clear enough to stare at it without wishinge to be fat? Who c strong enough to present his soul to such a mirror? And he who is capable ofe this, should he not make more arrangements? That *he himself should consecrate himself* aligned with the rings "? With the vow of his own return? With the ring of eternal self-blessinge and eternal self-affirmation? With the will of always wanting and then, again, wanting? To wille back, to will all that was? To will forward, all that will be? Do you know now what the worlde is to me? And what I want when I want *this world?*"(7).e

Returning to the purely theoretical domain, *B's* view is thus one in which *immanent finality* coincides with *V ajinalism of absolute will under the sign of a contingency principle*.e The Aristotelian metaphysics of finality can be taken as a starting point: finality, "rationality,"e reality, the meaning of the totality of objects, forms and beings are conditioned by reality-thate is, by the beingness-of the unconditioned. But from the positive point of view, i.e., of experience, an unconditioned thought of as "other," i.e., nonetheless substantialized and extrojected, cannot be the *actual* unconditioned but rather a representation, a philosophical ce theological concept, thus something hypothetical and mediated. The actual unconditioned, absolutely KCUT *ē* will have, can be for the self only in the form of the self. It follows that onlye insofar as the I enacts the unconditioned and *is* so, purpose, rationality, reality, meaning will be in nature, and yet not in itself absolutely, but by the I hypothetically. There is no purpose, there is no reason, there is no order, there is no "being" in nature - there is only "deprivation" before the "I" sets itself up as the *Sufficient Weave*, as the one who *consists in* and conforms to the absolute will: since the one who needs *nothing*, who rests on nothing, is that which all n ed, on which everything rests with which, insofar as they are positively, they are united. en the cosmic myth, he actualizes the world, gives it absolute being; the process of beings, ore ontological process, hangs on him and in him becomes the process not of a semblance, but of ae positive principle, of a principle that does not procrastinate but already has itself.e

Kant himself came close to such a view when he noted that the objective existence ofe finality in things has as a condition the advent of whate

(I) *WillezurMacht*, § 385.

whom he called the moral man Kant meant being, whose law can only be regarded as unconditionally posited by himself. He noted that all beings of nature are conditioned, deferring each to other than itself, where man, insofar as he is moral will, cannot be asked why he exists, realizing he, in a certain way, is the unconditioned, that which exists for itself. When the concept of moral self-determination had no *reality*, the chain of ends subordinate to one another would remain suspended in a vacuum, and the question of the factual reality of a teleology in the world system would remain indeterminate (8). Only it is to be regarded as an aporia, in Kant, to identify the point of the unconditioned with that of the moral will, even if in the subliminal moral form of the pure categorical imperative—this will be shown more closely below. As a pattern, however, the concept indicated above is confirmed: only *if* and at the point where the self is actualized according to the value of the unconditioned does the idea of finality in nature acquire an objective reality.

Resuming the metaphysical scheme as a dramatization of the meanings in which it deals, it is clear moreover that one cannot drop the pure act (unconditioned T or value according to /?) and the becoming of nature out of each other. Because of such a distinction, one would in fact have two "places" — then which of them would be that of the immanent principle? Perhaps the becoming? To it being being, by hypothesis, the "other" (in the form of final purpose) being not having it already in itself. But asking for it and desiring it, no violence will be able to make a positivity appear at any point in the becoming, and the conclusion will be either Platonic or Parmenidean dualism, or the dispersal of the process into the infinity of dependence. Will it then be the immanent principle, no doubt the "pure act"? But even if it were, since by hypothesis, here the pure act lets the element of becoming fall out of itself, since it has no substratum and no self-distance, it could not even be said to be rigorously, purpose unto itself, *avrorcXrg*, it would not be so much the unconditioned as the mere $lo = e$, what, in the present doctrine, corresponds to the simple theoretical moment. And so that the two *temiini* are to be joined inseparably and functionally; the unconditioned is not to be placed outside the process *c* by the potency of it, but in *the* process itself, according to the special nature of its actuality, that is, the element of a passing away in which the non-entity, the pure relation of who *c* substantiated by domination, is realized. Only in this respect does the unconditioned appear at once as the substratum, as the *òùvapi<*; and as the absolute *prius* of the whole series.

If we refer to the world of the subjective option, it is possible to develop and integrate the theory of certainty proper to idealism according to a criterion that can be formulated in the following way: the self will be said to be absolutely certain only in regard to that of which it has in itself the principle and cause, in a relation of dominion; for that matter, only to the extent of that in it which satisfies such a condition.

(8) *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, §§ 83, 84.

This criterion is presented such that it immediately implies two principles: the principle of power *c* the principle of *contingency*.

Regarding the first point, the inconsistency of the theory, which links certainty to the concept of necessity, must be noted. Certain would be what is necessary. But the very notion of necessity is such that, as soon as it is critically deepened, it dissolves into something quite problematic. Absolute necessity would seem to have to be called that of a determination, the

principle of which is at all external to the self and independent of it. Now, even if one were to find a way of making intelligible how the ego could undergo any determination *from outside*, it would become clear that it would fall for him in such a case into the category not of necessity but of contingency: since it does not depend by hypothesis on him, nothing can in fact authorize him to hold that said determination cannot, from one moment to the next, be removed or changed. One result of the Kantian critique is this, that no foundation whatsoever can be given to judgments having a character of necessity when the principle of this is not shifted from the external to the internal, that is, from the empirical or existential datum, where necessity is limited to what appears at a given time and in a given place, or at most according to a certain non-hypothetical recurrence, to the plane of the subject. But here, however, necessity, made subjective, implies an act, the very act that assumes, affirms or predicates it. And the character of *absolute* necessity that can be attributed to a determination expresses only the presence, in the self, of the faculty of positing something as absolutely necessary, and that absolutely (without further grounding). Which is equivalent to saying that the necessary postulates the unconditioned: having to subjectify itself (and such is the sense of the Kantian reversal of the criterion of certainty); it has its reason not in itself, but in an elementary power of freedom.

Now, depending on the way this elementary freedom is experienced, the theory of certainty admits two distinct individualizations, which correspond precisely to the two options. In the one case, freedom passes in the form of absolute assent, of the spontaneity of the identity of the possible with the real; it gives activity from within the extroverted direction of the fulfilled compulsion and identification, so that the situation is determined, in which de facto resistance becomes both *ratio cognoscendi* and *ratio essendi* of the subjective. This alone is the order, in which the notion of necessity has a content and in which certainty and necessity are mutually mutually. In the other alternative the subjective is extreme reason to itself, the internal constraint is severed, the self is not the act, but the lord of the act, so as certain will appear simply that which is unconditionally willed, insofar as it is unconditionally willed. In the following, the problem of the relations between idea and reality, between certainty and reality, will be considered more closely. In the meantime, it may be admitted in principle that the real, understood, in general, as the object of sensible perception, represents the stage at which the idea is entirely fulfilled (Hamelin), reaches its final individuation (Royce) so as to count as the positive determination of the possible - but, as such, also as the criterion for what is certain and unambiguous. Here, however, the question must be asked: as what does this definitive principle of individuation present itself as? Does it stand in the sign of the I or of the other? Of the exercise or of the wanting? Or, formulating it otherwise: will the real be that which makes known to the I what the I wills (since the I poses itself as desire), or will the I regard experience as an indeterminate possibility in which only its affirmation, as perfect and incorporating the power and value of the absolute limit, will place what in it must be said to be real and have the actual character of reality? Where in the first case an A will be said to be willed because it is real or existent (this is the solution which, as seen above, has imposed itself on incomplete idealism), in the other case an X will be said to be real insofar as it is willed or for that which is willed ~ c in the rest unreal, as the correlative of a *deprivation* of the will. We will return to the latter point below. Here it will only be worth noting that the two alternatives correspond to the two options, but that the second leads by itself to the remittance of the criterion of certainty to power. The ego can be said to be certain of absolute certainty only of that whose being or non-being, whose being thus or being otherwise depends only one

it, of that of which it is therefore the principle and cause, of that which, being entirely dominated by it, in no way would know how to escape it and make false, with the autonomy proper to itself, the positions that the ego connects to it. To be certain, to possess, to dominate thus mutate without residue. But possession, in the most concrete dimension of actuality - in that which, practically - mind, in experience goes to distinguish the real from the possible ce power.

That being the case, the second point, concerning *contingency*, is clear in itself. For what can it mean that a given determination depends on me, except that I am not bound to it, that my unconditioned will being the substance of it, if it can so, can also be otherwise, that if it is, it can also, as soon as I so desire, not be? It follows from this that in all that is rigid and inconvertible - both in the material order and in the rational or moral order there is a deprivation of certainty. The ego can be said to be certain only in that world in which, being free Lord, everything is ambiguous to itself and contingent, due to the fact that it has its principle not in itself, but in the unconditioned affirmation of the individual. Only in such a situation does the ideal actually find itself unified with the real and the self absolutely with itself: it expresses the *pure state of law*, the perfect intelligibility. The remission of a determination to the pure will of the ego gives an explanatory principle, beyond which nothing can or should be asked; And if by miracle is meant precisely that which is linked to an unconditioned causality, and therefore illegitimate, anonymous, there where value lives as affirmation = *there* a world, whose element was precisely the miracle, would constitute the ideal limit of evidence, whereas a world governed by invariable laws indifferent to the power of whatever order they are - would appear as that which is most unintelligible and therefore miraculous in the vulgar sense of the term. Hence the complete reversal of the view of traditional logic: *the criterion of the certain is not the inconceivability but the conceivability of the contrary*. The criterion of the inconceivability of the contrary is ultimately that of powerlessness in the face of a given element. But either this element escapes the ego, and then of it no real certainty can be had; or it does not escape it and can depend on it, and then it must be said that, as soon as it is wanted, *it can come* biare, and, therefore, *that in principle it is possible for me to conceive of the contrary*. The proposition, that its criterion of the possible is the real, in the subjective option must therefore be illuminated by the other, that the criterion of the real is the possible, meaning here by "possible" both what can be and also not be, and what the self actually can.

With regard to the contingent, it can thus be said to present a phenomenology. There are essentially two forms of appearance of the contingent, which are related one to the unconditioned that is such by deprivation of condition, and the other to the unconditioned that is such by perfection of condition. Three epochs of the problem of certainty can therefore be distinguished. The first is where contingency stands in the sign of the "other": this makes the possible experience appear in fundamental uncertainty, places the self before the "madness of phenomena," before an affair which, if one detaches oneself from it to a certain extent, appears as incomprehensible and to a high degree unpredictable and uncontrollable. This is the contingency to which the views of both empiricism and skepticism correspond. Such a situation may be followed by that of a law which reacts and seeks to reduce the contingency of individual phenomena by tracing them back to general laws: this reduction now counts as a criterion of certainty and admits of a development, the lower limit of which ideally corresponds to the law as positive science conceives it and the upper limit of which is instead the rational law empowered to the transcendental meaning of category within the framework

of a system having panlogism as its ideal ("all that is real is rational and all that is rational is real"). In a third epoch we move from "objective reason" to the pure principle of determination, with respect to which the necessary and the lawful appear not as the apriori, but as the aposteriori, and the last instance is again contingency, the *active* contingency proper to a central potestas. Then the criterion of certainty takes the form enunciated above and has the closest relation to the concept and problem of real power (9).^e

Finally, it is worth noting that if one remembers the place that the subjective option has in the overall theory of the absolute individual and thus avoids hypostatizing it, the criteria indicated take an absolutely unassailable form. Such a reference means that where it is posited that the criterion of the certain is the contingent, therein is also implied, as a special case, the possibility of certainty as necessity. For an arbitrary that was absolutely and fatally so would not really be the arbitrary (the contingent in the active sense) but, in a certain way, the necessary; the arbitrary, in its truth or extreme power is to be understood instead as the unity or indifference of arbitrary (contingent in the active sense) and non-arbitrary (necessary). This, as far as the purely formal side is concerned.^e

(9) Cf. what has been said above, as well as the second volume of this work (*Phenomenology of the Absolute Individual*. Bocca. Turin 1930) and our essay *Die drei Epochen der Geistesprobleme*, in *Logos*, Tübingen 1931.

Section Seven

Of the way of the absolute individual as the principle of a theory of freedom

As an inductive counterpart to what has been set deductively above, it will now be shown that one is brought back to the meaning of the subjective option when one wants to think deeply about the concept of a freedom as a *reality*, that is, the nature of the situation to be

relied upon as a freedom acting as an act of itself and as nothing but that.

To delimit the scope of the question it must be emphasized that, since we are dealing with the concretization of freedom in an *act*, we must disregard the two first moments of contingency already indicated correlatively, we must disregard the deontological and postulative moment, and freedom must be made the content of a concept. But given the character of mediation proper to the concept, one will not be able to say what freedom is if at the same time one does not say what it does not contain - that is to say: if at the same time one does not also specify and ground the notion of necessity.

In order to have an initial point of taking for our research we shall refer, in a very general way, the notion of what is necessary to that of an immutable determinacy, and the notion of what is free to that of the real possibility of change in general. It is, this, like a conceptual raw material, to be refined gradually through successive degrees of an analysis.

1. Nature in general. As *dynamic determinacy* we define the situation in which a possibility of movement, of development, of factual concretization is subordinated to a necessity, in the sense that through it a given determination or law is implemented which, ideally, presupposes itself to it, and if it owes its actual realization to it, it also uniquely, inconvertibly determines this realization. To such an

concept may correspond in the abstract to that of *function* in the mathematical sense, as a concept that likewise includes the idea of a development related to a law already summarized in a formula, and, more generally, the concept of the *nature* of a given being. The well-known Aristotelian definition is: "Nature is, in a primary and proper sense, the substance of beings which have in themselves, as such, the principle of motion.... Nature in this sense is the principle of motion of natural beings, immanent to them in some way, either in potency, or presently" (1).e

To be realized, a nature may require a certain set of conditions and means. Imagine that these conditions are not present or that factors unfavorable to the development in question act. That nature will then result *impeded*. Thus a plant that is caged or whose branches are methodically cut off or that is placed in an unfavorable climate is said to be impeded.e

On this basis there can be a first, rudimentary identification of the relationship between freedom and necessity. The plant that can grow and develop fully and harmoniously is said to be free, the one that cannot is said to be unfree. To freedom, understood as the uncontested realization of a given nature, necessity would be contrasted as coercion, limitation or alteration by external factors. Thus freedom-positive would mean the possibility, the power to realize an internal determination; *negative* would be the absence of coercion or hindrance from outside. But the principle of distinction tying exclusively to the external factor or obstacle, the two points, in reality, are one, and here free means nothing more than not being prevented. One therefore remains in an altogether negative concept of freedom. The unimpeded plant, placed in its natural environment, in its harmonious and "free" development goes in fact to fulfill itself as that particular plant, nor can anything else do (2); free with respect to other (*negative*), and possibly *powerful with* respect to the other (as in the case that it succeeds in overcoming adverse conditions), it is not so with respect to itself (*positive*), in order to the faculty of being anything other than that particular plant. Such a purely negative freedom is called *spontaneity*, with reference to the Aristotelian notion of a simple having in itself the principle of activity; if then by *essence* is meant

(1) Aristotle, *Metaph.*, V, 1015 a; cf. V, 1014 : "(Nature) is that which is original in a thing and from which it develops as from a seed."

(2) With respect to the general concept of nature or dynamic determinacy, it makes no difference that in some cases the law of internal determination is not simple, but admits more than one direction depending on external conditions. Thus the Chinese primrose in an environment of a given temperature produces white flowers, in an environment of a different temperature it produces red flowers, returning, however, to produce white ones if it brings it back the same plant or plant form from the first in the original environment. And it is evident that this same variability or lability is ideally included in the law of that given nature, whose reaction in the one case is as predetermined as in the other.

proper nature, that is, the preformation or internal determinacy of a being, and by *existence* the realization of the latter, spontaneity can be said to be instrumental (or creaturely, or naturalistic) freedom. A being that is free with regard to existence, which alone falls to it to realize, remains dependent with regard to essence, indeed, to tell the truth, it depends on it precisely in the act of manifesting its "freedom"; while it certainly develops an activity to be judged autonomous insofar as it is not determined by anything extrinsic, this activity is nevertheless commanded by a law, so that it ultimately goes to witness fundamental passivity and dependence.

This point must be fixed with all clarity, for it is fundamental to the entire development of the problem under consideration here. The concept of freedom as spontaneity does not provide a real principle of distinction; it is empty of its own content and, once the idea of "dynamic determinacy" is understood, it becomes confused with that of necessity leading to a night in which all cows are black, that is, in which everything, from the point of view of "essence" or proper nature, can be considered indifferently as free and as necessitated.

In a whole variety of forms we are presented again and again, in philosophy, with the illegitimate inference from negative to positive freedom, from relative freedom to absolute freedom. Underlying these confusions is, after all, the transposition of what is proper to another altogether naturalistic stage. For a man identifying himself undoubtedly to impulses, instincts, needs, could or may appear as necessities only those situations, in which their satisfaction is prevented by external factors; in any other case, he could feel free. From the inner point of view, the situation proper to one who is moved by an impulse is indeed not different from that of spontaneity in general as existential freedom. Now, we see to be nothing other than the limit of even metaphysical conceptions, such as Spinoza's. Spinoza, insofar as he is implicitly understood as free precisely the unimpeded, deduced freedom from infinity. In contrast to the finite, which, as such, is determined and conditioned by something else, the infinite is "free" since it has nothing outside itself that can condition and limit it; therefore, in what it is, it should be considered as *causa sui*. But this is evidently the mere negative freedom of the non-in-restrained, which does not at all exclude internal necessity or the mode of a necessitated act, so to speak, in this regard, of *causa sui* is a mere sound (3). The reduction to the absurd

(3) That Hegelism itself, *mutatis mutandis*, may end up at this level because of the misunderstanding now pointed out, results, for example, from the following passage by J.E. Erdmann (*Logik* § 142): "The concept (meaning the absolute concept in the Hegelian sense) is freedom, since it no longer stands against another, that is, it has no limit in anything else, but only in itself. Hegel's corresponding passage (*Wissenschaft der Logik*, S.W., V, p. 11) is, "The concept is the free identity, because existing in itself and for itself, it is that which is proper to the necessity of substance, but at the same time resolved (*aufgehoben*) as a being posited; such a positing, in its referring to itself, is precisely that identity." However, we do not ask ourselves *in quality*

of such positions is had by returning precisely to the concrete plane of ordinary existence; in accordance with them, one who would be irresistibly transported, for example, by a sexual appetite to which he identifies himself completely, which would take away all capacity for control, should be said to be free if such an appetite can have its satisfaction, notwithstanding when external circumstances prevent it. Instead, it is clear that there can be an absence of coercion (of external limits) with necessity and a presence of coercion with an internal freedom (as, for example, in the Stoic type of the Sage or the Kantian type of moral nature in the face of phenomenal necessity). And the more one feels free in the sense of that spontaneity, of which the Spinozian infinity represents the limit, the less one is, because in that case the chain is unmeasured and there is an adherence of all the more complete to a state to be said to be simply unrestrained.

2. *Nature conscious*. The situation which we have generally defined as dynamic determinacy may be such, that to existential freedom, to the power, that is, of rendering an essence into act, consciousness is attached: a consciousness which may be direct or mediated. When this is the case, one is beyond the crudest naturalistic plane and the following illusion arises: that what one is conscious of for that very reason would be free - or, more pertinently: that it would suffice to assume in a consciousness what one has called essence in order for the being it defines to be said to be free. Essence can also be understood as a function of causes; then one has the alternative of being aware of such causes or not. But it is not, this, an alternative that can really lead beyond the situation proper to a "nature" in general. The stone endowed with consciousness, of which Spinoza speaks (4), when it falls and is ignorant of the causes that this inconvertibly determines it may fantasize that it is free in its movement; if that ignorance ceased, it would pass instead to the consciousness of being necessitated: but even in the hypothetical case that, beyond this, it felt itself to be one with such causes and between them and itself it conceived no difference, the situation would not be changed.

One can go further and say that the situation is not changed even when the intervention of consciousness and a certain positive, discriminating freedom were necessary conditions for the realization of a given nature. In such cases consciousness might be as implicit in the essence of a given nature as irritability is, for example, in that of simple organic life and inertia in that of inanimate matter. The lesser or greater complexity and differentiation of what might well be called the secondary causes or, if you prefer, the possible

of that the function of posing is orth-while-while with this very question we go beyond, or not beyond, the Spinozian view.

(4) B. Spinoza. *Epist.* ed. Van Vloten. LVIII, p. 381 ff.

lity of a "natura naturata," encompassing therein the realm of consciousness, does not by itself lead to a *principium distinctionis*, as much as to the philosophical concept of freedom.

The principle of determinacy falls by the fact that one cannot be, in general, otherwise than what one is or is going to become. Schematizing, given this determinacy one can consider the "essence" as the ideal antecedent, then an interval of completion culminating in the "existing" essence. This interval is synthetic (creative) *objective*, that is, in regard to existence (*evsre sequi tur operati*), it is, however, analytic *idealiter*, in regard to essence (*operavi sequitur esse*), and Tesser a nature corresponds to the immediate and inseparable unity of this analyticity and this syntheticity. Bringing in the principle of consciousness or self-consciousness thus does not lead to a solution of the problem, which we are examining, if that principle falls *within* such a unity, and within it also falls the freedom inherent in the conscious principle.

The theory of freedom that can be asserted in relation to this degree is based on inferring sophistically from a relative or accidental difference to an absolute or essential difference, and therefore again on considering the relation of one nature to another rather than its relation to itself, which alone must be examined for a real delimitation of the concept of freedom. We may take ourselves to the limit, and note that the very concept of divinity, as a certain content of scholasticism has formulated it—the divinity quale *ens de cuius essendo existentia*—does not lead beyond the naturalistic order if the relation between existence and essence is analytic, that is, when it is judged that in the ontological order resistance proceeds so necessarily and almost automatically from essence, without further mediation, as in the logical order a property of the triangle from its definition.

Having understood, therefore, that for the problem of freedom it is only the relation of entities to themselves that is decisive, it will be easy to show that by referring to the order of morality or that of rationality (of *logos*) no more is gained than by introducing the principle of consciousness.

3. Nature and Freedom. There are philosophies which hold that the recognition of *moral freedom* leads beyond the indeterminacy proper to the naturalistic plane and provides the principle of distinction sought.

Two points need to be considered here. The first is this: if one conceives of moral freedom as what is precipitous to man, what he must be insofar as he is truly man—and such is, more or less, the predominant view in the mentioned philosophies—it is clear that the situation already considered is repeated. Under such an assumption man acting ethically (what this means, for now, may remain undetermined) would only add

guage to his typicality, to his "idea" in the Platonic sense: the ethical conduct of his life e would make him a grandmotherly nature, whereas in immorality he would be a e degenerate or unsuccessful nature, impeded, not conforming to himself - rcapà òifenv. e Hence, morality or the faculty of moral determination in general, at the same point of e distinguishing him from a beast or a being driven only by instincts, would also make e man at all similar to one or the other. To this extent, that the ethical conduct of life e involves efforts, struggles, overcoming, self-discipline-all this has no different e significance than what a plant can do when it comes e

to realize itself-its nature or essence-by overcoming a certain set of adverse conditions: that e these conditions, in the present case, are primarily of an internal order, constitutes no real e difference. The argument, too, that man is not moral unless he does so of his own free will, e says nothing after one has understood the concept of dynamic determinacy in the terms already e set forth: unless it is shown that the principle of free dom does not follow, but precedes and e founds the determinacy by which one defines oneself -de facto or ideally - Moral Tesser. e Without this, in the same proposition, *"To be free c nothing, to become free is e*

heaven," e

"becoming" becomes simply a special case of "being"; and an entity that woke up to itself essentially determined to the fulfillment of freedom, an entity on which the Fichtian principle, e "Freedom *must* be," burdened as a condition of existence or an internal law, would show an e internal dependence no different than that of any nature.e

The second point to consider is the following. In morality, unless its concept is dissolved, the condition now mentioned cannot be fulfilled, namely: the point of freedom *cannot be so* understood, that it is reaffirmed beyond the synthesis of naturalness. Here from the consideration of morality as a concept we must move on to that of morality as an experience, as a fact of intractable life. Now, in this regard Kant is credited with having brought out well what in all ethics is the properly ethical Element, beyond the variety of possible contents or precepts: it is the pure form of *compulsoriness* or *imperativeness*. "The moral realm," writes Kant (5), "has, yes, us for its legislative members, but we must always recognize ourselves not as sovereigns but as subjects of it." Self-determination ceases to be moral in character when it is not informed by the spirit of absolute, dutiful obedience to the categorical imperative of a law recognized in and of itself as valid, hence transcendent. Far from having an affirmation, in which what stands first is the pure will, one has instead a determination of the will by such a law (6). Thus in the

(5) I. Kant. *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, cit., vol. I. ch. III. p. 99.

(6) I. Kant, *Kritik*, cit., vol. II, §§ 5, 6. Cf. M. Blondel, *L'action*, cit., vol. II, p. 224: "Moral precepts seem to us less the formula of our own will than the expression of a sovereign will whose right over us it is our first obligation to recognize."

Kantian principle, "If/ you must, therefore you may," not duty is posited by freedom, but rather freedom by duty: the *reality of freedom*, Kantianly, is demonstrated only by the *presence of* that law which would not command if one did not have the freedom to determine oneself in accordance with it; law, therefore, which is presented as the formal translation of a *fact, of a given* of human nature, while the freedom it posits is lowered to that which is purely instrumental, almost as in the case of a mere executive power.

This, to tell the truth, has a general scope: if "duty" does not present itself to consciousness in a certain sense as an "AND" (in an ideal objectivity already recognized in the form of *imperativeness* and not at all influenced by whether or not the arbitrariness of an Ego connives to it), those specific characters by which every ethical experience defines itself as such would fall away. Ultimately: the moral law as moral cannot be experienced as a pure position of the ego, since then it could not stand in itself and bind that ego (on which, in such a case, would rest the sole basis of its reality) to absolute obedience; but if this case is excluded, and if morality must still retain a character of "objectivity," of law, it is necessary to place this - even if understood as the pure command to the ego to perform a fact, so that it "may be for him" - as a *fact*, that is, more or less in the terms of what has been understood as the "essential" antecedent of a given nature.

Senonché, having reached this point, not only is the inability of the moral category to take us further into the problem of real freedom also confirmed on the *subjecti side*, but it opens the door to a critique, which ends up dissolving the very basis of the ethical attitude. To go to "phenomenologically" recognize the ethical law as a *fact* is, in fact, to see in it, ultimately, an immediacy *at the* other immediacies of internal experience, an instance *at* other instances. Where the moral law is felt, it is not the sole determinant in a free field; it generally finds against itself, co-present, other elements, equally immediate. In such a state of affairs, instances of greater intensity can overwhelm the moral impulse, and if it, as has been assumed, is simply entitled to the value of a fact, nothing can maintain to it an ideal dignity and a priority of right in spite of this succumbing to it in the contingency of a dynamic play of forces, all of which are now on the same plane. A view is then affirmed, such as that of Nietzsche, to whom is due the merit of having precisely seen that in concrete terms the moral law simply refers back to a force, a force of equal nature to those against which it struggles, all the transcendent or ideal characters with which it clothed itself being but expressions of its greater power or enlisted more or less surreptitiously by its will to dominate.

But where this is in fact the case, if one claims for the self a margin of autonomy, a power of mediation, and does not reduce it to a spectacular-

passive player in the dynamics of the inner life, the situation can only become even more difficult. For, in such a case, the moral instance falls within the matter which the ego has to mediate; and even when it turns out to be predominant (even when this predominance appears constant and universal in an *a posteriori* consideration)* its impulse should be suspended, its evidence should be held, precisely because it is immediate, as suspect as that of a phenomenon of empirical experience; such eventual supremacy should be regarded as purely factual, and therefore incapable of any meaning other than that which proceeds simply from its being materially stronger than other equally present impulses. In short: either one stops at a plane of immediacy, and then the moral law is, like everything else, a mere "given" and wherever one senses an "I must" (*sollen*) one expresses a simple "I am compelled" (*miissen*)* or one takes the standpoint of mediation in the face of the contents of internal experience, and then one must demand a grounding from the invitation of "duty" as well as from that of any other tendency that seeks to grab our assent and move us; it is necessary to curb its compulsion, to suspend its intrinsic evidence and the fascination, to make it appear before the ego which, impassive, will judge of it as an absolute arbiter and let it act only when so decided on further consideration.

But this amounts precisely to the dissolution of the concept of morality. The general point of view is, in this regard, that direct adherence, the immediate recognition of the internal law according to a categorical value is a condition of morality, so that "to question one's duty is to be already outside morality" (7); an idea, this, which nullifies the concept of moral freedom (X). In conclusion: the fact that it demands as in and of itself valid, regardless of its being willed and enacted, or not, makes the will, which possibly subordinates itself to it and thus morally determines itself, the instrumentality, the purely *existential* freedom proper to a dynamic determinacy.

Those who are accustomed to thinking through to the end must recognize that the idea of duty and the idea of mediation are mutually exclusive: as soon as duty is mediated, that is, as soon as the self assumes an active and free attitude in the face of it, it either vanishes or mourning, or it ceases to be categorical, assuming a merely hypothetical or parentic character. It is for this reason that the position proper to a moral consciousness is unassailable only on condition of remaining strictly in the *formal field* * that is, on condition of having in view only the character of the pure, unconditional "you must" of the inner law, without voice

(7) Cf. G. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind** cit. p. 283.

(8) Duty and mediation stand between them as contradictors; this is best explained in the following lines.

ler to reflect on its content; by reflecting on it, and thus wanting to justify a given concrete moral precept, the position remains fatally undermined.e

This is apparent in Kant himself, when he sought to define concretely the criterion according to which a given precept can be elevated to a properly ethical law; that criterion, as it is now, would be the capacity for universalization, which can be defined as follows: "Act in such a way that the maxim of your conduct may be valid as a universal criterion of action."e But already this formulation, abstract as it may be, implies questionable and unstated assumptions: it implies not only that "social" living is desired, but that life in society should be informed by a principle of harmony, reciprocity and, finally, equality. But to such a basically petty-bourgeois ideal of living, one could oppose, with equal right, others quite different, depending on temperaments, not to say even tastes: for example, a heroic or domineering ideal. And even underlying such ideals may stand a "you must," an absolute categoricity, as, again, Nietzsche well pointed out. In the end, morality is not saved from mediation by losing altitude and moving to empirical justifications: to criteria of expediency and utilitarianism for those who do not want to make things difficult for themselves in consociate living, such as it has taken form -- a more or less collectivized and leveling form -- in modern times.e

In fact, morality as an autonomous category is a nonsense; morality is nothing but secularized religion, so not something original, but something that presupposes a process of cleavage, formalization and association. The recognition of unconditional imperativeness of a "moral" law is a simple way of appearing of that feeling of dependence of the schlierian *"Gefühl der schlechtinnigen Abhängigkeit"* (9) that constitutes the core of the ecstatic-dualistic based religious experience. But the "creaturely" situation proper to such an experience suffices by itself to confirm what has been said to show that with ethicality we do not come to ground a positive concept of freedom. The principle of the will, as a moral will, is always that of Platonic *Euthyphro*, namely, that things do not appear good because they are willed, but are willed because they are understood as already good in themselves, regardless of the act by which they are judged to be so.e

4. Finalism. Once this point, i.e., this internal situation, is recognized, the aforementioned theories of freedom, in which freedom is founded through the idea of finality and self-determination according to motives as opposed to causal determination, also fall. It is intended that with the faculty of electing motives a zone of indeterminacy and free movement beyond natural necessity is established. However, decisive in this regard always remains the quality in which internal determination is experienced. For finalism in general, Bergson (10)e made

(9) "Feeling of bad addiction" (Ed.).A

(10) (10) *L'Évolution créatrice*, cit. pp. 42-43.A

rightly point out that it can only be valid as a reverse mechanism, when the thrust of an antecedent is replaced by the parimenti fatal attraction of something vicin situated, as an end, in the future: and the case-limit in the cosmological myth is the automatic and irresistible action exerted on nature by the Aristotelian "immovable engine" precisely as a final cause. As for the determination according to reasons, we repeat that precisely the general and formal problem about "value" and about the foundation of the determining force of value must be decided. The difficulties here are more or less the same as in the specific case of moral consciousness; only the difficulty of hypostatizing or formalizing what in a motive is the element of "value" as such is more visible, and it is more evident that the choice of motive follows empirical, hedonistic and eudemonistic criteria, dictated ultimately by a "proper nature." The margin of indeterminacy that seems to exist here in the choice may indeed say as little as the "freedom" of the Chinese primrose to produce white or red flowers depending on the temperature of the environment.

Fichte argues that nature would have no influence at all on man if his impulses were not transformed in consciousness into finalistic concepts (*Zwecksbegriffe*) but, already because of this—because of the presence of a conscious principle that can choose, assent or abstain, such as is presupposed by the finalistic concept one would have freedom (II). Against this it should be noted that presupposing an antecedent to *formal* freedom is almost as good as denying it: whatever its further determination, the fact remains, in any case, that it *reacts* to a given situation which imposes a given problem on it. It will thus be possible to speak of freedom in relation to the matter: in the formal regard (of the fact of determining itself, as well as the *how* of determining itself), it is already prejudiced.

As for the matter, the idea of a choice of motives thus remains, in regard to which two cases are given. In the first it is admitted that a certain efficiency is attached to motives on the determination of the will — and that this efficiency is then made to reside, according to a crude realism, in the motive itself, that is, in immanent dispositions of the faculty of desire, i.e., whether it is thought to be wanted because it is desirable or to be desirable because it is wanted by a will in a certain preformed way or, again, whether the choice is made to result from a mixture of the two cases the thing does not change in anything. Just as it is not that by an exchange of masters a servant ceases to be such, so the faculty of choosing one motive over another says nothing about freedom, since beyond the particular motives there always remains, in the above hypothesis, *the form of conformity in general to a motive*. The act always remains experienced as bound to itself, which results in a level of consciousness in which, according to a well-known image, the claim of freedom is as absurd as that

(11) LG, Fichte, *Stenlehre*, cit., pp. 105-109. that the scales fall on the side of the lesser weight, that is, as much as the claim that the greater weight is not the greater weight. And the thing does not change if one shifts freedom into the faculty of generating new motives or of giving different intensity to those already present, since in this case rejection of the new motive will have for its foundation a motive, and so one can go on endlessly without coming to terms with anything, since the *form* in general of the determining itself that is reiterated, by hypothesis, remains the same.

In the second case, the determinative power is taken away from the motive itself and centralized in a law: the free act would be one that conforms to the conclusion of a syllogism, which would have the law for major and the particular motive for minor. After what has already been said, the inconsistency of such a position is clear. Since what would be the

foundation of this law? A theoretical faculty transcending the practical, a *voluntas movens per se*. Do we refer to a unity of theoretical and practical, to the notion that knowledge of the law or universal is at one with the very act that wills it in the particular? Such a unity is entirely apparent; it is not unity, but promiscuity of contradictory elements. For either the practical principle is a measure unto itself, and then knowledge, the theoretician must stand by it as an *ἐπίτις* like the servant who brings the lamp before the master and lights the way. that way which the master wills (Henry of Ghent), as an occasional cause of which the will is a determining cause (Duns Scotus); or else it is already in itself informed by knowledge, and then the autonomy of its practicality is a *flatus vocis*.

(5) *Rational freedom.* It has been pointed out repeatedly above that the transposition of an order of determinacy from the external domain into the internal one does not lead, by the same token, to an overcoming of necessity, the latter resulting from this in fact only reaffirmed. It will be necessary to take up such a point again, in order to show that by referring to an intricate necessity of a kind, now, not moral but mental and logico-rational on the psychological or transcendental plane our problem, once again, is *not* solved. Indeed, with a freedom that appears to be simply an inward necessity we do not go beyond that proper to existential syntheses. And if in the face of a constraint from the external world man can still retain a freedom, that of protesting intractively against the violence he suffers, under the constraint exerted by his own nature one only deceives oneself if one believes oneself to be free (12). The spontaneity of a *nature signed*, and yet, as such, *naturalized*, is not freedom. Whether more or less, realizing it or not, theories of rational freedom are reduced to this, is what we shall show with the following considerations.

(12) Cf. É. Boutroux. *De la contingence*, cit. p. 132.

(a) The thesis already mentioned, that by introducing consciousness one would reach the plane of freedom, is found in more elaborate terms in the formulations of transcendental philosophy as a philosophy of nature, or doctrine of categories. But a similar limitation is encountered here. The central motive is to elevate to rational consciousness a series already objectively given through organized empirical knowledge, transforming the factual necessity inherent in it (for now, we will admit that this may be granted) into the necessity of reason. Now, the recognition of the rationality of a determinacy that at first imposed itself as a matter of fact (and this happens whenever it is admitted that the system of a priori forms is not known a priori), in no way can really redeem it in freedom; at the point of such a *recognizing* and rationally assuming, it must rather be said that the self fails itself and yields before the *Επέτις*: the act, which elevates the situations of nature to rational "freedom," does not possess its own principle, cannot have the character of a determinative autonomy.

In the speculative current, to which we refer, it is admitted that the series developed by reflection, by the *logos*, has value of a finding and not of a real positing (13), of mere elevation of factual necessities to necessities of reason (14), of an explanation and not of the

articulation of a real process (15). First there is a "real knowledge," which is developed without freedom merely reproduces the antecedent series in the formal setting (16).e In this regard, these admissions of Schelling's early philosophy are precise: "The proposition: natural science must be able to deduce all its principles a priori, in part c was understood thus: natural science must do without experience altogether and draw out of itself, without mediation of experience, its own principles, a thesis so incongruous, that it does not even deserve refutation. Not only do we not know this or that, but, in general, we originally know absolutely nothing except through experience, and in that sense all our knowledge consists in experience. A priori propositions become such insofar as we become aware of their necessity, and so every proposition, whatever its content, can be elevated to such dignity, the difference between a priori principles and a posteriori principles being a difference only with regard to our knowledge and the genus of our knowledge, so that the same principle which for me has been merely historical, that is, experimental, character becomes an a priori principle as soon as directly or indirectly-

(13) J.G. Fichte. *Grand. derges, Wissenschaftslehre*, cit. pp. 123-124, 291.

(14) 14) J.G. Fichte, *Sittenlehre*, cit. pp. 15-17.

(15) J.G. Fichte. *Sittenlehre*, cit. p. 92.

(16) 16) *T anszendente Logik*, cit. pp. 148-149. Cf. *Darstellung aas dem Jahre 1801*, cit. p. 67.

mind, I perceive its internal necessity" (17). Identical view is found in Hegel (18), of whom, after all, it is known enough that philosophy, as a system of transcendental reflection, similar to Minerva's bird, takes its flight at twilight, when the whole process is already accomplished: "As a thought (*logos*) of the world it [the philosophy that goes to define the series of rational necessity] appears in time after reality has carried out its formative process, and has come to an end" (19). Along the same lines is the modern Hamelin who, admitting experience as an accidental but nevertheless indispensable means of becoming aware of a knowledge that in essence is a priori but cannot be formulated directly (20), remains in the situation proper to a simple "recognizing."e

For all these views, Schelling's scheme is the clearest, but also the one that makes most sensible its insufficiency to ground a real concept of freedom: nature develops through a series of necessary acts, culminating in self-consciousness; precisely to this is the initiation of a new series, precisely the series in which, as a function of conscious repetition, what in the first was necessity becomes freedom (21). Well, such freedom is a pure fiction first of all *forma! iter*. because, corresponding to a *necessary* degree of the development of nature it remains conditioned and dependent in its principle (22); secondly, *materialiter*, because it develops as mere *repetition*. the possibility of the different is excluded, as content one has the natural series, already in itself determined, that it finds and does not make, that it is that and not other.e Thus it is that Schopenhauer, also considering a system of degrees of objectification of the cosmic *Wille*, certainly put it, more consistently, in the sign of necessity.e

(b) The situation is not improved when one leaves aside the all but peregrine problems of the idealistic philosophy of nature and moves from transcendental idealism to absolute idealism. Proper to this further position or assumption is the suppression of any heterological

or empirical antecedent of the determining activity of the *logos* c the understanding of this in the terms of a closed and autonomous system, which develops in a certain way from itself.e Now, this only means introducing the enemy even further inside its own citadel. et has alreadye be n noted that the attempt to solve-e

(17) J.W. Schelling, *Einleitung zum Entwurf eines Systems der Naturphilosophie*. ed. Weiss, pp. 69 - 691.

(18) *Enzyklop.* § 12.

(19) *Rechtsphilosophie*. ed. Lasson'. p. 17.

(20) *Essai sur les éléments principaux de la représentation*, Paris, 1907. p. 9. *passim*.

(21) *Der trans?. Idealismus*. cit. pp. 66-67.

(22) *Der trans?. Idealismus*, cit., p. 229: "Freedom itself is but a necessary phenomenon, whose conditions precisely for that reason must have an integral necessity."

vere, through a mere combination of concepts, the obscurity and necessity inherent in the existential datum by truly adapting spirit as *logos* to reality succeeds only on the condition of reducing spirit itself to something inexplicable and necessitated, bordering even on an unconscious function: only on the condition, let us say, of degrading and naturalizing it. This is what happened already to Leibniz: wanting to spiritualize the notion of force, he ended up by mechanizing that of spirit in the terms of spiritual *automaton*.

Therefore, we will not return to this, but will reiterate the argument from a practical point of view. We shall say below that concrete experience, when taken in the totality of its actual possibilities—all the more so, then, if of the ideal ones—presents only *relatively* inconvertible determinations. But one can narrow the question down to the individual and, properly, to the one who makes the point of view of absolute idealism his own, to consider what his relation is to real life and to things. In this restricted scope in space and time, one can certainly point to sufficiently stable determinations—for example, organic conditions, the endurance of matter, the determinisms of sensory perception and of material action, etc.; about such determinations even the representatives of the most opposing philosophies show, by their concrete way of behaving and by their more or less identical *impotence*, that they agree. Now, let the actual causes posited by dogmatic realism as the basis of such stabilities be removed; let antecedents, such as those, just now mentioned, of idealistic philosophies of nature, also be removed: let us therefore defer exclusively to the determining power of the *logos*, which knows only the internal necessity identical with freedom. In fact, the result will be this: one will say that space and time have no reality in themselves, but one will have to admit a *necessary* spatializing and temporalizing function of the *logos*; one will say that matter is an illusion, but one will be forced to contrive a certain situation of the "free" faculties of the self, from which the representation or idea of matter necessarily proceeds; in general, one will charge as "abstractions" and as empiricism the determinisms identified more or less roughly by the positive sciences, but, if one does not want to abandon the positions openly, one will make them understand exactly a set of particular laws for the "concrete freedom" of the "I," etc. It thus seems clear that in such an assumption those constant determinations go to constitute the *principium individuationis* of the *logos*; in fact, the philosopher, for whom all of nature has been transformed into inwardness and into a production from within the *logos*, stands in an unchanged relation—relation, of very limited power—to the invariants of real life. Such invariants remain practically as indifferent to the varieties of philosophical explications as to those of the terms that may designate them in different languages; the absolute idealist is no more given to evading them than any other being. To that extent, how can one fail to recognize that, despite the

alleged closure of the system of absolute idealism, the rational freedom of the *logos* is only a reflection of factual necessity, that what one posits as of right and by which one seeks to find a positive concept of spiritual autonomy, one does not pose it so that because one is already abstract to it in fact? So here too, and under still one regard, freedom goes to be confused with necessity.

There would be only one way for the proponent of absolute idealism to prove that the "rational freedom" of the transcendental principle is really freedom, and not the movement that binds to a nature. This path already leads to the world proper to the subjective option and stands in the sign of *power*. Once a determinateness of the modes and forms of the *logos* is admitted, if this determinacy is incontrovertible, there is no way of objectively demonstrating that at its basis lies the freedom of the ego rather than being, for example, the obligatory reaction to a given action of a non-ego which, while remaining elusive in *knowledge* (knowledge can always reaffirm itself by the act of noticing it or positing it for itself, even if this reaffirmation were to be complete only ad infinitum - such is Fichte's view in regard to that mysterious collision (*Anstoss*), given which for him the fundamental elements of the system of knowledge could be deduced and produced on the basis of the immanent laws of the ego alone) (23), would nevertheless be postulated distinctly by the *law-power* of the ego to mutate or suppress that determinateness. To secure oneself from the *possibility* of an "other"-ego, noumenon, pre-established harmony, etc. - as equally probable explanatory principles and, at the same time, in order to be able to give concrete content to the concept of freedom, it is necessary to seek a *principle of distinction* between the two cases, that is, between the case of the unconditionally determining *logos* and the other, in which such unconditionality is only semblance, resolving itself in fact into a spontaneity that *does not* exclude a noumenic influence or immanent necessity (= *spiritual automaton*). Such a *principiata distinctionis* can only reside in this: that the ego in the first case *can* arbitrarily change its determination. It is therefore demanded that the *logos* prove its actual autonomy through the power of being, that is, of actualizing itself, unlike what happens uniformly and universally. This is *the experientium crucis* of immanentism, what decides whether "rational freedom" does not repeat the situation of those who make a virtue of necessity. Here the philosopher can no longer escape: whatever pretext he devises to disguise his impotence, he will find himself inexorably rejected in the other alternative, which dissolves the positive notion of a freedom referred to the *logos*. Thus:

1) The inconvertibility of a certain determination of the activity of the *logos* cannot be deduced from a principle of *harmony* and internal *consistency*, because first of all it would be necessary to show for what reason harmony should be elected, instead of disharmony, and consistency should have a counter value

(23) J.G. Fichte, *Grundlagen der gesam. Wissenschaftslehre* cit., p. 279.

to incocreny; second, because, as B. Russell (24), one can point to;/!/ equally coherent sets;e finally, because having admitted the priority of freedom, it follows that the self cannot have ae transcendent criterion for coherence but, given where coherence corresponds to the chosene "value," coherent would simply be what he unconditionally wants and only insofar as he wants it: a system *X* would not be assumed because it is coherent in itself, but would appear coherent only because it is fre ly elected and assumed (25).e

2)éNotably, the *pragmatic solution* also falls, should it be applied to the sphere, which ise the transcendental sphere, that we are dealing with here. Pragmatically, the criterion ofe *logos* determination would be *convenience*; true and rational would turn out to be that systeme which is most convenient or useful for the purposes of an overall arrangement of experience and coordination of the possibilities of action. But thus the problem is only displaced. First, one would have to ask why comfort should be preferred (at what low level one ends up one such a path is anyone's guess: one could speak of a philosophy of *laziness* or of *comfort* as ae transcendental principle). Second, it would be necessary to show on what basis a givene determination is recognized as comfortable. Does this not presuppose a formal criterion ofe truth, which, for the sake of argument, will not be that of comfort or usefulness? And will ite be said that the criterion of the act, by which the useful is posited as true, is still the useful, ine which case it would simply be useful to regard the useful as true? But then we end up in ae regression to infinity (26). This apart, from the concrete point of view notæ, such as e "convenient" and "useful," cannot have any independent meaning (useful, in relation to whate and to whom?): they are notions that are defined of necessity on the basis of extraneous, empirical references, so that they are inadequate for the order at issue here.e

Theoretically, the pragmatist ultimately remains in the dogmatic position, because he endse up making the useful an objective measure, instead of understanding it as a way by whiche what is desired *appears*. The pragmatist asserts that every law has a teleological character, that every axiom expresses a postulate, ande

(24) B. Russell, *The Problem of Philosophy*. ch. XII.

(25) Poincaré's theory states, as c known, that various expressions of the real are possible, resulting in equally "true" systems of science; he admits, however, that, among them, one is simpler c convenient, and that one is chosen. The situation c analogous to the one now discussed. Wh t is the point of accepting the simplest? To say that the simple imposes itself over the more complex is as good as adhering to the inte ctu istic principle of the aseity of truth. 11 Poincaré lets sip, for example, th t a two- or four-dimensional system would lead to inferiority to a three-dimensional system in the struggle for life. Now, even apart from the tacit assumption of a *will to power*, if acting is a necessity and if, on the other hand, conditions are encountered in the given, the "arbitrary" character of science, which arises from such n encounter, is pure sound. It can be conceived only because, y contradicting itself, it tacitly maintains in spite of everything the idea of a reality unto itself, extern t the scientific system of knowledge. Poincaré's conclusion is well determinism (see *Dernières pensées*. Paris, s.d., p. 244).

(26) Cf. N. Abbagnano. *The irrational sources of thought*, cit. pp. 104-105.

so on and so forth. But, evidently, with the primacy given to practical activity, the problem, already discussed, of the election of ends comes up again in full. The pragmatist asserts that every truth leads back to a postulate, but recognizes that there are "false" postulates and "true" postulates: in this regard, what decides would be experiment, the examination of practical consequences. Let us also set aside the criticism made more on the logical level, namely, that for every examination of practical consequences a criterion of truth comes into play, thus, pragmatically, afresh a postulate. Here, rather, it is to be noted that pragmatists, by deferring to experience, think they are getting away with it; below, it will be seen instead that they fall into a vicious circle, it will be seen that it is precisely a pragmatically oriented epistemology that tells us that very little definite can come from experience as such. Hence, the pragmatistically oriented alibi falls away, where it is adduced for the problem, which is at issue.

(3) *Historical necessity* or *historicity* is an equally precarious refuge. It is said that the *logos* is, yes, free, but it cannot contradict its own history; it could not disregard the set of determinations previously willed by it, which constitute to it as a body that sets certain internal laws and conditions to its activity. Here it should be noted first of all that a necessity, namely that of becoming, is already presupposed at the point of speaking, in general, of history; secondly, that it must be decided whether or not one wants to seriously maintain the immanentist point of view, because the historicist argument cannot but undermine the concept of the *ideality* of time. If time is simply a category, a form of human representation, one cannot make it something determinative. Asserting the "historicity of the *logos*" invokes, after all, a coherence to the past or to a kind of inheritance, which -- apart from what has already been said about the criterion of coherence -- ultimately always implies a certain *real* causality on the part of the past itself, the *reality* of the before-forever nexus. But if then, by a dialectical device now familiar to us, one were to go and deny the distinction between the subject of history and history itself, things would only get worse. For in such a case the ego-consciousness would not even be given the possibility of grasping and formulating a general law of development, because it would be so necessary for it to be able to detach itself from development itself, from history, and understand it as a whole. Nothing, precisely nothing would therefore be pronounceable. The very notion of the historicity of the *logos*, of a given internal dialectic of it, and all others akin to it, would come only as relative truths reflecting a fleeting moment of an elusive process, a moment that will give rise to new moments, to which will correspond new views, equally relative, ephemeral and above all unpredictable (27). Beyond the notion of *laws of becoming* would reaffirm that of an informable *becoming of laws*.

(4) Let us examine the last possible refuge, that of those who claim that the internal logic of the *logos* is the very logic of freedom, it is the form, in which freedom rea-

(27) On this internal contradiction, whence one is compelled either to hypostatize and subject the doctrine of becoming from becoming, or to recognize its entirely relative and conditional character. cf. G. Siinmel, *Die Hauptprobleme der Philosophie*. ch. II. end.
lizes itself. Such an argument is easily overcome by asking whether the spirit is free because it has that form, or whether it has that form because it is free. The "distinction" is necessary for the reason already stated, namely, because to speak of an absolute conversione

of the freedom of *logos* with law is, concretely, nothing but a larval way of speaking of necessity, by which the principle whereby freedom can have a concrete sense as against the manner of a nature is lost, *V a u t u r n e t i s p i r i t u a l* remains the extreme instance, one does not get far from the mere not-being-caused-by-other proper to the false Spinozian *cause sui*. Now, as to the two propositions of the alternative, to say that form depends on freedom is to say unless we fall into the indicated tautology that, as of right, it is not necessary, but contingent. Instead, the first position leads to an absurdity: since the freedom that can be realized insofar as one assumes oneself to a given form or logic is not freedom, but precisely the opposite (28). Even assuming that the abstraction inherent in the concept of a *given* logic, only through which freedom could be realized as such, is somehow intelligible, if one does not want to strip even here the word freedom of all semblance of meaning one must, in a certain way, presuppose freedom to itself, that is, admit the reality of a transcendental situation, in which the spirit can choose to submit to that law, or not: albeit with the caveat that only in the former case will it be realized in its essence and be in harmony with itself, while in the latter it will come into contradiction with its own nature or destination. Now, in fact the character of true freedom is precisely this, *to be able to be in contradiction with itself*, for this "itself" is a non-sense, freedom means *possibility*, and indeterminate possibility has nothing by which it can be contradicted. If freedom is not the power of *Yes* as well as *No*, it is *clatus vocis* (29). A freedom enslaved to the principle of identity is the negation of freedom: it presents the character of a *signata nature*. And a principle upon which the necessity of free "becoming" looms—as noted above—is no more free than the principle upon which any other necessity looms. On the other hand, if one could really conceive of a logic rained down from no one knows where, willed, in the immanentist assumption, by no one knows whom that mediates freedom, freedom would result at the same point practically abolished, because the "other" of such logic or determination is, by definition, such that one could not affirm it without at the same time automatically taking away the possibility of affirming it (30). The concept to be assumed is that of a freedom that excludes all conditions.

(28) Schopenhauer (MWR *al.v Mille und Korst.*, 53) rightly says: "It is a contradiction that one grasps with one's hand to proclaim the will free and yet prescribe to it laws under which it should will - as one who would say iron made of wood."

(29) It is noteworthy that the *necessity* of the mere existence of thought is sufficient for some philosophies, such as that of J. Lachelier (*Psychologie et métaphysique*, Paris, 1916. p. 159). to deduce fundamental forms of the *logos*, such as the principle of causality and of induction; from this it can be seen that the consideration, mentioned above, is anything but a peregrine subtlety.

It is law, logic or dialecticism to which it owes its being freedom. So also this direction by the retreat of the absolute idealist *who does not have the power* is precluded.

(c) That the rational element cannot provide a real solution to the problem of freedom, this is also apparent when considering thought in general, as to its form, both in the logical and psychological order.

For the first point, it is a fact that logical consciousness has more than one trait in common with ethical consciousness, so much so that the considerations we have made for the

latter can be applied to it, barring a slight transposition of terms. The act by which a rationale truth is recognized is in fact not experienced as a pure affirmation of the subject, but rather as linked to something imperative, to something, which imposes itself on consciousness intimately precluding it from any other possible direction. The law of logical evidence is essentially *V inconceivability of the contrary*-which is as good as saying: the *passivity* of the self before it (31). The scholastic theory, according to which the essential character of truth lies in the fact that the subject, in knowing it, *finds it to be* truth and does not *make it* so, from the critical point of view can be as flawed as one likes, but it translates an unquestionably real psychological situation: in the logico-rational order and in a phenomenological consideration truth presents itself as something necessary and valid independently of the arbitrariness of the ego, which not so much the

(30) Fichte's argument (*Sittenlehre*, cit., 1, III, § 16, li), that the logically determined set of dialectical degrees does not contradict freedom, because it concerns only the abstractly possible, for the *actual* passage from one to the other degree being always to be postulated an absolute act; for it always remains that, *if* the act takes place, *then* one will necessarily pass to the next degree already predictable and predetermined. In the Fichtian *Sittenlehre*, however, an inconvertible complex of determinations is expounded, unfolding to the point of identifying the most minute norms of custom as conditions for "freedom to be" ("freedom must be" is in fact the generating principle of the Fichtian deduction). This reduces real freedom (that which can choose to be "free" or not) to a shadow (it remains purely formal, it has only the alternative of accepting or not accepting a situation which, however, is already given in all particulars, which cannot be different from what it is) and real freedom to self-negation: between its having to be and its being (its becoming itself) there being the medium of an inconvertible necessity. The laws of realization - Fichte says elsewhere (*Aus einem Privatschreiben*, ed. H. Fichte, pp. 388-389, *apud* X. Leon, *La philosophie de Fichte*, Paris, 1902, p. 377) are as independent of the initial act as the natural laws that make the ear grow from the seed are of the act of the sower. The absurdity of *necessary production of freedom* is found in M. Blondel (*L'action*, cit., *passim*, and you. 1, p. 176). Cf. the critique of Fichte in C. Secrétan. *La philosophie de la liberté*, Paris, 1866, vol. I. pp. 14-16.

(31)¹¹ Greek term ἀδύνατον encompasses the double sense of impotence and logical impossibility, the impossible as contradictory to that which has no power to realize itself. Cf. F. Nietzsche, *Wille zur Macht*, § 272: "The fact that one cannot contradict oneself proves an *incapacity* and not a 'truth': it is a form of organic impotence and not at all an 'ideal value' "

knows, as much as it recognizes it. "We think logically only when we *find* something e that is, independent of our thinking," Rickert notes. There is "the recognition of a e theoretical value, existing in itself and transcendent with respect to *any* subject, a value, e which, should its relation to the subject also be emphasized, might designate itself as a e formal 'devi transcendent'"; thus one may well speak of a "*dependence on or being-bound of the thinking subject*" (32). Truth is to logical consciousness as imperative as the categorical imperative is to ethical consciousness: and the part or function that e "fre dom" has in the two cases e

is the same.e

n general, to say that a contrary is inconceivable is to say that the "I" as *logos cannot* pose otherwise, that he therefore as one who, in general, obeys a given nature - does not have in himself the absolute reason for his act. If the specific character of the experience of rational truth is precisely that of the obligativeness and transcendent nonnativity of a value, and if the principle of contradiction expresses the sense of the way in which the " " experiences the logical act, it is clear that we remain at the point of that internal necessity and spontaneity linked to an essence, which nullifies any idea of true freedom.e

If, on the other hand, an active principle were really to be reaffirmed in the rational order, it would, however, be seen to vanish in specific character, just as happened in the case of ethical consciousness. Indeed, it was pointed out at the time why certainty, whose criterion is precisely the inconceivability of the contrary, can give rise to an antinomy, become problematic at all or lead to the opposite criterion when an absolute foundation is really sought. Further below, such an antinomy will be further considered.e

(d) This, about the rational act as far as its form is concerned. As far as its content is concerned, the situation presents itself as follows, when psychologically considered.e Whenever thought passes, in general, from one determination *A* to another *B* by establishing a nexus between them, there arises the double problem of *how* from *A* the reasoning mind passed to *B* and, then, why from *A* it passed precisely to *B* and not to some other element whatever. This is, in its most schematic expression, the problem of causality. On the naturalistic or empirical plane it finds no solution; on such a plane the causal relation, indeed the mere implication of an attribute in a subject, appears contingent: one has only correlations which are apprehended but not understood, which are because they are and not because the different is inconceivable. Hence, in this regard, in our days we speak no longer of causal relations but of "constant sequences." The results of an in-depth epistemology can be taken into account and, rejecting the simplistic theory of uniformity that defines itself-e

(32) H. Rickert, *Das Etre, die Einheit und die Eins* > Tubingen, 1924. pp. 57, 6 .

scano by association almost in a mechanical layering of data of experience, one can recognize the part that, here, has an active work of collation and discrimination of the mind. Indeed, one must go even further in this direction and admit that the synthetic moment is in fact proper to thought even where appearances would show otherwise, for example in mathematics. The science itself invention is not to be considered restricted to interpretative principles and postulates, but present more or less in all the most important steps (33). Only that to the form of objective thought is proper--not without relation to what was said in the previous paragraph--*Vantedatare*: what one has achieved by a synthetic process one incorporates into the concept from which one started, considering it as implicit; and it is thus that, when one retraces the process and expresses it in a formula, one can think of an analytic and necessary nexus (34).

But, again, admitting the syntheticity of thought is as valid as admitting its contingency. This has been rightly pointed out, with reference to Kant (35): with this syntheticity one goes to indicate the problem, not already to solve it. In terms of syntheticity, the passages of thought are presented as mere facts - internal facts, but still facts. To the thought that does not look at the results, but wants to account for itself, the *possibility of* such passages remains inexplicable. It may be objected that this is natural, for already by taking itself for object of thought makes itself foreign to itself. It is equally true, however, that where one assumes the opposite attitude and confuses oneself with thought in action, not only does one not solve the problem, but rather one does not even reach it and exacerbates it, one remains at the level of evidence proper to that which is simply experienced. And if one were to stop at that kind of evidence and it were to be judged satisfactory, it is not clear why one should not already stop at that which is proper to the evidence of lived sensory experience itself, which indeed is more vivid, but which has been recognized as problematic, since beyond it arose the need for a science of nature. Indeed, just as criticism has led to scepticism and found the mere evidence of the senses insufficient, for a similar attitude of mediation will result in the same with regard to the mental processes that determine the system of knowledge. For them, the arguments formulated by Hume (36) remain valid: thought could be conceived as a function of actual causality, and

(33) Cf. L. Weber, *Vers le positivisme*, cit. pp. 236, 256, 265.

(34) That a certain consequent can be connected according to intelligible and rational relations to an antecedent *après* accident has occurred. This does not exclude a synthetic principle and freedom. On this F.C.S. Schiller, *Études sur l'humanisme*, Paris, 1909. pp. 516-517.

(35) H. Poincaré, *Science et hypothèse*, Paris, s.d., p. 10.

thus made intelligible in all its synthetic passages, should the self of it know the conditions entirely. Instead, already the *power* of pure production of a thought is not grasped by ordinary consciousness; it grasps only the occurrence, that is, the manifesting and defining of a thought that follows a certain state of internal tension, while both the manner in which this occurs and the force that acts here are neither perceived nor understood. Moreover, it is not that one always has the same power over thought, it is not that developing it according to proper and satisfactory nexuses in the order of objective knowledge is as free-wheeling as, for a healthy man, raising an arm when he wants to. This means that there are conditionalities, but the principle of them only to a small extent is dominated by the conscious ego. All this means that even in the internal order, that is, in that of the mind and *logos*, causality--the principle of sense-bound relations between an antecedent and a consequent--has no less character of contingency than in the empirical order of natural phenomena.

About "thought," modern man has some curious illusions. One might say precisely that, in this regard, he has not yet reached critical maturity; just as in earlier times so many natural phenomena seemed intrinsically self-evident, but became problematic and enigmatic as soon as an adequate analysis made their conditionalities explicit and highlighted, likewise as basically inflexible consciousness is led to believe that the intellectual processes forming the basis of explanatory systems represent something in and of themselves self-evident and exempt from contingency. The watchword of the idealists, repeated often to the point of boredom at every opportunity, is the "creativity" of thought, the "idea as creation." This applies to them as the supreme explanatory principle as a function of freedom - and they do not realize that thus they choose, among mental processes, precisely those which to a merely elementary psychological consideration appear most affected by a moment of contingency and passivity. Indeed, while there is certainly a decisive margin of activity in cold critical-analytical thinking, quite differently are things there where "creative" and inventive processes are involved. The moment of invention and productive intellection presents itself predominantly - according to what numerous scientists and thinkers testify on the basis of their own personal experiences with characters not unlike those of a happy and almost graceful case (37). The active work of the self is usually reduced to preparing and propitiating; at the location of the problem or task and an obscure conatus, it turns out, to those whose

(36) I. River, *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sec. VII. I.

(37) Typical is, for example, already this testimony of Philo of Alexandria: "I have no difficulty in telling you what happened to me many times. Some days, when I wanted to set down in writing in the usual way my philosophical thoughts and saw distinctly the purpose, I nevertheless found my spirit so infertile and rigid that I had to stop without completing anything. In my helplessness, I would then marvel at this mysterious force that gives thought its reality and regulates the opening and closing of the human soul.

is capable of introspection, that one *expects* (38) almost a spark, an illumination for "creative" enthusiasm or intellectual synthesis, which can occur at the most unpredictable point and in the most unpredictable way. The situation, here, is as if not so much the "E" thought the thought, as the thought thought thought the "E": not *cogito* but *cogitar*. And when the "creativity" is that of the artist, generally the same situation is even more typical. 11 Platonice concept of *pavla*, which is not very dissimilar to that of a being possessed or invaded, with the symbolic counterpart of the "démone," on a par with the Aristotelian-Averroistic theory of the "possible intellect" which, in a certain way, must be fertilized from outside in order to come into being and be able to grasp and develop necessary, essential and universal nexuses, reflects this state of affairs. And it is confirmed in another respect, despite its deviations, by the modern psychology of the subconscious, beginning with Myers & James, when it sees in the moment of invention, inspiration & creative intuition the surfacing of the "subliminal." whatever may be the consistency of this notion, when it is hypostatized as a reality in its own right (of this is the case, when one even goes to speak of an unconscious), the heuristic use of it to highlight the factor of contingency and non-presence of the active self in "creative thought," its importance in explaining its passages and syntheticity as a function of a truly free and self-sufficient principle, remains always valid.

If this were the place, to this could be added various other considerations about the background of ideas, which have brought about some decisive revolutions in the field of science and thought, especially in the modern era. It is precisely the very last of naïveté to see in such ideas the effect of spontaneous processes, since in most typical cases they are indeed *suggestions*, of which their authors were the first not to realize well and which were later assumed with even more passivity, when, a current having been formed, they thought of unquestionable and in themselves self-evident ideas. Especially in the frameworks of thought that has been agreed to be called scientific a whole image of the world has been *constructed* in such a way-image, which seems to correspond to a watchword in its systematically excluding and inhibiting other equally possible views and other possibilities of organizing knowledge. And it may be noted that the period in which such processes had an almost unprecedented efficiency was also more or less the period in which the "freedom of creative thought" was claimed and "celebrated" by idealist philosophers.

At other times I would set to work with an empty head and immediately arrive, without effort, at fullness. Like snowflakes or grains of seed, my thoughts would descend invisibly from above. The spirit would take hold of me and transport me like a divine force, so that I no longer knew who was in me, who I was. What I was saying, & what I was writing. For I had then found the flow of speech, a light full of happiness, the piercing gaze, the mastery of the subject, as if the inner eye saw everything according to a superior clarity."

(3K) About the great importance of the *expectant* attitude in invention see F.H. Myers, *Human Personality and its Survival*. II. ch. VI.

So, so far the concept sought has eluded: neither the non-implicit; neither *cause sui* as spontaneity, nor conscious nature, nor finalism, nor moral determination, nor the varieties of rational freedom in apriori or even in simply psychological or phenomenological can ground a relation, by virtue of which the idea of freedom acquires a truly definite sense as opposed to that of necessity. One more step must therefore be attempted.

Of remaining ways, however, there is only one. What has so far disappointed the search has been the recurrence, in various forms, of the same situation: the constant falling away of the principle of freedom (taken in the provisional sense indicated at the beginning) *within* the logical interval between essence and existence. The path that remains open is thus the same as the one taken when one postulated the becoming aware of the naked power of the Individual, namely: rising up *this way* from essence in general. The first effect of such a movement is the dissolution into an antinomy precisely of the concept of internal necessity. Let us follow this dissolution—in other words: we have seen what happens at the pseudo-synthesis of ego and necessity: where it has the character of necessity, the function referred to ceases to have the character of ego, and where it really has the character of ego it ceases to have the character of necessity. The first case has already been exhaustively considered. Let us therefore examine the second, take the critical point of view that dissolves necessity in order to see where we get to by so doing.

Critical philosophy (Kant) started from the assumption, that there are in fact judgments having a necessary and universal character around experience, which nevertheless cannot be deduced from it; to explain their possibility and genesis, it inferred to a transcendental activity of the *logos* determined according to the categories. It is clear, however, that such an inference rests on a pure hypothesis. It is in the following way that, rather, the problem should be posed: how *should* experience, *logos* and the relation of one to the other be thought of *given that* there are judgments having a necessary and universal character? The objective conception of the *logos*, or a *priori* activity, which we have seen where it leads, and which it is now a matter of surpassing, thus appears *hypothetical*. It holds on or falls depending on whether or not the premise is founded. The difficulties that, in this regard, arise are well known, and here it is only a matter of ordering and unfolding them so that they lead to our purpose.

) Already on the formal side the premise implies an aporia. In fact, the universality and necessity of certain judgments is tacitly assumed as a *fact*, that is, as something that actually occurs and that experience confirms, independently of and prior to critical philosophy, which wants to

only explain the possibility of it. But this philosophy turns to explain the possibility of it.^e But this philosophy turns to explain the possibility of it only because it assumes that whatever comes from mere experience can only have a contingent character. Kantian criticism in its premise thus moves in a vicious circle: for either it admits that experience can provide something universal and necessary, and then the critical problem (i.e., the problem of the genesis of synthetic *a priori* judgments) has no *raison d'être*; or it denies experience this capacity, and then it pulls the ground out from under its feet.^e

2) Thus, it must be seen whether the notion of necessity can be grounded in experientiality. If this fails, still by another route the idea of an internal necessity will be shown to be untenable and can be abandoned.^e

(a) Now, Buine's critique, which served as a stimulus for the setting of the Kantian problem, is well-founded. The connection of an *A* to a *B* in experience is entirely contingent.^e *A priori*, nothing can be said to be contrary to the laws of nature; of everything that is one can conceive of non-being and, in everything, the possibility of producing everything: the necessity of a relation is its mere factuality, its mere being present.^e

(?) Any *demonstration*, if not of the necessity, of the *invariability* of the laws of nature is condemned in advance to spin within a vicious circle. After all, the image of nature as an exhausted process, as an identical repetition of identical situations and as an automatism is but a working hypothesis, largely abandoned, by now, by physical science, which is content with what can be put on approximately on a statistical basis. This means giving fore foundation to every law a simple calculation of probabilities and, objectively, assuming that physical law is but the bed in which the torrent of facts flows, a bed which is carved out by it, although it then follows it (39). It is therefore an entirely hypothetical and conditional constancy; one cannot extrapolate it—extend it, that is, to what is possible experience not yet verified until one has a way of proving the principle of induction. But in the empirical-experimental order, as Hume precisely pointed out, such a demonstration always ends in a petition of principle.^e

(c) Nature cannot be considered "done," exhausted—it is in the process of becoming already by the circumstance that, positively and continually, it is identified with what is known of it through science, and science at no point is to be said to be finished. Moreover, the sciences do not present themselves as a static body of knowledge increasing almost by stratification, but are systems in which change is not restricted, as Kant might have believed,

(39) Cf. É. Boutroux, *De la contingence*, cit., p. 39; E. Myerson, *De l'explication dans les Sciences*, Paris, 1921, vol. II, p. 2K5.

to the phenomenal manner beyond the immutability of certain *a priori* formal principles, characteristic for each of them; in them change also invests such principles, which from epoche to epoch vary, now more and now less, sometimes even completely, as in recent times has become clear with the physical theory of general relativity. Rigid superstructures fall away, physical science has for its ideal a system that is as labile and plastic as possible, making it possible for it to satisfy not so much a truly noetic-theoretical instance as a practical, pragmatic one: to dominate the disruptive multiplicity of phenomena as best as possible, even if the relations that serve this purpose are reduced-as in contemporary formal physics is the case-to something that is not at all unintelligible, indeed not even representable, having a purely algebraic character.

(d) Arago said that, outside of mathematics, those who utter the word "impossible" at least lack prudence. This very restriction no longer has any reason to exist. Precisely mathematics now appears as the place of the "possible" par excellence. We know of the possibility of a non-Archimedean arithmetic and a theory of transfinity. In the field of geometry, both Euclid's and Riemann's and Lobatchewsky's geometry are possible, and one knows of the contingent and inductible character of the spatial parameters on which beyond the purely formal order depends the evidence and the possibility of application of one to the exclusion of the others. Which is enough to ruin the assumptions of Kantian *Analytics*. Generally speaking, with the loss of mathematical certainty from being apodictic-deductive has become hypothetical-deductive: it is no longer a matter of *a priori* determinations that are necessary and self-evident in themselves, since what stands before are instead "propositional functions" that present themselves differently depending on the varying definitional arrangement of their variables. Now the *principiti*TM *individuationis* of propositional functions can only be an "absolute position," that is, something unverifiable and indemonstrable - a contingency. In fact, those who reject the criterion of "convention" (Poincaré) and the "absolute hypothesis" (Russell) and in this regard ask experience for the individuation of the possible, move within a vicious circle, for the reason that no *experimenta crucis* can be given in absolute; the datum of experience is itself indeterminate, ambiguous, it is defined and acquires a precise face only at the point of its incorporation into a given scientific system - which in turn presupposes a certain definitional arrangement of propositional functions. In the field of mathematical physics, then, if the theory of generalized relativity, assuming an extremely plastic algebraic tool, can deduce all gravitic-electrical phenomena given that they are so-called spatial curvatures or contractions, it is, however, powerless to deduce these same curvatures, which remain a mystery, something that it simply presupposes and yet which, if so, might as well be otherwise.

(è) But one can go even further. Just as Kant's categories-which are then more or less the same as those appearing in post-Kantian attempts at "deduction"-were simply taken over from traditional logic, likewise the basis of both them, and of the forms with which modern scientific thought works, is an entirely arbitrary circumscription of possible experience. Particular real phenomena, already occurring in normal everyday experience, and even more so a number of other, very varied phenomena, which fall into the realm of the extranormal, are systematically-mindedly left out-the problem of the non-psychological, physiological or otherwise empirical, but transcendental foundation of their possibilities is not posed. This is already true of *sleep* and *dreaming*. The arguments by which attempts have been made to give a speculative foundation to the common opposition of dream world to "normal" waking world, as of illusion to reality, have never succeeded in having probative value. This opposition, in fact, does not have a theoretical basis, but a pragmatic one - "illusion" is simply the name given to a part of experience which, if it were regarded in the same way as the remainder, *would disturb* a certain conventional worldview in which most are comfortable (40). Along with the dream, various other phenomena pertaining to psychopathology and psychiatry are dismissed in the same way, to this lending itself to the idea, that they have a merely "subjective" character: as if this would exempt philosophical research as to their possibility.

But there are extranormal phenomena that do not fall into the subjective sphere alone as pure experience: phenomena, which are as "objective" as others. Special researches, in our days, have had to ascertain their "reality" more and more: telepathy, prescience, vision of the past, levitation, contribution phenomena, telekinesis, split personality and so on. Those phenomena of this kind which fall within the scope of metapsychics and likewise of ethnological documentation, are basically, however, but the lowest in an order, the upper limit of which is phenomenology referred to by multiple traditions, to figures of initiates, saints, yogis and theurgies, and which in some cultural areas is linked to precise techniques for voluntary production. After the ascertainment of reality of the first class of those phenomena, the reality of the latter should not be ruled out in principle either, despite the fact that special circumstances often make it inconceivable for those moved by mere curiosity to control them (41).

With this, you have a whole matter of "possible experience," which shows precisely that modern science of nature is based on a "cut"

(40) Cf. F.C.S. Schiller, *Études sur l'humanisme*, Paris, 1909, XIII; and also C. Blondel, *La conscience morbide*, Paris, 1914.

(41)) Cf. J. Evola, *Lo Yoga della potenza* (1949). Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome', 1994, pp. 205-213 (ed.).

arbitrary. Consequences of a greater moment come, however, in the transcendental setting, when one would set out to define, in the Kantian way, the system of categories that would explain this matter together with the datum of "normal" e-experience, itself already affected, according to what has just been seen, by the factor of contingency c of simple probability.e

Thus the notion of necessity in the empirical setting is shown to be groundless, which therefore goes to make the idea of an inconvertible, "objective" determination of internal forms, inferred hypothetically from the former, appear equally groundless, as according to the original, Kantian, approach to the critical problem mentioned above.e

Enlisting a *philosophy of values* to support transcendental theory does not lead beyond the antinomy related to the concept of necessity. The philosophy of values, taking into account, in part, the things now alluded to, recognizes an indeterminacy in the same internal sphere but, beyond it, some forms of the *logos* would turn out to be objective c necessary because to them, unlike other possible ones, an *ideal imperativeness* is attached', that is, they present themselves, not as mere ideas or categories, but as *values*, and as such they impose themselves in choice. Senonchc, it has already been seen: either the value appears to be such in and of itself, and then we return to a case already criticized (moral freedom, freedom conditioned by a law, ccc.); or it is the self that makes every value such, and then one cannot hypostatize the value itself and objectively bind to it the note of inconvertibility. Thus also falls Boutroux's attempt to ground the constancy of laws by deducing it from a stability of the ideal that the activity of the *logos* follows in organizing knowledge. The argument to be made is the same: either this ideal already turns out in itself to be worthy of being wanted, and then we have the situation of the predetennial nation; or value comes to it from the mere fact of being wanted, and then it c contingent, its stability cannot be guaranteed (42).e

In general, the mentioned philosophy of values ends up in a vicious circle because if its *"solleiv,"* i.e., the imperative element, is to be distinguished from the compulsion proper to mere spontaneity, one has to return to a situation in which this *"sollen"* appears as *one* among several possible directions, so that the criterion escapes either into contingency (if indeed one conceives of a freedom-basis), or into regression to infinity (in case one admits that in the choice, by which one elects and follows the "you owe" as opposed to its opposite, one has again obeyed a "you owe").e

(6)e Pure causality. At least ideally, it is therefore possible to cross the boundary, that is, to refer to something entirely free from objective constraint. At this point, the possibility of the distinction sought would seem to emerge: *causa sui*, understood anti-Spinozianly as the power

(42) Boutroux declares himself for the first alternative, as he speaks of "an end which, in itself, inherita absolutely to be realized" (*Idée de lai naturelle*, Paris, 1895, pp. 162, 156).

contingent to determine what has been called essence, would define freedom as against the *cause sui* reported to that which-in the existential order or that of ideal normativity-actualizes this essence or nature. The situation, of which we are speaking, can be clarified through the examination of views where it has been presented under species of theological concepts.

Arnauld and Bayle have made criticisms against the *sui cause* understood in an active anti-Spinozian sense, but these have little foundation (43). Bayle's argument basically rests on the idea, that a *power* as such is inconceivable: "Since in order to think and will it is necessary necessarily to possess being and resistance, it is impossible that God, thinking and willing, can be the cause of himself - *non est possibile quod aliquid sit causa efficiens sui ipsius. quia sic esset prius se ipso, quod est impossibile.*" - But, in fact, this is the way things are: to be cause of oneself certainly does not mean not to have cause - this would instead occur in precisely the opposite case, that is, when one refuses to think of something beyond essence and posits this, in its determinacy, as the ultimate datum and first principle. If one calls *being* what proceeds from it, a *power* as such is certainly a non-being; although real, one cannot call it itself being, just as, with a paralogism, those who make objections of the kind Bayle makes. Freedom, if it is to be unconditioned, cannot have before it resistance of its essence, but instead the pure *power* of giving itself its own essence, and, indeed, contingently. And that is how *causa sui* should be defined in the positive sense. Here we might refer to the distinction Plato makes, in the *Parmenides*, between $\alpha\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\iota\tau\eta$ and $\alpha\upsilon\tau\eta$: the latter is nothingness (*nihilprivativum*), the former is simply the non-entity, and such is by definition that for which resistant (here, as nature, essence or determinacy in general) is (44). Such a position is corroborated by previous criticisms by which it has been shown, in a more concrete order, that even the first principles of rationalism present themselves as determinations, of which one can always ask for a foundation about their being essence not others. Now, only if essence, of which freedom as "nothing" or $\alpha\pi\alpha\rho\alpha\iota\tau\eta$ (i.e., as indeterminate power) is a cause, were itself pure indeterminacy-and this can only happen if one treats the problem on the plane of abstract theological positions- there is no distinction between causer and caused, and the notion of *cause sui* does not hold up. As soon as essence is determined, on the other hand, the distinction is possible and intelligible and

(43) Cf. R. Descartes, *Medita IV: objections faites per Arnaud: P. Bayle. Objectiones in libros quatuor Poirei de Deo. anima et malo.*

(44) Cf. F.W. Schelling, *Darstellung des philosoph. Empirismus*, cit. pp. 282-284. Thus Duns Scotus rightly says: "*Producilo ei secundum illud esse essentiae est verissime creatio; ipsa enim est ex de nihilo. ut de termino aliquo, et ad terminum ens. ut terminum ad quem*" (apud E. Pluzanski, *Essai sur la philosophie de Duns Scotus*, p. 183).

Descartes showed that it can be referred to divinity itself (45). Thus, overall: the scholastic view is well known, according to which, as far as creatures are concerned, resistance is regarded as accidental with respect to essence. It is clear, however, that apart from this accidentality or contingency, there is a necessity, for if essence is indifferent with respect to its existing = +eA or non-existing = - /!, apart from the question of actual existence (*esse existentiae*) there remains the fact of the ideal determination of A in general = p4| (*esse essentiae*). By positing a power with respect to which that given essential determination = |z| is as contingent as this is with respect to its actual existence, the notion of *causa sui* thus remains well defined and retains its sense against the criticism mentioned above.

A sufficiently firm position would thus seem to be reached; however, provided that things are considered from an essentially definitional standpoint, not as a function of an actual act. In fact, from this second point of view, the problem would arise *sùbito* about the meaning inherent in essential causation, that is, to it insofar as it is, in general, causation (i.e., passage beyond the indifference of causing or not causing), yet freedom: but this is properly the concept on which the whole of the present research gravitates.

Here we find ourselves at a particularly difficult point, because it seems as if no concept can be formulated at all without, at the same time, contradicting its content: every definition of freedom goes, in one way or another, to give reason to determinism (46): in one way or another, it is necessary to surreptitiously introduce some normativity to this, which would *sùbito* bring us back from the point reached by our research.

Take, for example—to stay still for a moment on the level of theological-cosmic substantiation—the Leibnizian theory of freedom.

(45) R. Descartes, *Meditations*, cit., *Réponse aux premières objections de Caterus*: "When we say that God is by means of Himself, we may mean this negatively, as if to say that He has no cause; but if we first seek the cause by which He is, or by which He does not cease to be, and, having considered the immense power comprehensible contained in His idea, we have recognized it to be so full and so abundant that it is, indeed, the true cause by which He is. For which He always continues thus to be, and that He cannot observe any other than that, we say that God is by means of Himself no longer negatively, but positivissimamente. For although there is no need to say that He is the efficient cause of Himself, so that we do not end up in a veritable dispute, nevertheless, seeing what makes Him to be through Himself, or that there is no cause other than Him at all, that He does not proceed from nothing, but from the real and true immensity of His power, it is quite permissible for us to think that He, in regard to Himself, does, in a certain way, the same thing as the efficient cause in regard to its effect, and therefore that He is through Himself positively." Related to this same order of ideas is the distinction between *Gott* and *Gottheit* in Germanic mystical theology, and that between the Brahma or Ishvara and the Brahman of Hindu metaphysics.

(46) Cf. H. Bergson, *Evolution créatrice*, cit. p. 175.

as conformity of the will to that which is more perfect. It is subviciously to be ruled out because, resting on the principle of sufficient reason, it makes objective criteria of greater or less perfection precede the act of choice; so that *possibility*, indeterminacy in actualizing, which Leibniz intended to claim against Spinoza's God, becomes an empty word: the more perfect remains determined by the nature of essences (of the "possible ones" that present themselves to choice in theodicy: of possible worlds) in such a necessary way and independently of the will, as much as the direction that a physical body on which a group of diverse but nevertheless definite forces act ultimately will follow (47). Instead, the truth is, that in the diversity of "possible" worlds that, according to this Leibnizian cosmological myth, presents themselves to divine choice, *a priori there is not* and cannot be anything more or less perfect in itself, good or bad, but a pure nothing of value, something insusceptible to receive such predicates and *spar* (48).e

Let us see, however, how things stand in a theory that--turning to the concrete plane of the individual--seems to assume precisely this point of view. This is the Stimerian theory of the One and its "property." For it, the pure will should represent the extreme instance; nothing should have, in itself, power to impose itself on her; spirit and sense, good and bad, and, in general, all opposites should stand, in front of her, at an equal distance, devoid of any determining power. The only character of the act, its only cause, would be Tesser *mio* (49). But here it may be asked: does the "mine" take meaning as against a non-mine, that is, is everything indifferently "mine"? Formulating otherwise: is there a way to guarantee the really having, a determination, the pure love for the bare essence of the self, of the One, whatever foundation cannot be an "obsession" (so, and also "fixed idea," Stimer calls everything that moves by virtue of an agreed value presumed to be its own)?e

In the world, in which Stimer moves, this question has no answer. Rather, it turns out that, in the final analysis, the One overcomes a certain group of "fixed ideas"-which correspond to social grandmas and religious precepts-only to give himself more freely, that is, more passively, to impulses and instincts: as if these were not themselves "fixed ideas"-in fact, fixed ideas far more deeply irradiated than the others, *because they are organic*, equally foreign to the point of pure self-possession! Certainly, with Nietzsche, one can make "mine" a category, something that is identified with the "good" and that.e

(47) After all, Leibniz, speaks explicitly of a "metaphysical mechanism" and "divine mathematics" (see for example *De rerum originatione radicali*, ed. Gerhard!, vol. VII, p. 304) and comes to the same conclusion as Spinoza: God could not change anything in the world that is, because this "is" reflects the greater value, and He can only will the greater value (*Theodicea*, §§ 52, 53).

(48) This is what Fichte rightly pointed out, *Tanz. Logik*, cit., p. 213.

(49) M. Stimer, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum*, ed. Reklam, pp. 44, 192-193.

as it were, redeems all content: taken in the function of absolute will, *willed*, *instinct* is no longer instinct, craving is no longer craving, nothing has any more naturalistic or eudemonistic character. Practically, here one would have to make oneself quite certain regarding the possible background of such a will, at the point where, in general, a determination takes place, a purely subjective persuasion having to be considered insufficient and often superficial in this regard. But even abolished for real, by means of a congruous discipline (50), all antecedent, that is, paralyzed the power that by preformation, habit or internal law given motives may have; eliminated, moreover, all determining oneself in a polemical-reactive function, because when one says "no," one evidently still remains determined by what one denies - what, then, will generally be the character of the act? *Such a character can only appear as that of absolute spontaneity.*

About Stirner, where in his world the category of "mine" might end up, is characteristically apparent from two consecutive pages 75 and 76 - of his major work. In the first, the One is contrasted, in his impassibility, to the one who is moved by things and values. In the second, however, the case of a girl who, obsessed with the idea of spiritual salvation, represses the impulse of the senses is condemned. This is a blatant contradiction. Consistent position, if at all, would be that of one who, suspended at first the voice of sex, at a later time impassively deliberates to second it or not to second it. And for the purposes of this mediation, even as Nietzsche (51) recognizes the value that, pragmatically, as a support, certain moral grandmothers can have. How difficult it is, however, to maintain oneself on the achieved position of a true *anomie*, Nietzsche himself, again, shows: the pure "I want" is an absolute imperative of self to self. He ends up associating it more or less explicitly with a "being oneself," brought back to a naturalistic basis (in the terminology of the last phase of his philosophy, "physiological").

Freeing the situation from all empirical elements, at the level to which, with the set of considerations above, we have arrived, there is no need for a determination to occur. Observe, however, what occurs, from the formal point of view, *if it does* occur. A power that goes to define an essence is necessarily one in which a principle, without further foundation, is incorporated all in a given direction. Now, existential spontaneity exhibits no different situation: it is taken all in a certain direction and, if we confine ourselves to considering its order (the proper ambit to the synthesis of existence) it, in that, has no further foundation, the determinacy of an *esse existentiae* is, for it, as unreal before and outside of its realization as is the essence before the *cause sui se*

(50) Cf. J. Evola. *The Yoga of Power*, cit. II. ch. 5.A

(51) See, for example, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse*, § 18.A

dia by drawing it from "nothingness." Thus, *formaliter*, the essential synthesis turns out to be identical to the existential one: common principle is its pure actuality. Which is as good as saying: the distinction once again threatens to dissolve. It is clear that unmanifested freedom, freedom not yet making an act of itself overpowers and dominates indefinite possibilities of form, of which none imposes itself on it more than another, just as neither does a choice in general; but at the point where the balance is broken, at the point of a determining in act, the spontaneity that posits an essence is, in its ambit, hardly discernible from that which brings an essence into existence.

This would seem to constitute the ultimate limitation for the present research: having started from elementary degrees, even at the root of the highest and most differentiated ones a characteristic has been found that remains essentially the same. On the one hand, necessity as pure necessity has critically dissolved itself; the concepts which, in the varieties of a realistic premise (whether of empirical order or of rationalistic order) go to define it have had no way of justifying themselves. On the other hand, in the inevitable immediacy and inconvertibility binding itself to a certain determination of itself as an act, pure freedom becomes problematic: absolutely itself in the synthesis of essence, real and possible in it become one again.

One principle may define the situation, which seems to constitute the extreme instance: *in the transition from the possible to the real in general* (i.e.: in the real encompassing both *Lesse essentiae* and *Lesse existentiae*) - or, if preferred, in the absolute position of a "real possibility" - a freedom passes to the point where it and necessity are one and the same. In such a situation, necessity acts as form, freedom as matter or power (*δύναμις*): through freedom as necessity is actualized, of this the self-identity being then the more general or original element or law. Necessity is like a destiny for realized freedom. Every manifested point, whatever it may be, is elementarily what has been understood in the present theory as objectivity, as promiscuity of active and passive. Nothing is real, which is not also necessary - in which freedom, almost in a *precipitate*, does not die to itself.

A clarification of the concept now stated can be made through a mathematical exemplification. Let one arbitrarily mark a number of sufficiently close points on a sheet of paper. By joining them, according to their succession, one obtains a curve of which one *can*, by the method of "cuts," identify the equation, capable of defining its further course. Arbitrariness, and simply as arbitrariness, has thus passed into a law, which is as good as saying into its opposite. That naive determinism, which here would claim that arbitrariness as physique, that what is done proceeds from necessary and sufficient conditions in which the equation is already found to be inconvertibly predetermined, is, as has often been pointed out, refuted by the invitation to determine then the equation itself *before it is brought into being* by means of what is illusorily believed to be arbitrariness. If such a determi-

nism believes that it overcomes the objection by saying that it lacks knowledge of *all* the conditions, it will retort that it then has no right to pronounce on the question *as if, instead, it knew them all*, since what guarantee is there that the presently indeterminate system of conditions is determinable, as, before all else, is required to speak sensibly of a necessary and sufficient relation of determination and to exclude that among the determining factors is to be found precisely freedom? But, on the other hand, granted that the faculty of arbitrariness could also have determined a curve defined by a different equation, it will remain in any case, in the order of the real, *an* equation. Necessity does not lie first, but is fatally drawn from freedom itself as soon as it manifests itself (steps into the real): then everything falls under the law of self-identities and of naturalistic spontaneities. Kant, too, generally regarded freedom as the pure power of positing the principle of a new series; or development of this falls under the law of causality, however, and is such that it can be explained as a function of it.

Senonché precisely at this point the problem is defined for really we want to say: one has a relation which, to be determined is general, is such that it also allows the individuation of that, which is opposed to it. The problem, again, is: how is a freedom to be thought of as *real*? As *real*, freedom would generally fall under necessity. But here freedom need only pass into the real in order to be only itself, to self-exploit and reunite with itself: its reality must have that condition.

Only the following situation can therefore be valid as a solution: the matter of the act must be such, that necessity, in its affirming through its actualization, in this also goes to deny, to consume itself, to bring forth the other of itself. But this is precisely the situation defined by the subjective option: the solution is given by that which is included in the concept of an entity made of domination, of self-distance, of self-excess, actualized in the synthesis of finite and infinite, of which it has been said in due time.

And now, finally, we have two concepts of freedom and necessity interconnected, but also, at the same point, opposed. They result from two opposite functional relations between the form and matter of the act, which, transcendently, lead back to value as affirmation and value as negation. As for the concept of freedom, it must imply both freedom and necessity in the strict sense, as *moments* that if they cannot be separated, neither can they be confused at a neutral point, as has been seen to happen in most of the views examined so far. Considered in the realm of reality, and not possibility, a pure freedom is mutated with pure necessity - to hold to it is to repeat the adventure of the Kantian dove who thought she would fly more freely when there was no longer the resistance of the air, and to grasp the only aesthetic moment of function that defines what can be said to be actually free. Without internal opposition and distancing, without a

place that at the same time incorporates a self-denial and domination, freedom is thwarted, there is no *manifestation of freedom*.

While every element, whatever it may be, insofar as it is assumed in the realm of simple actuality, adherence and identification (as occurs in spontaneity and in the order, which is connected to it or which proceeds from it, of what appears to have value, reality or evidence in itself) incorporates necessity, insofar as it is assumed instead in the function of the breaking of a self-identity into an absolute will that is released as a *determinate act of power* it passes into the realm of freedom. It is a *formal* relation what constitutes the essence of the distinction. And in all the speculative positions considered above, especially in the resulting antinomies, the efficiency of two opposing instances and almost an internal dialectic between the truths attached to one or the other option is clearly visible: for wherever support was sought in the objective and the necessary one referred, after all, to evidences proper to the "way of the other" and as such entering into crisis upon the reassertion of a positive concept of freedom.

Here it is not necessary to uppers to indicate the situation in which the actualization of freedom takes place: we have already spoken of a development of the different that counts as a series of acts of creative disidentification, that is, of acts in which freedom concretely witnesses itself as the power of other, dominating itself or taking back one, identical, immaterial and simple from all the intervals of change and from all the limits of transfinite determinations. This essence "burning and flaming without ceasing" (52) in naked possession, exists from and for itself and not from and for anything else - and is *free*.

We may dwell a moment longer on the myth that can take shape from the concept of freedom now defined. In the divinity as mere demiurgic power can be understood that which corresponds to the moment of necessity of self-identity, of the real identical with the possible, to that which cannot be but what is. Then it stands to the one who is free in the mere relation of power and matter to high: a symbol of the ancient law that held him crucified to himself and which he finds in all that limits and binds him, the free being turned in his process to dissolve himself from it, to transcend it, to do violence to it, in itself only almost a remote, dark past to be redeemed in a higher order.

Still in the context of myth, along this same direction a *theology of negation* can also be formulated. According to a certain perspective, the world of contingency, destruction, guilt, and death, the *àvTépwG*, all that in which law, identity, and form are overwhelmed and broken, can appear as a revelation of a supracritical value, of spirit as true transcendence and freedom. Some varieties of the Dionysian religions that of

(52) Expression from Meister Eckhart, *Schriften und Predigten*, cit., vol. II, p. 127.

Dionysus Zagreo in the West, of Shiva or Kālī in the East-incorporate precisely these meanings (53).e

A further mythical reference can be given by the themes of the *sacrifice* and *de- V incarnation of God*. Often the deepest meaning of these is that the highest essence of God is realized as such at the point of his sacrifice and incarnation, that is, of his possessing himself through his distancing from himself and his passing away. According to various mythologies, a not different sense is referred to the act of creation itself: a world arises from a sacrificial act or an act of divine asceticism (54). A similar idea, moreover, has been taken up in the theology of freedom by Secrétan, according to the following argument: God is absolute; but an absolute that was compelled to be so would not be as absolute as one in which the power to make himself nonabsolute was also included. Thus God, as eminently absolute, limits himself, creating by a superessential act the creature before him. In this limitation thus comes to act the perfection of freedom which the Secrétan defines creation precisely as the act that freedom in the eminent sense - in the sense, which the present doctrine has brought out makes of itself (55). Not the absolute, which its absoluteness had as a necessity or nature, but that which is such to the point of being able to deny its own absoluteness by making itself finite, but thus distancing itself, making itself free with respect to being and leaning on nothing (recall the considerations of Schelling already referred to), is the Supreme.e

Wanting then to look for a symbol for the process of freedom as a whole, perhaps alchemical hermeticism can give it to us, where it in *solving the fixed and fixing the volatile* indicates the essence of the "Great Work" (56). On the plane, which we are dealing with here, this means: to blaze being, to dissolve, to untie the necessary, the rigid and the inconvertible, and from this contingency to draw Weave

(53) Cf. J. Evola, *The Yoga of Power*, cit., I. ch. 5; Nova is, *Schrijnen*, cit., voi. I, p. 486: "The cause of transience must be sought in the spirit... his self, everything is eternal. Being mortal is the privilege of higher natures. Eternity is a mark, *sui venia verbis*, of beings devoid of thrust"; voi. II, p. 230: "Thus freedom is introduced into nature and, with it, guilt, the transgression of nature's will, the cause of a evil"; voi. II, p. 650: "All diseases resemble sin in that they are transcendent. Our diseases are all phenomena of an exaggerated feeling that wants to pass into higher forces. When man wanted to become God, he sinned." These are, these of Novalis, scattered insights susceptible to being traced back to the *metaphysics of negation* mentioned above.

(54) Cf. A.S. Pringle-Pattison, *The Idea of Enjoyment in the Tightly of the Recent Philosophy*, Oxford. 1917. It may be recalled, in particular, the association of creating with "attaining a higher nature" with the divine *de- Tascensis fire (tapas)*; in the *Rhagavad-gītā* (IV, 6; IX. 8) the manifesting and creating of the God is referred to a *mastering of one's own nature*, i.e., one's own infinity.

(55) C. Secrétan. *La philosophie de la liberté*, Paris, 1866, voi. I, ch. XVI11 *passim*, c pp. 442-443. This view is, moreover, already hinted at in Hegel (*Phänomeni. d. Geistes*, cit., p. 446), when he says that the sacrifice of the God is what makes these become "for itself" while at the same time giving the individual existence.

(56) Cf. Julius Evola, *The Hermetic Tradition* (1931), Edizioni Mediterranee. Rome⁴ 1996, The (Ed.).

crowned, which here can be understood as the identical, one and immaterial element of domination: this. in a circularity of "sublimation" and subsequent "precipitation," as a resuming and new dissolving or rapping, of the one principle. The process of freedom can thus

be referred, to use such symbolism, either to a "volatile" generating itself from the continuous dissolving of the "fixed," or to a "fixed" generating itself from the continuous individuation and possession of the "volatile." The two directions continue and pass through each other. One of these consists in the absolute synthesis of being and non-being that realizes freedom as *reality*, while exactly corresponding to the value situation proper to the second option. From a particular point of view, this process develops the very act of being that grasps and explains itself to itself in it becoming enacts *V apodissi supreme proper to possession*. Indeed, *V being or beingness* incorporates the fundamental problematic, that which subsists of inexplicable beyond all "how" and "why"- indeed the various "how" and "why" questions are only reflections or variations of such a basal problem. Hence, the development of freedom by the consummation of being, of the self-identical, also has in all its degrees the meaning of an exhaustion of existential darkness or anguish (57): it is *apodosis* in an absolute sense. This is achieved not by the rhetoric of arguments and of theories, but by the very process of freedom.

This leads to a final point, which engages the entire theory of the unconditioned that we have formulated. It might be objected that such a process being in some way defined, on the concept of it might have taken hold the criticisms made by ourselves with regard to the determinacies surreptitiously assumed by rationalism. Things are not, however, in these terms: as dialectic and, therefore, if you will, an elementary necessity is admitted to them - nor can it be otherwise, this being a condition for everything that, in general, *is* (be manifested). But such as dialectic has its deepest truth in that, far from being an end in itself - as in modernized Heraclitism it does not so much conclude with the negation of itself as a pure process, as it already implements it in every passing, that is, it dialecticizes with itself in depth in its dialectic in extension, taking up or resolving at every point that on which it rests.

If then, again, it were objected that, in spite of everything, there is a necessity, that of the negation of necessity, one would retort by objecting, first, to the right to so abstract the form of a concept from its content and then hypostatize it. Evidently, thus one could proceed to infi-

(57) It is the point that T. Carlyle (*Sartor Resartus*, ed. Dent, p. 37; tr. it.: Laterza, Bari 1924) already highlighted, asking the philosopher not why I wear this or that "apparel" (i.e., I am in this or that form of manifestation) and obey this or that law, but, in general, why I am *here* i.e., why I exist. As simply existing, the person cannot help but experience a fundamental obscurity, unresolved by anything he or she thinks and does. Of it, the problematicity of not-I is the mere reflection, or corrective: it objectifies a *differential of explanation* or, to put it better, of *non-persuasion* (in the sense given by Michelstaedter to this term). Cf. below. Finally, because, having said that the self is the not-this, the ungraspable, one could object that this is still a determinacy, and replying that the true ungraspable is the unity of the ungraspable and the graspable, of the this as well as the not-this, one could object to the same thing, and so on: by which one would not wish that the sensible content of a concept be specified, but that nothing be pronounced. - Secondly, there is to retort that the system of *B*, *B* as a category or the "way of the absolute individual" as a specific determination of freedom, *as a whole* is itself contingent: in so far as it has value, in so far as its opposite *A* has equal possibility as an all-encompassing category. Finally, beyond *A* and *B*, beyond the one option and the other, there is

the further, elementary moment of contingency, linked to the absolute act of freedom by which we rise to the level of value and lay bare the existential antithesis. Thus the whole system remains closed in on itself and does not actually rest on anything, "I am nothing: I call everything," this is indeed the true "Name" of the spirit, of the absolute individual.

Section Eight

Problem framing

In the present section we propose to identify more closely general concepts that we have already formulated but which receive their full specific meaning only in reference to the perspectives proper to the way of the absolute individual, that is, to the world of value as affirmation.

1. The rational and the irrational

First, it is possible to circumscribe the place, sense and limit of idealistic philosophy in general. Picking up on what was mentioned in the introduction, it is visible that this philosophy develops and gains evidence only on the basis of a will to autonomy, a being-for-itself; it is this will that gives rise to the immanentist theory of knowledge, which establishes these relations intended to free thought from all presuppositions, and which seeks to constitute reflection in a closed system. The limitation encountered here is a limitation, first of all, in the matter of consciousness, and it leads back to the general one indicated when speaking of the situation of logico-rational consciousness, to which is proper a passivity, a living under the species of an imperative and almost of a *v/v at the back* what it assumes as truth. Similar to any other philosophy, idealism *is caught up in* its own truth, which, however, in this case,

goes to constitute a kind of contradiction between form and content. When, however, it is recognized that the "truth" of idealism acquires evidence only as a function of a will - that of the "way of the self" - and that this will, in turn, is not bound to itself, but expresses only one of the transcendental options pos-e

sible, one of the directions of unconditional freedom, the hinted limit of idealism is removed.

This leads to clarifying, in general, the relations between rational and nonrational. As far as first principles are concerned, to ask for a *justification* of the requirement from which one starts is a meaningless thing. For what is meant here by "justification"? Does one claim to go back to the infinite along a chain of "reasons" according to what in more than one case has already been seen to have to happen (à la Kierkegaard)? All truth gravitates on a *prius* - before all determining and organizing of reflection as speculation there is an act or assumption, which to everything else gives its direction, to which, in certain cases, everything else may indeed count as *ratio cognoscendi*, but which still constitutes the *ratio essendi* of it. Of such elementary determination it is not that one cannot, but that a further "reason" *must be given*. As the limit of the series and the *sense of it*, it is to itself its own justification, as for the various "reasons," they come only *afterwards*, they are determined and non-determining elements, or determinants only incidentally. "Explaining" that original position is thus tantamount to denying it, not admitting it, that is, to claim that the whole series rests on nothingness. In such cases it may well be said that the philosopher does not think his own system, *but is thought* (1).

At the level of the subjective option, this is not merely an observation, but also the basis for certain value judgments, for a fundamental orientation and direction of the spirit. Action takes primacy in the face of knowledge. Here the habit of asking for reasons, of leaning on a truth, of objectively defining a reality becomes a negative symptom: it almost says of an inferiority complex, it attests to a not knowing how to stand on one's own feet: one dings something to *be*, so that one may not want it, not command it - yet feeling secure and justified. But for one who follows the "way of the absolute individual," in the order of "supreme things" he cares less about *knowing* what *is* and what *is* true than about *determining* what must be or must be true. For him, rather than problems, there are tasks. For that matter, too often one disregards what is frequently behind the impersonality, rigor and objectivity of the "seeker of truth": *Vinegarability of a will*. And this, too, is disregarded: that the fixity of the real and the "true" are often not defined except by the extroverted attitude of those who need it as support: as a Mirror's Reflected Image goes toward those who move toward it.

(1) Cf. F.L. Jaspers, *Über die Lehre Spinozas*, cit. p. 143: "Man's intellect does not have its own life in itself: the will is not formed through it. Instead, man's intellect is formed through his *will*, which is a spark of eternal pure light and an omnipotent force. He who goes with this light and acts with this power goes from evidence to evidence and comes to know his origin and his destiny."

It follows from this that skepticism, relativism, illusion theory are but feeble movements stopped halfway and only because of this we would almost say: because of the fear they attest - contradictory. One does not come to think that the "truth" is so impenetrable, that there is no way to perceive error, illusion, relativity as error, illusion, relativity: that all this is without relations, is without a possible term of comparison and measurement, therefore it is the unique and absolute datum. It is all too evident that one cannot speak of error, of "as if"

(Vaihinger), of the "falsifying activity of the intellect," of the subjectivity creator of illusions and so on without the implicit presupposition of the *affirmability* in general of a term of truth that, in spite of everything, *exists*, beyond the world of the relative and the illusory, that is, without the presupposition of a will that *needs* something to be, because it wants to lean on and discharge itself. This something it does not find, it escapes her, and not knowing how to react, not knowing how to paralyze the need, she is unhappy, *skeptical*.

In a better light the attitude of the *Greek sophists* is presented. They, taking skepticism and the denial of objective truth as a simple presupposition, understood the *indeterminacy* of "truth," and from this they drew the necessary consequences: they asserted that *truth can be constructed*, that there is an art or technique to make one thing or another become "true," that action can intervene in order to those evidences or beliefs, which men, out of habit or passivity, hold to be absolute. As for the limitation of sophistry, it is well known: we are restricted to the plane of rhetoric and heresy, that is, to that which can be demolished or constructed in the mere discursive sphere and which would not even know how to touch all that is deep and irrational persuasion. The problem of an organ capable of assuring an unacknowledged but willed truth of its verification in order to complex systems of reference, transcending mere social opinions or subjective beliefs, this problem was not even conceived by sophistry, which, being, after all, the first not to believe in itself, kept itself paid to a juggling or duellistic art in the sphere of discourse. However, later speculation, beginning with Socrates, far from taking up the need that had appeared in such a primitive and frivolous form in sophistics, took in principle toward the opposite direction, that toward truth conceived and experienced as necessity.

Irrationalism is also an incomplete position. This philosophy usually merely asserts the reality of an irrational as a principle unto itself, opposed to the rational and irreducible to the sphere of the rational. Now, it is precisely this opposition that should be overcome. That is, it should be recognized that a rational that subsists and unfolds by its own virtue is a fiction that exists neither in heaven nor on earth, that of the rational itself the root is the non-rational, so that the relationship between the two is not one of opposition or mutual exclusion, but of a hierarchical subordination of the latter to the former. The non-rational is not to be sought beyond the rational.

But in the bosom of it, as its internal dimension and as that which *expresses itself* and acts determinatively in the logical order: an order which, disjointed from it, would collapse into nothingness, because its very eventual constitution in a system of abstract relations has possibility only on the basis of *a will to abstraction*. By and large, it can be said that everything is at once rational (or rationalizable) and irrational, this relating less to essential characters than to two aspects and two different functions according to which the same object can be assumed. Even of the more "irrational" realm of feelings, impulses and qualities an adequately advanced science will be able to point to the logic, in the same way that a sufficiently thorough analysis will always be able to lay bare the residue or non-rational moment present in what appears to conform to law.

As for the practical, deontological aspects of irrationalism, the consequence of this is that true freedom need not set itself in antithetical function with respect to the law, as if true freedom should be considered that of the rebel, not already that of the ruler. On the contrary, it is to be said that the complete affirmation of a will sufficient to itself cannot but be followed, and almost witnessed, by a "rationality," by a law; when this does not happen, one has rather to do with a velleity, with an imperfect affirmation of freedom, limited to an intensive level below that of another order already given. If rational stands to the non-rational as *style* stands to the free creative power of an artist. A high degree of power and tension naturally brings with it a high degree and rigor of logic, because logic, in this practical sphere, is an expression of the amount of chaos that one is capable of assuming and organizing, that one has the power to master in order to force it to assume an absolute, unequivocal, *necessary* form. The irrational in its pure state is not a reality, but a pre-reality, a pre-world. That is, it has a specific well-defined place: that proper to the moment or interval of *passing away*. In the act of any passing over or self-distancing, the antecedent, that from which one detaches oneself, *appears* properly as bound by law and rationality, while that which is affirmed in the nascent state presents itself as irrational, arbitrary or contingent, the movement as such not being able not to lay bare for a moment the deep principle on which form and format rest. But this is, precisely, an appearance, something relative. By right, there is no limit, on this side of which is the logical and the rational, on the other side of which is the illogical and the irrational, but the logical was already irrational, and every new assertion of the non-rational given that it is sufficiently intense and profound in relation to the sphere in which it takes place brings with it a new rationality or logicity—a new form of organization of domination—that is precisely the expression, sanction and sign of that intensity.

Thus the irrationalism inherent in Croce's theory about the theoreticity of error is not acceptable: error as a kind of distortion or deviation of the theoretical faculty, of the *logos*—which in itself would always affirm truth—because of the irruption of an extraneous practical or, as Croce calls it, "economic" element. Such an "practical" element, it is repeated, already lies at the basis of the *logos*, and what proceeds from it can only appear as "error" in the case of a contrast between two tendencies or instances, of which Tuna has not yet enlisted all the means necessary to reassert itself adequately over the other. But to this, we shall have to return.

As of now, however, this overall pattern can be fixed. Considering a determination through all possible degrees of experience going from the inside to the outside, the original point is the non-rational. If one makes abstraction of it, or if consciousness takes form *after* it, one has the plane proper to that which is rational and conforms to logic. Let there be abstraction of that also; then, as a *caput mortuum* or "precipitate," there will be determination under species of a fact and a certain mechanical and physical law. On the latter plane is *perceived that which* in the previous order was *thought* and which at the initial point of the series can be *conceived* as pure determination. In this respect, and in the case of a complete development, these three planes thus represent only three aspects or modes according to which a single reality can present itself to itself. In the special regard of the question considered here, rational necessity is the freedom or irrational experienced, as it were, from without: then determining *appears* as the *vis a tergo* of the logical imperative. The evidence and stringency of a given logic is the *a posteriori* symbolic equivalent of the *power of* a given non-rational situation.

The real problem of irrationalism takes shape on a different plane, detached from the anti-

intellectualist polemic. It falls within the domain of *meanings*. It is that once it is understood that what is rational, objective, proceeds from something that, it, is not rational, one must ask: *what is* this something? What is the relation of the Zo to it? Is there posed as the ultimate term a transcendent and incoercible power with respect to which everything we determine, assume, think or want appears as the accidentality attached to a given moment of an unpredictable event? Or is *V* the same as that power, as an absolute, lucid principle that is what *it wants to be*? Irrationalism as a worldview corresponds to the first alternative. Opposed to it antipodally is the "way of the Absolute Individual." The two directions are incommunicable because of their potential all-encompassing nature. In fact, once the first is assumed, one can consider the aptitude for domination and the active formation of the nonrational simply as a particular episode in the indefinable incoercible burst of "Life," an episode insusceptible to being hypostatized and extended to the totality of the possible. Assumed instead in the second direction, it is the same irrationalist conception of Life as an indefinite, indomitable, ever-newly bursting of forms and perspectives that can be understood as one among many that can be *willed* as true and

into which it is equally illegitimate to contract the whole, the totality of a possible which, in this case, is subsumed at the point of autarky. With such a framing, what, in principle, can be said about the meaning and place of Irrationalism remains exhausted.

A critique of irrationalist intuitionism has already been mentioned above. It can be taken up on the basis of the points specified just now. Such a theory makes a kind of trial of the activity of the intellect, especially as the creator intellect of science, because it sees in it an organ that deforms and limits the reality of experience, which would be supplanted by fiction, conventions and relations justified only in the manner of practical purposes. Now, it is first of all evident that such value judgments imply—just as is the case in skepticism and relativism—the idea of a "self" assumed as the "true" reality that is neither deformed nor falsified. Such a reality is here identified with the irrational, of which the rational would thus represent a limitation, negation or downfall. More important, however, is to note that as for the non-rational, intuitionism *chooses*, and exalts only one species of it, the negative. Indeed, its very critique would serve to highlight well the practical, thus non-rational, foundation of the "fabricating" activity of the intellect, which should already amount to justifying it. How, then, can one condemn such activity who precisely affirms the primacy of the irrational? The truth is that that non-rational which manifests itself in doing violence to the indefinite, in imposing the seal of a form to the formless, *is not loved* by intuitionism. The dissolution of the will, its regression and coalescence with the flow of the immediate data of consciousness and with an emptiness made up of sensation and mere spontaneity (*Vélan vita!*)—this is what, on the other hand, intuitionism feels vocated to, what grounds its doctrine and truth and forges its critical armamentarium. A paradoxical situation, here the intellect is mobilized to discover and tententiously bring to light everything that the "practical" action of the intellect cannot be right about, every remnant of the irrational: almost with a *Schadenfreude*, with a pleasure fore harm and for failure in those who have sided with the without-form.

Not without relation to this another point can also be mentioned. On the basis of the views we have formulated, an objection of principle often raised against incomplete and dualistic irrationalism loses all force. Indeed, where the rational counts as a negation of the irrational, putting up a *theory of* the irrational is indeed absurd. A coherent irrationalist should limit himself to simple living and acting according to momentary impulses and inspirations, at most giving himself to lyrical effusions or some kind of "creative" spontaneity, as free from form as possible. Otherwise things go when in the rational is meant a particular means of expression of the non-rational. In such a case the theory, the system, the logico-rational formulation expresses the extrinsicity, the taking shape of an act, and they of this—as we said go to testify to the power in a certain sphere. The rationalist, on the other hand, who, consistent, would limit himself to mere living and feeling, fearing to contaminate with form and rationality pure experience and

believing that those of this one would never know how to express the richness of infinity," resembles the failed artist to whom expression seems deadly to what he confusingly feels and "cannot be said": where the true artist knows how to lord over the medium of expression and makes it adequately say what he wants: in the limit-in the power of the limit-making an act of what is truly infinite.

2. The doctrine of deprivation

Here we will take up idealism understood as a *problem* to specify the situation that leads from the theory of knowledge to *the order of action*, in the sense of moving from a more elementary degree to a more complete and perfect degree along a single possible direction of spirit.

The schematic formula summarizing the idealistic position in general as a theory of knowledge is already well known: *X is A or X*. With it it is first expressed that the being of a thing is mutated by its being represented and generally known, hence the proposition, "The world is my representation." In correspondence, the self remains elementarily defined as representational activity.

Beyond this, the following problem arises. Concretely, the distinction between what is mere idea or illusion and what is reality *makes sense*. Like it or not, ordinary life is based on it. But with what has been said just now no such distinction can be accounted for: as much as a house as the mere image of it, as much a dream phantom as a waking perception, as much as a group of natural phenomena conforming to law as the visions of a schizophrenic being in equal measure nothing outside of a corresponding representation of me. Here there is no need to repeat the arguments by which a truly radical critique shows that to establish, in this respect, a truly essential difference is impossible. What then defines the reality of what, specifically, is considered real?

When we confine ourselves to a purelygnoseological idealism, such a question is bound to remain unanswered. To posit for exclusive point of reference representational activity (what in the above formula corresponds to element *X is A*), is to restrict oneself to something, which can be said of everything equally, thus to an empty and indeterminate genus. In so far as this genus can specify itself, and gnoseology establish differences that adapt it to the plane of the concrete, in so far as, beyond such a point of reference, a further criterion is assumed: that of the *mode of activity*, of the relation of activity to itself. It is all right that the self draws everything from within itself - *but according to what function?* In the quality of which he lives, as the case may be, this generic actuality of his, which is the representing, the making of something *for him*?

Thus we return to the very point, which in previous examinations has so often served as our basis. It is evident, therefore, that only by introducing the concept of *value* as understood by us do various perspectives come and define themselves for this problem. In particular, here the two opposing, fundamental qualifications of activity as *spontaneous* and *voluntary activity* come into question, and it is enough to take them into account for us to be able to move forward in our research. The question, now, is as follows: I may well reduce the world--the whole of Experience--to my representation, but to what extent can I sensibly reduce it *also* to my will? I can do so even more generally, to *value*?

Now, it stands that in correlation with determinate areas or objects the representational activity - the basis of idealistic immanentization - is simply of the type of spontaneous activity: in such cases, the real is not dominated by the possible, the self is passive with respect to its own act, not so much affirming things, that is, the images, the representations to which these correspond, as it is as if things were affirming themselves in him, according to an often unpredictable affair, often devoid of all intentionality, insusceptible to illuminating itself with meaning. As already noted in criticizing Schopenhauer and pointing out what use can be made, in transcendental terms, of his concept of *Wille*, it is the experience of pure impulse, passion and craving that, at the limit, gives a way of roughly understanding the meaning of this area of the ego's activity: as in the case of impulses, passions, cravings and emotions, there are representations (acts, positing representations) which, although they are something of *mine*, are not *me*, for the simple reason that I cannot freely provoke them, and that they are insusceptible to being modified or suppressed. So I may well say that I am the one who "posits" nature: but I must immediately add that I am so insofar as I am spontaneity, note insofar as I properly am, that is: not insofar as I am will in the specific sense and dominion (2). I

(2) In his second philosophy Schelling was to recognize this point definitively: "Considering more closely, however, it is foolishness [to say that the world is my representation] until it is shown *how*, in what way even *nothing* I am to consider existing is *through the I* for the I. The very view of such a subjectivistic idealism [Schelling, though not of the mourning rightly, here alludes to Eichte] cannot want the I to place things outside itself, *Ubero* and in function of *wanting* because there are far too many things that the I would like to be otherwise, if external being depended on it. The most radical idealist cannot avoid thinking that the ego, as to representations of the external world, is dependent even if not on a thing-in-itself, as Kant called it, or generally on a cause outside itself. nevertheless at least on an internal necessity, and when he attributes to the ego the production of those representations, this must be, at least, a blind production, founded not on the *will* but on the *nature* of the ego" (*Zur Geschichte der neueren Philosophie*, S. W. I sec. 10, X. pp. 92-93). Leibniz (*Theodicea*. §291) rightly noted spontaneity to be common to everything; it is the degree of dominion one has over activity that by which a free and intelligent being is differentiated; thus the distinction and the problem, mentioned above, arise.

This already provides a concrete *principium distinctionis* for the problem we are dealing with. Indeed, it can be assumed that, in the last resort, a "real" thing is simply a thing about whose representation I, as will, can do nothing or almost nothing. There are particular representations which, in grandmotherly fashion, I cannot avoid, change, destroy, inhibit, or evoke at will, any more than I can with my thinking in the strict sense and with the force of a mastered fantastic activity, and these I distinguish with the attribute of reality. The attribute of reality, concretely, has for its foundation this *non-power* referring to something, which I

does not for that reason cease to be a representation, does not for that reason cease to rest on an activity of mine. That which in the world as a representation proceeds from an activity that, although it is mine, is *necessary*, namely: that which proceeds from a spontaneity, precisely that is commonly called *real*. As a function of will, spontaneity is simply to be defined as *deprivation*. "There are real things"-meaning, "There are representations, about which I cannot, as to their occurrence, as to their constancy, as to their intensity with respect to them, and others possible"-and this, in turn, transcendently means, "There are situations defined by a differential between spontaneity and will in the senses of an overpowering of the former over the latter." This is all that can be said, if one wants to stick to *absolute positivism*.

What at most can be objected to, is that a character of necessity and unrestrained spontaneity could also have dreams, hallucinations, fixed ideas, without for this reason all being commonly considered real and not merely subjective. But the objection, thinking strictly, does not hold up. It is clear that even in such cases the criterion of distinction is non-power: however necessary they may be, such representations do not have the power to reassert themselves and be determinative in order to possible, more complex systems of reference, given by the totality of experience, systems according to which the agreed, conventional concept of the non-subjective is defined. They are only "necessary" in a restricted sphere, and should this sphere be isolated, should one have the power to constitute it as an extreme instance in itself without regard to consequences and contradictions - as happens for example in the paranoid - it would not be theoretically possible to make a well-founded discriminating judgment, as much as to continue to speak of an unreal and only subjective world.

After that, the fundamental point is the following: *Sfatto* joints of non-power must be curbed the natural and instinctive inclination to explain it with the *concept of a real present thing*, of an "other" acting on the self. This would be to discard, because, concretely, the relation is just the opposite. In the realm of absolute sufficient and perfect power with respect to any representation, the idea of "other" could never arise: it is therefore the experience of a non-power that gives meaning to the experience of an "other," it is what is before, the immediate and original datum of consciousness, and, as for the "real thing," it is but a symbol of it, a hypostasis, a

conceptual transcription made through a transcendent (in the Kantian sense) use of the logical principle of causality. Hence, the explanation of the fact that one is powerless in certain areas of representational activity by reference to an "other"-whatever this may be according to the varieties of philosophies-is a pseudo-explanation, indeed a vicious circle: one might as well claim that the symbol explains, clarifies that of which it is a symbol rather than in it having its explanation and meaning.

To say that a representation is not caused by me according to a 'voluntary activity is not at all the same as to say that it is caused by something else-this is the central point of the refutation of philosophical realism (3). Realism, with a paralogism, from not being, the representation of anything, caused by me as absolute will infer to its not being caused by me

in any way, not at all giving thought to the fact that between Tesser caused according to will and not being caused by me at all, a third term is conceivable: precisely Tesser caused by me according to spontaneity. In what is not caused by me in an absolute sense there is simply expressed a *deprivation* of my causality as value-bound causality and, in particular, as positively free causality - and the logical transition from such a deprivation to the causality, and thus to the actual existence, of the T "other," is *synthetic* and in no way justifiable or cogent. The realist, when he does this, *escapes* from what concrete experience can authorize him and goes on to *construct* a mere concept. Indeed, his position would be justified only when he could really start from the thing, when the thing and not the limit, deprivation, was the original datum; instead, deprivation is what in actual experience stands first, the matter from which then the set of categories constructs the varieties of what is judged "real" and objective.

So: the fact that I as e, i.e., as a sufficient and free principle, cannot recognize myself as the unconditioned cause of particular classes of representations does not impose the concept of real things, existing in themselves, causing them in me, but simply means that an area of my activity still has the form of spontaneity, that the e as freedom in it suffers a *deprivation*. The "reality" of the object as such is only the *phenomenon* (the reflection) of the privation proper to an imperfect act -- that is to say: of the distance of it from the perfect act. Correlative to the reality of privation, that reality lives and dies with it. In the process by which the self would eventually go on to make itself sufficient to its own act, that is, to make the principle of it no longer the sponta-

(3) The inference to reality starting from the powerlessness of spirit to produce ideas of things or to prevent them from being produced is found in, among many others, J. Locke, *Essay on Human Understanding*, I. IV, ch. IV, § 4: ch. XI, §§ 5-8; D. Nume, *An Enquiring*, cit., sec. V. IL Cf. Aristotle, *De Anima*, L, V. 43#, 14-18.

neity, but the will-it could not but dissolve, it would lose its existential character, it would pass to the meaning of myth and symbol.

However, the relativity of the concept of privation must be made clear, namely: a given element or mode of the act is never privation in itself, but such a character it always acquires in a relation. It is necessary that we move to the plane of value and freedom to that what is positive as spontaneity (i.e., as a function of the simplethetic moment) turns into something negative from a further point of view, when the self has not simultaneously elevated itself to the capacity to reduce it to itself. This means that the theory now formulated is of those that can acquire evidence and present definite meaning only in the world of the absolute individual and, more particularly, mind, of the subjective option. Not *wanting* to move to the plane of value, the concept of deprivation, as it is defined here and as it can form the basis of a *transcendental* ethics, must appear unintelligible. And that is why in ordinary existence nothing would be more absurd than to make oneself free in the terms of a passion, a void of absolute being and violence, precisely those aspects of the world at which the ordinary man moves so confidently and naturally. Nor could the idealist who would not abandon his position be led to understand the notion of deprivation. Of the same notion, that there is a certain activity of mine which is necessitated, which to a certain extent does not depend on me, he could say having, it, for a condition the act whereby it is such for me; and it would not be worth retorting by saying that I am not free with respect to this act, by which I think

or posit that some of my thoughts or representations are independent of me, because the idealist could restate his argument, according to an indefinite recurrence, for the purpose of claiming the cognitive elusiveness of limits. That "qualitative leap," so often mentioned, is thus the condition of everything.

There are representations, on which *e* can, and others, on which *e* cannot - thus is presented, in the frameworks of absolute positivism, the problem of reality. To add something more to "explain" this non-power is to give back, to bounce back into the logical order, where precisely in vain one would try to undermine the position of abstract idealism.

In this regard, should the last word therefore be a declared profession of agnosticism? An arrest to this naked fact of non-power, with renunciation to transcend it as it may be? This depends on what is meant by "transcend." There is an open way, however, that only *V action* can take. This much is certain: that at the point at which we find ourselves, every intellectual "explanation" is a pseudo-explanation which leaves the facts as they are, which in nothing changes the real, existential relation with which *e* find myself to things (i.e.: which leaves the differential between spontaneity and will unchanged). Nothing is changed in regard to this when one "explains" the limit with matter instead of God, with the "thing in itself" instead of the "historicity of spirit." In all this one has, in the final analysis, only the varieties

Of a logizzare myth, of a *beating about the bush*, a simple *discourse* around the thing. There is, however, another possibility: explaining by action, that is, by resolving, by passing to the act what is in potency, by creating sufficiency where there is deprivation, by determining a new situation among the powers of the self, by framing consciousness itself. Thus, in one particular regard, the "explanation" about an existential datum, about a representation that is formed according to necessity on the basis of sensible perception, will not be some theory about the thing, but rather the act proper to what scholasticism called intellectual intuition, an eminently active act without "matter" that renders its object in the terms of a *meaning* and by that very act places it in an absolute relation to the "I." In other respects it will be transformations, where the moment of potency, of agilizing, of dissolving, is more prominent. But, on the whole, the direction is unique, the integration of the ego as ego in the whole sphere of its activity is what counts and which by itself leads to a transfiguration of the world as a simple representation more or less imbued with deprivation. Considered from the standpoint of this possible development, such deprivation then appears simply as that proper to what is in potency and as such requires no explanation whatsoever. Its only explanation - we repeat - is its factual resolution.

Of the nature and forms of the process, of which we speak, it is not the case here to deal. In any case, its concept was not created for the needs of our theory, indeed from our theory it is independent. Our theory merely indicates its convenience in regard to the integration of idealism and the possible transition from gnoseological idealism to the doctrine of the absolute individual. Here only the following consideration can enter into the question: that always, in every respect, one will be dealing with inner actions having for their end the reduction of what, in general, has been understood by "spontaneity": as one who would turn to infrenate the world of instincts and passions, not in order to suppress it, but to starve the energies proper and to these energies rejoin on a higher plane. Thus, if one sticks to the original sense of the term, one could well speak, analogically, of a *transcendental asceticism*, that is, of an asceticism whose object consists not of the mere subjective world of affectivity - that is, of it only in a quite elementary and preparatory degree - but of the powers overshadowed by the idealistic doctrine of categories and a priori, in the function of which unfolds that set of representations and relations between representations, to which ordinarily the notion of reality and the objective world are made to correspond. It has already been shown that in the frameworks of abstract idealism in so far as such powers can already be connected to the "creativity" of the ego and spirit, they are given an unconscious or subconscious character. In the same subjective sphere in a narrow, psychological sense.

such a character is common to what is in the nature of impulse, of pure spontaneity: to the rapidity of given irreflexive, instinctive or impulsive reactions is linked an effective deprivation of consciousness, and it is just such a situation, conducted to the limit, that can introduce us approximately into the sense and mode of action of the aforementioned power (4). Thus it is, also, a matter of a special and active integration of consciousness and of the sphere of consciousness, which will imply certain transformations apt to change the passive into the active, the identification into a higher lucidity.

As for the general conditions, the assumption of the naked power of the individual, as in an awakening, is the first point; the destruction of the fascination of the "real," the retraction of the gaze from the external phantom and the leading it back inward is the second point. The method is, to use a Novalis term, an *active empiricism*. The irrational, the "other" must not be "explained," but assumed - this is, again, fundamental. The "other" has no causes, no reasons, no conditions - to "deduce" it is to discard it in what we shall call the "way of rhetoric." There is nothing behind the "phenomenon," the "for us." What is really "beyond" the "phenomenal" experience is what this same experience *becomes*, when the act that corresponds to it from imperfect becomes perfect - only as a correlative of such an integrated act, that is, of an active intellect in terms of possible experience, can we speak of a noumenon. Metaphysics, in these terms, is transcendentalism, indeed transcendence, only as absolute empiricism. But to this we shall return, when the problem of potency is treated.

Here the irrational presupposition and, therefore, also the internal direction of realistic philosophy can be indicated. The proper of it is the *making of nonbeing a being*. By calling real that which, as a symbolic correlative of a deprivation of central power, of a negation or passion in the unmultipliable body of the ego's activity, should instead, according to justice, be called *unreal*, it confirms this deprivation itself and, as it were, escapes, evades. To the act that, dominating them, annuls things as such and redeems privation, the realist substitutes a fact that recognizes them - superstition gives them an autonomous being and reality: as if by a collapse of internal tension (5).

(4) Fichte (*Grundriss des Eigentlichen der Wissenschaftslehre*, cit., § 3, IV, pp. 34X ff.; *Grundlage der gess. IViss. e. cit.*, p. 301, ccc.); Schelling (*Transz. Idealismus*, cit., pp. 403, 406-9, 460-461) point out that the belief in the objective world in its necessity proceeds from the fact that in perceiving it one empathizes with it without at the same time reflecting on himself as perceiver. Indeed, spontaneity even common is generally related to irreflexivity.

(5) Meister Eckhart gives a vivid and precise expression to the theory of deprivation in the following passage, "Take a burning coal and place it on my hand. If I were to say that the coal burns my hand, I would not say right. If I were really to say what burns me: the nothingness. For the coal has something in it, which the hand does not have. Here, just this

Let us repeat: the immediate positive fact is only one: a finite, self-bound activity. Because one is powerless to assume this finiteness, because one wants to relieve oneself of the responsibility and burden of it, one invents the "other" that "explains" it, one brings in a cause distinct from the self that is the cause of necessary representations. Senonché in what is limited one can well conceive of simply the imperfect; having arrived at the concept of deprivation, in deprivation one can see the natural character proper to what is in potency in a whole, which includes degrees of potency in actual degrees of potency that are not yet or not yet perfectly so. *V powerlessness* (necessity, existential opacity) can be identical with an "in potency" so that one can see in all that is non-potency, limitation, finitude, mala contingency, the privation inherent in that which, in a progressive series, comes first, precisely and only insofar as it comes first. And this privation does not need to be explained, to be "deduced." Its explanation, as stated above, lies only in the process of the incomplete becoming integrated, of the unconscious becoming clarified, of sensation becoming an immaterial act, of spontaneity becoming will, of overcoming, if one wants to use the terminology of Vedānta metaphysics, "ignorance."

The situation, from which speculative realism practically and irrationally arises can also be clarified in the following terms. Let there be a being in whom lives the impulse to make the sphere of absolute causality coextensive with that of all his experience, but who nevertheless is in a state affected by certain limitations. In such a being there will occur a natural propensity to fill even the negative zones with a certain causality which, therefore, since it cannot by hypothesis be referred to the "I," if the whole is likewise to turn out to be causally understood, it must be referred to "other. Hence the transition from the non-being of the *TOÛTÒV* to the being of the *ΕΤΕΡΟΥ*, hence the sophistry, that to say that a thing (the representation of a thing) was not freely posited by me does not simply mean that, in relation to it, there is a state of deprivation of my causality, but rather that there is the causality of other about me. This, of course, is a perversion of the initial instance: actuality that is not my actuality, from the immanent point of view can only be something thought, that is, a content, the object of a representation, and if the object of a necessary representation, it is not actuality, but deprivation. The act, it cannot borrow it from anything, it has *Videntico*, the Kad' *ἔ* will have by law unbreakable. So also in this respect in realism there is expressed only the escape of the true act, the escape from that act, only in which, by destruction of privation, things would become truly real, participants of the absolute being of value.

nothing means to me. But if my hand had in it a coal that could and can, it would at the same time have the nature of fire. He who would then take all the fire that he ever seized and pour it on my hand, could do me no harm" (ed. Pfeiffer. Göttingen⁴, 1924, p. 65). The arrest of the realist projection of the "other" can be detected in doctrines, such as the Hindu (*Vedānta*) doctrine of *māyā*: the world of realism understood as an illusion or semblance, due to an "ignorance" (*avidyā*).

It is obvious, however, that not from the simple overcoming of realism as a philosophy came the elimination of the "other": the position of the "other" occurs not by inference or in theories, but in an immediate, necessary (spontaneous) and natural way in vast areas of representational activity, which are those most properly associated with sensible perception. Substantiating this is fundamentally the category of *space*, that is, the spatializing act. Here Parmenides in the allusion that that non-being (= being of the other or other as being), which no violence can ever make it be, would correspond to empty space - that is, to the form in itself of space - hinted at a profound metaphysical meaning, grasped by few. Through the spatializing act, non-being acquires semblance of being, deprivation, robe of reality, world of things, or nature. Thus by *sense of* such a high one must conceive of a deeper, transcendently objective degree of the same flight, the same coming short of self, which on the speculative level is expressed in philosophical realism. It is a point, this, that has been touched upon by us elsewhere (6). That the work of asceticism, of the integration and actualization of consciousness, of which we have spoken, has, in an eminent way, to affect that which acts as a transcendental, superindividual and irrational substratum to the spatial category in general, this, therefore, is evident, and finds confirmation in the views proper to many of the traditions which the varieties of such asceticism had or have for their object.

Let the following consideration be made of past because it implies visuals not entirely assumable in simple philosophy. The principle of the contingency of categories was stated earlier, a contingency that, among other things, implies the possibility of their *becoming*. This of course also applies to the category of space. It is one of the entirely arbitrary limitations already indicated to assume that the experience which the common man of today ordinarily has of space is inconvertible and universal, that along with it others different from it there are not or have not been, in correspondence with which the experience of the "other," of which space is the fundamental basis, is itself different. It is a fact that the center or axis around which the life of the greatest ancient civilizations of the Occident and especially of the East was organized was a magical-symbolic vision of the world, in the frameworks of which space (as indeed also time and causality) did not have the same meaning that it presents for modern man (7). We need only recall, for example, the Hindu notion of the- *Vākāsha* (ether-consciousness or space-consciousness) and be aware that in this we were not dealing with philosophical constructions of individual thinkers, but translations of a more or less general collective existential datum, to present that that civilization was moving in a different space from ours. And even in the ancient Greek civilization the sense of the unreality of the "other" is like a vein that runs all the way to Neoplatonism, having now highs and now lows: that is why the Greeks ignored

(6) *L'individual and the becoming of the world*, Librerie di Scienze e Lettere. Rome, 1926, p. 32.

(7) Cf. J. Evola. *Revolt against the modern world*. Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome, 1969. 1. 20 (Ed.).

the notion of matter in the massive modern sense, and in tracing it back to that of imperfection, potentiality or deprivation, approached the views sketched above. Even those who wished to reflect on certain material gathered from ethnology (however spurious such material might be) had to realize the possibility of an experience, in which the real had not yet taken on the figure of mere "given" that comes to it through the category of space in its present form: situations were noted, in which the relation between the "E" and the spatial "non-I" was labile, not unambiguously determined (8). R. Guénon has rightly spoken of a process of "solidification" of the experience of the world, occurring, after all, in a relatively recent period, in tune with the corresponding process realized in the human interiority (9).

Moreover, it is no accident, but a logical thing, that in civilizations where it appears, from sufficient evidence, that the spatializing function did not so uniquely invest the non-existence with the semblance of being, of an external and given reality, always possibilities of power were admitted for man, which go beyond the schemes of the modern physical-scientist conception of the universe. The two imply each other, according to what has already been said. And the experience of a "psychic" or supersensible world interwoven with the physical-spatial one corresponds, after all, to the intermediate degrees between power and act in the world of representation, to partial resolutions of "deprivation," the counterpart of which is precisely an exhaustion of otherness, the "other" which gradually becomes a symbol or is internalized under the species of an experience of powers at which it is possible to *command*.

By contrast, in the world, which is commonly called normal and is fixed in the definite forms of space, things are by man simply *looked at* with relation to the deepest, unconscious dimension, they are *suffered*. *Vergil* that *Vuoto* actuates of them is only a reflection. An active knowing does not even suspected by the consciousness fascinated by the daemon of space, which wanders among shadows when it believes instead that it is moving among "real" things (in such terms the Platonic myth of the shadows of the cave is strictly in accordance with truth) and makes the body of its power fall out of itself - into the deprivation, into the darkness of "sensation" and of what else lies below the threshold of distinct consciousness.

3. On stoicism and the way of rhetoric

With the above considerations from the gnoseological problem one has thus been led to the deontological problem. Here it is worth fixing the meaning of other attitudes that can be taken towards this second problem.

(8) Cf. E. De Martino. *The magical world*, Einaudi. Turin, 1948.

(9) R. Guénon, *Le règne de la quantité et les signes des temps*, Paris, 1945.

The point that, on the basis of what has been seen, must remain ferine is that the "other" is, yes, as other, non-being, but that nevertheless it as non-being is—that is: deprivation, of which it is the symbolic correlative, for man is real. This, in logic implies an oft-discussed aporia in Greek speculation: there is indeed something absurd in preaching the being of non-being. But this is not, as we know, a situation in which the pure theoretical faculty enters into question.

Rather, the theoretical aporia indicates a tension, a contrast of a practical order that can be brought out by examining the *Stoic position* in a generalized sense.^e

As such it can be defined as that, in which value becomes absolutized in its formal aspect, to which corresponds precisely the predication of esse- king, stiffening into a pure state of lawe that lets the intensive moment fall out of itself. Unlike what happens in realism, here one does not fail, one does not concede rationality to the irrational, the judgment of existence is assumed as absolutely binding in the judgment of value. With a verdict, one thus proclaims as *being* the point of value, that is, what *must* be, c one affirms that being is, non-being is not (Parmenides). Senonché this can only have the meaning of an inner unwaveringness in the face of deprivation, of ἀòia<|)opia and ἀνὰdetà, of indifference and non-adherence to passion.^e The fact, that passion is, in general, felt and suffered, subsists. The subjective and ethical-psychological transposition of this attitude is in the well-known properly Stoic saying, "Suffering, however much you do, I will never acknowledge that you are *evil*."

Such a position appears affected by an elemental contradiction where one thinks d eplye about the Stoic theory of ovYKCtTctOEoig, of assent. Does not saying that passion is felt ce undergone mean that, through the elemental assent inherent in perceiving in general, one has adhered to it, that it has been assumed, that therefore to non-being the *logos* has already granted a being? Non-being can then no longer be denied value, because, even if in an elemental degree, it has already been given it. The value judgment inherent in the proposition, "Being is, non-being is not," proves, therefore, to be almoste *hysterical*, that is, to a e consciousness, after all, dilacerated and contradictory. ef pq óv, non-being, is not, it must not have voice, form and power; if, on the other hand, it does have voice, form and power, and thise the I in the existential judgment I recognizes, *must* recognize, it is, and who instead does not c, except in an empty formal sufficiency, is being the òv.^e

Classical Stoicism, as c known, distinguished between rà ècj* qvìv c TÙ pq è<J)' qvìv, betwe n the realm of what depends on me and that of what does not depend on me. The ne de for and ethics of *power*, autarky and *virtus* is asserted only in regard to the former. At a highere level, this distinction appears artificial. en all that is for him the self finds itself, in a certain way, engaged, bound, compromised; there is no thing that he, without being aggrieved by it, can abandon and have justified by anything else. This is the fearsome consequence of the dangerous wisdom contained in the e

formula: The world is my representation. It goes to constitute as a prison, from which one cannot escape, because it has no walls. Realizing the power, the sufficiency, the self-sufficiency of the world of the *à è<J*) *fpiv* identified with the subjective and individual one in the narrow sense of human passions and affectivity, can thus be but one degree with respect to a much broader task, to the task of transcendental asceticism previously defined in correlation with the extension of the concepts of passion, deprivation and necessity. No less than all that the realization of such a task implies can ground the identification of logical judgment with value judgment, expressed eminently in the Eleatic truth: "Being is, non-being is not."^e

This does not prevent the Stoic position itself, despite the dilaceration from which it suffers, from being on the line of those who hold themselves up, when compared with the *netftto p qropiKp* path of *rhetorical persuasion*. Thus may be defined, with an extension of the corresponding Greek notion, any response by a discursive act to that deprivation of things, the resolution of which requires instead the absolute act in the real transfixion, transformation of powers, reduction of the differential of spontaneity, integration of consciousness. It is a matter, here, of all varieties of "explanations," of all theoretical constructions that are worth to the ego as a substitute, precisely, for the destruction of existential irrationality, of the accomplished state of justice, thus pretending to it a sufficiency. On this, it is not necessary to pause particularly, because examples of such a revolution we have already encountered and considered. One of them is, in fact, precisely the theory of realism, the substratum of which has just now been indicated. Another, however, is the theory of absolute idealism according to the inversion, which has been charged in it several times, which it theoretically cannot avoid, but which practically - mind equally expresses a discarding, a dissolving of self-sufficiency. As we have seen, this is the irrational basis of paralogism, whereby as the realist from non-being, anything, in the world of representation, not caused by me according to will, infers to its not being caused by me *in any way*, but by something else; likewise the absolute idealist infers from being caused by me according to spontaneity to a being caused by the self in the proper sense: whence the speculative developments, in which the amount of existential antithesis that one is able to take up and "explain" in the immanent principle is strictly equivalent to the amount of the irrational, the obscure, and the passive that one introduces into this same principle, that is, in the "E" whose freedom one would like to "celebrate," up to the ultimate collapse and form-limit of rhetoric, which occurs in theories, such as Gentile's about the "concrete will," signifying nothing but a dissolving in the moment of spontaneity according to which things appear and become (I). In this, after all, there is an equivalent of realism, the

(10) Cf. J. Evola, *Essays on Magical Idealism*, cit. pp. 13 ff., 37 ff., 157 ff. which irrationally *yields* and bestows upon the irrational - upon *pq ov*, non-being - reason, being. But, in general, every "deduction," every concept that "explains," and thus *annihilates*, rationalizes the irrational of deprivation is a creature of the identical tendency to discard; it takes shape on the path of rhetoric, it does not express sufficiency to the "other" but rather, beyond fiction, letting oneself be raped by the "other." As stated: the irrational (the other from value) is not to be "explained" (11).^e

In judgments concerning the order of the real, Kant distinguished matter from form. His point was that if there is no experience possible when it is not *c* invested and interpenetrated by form (i.e., by the transcendental activity of thought), form itself, or category, cannot be *emonstrated* nor can it act except in relation to matter, i.e., what in experience is given

through the senses (12). *That* we have the experience of reality (not its form, its "what," which would derive only from ideal activity), this Kant does not defer to the power of the subject, but, with regard precisely to the condition constituted by sensible matter, to the *noumenon*. The noumenon in Kant is but a name for the intervening distance between the ordinary humane power of perception and the faculty of "intellect intuitive," or "intellectual intuition," which in scholasticism was often attributed to angelic entities: it is a symbol of what Maimone (13) called the "differential of sensibility," is a sign of the deprivation of free causality in regard to those cognitive acts to which external reality corresponds, in short, of that residue of potentiality and limitation, causing human knowing to proceed by discursive syntheses dominated by necessity and producing "phenomena" rather than by free and perfect acts that grasp causes and effects in causes. Thus the noumenon is, or, rather, *can* be anything but a "dogmatic remnant" in critical philosophy, once the views outlined above are assumed. The condition to this is that the noumenon *is not named*; only then, that is, only if one assumes it not as a concept but as a distance-measuring symbol, *is it*. When, on the other hand, one goes to define the noumenon as the transcendent cause that conditions and determines what we call "phenomenon" (our representations), it becomes a contradictory hypostasis, because, as we saw it earlier, from the positive point of view the *concept of the* noumenon-as well as every other equivalent to it-is explained by the *fact of* non-intuitive knowledge, and not vice versa, the limit, the deprivation inherent in it is what lies before and what we must stand firm on, arresting the tendency

(11) Of particular moment are the considerations in a similar order of ideas made by C. Michlaetdt, *Persuasion and Rhetoric*, cit.

(12) Cf. p. 543. for the principle of causality. *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, cit., p. 543. On the concept of demonstration as performance in the real *Kritik der Urteilkraft*, § 57, note 1.

(13) S. Maimon, *Versuch einer Theorie der Transzendentalphilosophie*, ed. 1790. pp. 27 ff.

to make the use, which precisely Kant called transcendent and distrusted, of the principle of causality (the idea of causality used not to connect phenomenon to phenomenon, but to trace back from phenomenon to that which should count as the cause of it but which by so doing would itself become phenomenon).

What happened after Kant precisely in regard to the noumenon is a typical case of the "way of rhetoric." The procedure, on the whole, was this: Kant had thus posited the noumenon in order to account for the necessity of representations linked to sensible matter and corresponding to the real world. Now already a Fichte traces back to a law of thought this act performed by Kant personally as a thinker and not included in his philosophy: that is, he affirms that in the ego there is the function of positing a non-ego to explain the said representations, a non-ego which, having thus become a concept, remains conditioned by the ego and is not transcendent but internal to the sphere of knowledge. This is the way by which the noumena is eliminated - let us say: exorcised - and, keeping to the plane of discursive thought, this sphere constituting a closed system, one goes on to construct the rhetorical sufficiency of the ego to the noumena, to the "differential of sensibility," nullifying the very reference that allows one to present the distance with respect to what can be said to be, according to truth, an act of real and perfect knowledge.

Let us consider other philosophical symbols of the same situation. One of them is related to the so-called *ontological proof*. Let it be noted that in so far as to speak of *proof* makes sense, in so far as one assumes that between the idea of God and his being in fact there is a difference, for if being, which alone accords with God, were purely ideal-if in God a reality beyond his ideality were not to be sought-it is clear that to think of him would be tantamount to thinking of him already as existing, and to think of him as not existing would be tantamount to not thinking of him at all, that his thinking is already his being. This is precisely all that Hegel (14) was able to say against Kant in the fact of disputing that one can speak of the existence of God in the same way as the existence of a thaler or any other thing in the sensible world. That's fine. But then one would not have a proof, simply a mere ideal assertion that is sufficient in itself. Given, on the other hand, that God's existence is something beyond his idea - in short: that God is not the thought of God in man, without residue - and yet that the connection between the two terms is synthetic, the assumption of ontological proof is paralogistic. It is in the *quo tantum cogitatum non potest* (God) will be able to, yes, bring in the idea that God is a being that exists, but in no way this existence itself. The being that by deduction can be joined to the idea is not Being, but the idea of being, that is, always the idea, and so the movement is a tautology. And this tautology is another variant of the way of rhetoric: with such juggling of concepts the "philosopher" and the university professor think they are surrogating that real experience of the divine which is the extreme limit of superdiscursive, metalogical and non-human intellectual intuition. All that in the way of mysticism and asceticism which, then, still does not change

(14) *Enzyklop.*, § 51, ann.

of true metaphysical realization-distances from such a limit, representing not so much the knowledge of God in man as God's own self-knowledge, is skipped in stride.

The Spinozian equivalent of the noumenon is the attribute of extension, which in substance coexists with that of thought: which in part leads back to what has been said about the sense of space. In this regard, too, the idealistic criticism has been advanced that, Spinoza having admitted the infinitude of thought, extension becomes a pleonasm. The truth is instead that extension is "power," which in true infinite thought becomes act, and the distinction of one attribute from the other is, again, a symbol, expressing a real situation that is not resolved by the movement of concepts. Spinoza, for that matter, had a suspicion of what must be held in this regard if one does not tread the path of rhetoric: beyond intellectual opinions and sensible experience in general he in fact conceived the state of the so-called "knowledge of the fourth kind," to which it is proper to grasp the incomprehensible (non-rational) unity of the two attributes in substance, and thus the transition from extension to the "space" of a spiritual vision.

In another domain, the following point can be mentioned. After all, it belongs equally to the path of rhetoric the movement according to which one tries to resolve the obscurity inherent in the existentiality of a thing - which transcendently refers to the "differential of sensation" - by recourse to *external causality*. In this case, the real, the fact, is assumed to be able to be "explained" by means of another fact from which it proceeds according to the nexus proper to that causality. From the ego and the situation of its powers, which is the real problem, it abstracts. Such a reference can only be, however, recurrent: it develops a series, which can

never be exhausted. The irrational, rather than eliminated, passes to another form: the "is" of the real escapes possession by referring, by the chain of external causes, always again to another - to another cause or condition of phenomenal order to which the flattery of reason or the absolute term is perpetually displaced.

In Descartes we have this situation: the insufficiency of the self to ground the idea of ontological perfection is ascertained, hence the so-called "psychological proof" of God's existence: since that idea is experienced, yet cannot come from ourselves, God must well exist as the cause of its arising in man. Such an argument makes it plausible that the thought, which is at issue in the Cartesian *cogito ergo sum*, is that which is simply logical-discursive, so much so that the rational-stylistic-phenomenistic interpretation of that formula, which we have already mentioned, is well-founded. Hence in Descartes along with the immanent criterion of certainty comes that founded on the principle of "divine veracity" to connect a character of reality to the object of a given category of representations or thoughts. In this there is a particular form of discarding, which avoids indeed the rhetorical solution, but with a myth similar to that of realism goes to make rigid a limiting boundary, which, however, is loyally confessed to oneself.

It can be seen that a similar situation in part - in part, because you lack such a myth characterizes Stoic consciousness. Now, about overcoming

of this and the transition to action, one must rectify certain perspectives that may result from e not understanding clearly enough that, in principle, it is not a matter of transformations of e matter but of form, the former being able at most to occur only as a consequence of the latter. e It is possible, in fact, in a determinate and still imperfect degree, to center on an antithesis that e makes one disavow that transcendental value of the finite, of the determinate c of the negative, e of which we have spoken in speaking of freedom as reality and of the world of the second e option in general. Then one seeks an Absolute that is out of the world of the finite, the e

determinate, the negative. In particular, one can start by perceiving the reality of deprivation, e that is, by noting that what ought to be is not, and what is is what ought not to be. The second e moment, which leads beyond the Stoic position, is that of *ethical rationalism*: holding firm in e spite of everything to e

"ought to be" means that, through its own force c action, being will have to take the form of e ought to be, will have to bend to it and reflect it in the mythical perspectives of some religions e the consciousness of the "Masters of Compassion," of those who feel the pain of the world e (existential deprivation in a certain affective transposition) and intend to redeem it or point the e way to e

liberation, may fall, as a variant, into this case. But a more driven phase may intervene, in which one feels free not only in the face of being, but also in the face of the values according to which in the previous degree one wanted to bend reality or "redeem" it. Then all "devi," all e-inconvertibility, falls away; the internal bond is severed. One comes, in the end, to understand, e-that there is nothing to be liberated or redeemed, that everything is already liberated and e-redeemed, that the finite and the true infinite (or transfinite) are one.e

Evidence of this perspective also exists in the history of civilization. Perhaps the most typical of them is the doctrine of the Mahàyàna, which goes on to recognize the fundamental identity of *nirvana* (or Absolute: the state of the "liberated") with *samsdra* (the finite, conditioned world) (15). The *contemplatio mundi sub specie aeternitatis* can, moreover, be regarded as a related view to it (16). But in the former the immanentistic and active moment is more in evidence: the one who realizes, as the apex of the path of integration of consciousness and "awakening," that identity, is also the *màyà-yogi*. i.e., the one for whom the world is no longer *màyà* in the sense of illusion and semblance, but the manifestation of power (of *màyà-shakti*), power with which he has become one and in which manifestation and liberation of the experience of the world, the true distinction of the "other," is produced. This thus

visibly leads back to the point mentioned earlier, the idea, namely, that there is not an absolute reality and a finite reality, but rather a finite experience and an absolute experience,

(15) 15) Cf. J. Evola. *The domination of the aakening* (1943). Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome⁴ . 1995 (ed.).

(16) 16) And also a view of Spinoza (*Brief Treatise*, ed. v n Vloten, p. 31) th t the imperfection c disorder of things is not a problem, since they have no basis in reality, ut only in an inadequate way according to which man imagines it.

fre from deprivation, made of act, made of freedom, of a single reality, and that the essential transformation is not about the matter of experience, but about power and form (17).e

4.eThe problem of essence and existence

The above considerations have emphasized the fact that, taking the practical, will-related point of view, the difference between idea (thought) and reality makes sense. This sense n edse to be further clarified.e

What has been said so far could lead one to constitute being as a pure heterological element, as an αὐτογενές. Just as Aristotle noted that the definition of a thing, i.e., the concept of a thing, says nothing in regard to its existence or non-existence, it being perfectly possible to think what the "Chimera" is without thereby deciding whether, in fact, there are any Chimeras, likewise Kant noted that the idea of a hundred thalers and a hundred real thalers are evidently not the same thing: but since from the strictly logical point of view there is nothing in the hundred thalers that is not included in the idea, or concept, of the hundred thalers, it followse that in so far as one refers to something irreducible to the logical element, a difference is made betwe n the one and the other. In scholastic terminology, such is the esse *existentiae* opposed to the esse *essenti ae*.

Such a view can thus be assumed, however provisionally, to the difference, which is here discussed, being able to be given a substantive character only when the movements proper to the "way of rhetoric" are to be prevented. Keeping in mind as a whole all the points specified above, however, it will be necessary to formulate a more comprehensive view.e

As noted repeatedly, the most basic degree of experience is simple representing. et alsoe includes natural evidences, which ordinary consciousness feeds on, without wondering howe and whence they come. ef thought intervenes, such evidences generally undergo a crisis, which, however, introduces them to a higher degree, to that of *understanding*. n it already ae certain *quantum of* passivity, deprivation and spontaneity is reduced. When of a given thinge one has a *concept*, the self stands to it in the relation of an active construction, of ae determining what it is and cannot be, thus of a grasping it, fixing it and unitarily dominating itse various aspæts in an internal act in which its being given or presupposed as mere representation or as natural evidence is consummated. The

17) 17) On the outermost plane, the stage in which action precisely on matter is taken finds a

precipitous expression when the problem is shifted from the unmultiple consciousness of the One to humanity and the various myths of messianic advent are formulated, of which the modern physiqués of social and technical progress are but materialized forms among the most naive, gross c superstitious.

explanatory moment provided by the concept binds, after all, to this greater activity, defining precisely the intellectual act. Now, f "real existence," the esserci of the thing beyond itse concept in so far remains obscure and inexplicable, insofar as it too cannot be traced back toe such a relation, insofar as e cannot construct and determine it as in the case of the idea or essence. Which, concretely, means: Real weaving in so far as it is correlative to a deprivatione of my activity is inexplicable. This leads precisely back to the doctrine of deprivation ande likewise to what has be n said in regard to the concept of certainty conditioned by power ande fre dom. In a situation, in which the *sense*, which Weave of things binds to my wanting them, would shine out to me, it is clear that the reality of them beyond their concept would itself turne out to be *explained*, would be perfectly "intelligible."

Framing the problem in this way outlines the idea that betwe n concept and reality there ise no qualitative difference, only an *intensive one*, that is, one of degree. What ordinarily countse as an idea or concept is not to be thought of in abstractly psychological or unrealisticallye logical terms; it already incorporates-and in addition resolves-a certain degree of existence (Tesse *essentiae is*, that is, a degr e of *esse existentiae*). As for existence in the proper sense, one must then think of it as the correlative of a more intense degree of that same power whiche in elementary form determines the concept, that is, the simply thought thing. And when ae Berkeley (18) does not distinguish the real from the ideal except with reference to the perception proper "to a *more powerful* spirit," when similarly, but on a more empirical plane, ae Hume (19) distinguishes impressions justifying *belief* in a real world from mere ideas merelye because of the greater energy and vividness attached to the former, after all, the one and the other affirm a not different view. One might thus be tempted to say that reality or being is bute *Vact* of the idea, or, the idea, but a reality *in potency*, that is, a reality merely proposed ande sketched. But lest we play at misunderstanding, once we take the viewpoint of immanence we must clearly recognize that then Weave is predicated in two different senses. en fact, Weave ine its greatest potency insofar as it is precisely being, òtXoyov, does not represent for the I an act, but a deprivation of the act: as a function of e and freedom it is not act, but rather an "ine potency." The being that really is act is of a different species, it is a limitation on the directione of that free and transparent activity to itself which in an elementary degree is expressed in the intellectual syntheses which already partly reduce the spontaneity of mere mpiricale representing or experiencing. Thus the whole can have the following framing: a *continuum* ofe activity havinge

18) 18) *Principles of Human Knowledge*, §§ 29-3 .A

19) *T eatise on Human Nature*, III. s. 5.A

by limit and lower layer spontaneity, by limit and upper layer freedom. Beyond the existentielle order given as the simple world of representation, the self in the world of idea and concept enjoys a first degree of free activity, having positively in itself its own principle. This degree *can* proceed toward its perfection by means of a process that invests deeper and deeper and more complex layers of spontaneity until it dominates and resolves the same intensive degree corresponding in ordinary experience to real existence. The correlative of such a being will then be of the same "intelligible," free nature, made of active power, that already substantiated the idea: the act of that which, as a concept, is only the "in potency" will have being in the state of *meaning*^ or value, in an eminent sense, outside any "mythical" garb or transposition; and this alone will properly be being, absolute reality and, in one, evidence, absolute certainty. It is known that ancient Hellenic thought had, therefore, a symbol: that of KÓGgo*; vor|tó;.

With the considerations now set forth, among other things, the problem of the discemability between illusion and reality, between error and truth, once again arises. And the solution of such a problem can be, in every respect, only one, that which can be drastically expressed thus: error is but a weak truth (the correlative of an incomplete act, insufficient with respect to others present in the same order), truth, that a powerful error. Likewise, between illusion and reality there is no difference in nature, but only in degree: reality is an intense and dominating illusion, illusion, on the other hand, a sketchy reality, merely proposed, inhibited to others.

This concerns, moreover, the empirical plane, with reference to which a clarification is possible in the following terms. Suppose we assert, before you who do not see it, that here, at this moment, there is a *crystal*. This would be a false assertion, both for me and for you. Now, in what does this falsehood consist? In what, that the idea of the crystal, for me as for you, does not correspond to any existence or, more precisely: that the act that in such a situation, corresponds to the idea of crystal and the judgment of existence ("there is a crystal") is intensively irrelevant with respect to the spontaneity to which corresponds the representation of the environment in this moment, in which neither I nor you perceive a crystal. In the finale analysis, it is simply a relationship of tension between two forces, one of which is stronger than the other but which, from an internal and transcendental point of view, has analogy with the situations in which a passion or instinctive reaction directly imposes itself on what, in a weaker being, is a mere sketch of will. But to be only intensive, and internal to the self, this relationship can also be modified. And here are the degrees: first, beyond the simple mental image of the crystal and the simple discursive judgment ("false" even for me) of existence, one can proceed to an enlivening of its image that can lead all the way to an external perception of the crystal, in the seat of a subjective hallucination that, therefore, already fits provisionally into the fabric of experience. Secondly, one can act on other consciousnesses (what is to be understood by such a

regard, it will be seen when discussing solipsism), so that they also have the same hallucinatory character of perception and "seeing" the crystal. Finally, one could think of the same power continuing in an ever more intense and organic affirmation until the layers of spontaneity, to which correspond, even in a larger sphere, the representations of the real having the highest degree of character of "objectivity" and necessity are invested. And then, in correspondence with a power which, *sicut in natura veritas*, is capable of "suggesting" or "persuading" nature itself and thus inducing and actualizing in it the original idea at the given point and moment, what was originally false or illusory character of "subjective" would become "true" and "real."

Of course, the aspect in this scheme that suggests something between the miraculous and the presligital must be dismissed. Above all, it should be noted that in the example given it is from a representation, from an image, that one started, whereas the real *tenninus a quo* of the active procedure of a transcendental integration is the idea as an intellectual act: thus the development cannot have the extrinsic character of a hypnosis in grandeur, but that proper to an assumption of the essentialities which are the very powers, hierarchically ordered, of the real, just as will be said in speaking of the problem of potency: which, according to what has been seen, is inseparable from the problem of intellectual intuition, that is, of the faculty capable of resolving what is "matter" into the actuality proper to the order of "meanings."

But having made this point clear, for what concerns "true" versus "false," "real" versus illusion, things, in principle, cannot stand differently than is suggested by the paradoxical exemplification made just now. Which, after all, necessarily leads to considering from a further point of view the same problem of the possible in general. Where the act which achieves being involves the modification of a certain system of relations, it is clear that the criterion of the possible becomes the real, that one has a unique function which gradually becomes defined, finding its perfect univocal determination in its *tenninus ad quem*. In such cases the degree relative to idea and concept is necessarily problematic and indeterminate, hence here what has been said criticizing rationalism finds application, namely: there is no true *a priori* criterion for what is possible or not possible, there are no objective deductions, no intrinsic certainties, no logical passages in and of themselves self-evident. And rationally absurd what is in fact impossible, and not vice versa. Intrinsic certainties, the necessity of reason are but hypostases of uniformity, of empirical habits: they therefore subsist only contingently. This does not contradict the moment of value that has been acknowledged just above to the concept, but only relativizes it, in regard to that absolute act which, in the cases in question, constitutes the *real experimentum crucis* in the two orders, which converge here, of knowledge and action. Even confined to cases in which no modification necessarily intervenes in the existent, the *terminus ad quem* of intellectual intuition cannot fail to represent an integration of meaning and a complete determination of that which, as a concept, retained a margin of deprivation: of indeterminate, provisional, non-transparent to itself. Assuming these perspectives, it is thus confirmed that the opposition between idea and being and the corresponding position of the heterogeneity of being with respect to the idea are legitimate at a given level, for the purposes of discussing and setting up the integrative problem, but by them must be relativized where one considers the relations stable when the limit is broken. In any case, considering the process as a whole, a continuity between theoretical and practical elements appears clearly in it, however, quite different from that asserted in rhetoric by abstract idealism. Theoretical and practical result as two species of the kind of a fundamental practicality. Theoretical already as such appears as a practicality in outline, as an initial assertion and definition of a given spiritual current; and that which leads that current to assert itself completely in the terms of that "logic" which, to use Bacon's words-"is capable of constraining not minds by concepts, but things"-defines practicality properly. In the world of the undefeated, and particularly, if you will, in the world of ethical rationalism, there is certainly an antecedence of the theoretical to the practical, which, however, does not lead, as in other philosophies, to a dependence of action on knowledge. Dependence would in fact occur only if knowledge were not itself already an act, and a determining act, and if the practical beyond the theoretical were something detached, receiving its task from the theoretical itself,

rather than being its development on the basis of a fundamental continuity. Taken as a function of the integrative process mentioned above process which, however, does not impose itself, since even the attitude proper to Stoic consciousness is possible, there is no "you must" for the " " in regard to resolving deprivation and making your experience coherent or not - the theoretical determination, as noted above, naturally turns out to be indeterminate and problematic to a certain degree and takes on the sense of a *postulate* the evidence of its 'truths' is transformed into the imperativeness of something *tending* toward its own realization toward the plane of absolute meanings. Thus, as can be seen, we also come back to what was said in the first section of this work and the beginning of the present section with regard to the very "truth" of idealism in general and its main propositions. Such propositions are not "truth" as a statement of relations which, in *every* respect, already hold in things; they are instead practical acts, directions of determining, which also have others as compossible. And for some of them, as for that, expressed in the principle that the action determines the motive and note vice versa, that the world is internal to the self and not vice versa, etc., to which already the immediate data of psychological consciousness confirm them, it is necessary that in this same consciousness a certain modification take place. Thus such theoretical propositions cannot be said, absolutely, to be "true"; but neither can they be "false." False or true they can become so. One does not necessarily have to assume those domains -- or, to put it better, those dimensions, those intensive strata -- of experience, in the face of which theoretical determination turns out to be abstract and incomplete; but, given that this is so, it assumes, therefore, the characters of problematicity and, practically, those of a postulate.

Another point that is perhaps worth taking up, because the above further illuminates it, concerns *V immanence and immultiplicity of the will*; himself said of it while criticizing Schopenhauer. In regard, it is crucial not to detach "representation" from "will," to recognize that there is not representation *and* will, but representation in the abstract and representation *as* will. In other words: there is representation experienced passively the first Nietzsche would say: apollonically - representation referred to that which sustains it, animates it and confers various degrees of "reality" on it. So one could also say: representation and will are two ways of experiencing the same thing, in the former case from the outside, in the latter from the inside. As for the term "will," its content here can be left undetermined, so much so that the Schopenhauerian meaning can also be included in it - indeed, it has already been said, repeatedly, that precisely something like the Schopenhauerian *Wille* in its irrationality and elementarity can suggest the approximate sense of the kind of act that gives life and evidence to the "world as representation" corresponding to the order of what is meant by the real. Schopenhauer's deviation has already been indicated: Schopenhauer speaks of a universal cosmic will, which in the frameworks of his philosophy is not an immediate datum of consciousness (20), but itself a representation, a concept put one by means of an analogical-inductive procedure of the mind. To assume such a "will," thus a will that does not exactly coincide with an activity of mine, albeit, this one, articulated in degrees of power and non-power, of spontaneity and freedom (or will in the proper sense); to project or multiply the will (again like *Wille*) into other wills or finally to suppose one as their common root, is to cease to consider the dimension in depth of representation, to abandon the method of critical idealism, and to defer to myths, to abstract ideas, to something that, far from laying bare the deep transcendental root and *meaning* of objective representation, goes to conceal it with still a new bark.

Thus, in conclusion: abstract idealism is integratively surpassed by one who traces e "being" as an intensive limit inherent in certain classes of representations within the framework of an immultipliable activity, which is *this*: the activity or "will" (*Thousand*) of the subject, of the One; when, on the other hand, one externalizes and substantializes what that activity is-in its given aspect and in given areas-in the terms of a "will of nature" or in "other"e wills, one moves from the order of a critical positivism to that of a dogmatism in the bade sense, that is, one falls back into a situation that idealism, at least in the exigency, in the postulate, has overcome.e

20) Something like the Schopenhauerian *Wille*, however, is the object of a possible experience. of an experience, which is among those superindividualic superrational ones encountered along the path of awakening and integration of being. Cf. J. Evola, *The Doctrine of Awakening*, cit.

5. *Unity of problems*

The doctrine of being as the limit of an immanent process from potency to act leads to a fundamental unification of the main problems of philosophy.e

First, here it becomes clear that the two orders, logical one, ontological the other, which for Aristotle ran in two opposite directions, merge into a single progressiveness. According to Aristotle the two directions are opposite, because the one proper to the logical order is regressive and has as its ultimate end that which (pifcret, in the order of being, is the first principle, and with the Neoplatonic view about the two arcs of the cosmic process, the one of procession or emanation, the other of reconversion, we meet, albeit in a different framing, the same point of view. According to the conception expounded here, in the very process of representation passing into concept and of the *logos gradually becoming* integrated, there is instead the very process of reality, of non-being becoming being, of potentiality becoming act, of the possible becoming uniquely identified by resolving the indeterminacy of the abstracte genus and the fluctuation of contraries into a point of perfect reality. This can be said to be the demonstrative act par excellence, the *ὀπφίος Χόγος*, the true "syllogism in understanding" of an ever-deepening individuation of the indeterminate, opposed to the "syllogism in extension."e In the degrees, according to which the idea, adjusting itself to the intensive level of being as deprivation and necessity becomes an act, the very world of things can be said to be ontologically realized and, at the same point, demonstrated, illuminated in the order of an absolute science and perfect life - *ἐν τῷ περὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ* - no longer imbued with non-being.e Explanation as apodixis, ontological realization, *Videaliter* and *Vobjective*, the development of the *logos* and the metaphysical become, in this respect, one and the same thing.e

Second, we come to an identification of the ontological problem with the practical or deontological problem. ef real in the eminent sense is what is perfectly in act c therefore correlative to a perfect will, unreal will mean deprivation of actuality, imperfect and insufficient will - and therein lies not only the *ἀεὶ/V error* measure. according to what has been expounded, but also that of *evil*. Evil and error are associated concepts in that their common root, the principle that distinguishes them from their antonyms. is the imperfection of power.e

Therefore, the original meaning of the term *virtue*, according to the Spinozian axiom, "*per virtutem et potentiam idem intelligo*," can undoubtedly be taken back and understood as good that which proceeds from a perfect cause, from an *entire* cause', "*bonum ex causa integra, malum ex quolibet defectu*" (21). Even more can be taken up the assumption-e

(21) Spinoza. *Ethica*. IV, dcf. VII.

ontological concept of ethics corresponding to the ancient concept of evil as "deprivation of being," i.e., as that differential of necessity and imperfection that, in general, corresponds to "matter" and otherness in the order of existing and, in the inner order, precisely to imperfect power.e

Even on a more relative, psychological and individual level, it can be said that the feeling of guilt, the "consciousness of evil" draws its meaning from a situation analogous to that which defines falsehood and delusion, that is, from the state of a dilacerated soul due to the tension between two conflicting forces: guilt arises where an internal (or originally external, but then introjected) limitation is present that one does not have the strength to overwhelm, so as to give the act a character of *wholeness*, to will it according to a completely unified will, assuming its own end or object, free of fear and oscillation. Psychologically, it is the "bad conscience" proceeding from such a state of contradiction and imperfect will that gives rise to the idea of "evil," rather than it being this, as an objective and primary fact, that gives rise to that. A willed "fault," willed by a being who has the power, ceases to be a fault. Which applies *pari-menti* beyond the merely psychological-individual order, including also that broader order of relations, which have been considered in speaking of the problem of the real. What has become "good" in a given cycle of civilization and in a given people has often arisen as the work of domineering wills acting, according to the well-known Nietzschean expression, beyond good and evil, often with infringement of previous tables of values: of natures, to which the Aristotelian saying applies: "They have no law. They are to themselves the law."e There is, therefore, no other "evil" than in relation to the insufficiency and weakness of uncertain and disjointed beings, to that state expressed very effectively by De Maistre (22) by saying that among the principal faculties of man the will is that *la.break*: in it the "man f else wounded to death." "He does not know what he wants, he wants what he does not want: *he would like to want*. He sees in himself something that is not him and is stronger than him." The ethical precept can only be one: "*To be*" or: "*To be one*" or again: "*To be real*."

This is also a measure for the eudemological problem. The being that has power, as it is invariably good, just, true, rational, is likewise invariably *happy*. It is strictly accurate that "happiness crowns virtue" or "is virtue's reward," when the term "virtue" is understood in the above sense (23). This point can be explored further on the basis of a congruous development of a well-known Aristotelian doctrine. There is a pleasure that

(22) J. de Maistre, *Les soirées de Si. Péte sbou g*, Paris, 1924,1, pp. 67-68.

(23) One can also point to the double meaning that the ancient term *feli- citas* or *felix* had to indicate both happiness and the quality of one who succeeds, that is, one who comes to bring an action to perfect

completion.

is *passion*, almost a being bereft in the inner being that subjugates, suffers under it. What is commonly and properly "voluptuousness" shows such a situation in a typical way. But there is also an active and positive pleasure that presents itself as the crowning and effect of perfect actuality in that it is perfect (24). The former is connected with craving and, in general, with being in need of something else that follows the natural lines of spontaneity. Hence, it is "given," it is the enjoyment tied more or less uniquely to this or that object. Even when one does not stand on the plane of spontaneity in its most basic and unreflective forms, things are presented in such a way that it turns out to have the character of a *motive*, of something that determines action. The second pleasure, instead of being determinative, is something determined, that is, a result, an effect of the act of a will that wants only itself, without regard to the pleasure that will proceed from it, to which it does not look at first, tending as it is to impose itself on itself and on things. Already common experience offers examples of pleasure of this second kind in the processes of gradual acquisition of a skill. Here, in the beginning, there is an activity that is carried on by its own strength, not moved already by the representation of a pleasure but with effort and tension. As this activity succeeds, it becomes so liberated and accomplished that it becomes a possession (&X), an ability -- a enjoyment, as happiness goes with it. This pleasure comes precisely at the end, it is an ἑτέροιο τέλος (where to τέλει; its double sense of end and perfection should be preserved), the activity itself has created it, not by having willed it and been attracted to it but by having willed only itself. It is a pleasure to be said to be *pure* and free, quite different from that of the senses and things of nature which always has a conditionality -- one might say: a servitude -- by presupposition. To every perfect power such a pleasure is an inseparable garment. While the one binds to the act that, proceeding from need, desire or spontaneity, confirms deprivation, the second binds to the "just" act that destroys deprivation and constructs a being that is.

What has been considered separately so far can therefore be summarized as follows: First point: possible, certain, true, good, happy, converge and have *real as their* measure. Second point: real is synonymous with "in act," thus also with perfectly willed. Third point: it will not be said that something is willed because it is real, but, conversely, it will be said that something is real to the sole extent that it is willed, that "reality" which in things cannot be said to be willed being to be posited not as reality but as privation. Fourth point: this privation means non-power, the non-power inherent in a self-bound activity (spontaneity) underlies all necessity as well as also goes to define, when different degrees of power collide, the false, the wicked, the unhappy, the irrational. Fifth point: the

(24) Aristotle. *Ethica Nicomachea*, X,4, 1174¹⁷, 32; cf. 1176a, 33.

non-potential can take the meaning of "in potency," that is, representing a differential susceptible to being resolved in the act of the absolute individual. In this act is also act of the world of nature, being as act, full transparency of meaning, perfect life and value. The whole series, in which different problems meet, is *ontological* in a higher sense.

In regard to the theory of pleasure as defined according to the perspectives of the "way of the absolute individual," there has been talk of an integration of the Aristotelian doctrine. Aristotle well indicated in which direction a pure and positive pleasure, different from the sensible one, can arise; however, he did not merely refer this pleasure to the simple perfection of an actuality in general, but added the condition, that such an actuality conforms to the "nature" of the being to which it refers and which it goes to realize. Such a condition, which could relapse into naturalism for the possibility of an interpretation in this very sense of need and desire conditioning pleasure *de\V* other species, cannot be admitted. First, already the exemplification offered by the feeling of pleasure arising in the accomplishment of a skill and the free exercise of it removes it because the possession of a given skill is an acquisition and achievement, not something already included in a "nature." Second, it is evident that in the present doctrine, and at the level we are dealing with here, to speak, in general, of the "nature" of a being makes no sense. It is of the "is" which questions, which has no "nature," does not "is" anything, but is what it wants to be. Of the Aristotelian theory, one must therefore retain only the idea, that the simple character of perfection of the act causes pure and positive pleasure.

Having acknowledged this, the inconsistency of the doctrine of evil that a Böhme, as Schelling (in his second philosophy) and, recently, A. Tillich (25) have opposed to the conception, according to which evil can be traced back to a deprivation, also becomes clear. One would thus like to see in evil not a non-being, but what is proper to a "being that says no." Thus, after all, one traces the criterion of evil back to the logical criterion of contradiction, and by the sign of evil one points to the intimate tragic unhappiness that would torment the "evil one"-the being who wants self-contradiction. It is clear that this view has a foundation only within the framework of a theistic and creationist religious conception, with reference to a creaturely being, not already to the essence in general of which, to give the theory an autonomous and philosophical character, we instead speak on the views in question. Of being in general one cannot even speak in the same way as of this or that determinate being, about which - albeit according to the simple approximation proper to every empirical situation - it is possible to say what is and thus also to indicate what "contradicts" it or not. But pure being is the pure indeterminate, so there is nothing that can contradict it, nothing that can be its "no." Nor from the contradiction itself necessarily comes suffering or in-

(25) A. Tillich, *Il concetto di male*, Rome, 1928. happiness, when one considers the pleasure that crowns Tatoo that succeeds. To bring this idea into focus with a kind of paradox, suppose for a moment that an order of things defined by unity, identity, harmony is given. Lina will that would instead want contradiction would be unhappy only if she were not strong enough with respect to that order, so much so that she could not overcome it and make contradiction the law of things: only then would she suffer and be according to the correlation that the theory criticized here would like to establish "bad." Nevertheless, what has been indicated above, dealing with the origin of guilt remains firm, dealing with the origin of guilt - today we would say "guilt complex": internal situations may arise defined by a contrast of forces, of divergent directions related to different intensive degrees, situations, which one is unable to master no matter how much one has made one's own point of view of affirmative value and absolute value. In such situations there can certainly be no happiness. Thus all unhappiness also has a

symptom value, a value that should not be overlooked. But, again, it all comes down to a problem of power in the most general sense. If one cares to speak of "evil," one can only refer to such situations. A relationship of an ontological character between unhappiness, e contradiction and evil, such as that paste by the theory of Schelling and Tilgher, cannot be grounded theoretically - insisting on it would end in a larval eudemonism. As one who would point the way to happiness - to which, moreover, would be countered by the Nietzschean reply, with astonishment, "But what does it matter, to *us*. about happiness?", for when eudemonological values are regarded as the highest, this is a sign of regression: a straight will does not aspire to joy or shun sorrow, it does not move in accordance with such values - even when they are transfigured by religious assumptions but by itself, and joy or happiness is produced when what was wanted c has be n achieved (26).e

There is no need, moreover, to refer precisely to cases likely to alarm the commune consciousness as according to certain aspects of the Nietzschean doctrine of the superman and the will to power. For it is evident that disdain for the criterion of passive happiness and doing violence to oneself, to what one is according to nature and spontaneity, are commonplaces of ascetic experience and already of simply ethical or heroic experience. It is only a matter, then, of properly generalizing this very situation, the essence of the process toward being as an act always involving, albeit in varying forms and degrees, a saying "no" to spontaneity, in the bending and transforming of the powers that have it as a principle, something to which no ideal of pleasure or happiness can impel, something that implies an extranatural beginning in an absolute sense, thus beyond good and evil, happiness and unhappiness according to their human meaning and the values that arise along the "other way." Whether or not situations there occur in which, in addition to a detachment of values related to nature, there is an inversion of them, such that evil c misdeed becomes good or the way to good in the view deducible from the already traced metaphysics of negation

(26) Cf. F. Nietzsche. *Wille sur Macht*, §§ 302. 309, 235. 142. 167.

this, after all, c thing of detail and, practically, can be reduced to a mere gap in technique at certain stages of the self-integrative work.e

6. *The problem of power*

Some additive considerations deserve the problem of power, which we have already encountered repeatedly in what precedes.e

It has been said that the problem of power is, in a way, *V experi- mentum crucis* of idealism, provided that idealism is not afraid and really refers its fundamental demand to the "I," which is freedom. If the "I" is really the conditioning principle of his experience, he, in principle, should have the power to freely modify this same experience. Where this is not possible, idealism would suffer a serious presumption about its grounding. It may therefore be said that idealism is one of the few philosophical theories admitting of genuine experimental proof; and that the arguments by which this might be avoided do not withstand thorough criticism, this has already been shown.e

It has also been seen that it is possible to assume, beyond abstract idealism, the problem of reality without having to give up the point of view of immanence: having traced all that is real and objective back to a differential between spontaneity and will, thus to a given situation among the powers of the self, which can only be considered as contingent, the possibility of

power in the terms of an activity not ideally,gnoseologically conditioning ideal realities and mere representations, but concretely, magically agitating "real" realities remains postulated again. Hence, as is well known, already a Novalis had to formulate, starting from the premises of transcendental philosophy, the concept of a *magical idealism*. and even Schopenhauer had to admit such possibilities, in spite of the already mentioned limitations presented by his metaphysics.

It has been seen, moreover, that a doctrine of potency is also a condition for overcoming the contradiction and dilaceration proper to Stoic consciousness, in order not to be rejected into an individualism having a more or less tragic and desperate character, as is the case for Michelstaedter, for a Weininger and, to some extent, even for a Nietzsche (27). We will add that in the very sphere of a religious consciousness the problem arises, where it is recognized that the ontological dualism proper to a rigid theism does not

(27) Cf. E. von Hartmann, (*Geschichte der Metaphysik*, cit., vol. II, pp. 589- 591) who consistently places idealistic transcendental philosophy in front of this alternative: either philosophy of the unconscious or magical individualism, the second case resolving itself, however, for him, into a reduction to the absurd, because Hartmann considers it factually false that man can have any direct power over conditions of nature.

may not have a relative and conditional character, as it cannot be conceived that there is a being (the creaturely one) really outside Being and a "creation" that really was *projectio per jatum*. In a dramatized form, Dostoevsky in *The Obsessed* (28) gave the problem more or less in these terms: Either God does not exist, and then my will is extreme reason to itself, I am God and I am bound to prove my divinity; or God exists, and then I cannot escape His will, my will is the very will of God who in me so wills Himself, and then who would prevent the absolute from witnessing Himself in me, at the point where I claim the attribute of power? On a relative plane and where the individualistic moment prevails, above all and precisely, such a dilemma may present traits almost of Promethean prevarication, so that the wisdom of "Thou shalt not tempt thy Lord" could be brought into play. But should the limit be removed, and the theistic point of view be subordinated to the higher and sterner point of view of a metaphysical doctrine of "supreme identity," we see that in the most varied civilizations the possibility of "powers" has always been recognized, it proceeding logically from that metaphysical premise.

Philosophically, just as potency is the logical consequence of the idealistic premise, likewise, conversely, idealism is the theoretical premise of potency. For only if the "other" does not exist, only if the "real" is reduced to a particular species of the genus of subjective representations and, in general, the "spirit" has no "matter" against it, can one think of the possibility of magical or theurgical action. If, on the other hand, the limitation were rooted in an "in itself," action would necessarily be paralyzed and, at best, it would only succeed under certain conditions.

Another theoretical presupposition of power is empiricism, a contingentism and irrationalism (irrationalism as the admission of a heterological foundation as a deeper dimension of what can take the form of the rational). Only if the critique can demolish the concept of necessity of law and a *priori* law and explain that concept as the hypostasis of states of affairs therefore: empirical impossibility in the place of logical absurdity, constant sequences in the place of necessary causal links, laws as expressions of statistical data, states

of affairs that stand under the sign of contingency, according to the Humian principle "Everything can produce everything" - only then are the avenues truly open for power. As dissolving critical development of the various types of "necessity" along the lines of the one we expounded in the previous section (VII) can thus count as a preliminary *opus remotionis* for the doctrine of potency. And if in that

(28) This is the title, given in the 1920s, to the novel now better known as *Le Démon* (Ed.).

should be considered a preparation for it, not only, but also - in accordance with the practical substratum of the theoretical - already a degree of it, one could speak of a unique direction, as a case-boundary of that "faith, which creates its own verification," of which William James speaks. "Faith" may not be, in this sphere, the appropriate term, but the presupposition of power is still an evidence-will, or persuasion-will, which organizes the whole, in theoretical as well as in practical-experimental degrees, around a central axis, proceeding like a fire "which gradually burns away every constraint."

This leads to indicating the basic condition for potency, a condition having an almost paradoxical character. It consists precisely in that, that to really attain power one should not desire it, indeed, in the common sense of the term, one should not even want it. Earlier the saying was recalled, not to tempt, with power, the Lord. But even in traditions that move beyond the theistic and creaturely point of view into the metaphysical point of view of identity, much the same is said, power is often regarded there as a danger and as a constraint, and the way of power as a deviation. This is to be referred to all those situations, in which the act of potency ultimately expresses the voice of doubt, is worth as something from which the self demands confirmation of itself, making itself almost, as subject, the attribute of its act. Potency is realized in a state of absolute certainty; on the other hand, at the point, where any confirmation is demanded, this state is denied and thus the very condition of potency is lost. One could thus speak of a supreme equilibrium, like that of one who goes on a razor's edge. In a particular way, it is even more evident that desire paralyzes potency, desire manifesting as a deficiency and dependence of being: the opposite state to that of one who truly *can*. And this is why all traditions which admit power in an absolute sense, at the same time regard it as a quite exceptional thing that those who have actually reached the transcendental depths that make it possible should manifest it, that is, make use of it, the path traversed in order to arrive at it being such as to bring down most of the motives and impulses, in view of which the common man would desire power. The process that consummates deprivation is fundamentally that which produces a transfiguration of the experience of the world, which, having in its own right the destruction of the phantom of an external reality, also includes the *potentiality* of magical action. That, when and why such a potentiality also precipitates into act, this constitutes a transcendent problem, that is, one insusceptible to being posed with the categories of discursive thought, which in no way can apply to such spiritual heights.

Having fixed this point as far as the internal condition of power is concerned, as for its *technique*, the outline of it has already been indicated. It is a matter of assuming that certain spontaneity, which forms the basis of the things or beings on which one intends to act, and then of distinguishing oneself from it, of creating oneself inwardly superior to it, stronger than it, so that one may not simply have it, but *want to* have it, that is, in the form of the will. The command that is expressed in such a state cannot fail to be executed, because it is as if those things themselves or those beings willed it, according to a depth or dimension, to which they do not reach and in which instead the one who has the power has integrated them. As the roundabout of every law that is believed to regulate according to necessity the phenomena of the "objective" world, lies a kind of "transcendental habit." Concretely, this means a force taken by a monoidism, so that it is all absorbed in a given direction and goes to automatically repeat a certain kind of act, which defines its nature. Hence, these are situations which are, in principle, contingent and transmutable in the same way that the empirical character of a person who is capable of *organically willing his* consciousness and will to descend into the deepest

layers of his being is. 11 degree of power is proportional to the faculty of ascending back into the order of transcendental conditions by holding firm the state of presence to self and of intravolvability against the growing impetus of currents of spontaneity, of forces, precisely, absolutely lost in their objects, until the limit is reached at the point of that centrality and motionless spiritual initiative, which is hierarchically superior and anterior to actuality in the strict sense in which the will is in the free state. In addition - this has also been hinted at there is to be borne in mind the noetic moment which is inseparable counterpart in the developments of this kind, since the thing or being on which one *can* is that whose *sense* has been realized, which is thus not given in a perception or image, but raised in the active and perfectly actual state of the intellect. The command, which has the power, in its highest form is determined in this "intellectual" state, in whose simplicity the object is actually in the act of the one who "knows" it.

This also leads one to take up what has been said about space, in order to emphasize, that power and the technique of power imply the removal of the situation, as a result of which the objective world has assumed the character of a "given" and a precise differentiation has occurred factually beyond all critical-gnoseological consideration - between external and internal. Such a removal, of course, is not without its dangers since it can act in a regressive sense, that is, in the opposite direction to the desired one. For when the frontier between inward and outward is blurred and things, phenomena and beings cease to present themselves in the mask provided to them by spatiality, degrees of an identification are produced that resolve into as many instances against that "I," the substance of which is instead the distinguishing, the dissolving from a part of self. Thus it is that, in the traditions that have practically studied the problem of power, the concept of overcoming a profound crisis, such that it can be likened to a death (initiatory death, passage to the state of chaos), often recurs as a condition for the making of contact with the plane, or state, of being in which estrangement power is made possible. Not in the ordinary space known to modern man in the waking state, but in a space that has become "psychic," if one may say so, correlative to that plane, "magical" actions are performed. It may be admitted, moreover, that in it "forms" (visions, apparitions) are determined in as yet incomplete degrees; in them, however, the objective moment is already reduced, in these forms what was simply given as a physical reality in ordinary space acquiring the same greater closeness to the "E" that characterizes beings endowed with life and thought with which man finds himself in relation in ordinary experience. The symbolic and mythical aspect is, in those forms, more directly perceptible as such, so that their occurrence preludes to the final state, in which an active perception goes on to grasp only pure meanings and action no longer needs supports and indirect ways, such as rituals are, for example, in various traditions.

Thus the difference, indeed the opposition existing between the concept of transcendently defined power and the power that has been realized by technology in modern civilization remains very clear. Where the former presupposes, as mentioned just now, that the situation on the basis of which the experience of a "given" reality is formed is removed, the latter is based instead on conditions, which such experience of the "given" solidifies and makes stable to the highest degree, dissolving the "objective" and the "external" as much as possible from the "subjective." Only then can equally "given," that is, sufficiently fixed, relations between phenomena be defined, relations which are precisely those on which technique and technique-mediated power are based. That such a conditioned power changes

absolutely nothing in the problem, of the existent, is therefore self-evident: it is, in effect, a fiction and illusion of power, its premise being the hardening of the state of deprivation underlying the experience of the objective. Should this state be to some extent removed and, therefore, the self be effectively integrated, the whole system of modern technology would become problematic, moments of contingency would make it unstable--moments which, moreover, would open up the possibilities of a power of the *homo* species.

A final point, which it is good to clarify and which already introduces to the subject to be dealt with in the next paragraph, is the following: in considering the problem of potency one must liberate oneself from the notion of the "I," in the sense of not identifying it individually with a given manifestation of it, especially not with that, to which potency, precisely, can only apply as a *problem*. In fact, it is quite natural to conceive of "I" and "consciousness of man" in the ordinary sense as two synonyms and yet end up in a misunderstanding, because the subject is certainly not as man in that sense who can have power. Rather, we must turn to a doctrine of multiple states of the self or multiple states of being, to which introduces what has already been alluded to, viz. e

that to every state of spontaneity rediscovered and assumed in consciousness there corresponds a "danger" for the ego, a moment of crisis and, once overcome that this is, a new state, a new power of the ego, to which alone is given reason-command. All this is certainly conceivable in purely theoretical terms, that is, independently of data gathered directly from disciplines having such an order of things as their object.

It is well known that in our time the systematic and aprioristic denial of the possibility of powers proper to the period of scientism and materialism has often been succeeded by an almost opposite attitude, in any case too prone to give indiscriminate value to the domination of what is simply extranormal. The former attitude was evidently underpinned by the fallacious argument of *a dicta secundum quid*, a *dicta simpliciter*; that is, the simple assertion that what is not possible here, now and under given conditions is not, generally, that is, absolutely, possible. It thus had its *raison d'être* experimental ascertainment of any apparent phenomenon as nonnormal with respect to scientist schemes, an ascertainment that constituted the object of so-called metapsychics or parapsychology. On the basis of similar findings already a Schopenhauer had been able to say that to deny the reality of extranormal phenomena is to be not already skeptical, but ignorant (29), and one of the leading investigators of this domain even went so far as to conclude, "At the bottom of the human being one discovers the very attributes with which the concept of divinity was adorned: creative power and knowledge outside of space and time" (30).

However, a serious misunderstanding has arisen in this regard, both in method and in discriminating evaluation. Subjugating to the suggestion concerning what in the scientific period was agreed to be regarded as "positive" and "certain," it was thought to be possible to maintain in the domain of the extranormal the same attitude which is proper, precisely, to science in the ascertainment of its facts and in the formulation of its laws. Now, where it is a question of phenomena testifying to a true power, that is to say, one capable of being valid in the order of ideas now set forth, this is a pure contradiction: it purports to apply the categories proper to a method whose presupposition is the existence of a reality which appears as given and external - such is the scientific method - to an order of things, the presupposition of which is the objective removal of precisely this way of appearing of the real. Thus the

conditions which would appear most desirable for the experimental ascertainment of extranormal and for arriving, with regard to it, at a science of the modern type, are precisely the conditions under which the production of the extranormal is rendered impossible, that is, they are those which go to restrict the investigation to an order, after all, very uninteresting and conclusive of phenomena.

(29) A. Schopenhauer, *Parerla und Paralipomena*, ed. 1851, voi. I, p. 217.

(30) E. Osty, *La connaissance supra-normale, Elude expérimentale*, Paris, 1923, p. 224.

Indeed, it must be said that there is an inondo not only different, but, in principle, even opposite to that conditioned by transcendental asceticism. It is almost unbelievable that today there is not the slightest sense of this: so much so as to attribute a "supra-normal" character to phenomena connected with mediumship, to more or less profound forms of hysterical disintegration and so on, down to the almost always spurious and degraded material precisely to what ethnology has drawn from observation itself lacking an adequate method - of savage peoples. That in the genre of what is simply extranormal there is to be distinguished, and to be distinguished very sharply, this seems to be beyond the intellect and the interest of the exponents of the experimental method in metapsychics and, even more so, of those who, reacting against previous positivistic disbelief, around these phenomena sometimes even set up a kind of superstitious religion (31).

It has already been seen that the intervention of conditions permitting non-normal phenomena implies a crisis of the ego and, in a general sense, of what is usually called the human personality. Now, it is not necessarily the case that this crisis is always overcome. Instead, it is possible for regressive states to intervene, in which the self-presence of the ego is not integrated but rather diminished, but, the more general conditions being met (reduction of the experience of the "other," awakening and surfacing of the deep layers of elemental spontaneity) make possible certain varieties of the extranormal: of the extranormal precisely to phenomena related to the mediumistic *trance*, or to "spontaneous" phenomena, if we are even dealing with subjects to whom those regressive states are natural, or, finally, to phenomena falling precisely within the nocturnal sphere of the wild psyche and the witch world of it. All this belongs to the sub-intellectual plane and, after all, relative to that this concept is, sub-normal. Hence, it is clear that such phenomena, if they may be valid, in general, as instances against the hypostatized concept of natural necessity, also do not possess the slightest spiritual significance: as "possibilities," they tell only of a direction diametrically opposed to that in which the integration of the ego in its multiple degrees can be accomplished and one approaches the conquest of power. There is thus an extranormal, access to which implies what in religious terms would be called a "losing one's soul," in a variety of ways, which it is certainly not the case here to examine, to theoretical consideration having to suffice the clarification of the concepts-basics.

It remains to mention the relations resulting *a posteriori* between the order, in which there is the appearance of a certain conformity to laws of nature, and the notion of power according to its particular, possible way of realization. Similar considerations to those made with regard to the relationship between the irrational and the rational can be applied to this. The so-called

laws of nature have a simple regulatory character and do not touch at all on the plane of actual beginnings, that is, of actual causality. They can also be compared to the laws

(31) See J. Evola, *Mask and Face of Contemporary Spiritualism* (1932), Edizioni Mediterranee, Rome, 1972.

that preside over language, which serves to express ideas that are certainly not determined by those laws and in regard to whose verbal formulation they offer sufficient room for flexibility and freedom.

Here precisely the empiricist premise in the matter of worldview is asserted, which forbids seeing in the laws of nature anything other than uniformities touching neither the essence nor the eventual end of the courses, the beginning of which is on a plane, after all, always removed from the sphere of the physical senses. In this regard, what appears to be in accordance with the law can be said to express already, according to its deepest dimension, a miracle - miracle, which does not cease to be such by being habitual, that is, by the fact of its repetition with great constancy. Now, a new and active intervention in the phenomenal world does not necessarily always have to present itself as anti-nature: so little, as it is not necessarily the case that a new musical composition must always and necessarily represent an infraction of the laws of harmony as they have been defined in a musical tradition. Hence remaining its internal conditions already said, the act of power can instead express itself and be accomplished by means of a determinate intersection of "natural" causes used as occasional and instrumental causes, so much so that the corresponding effect is also susceptible to be "explained" in the same terms with which we are alluded to "explain" what usually happens, in nature or in history. And precisely an extreme-Eastern saying, that the more perfect the action of power is, conforming to "acting without acting" (*wei-wu-wei* - that is, to acting immaterially, as is proper to the "way of Heaven" (32), the more the effect will appear to conform to nature and those one whom that action is exercised will have the illusion of being free. By De Maistre and Boutroux, in particular, all the cases in which the "laws of nature" in their statistical character simply circumscribe a given space for occurrence in general, without determining it in the specific fact, which may obey an end and incorporate a particular meaning, either directly or in its initiating new series, have been highlighted: as in the example that, once one has also defined on a statistical basis how many earthquakes are to occur in a given period of time, there remains, however, undefined what a given earthquake, which thus falls within that predicted number, may signify, what end may possibly be realized in it, what consequences may arise from it through further developments of the "natural causes" set in motion by that event. In the regard of these indeterminations and this interference of independent causal series, we commonly speak of "chance." Those who follow the scientist point of view will say that "chance" is but a name for ignorance; which is quite correct but not in the sense supposed. It is not the ignorance of all circumstances of the kind known, according to an ultimately unattainable and only supposed completeness that might allow a causal connection to be established where "chance" is spoken of, but rather it is the ignorance of those who cannot see the effects in their actual causes to grasp the intention

(32) Cf. J. Evola. Introduction to Lao-Tz, *Tao-iè-ching*. Edizioni Mediterranee. Rome, 1997 (ed.).

which can appropriately and finalistically order independent series of natural developments.e

A De Maistre made such considerations in support of the thesis of a government in the time of Providence (33).eThisetheologicaleframingeiseobligatory, however.eThe considerations now alluded to may also apply more generally to certain actions of power in nature or history that are invisibly realized by serving the flexible guise of physical causality, the possibility of an actual tearing of the web of this not being excluded in principle, but being to be restricted to special cases having, from various points of view, a character of anomaly. As noted above, the problem of potency, like that of freedom, concerns *form*, not *matter*. And, after all, it is no different the basis of the distinction the Ancients made between theurgy and what is magic in a narrow sense, a discipline, the latter, of limited interest despite the dignity it can claim in the face of all that is connected with *trance*, mediumship and similar regressive states of being.e

7.eThe one and the much. The universal subject

One of the notions of abstract idealism that from the point of view of the present doctrine have the value of mere postulates is that of the so-called *universal subject*. To the transcendental ego the idealists also habitually give the features of a universal subject: that is, they are compelled to so much, in order to be able to solve some of their problems. But one account of not recognizing such an idea precisely as something valid only *sub conditione*, of hypostatizing it instead into a factual reality, idealists are again driven into ambiguity, into giving this subject in some cases as the concrete self, in others, on the other hand, as an entity, after all, transcendent when measured by the actual and immediate data of any consciousness.e

In the order of the present theory, intended to make idealism coextensive with an absolute positivism without the slightest deviation from the positions of immanence, such ambiguity cannot of course be allowed. And its elimination, after all, is not difficult. A theory of the universal subject would be well-founded only if it were possible to move suddenly into the universal and from it to deduce everything else, according to a kind of "philosophy of God."e Then one could also formulate propositions, such as that, that man's thinking is truth insofar as it is human, but insofar as and to the extent that it is either a manifestation of a universal thought, or an adaptation to it; or, that "what is said to be knowledge of the world is the world knowing itself (the world being Reason

(33) J. de Maistre. *Les soirées de St. Pétersbourg*, cit. *Ve entretien*.E

[roughly equivalent to the universal subject] and the knowledge of Reason is reason knowing itself)" (34), and so on. But all this is not transcendental critical philosophy, but metaphysical digression, indeed bad theology, because that translation can only be imagined, not actually accomplished, and everything is reduced to a mere speculative position.le

To understand ourselves on a concrete level, it is necessary, first of all, to distinguish the universal in act from the universal as a *requirement*. The universal refers, concretely, to what in experience in general there is unified, or what is susceptible to be unified, provided one is willing and have the power to do so. This is what the question must be about, not about the presence, or not, of the exigency, that a unity governs a more or less vast sphere *a priori*, as of

right, with indifference to every particular situation, every possible point of view, every subject, every condition.e

The datum, from which one must start in order to set up problems of this kind, presents neither pure unity nor pure multiplicity, but the one and the other mixed together in the terms -e to use an image taken from physics- of a field of forces, thus in the form of a dynamic relational function. A unity, that is, a universality, already exists in germ: it is that with a formal character proper to consciousness as a transcendental principle; moreover, a principle of material, as well as formal, unity must be admitted already by the fact that the very clashing, meeting and interfering of forces, of the many, expresses it. In every respect-both the ideal and real-the situation presents itself as that of a tensional system that is not stable, but susceptible to stabilization in the tensions of an *organization*, which always has the sense of a dynamic subordination presupposing a center that asserts itself, integrates, empowers and develops until it takes up in its wake all the rest. This is the condition for the only universal of which, from the positive point of view, one can speak. In the theoretical sphere a logical "extension" and "understanding" would then relate to the extent and intensity of the "field" proper to the center in question, thus-if we go back to the theory previously set forth-to the amount of spontaneity that the self is capable of directly assuming, transforming and dominating. The *possibility of organization* and unification can be accounted for in such dynamic terms: it is not necessary, in order to explain it, to refer back to a preformation, to a pre established teleologicality or harmony of the elements of experience, in short to a universal existing *ante rem* or latent *in re*, which it is only a matter of discovering and rendering in act, so that it is also as knowledge of the subject or for the subject. Against such an assumption one can always reaffirm the instance of critical thinking, which shows that one comes to so much only by arbitrary antedating and by a

(34) Thus B. Spaventa, *Logic and Metaphysics*, Laterza. Bari. 1911, p. 44 . absolutization of that which, positively, takes shape only at the end of a given process and through the condition of it: only by this route is synthetic knowing interpreted as a mere analytic recognizing and an ontological process as a mere subjective process. Even in regard to the universal, therefore, it is illegitimate to detach its notion from that of the development of a power that in various ways depending on the various domains-passes by degrees to the act. And since there is not and cannot be a pure multiplicity, but, as was said, the very formally is always recomposed within the one and also materially is mixed with unity in the tensional or functional seat, so the concept of the universal is not to be understood in the staticity of an absolute logical form, but, where it is defined in a precise content, it is to be referred to various degrees, to the degrees, that is, of the process of unification or of organization, of which we have spoken.e

To clarify this view, it is worth clarifying the meaning of the very in the world of value as an affirmation. In the dialectic proper to the realization of such a value it has been seen to be included the elementary moment proper to the purely, immediately thetic function; a function, which as such is extrovert, that is, directed to "other" and stands in the sign of spontaneity. But an "other" in the absolute sense for the "I" does not exist; the only conceivable "other" can only be the part as such as opposed to the whole, that is, a particular possibility, a particular moment, possibly a particular way among those included in the One. This leads to a principle of separation and division, thus to the very principle of *quantum*, of "much." Indeed, moving on to consider the transcendental function according to its further moment, relating to the fact that what arises through the thetic function of simple posing must nevertheless be almost a mirror of the self itself in its plenitude, there will be a development of the partial, delimiting

and objectifying individual possibilities-development, in a double sense: first, precisely in the sense of a quantum, of a "very much," in order to embrace the other, distinct possibilities that the actualization of a single one of them excludes and lets fall out of itself. By multiplication, in a certain way is given in the order of the "other" that which is proper to the fullness of the unmanifested. Secondly, there will be - in contrast to the *continuum* proper to the objective option a simultaneous, superordinate impetus to the unification of the manifold: unification not absolute, not such as to abolish the very as such, for that would be to deny the actualizing thetic moment in general, but organic, subordinative, such therefore as to preserve, in a certain respect, the very as such. There will therefore be a process of understanding held to be coextensive with the process of extension and multiplication that is bound up with the thetic moment: in the sense of a unity of an identity that does not exist before, but is realized in an immaterial way and in increasingly intense degrees through the domain of the manifold powers that, more or less unreal

late and chaotic, they break out as objects of experience from transcendental spontaneity (35).e

This is enough to account for the situation that a positive consideration can ascertain in the given and to understand the relations between the very and the universal. To sum up, neither pure multiplicity nor perfect organicity is to be assumed. The one and the very are co-present in experience according to a functional relation. Code of function, strictly speaking, is indeterminate. In any case, it is not a relation deferring to an "objective" transcendent order, but is such that it rests on an immanent and central power, by which it may or may not be defined in the sense of increasing organization. Such a power is immultipliable and includes by right the others, that is, the many, within itself. Understanding, in the real, non-formal regard, is not presently perfect: if the whole energy system is like the "body" of the self, this body is affected by deprivation, is not entirely resolved and transparent in terms of absolute meaning and possession. Thus there can be the experience of beings who can resist, exert unpredictable activity, present themselves as problems both for wanting and for knowing. But in this regard one must assert the view proper precisely to the general theory of privation: this way of appearing of the many does not mean that they have a reality of their own, but rather that, in correspondence, there is a privation at the center, equivalent to a predominance of function still bound to a direct, chaotic spontaneity in the body of the one power. There are no *more* finite powers, but the experience of a multitude of finite powers is only a phenomenon proceeding from the finitude of the one power. Thus, one never starts from the "many," but from the "One" in a state defined by the excess of spontaneity and letic function over will and pure intellectual actuality, a state to which is correlative, among other things, the experience of others around and against it, to eventually pass to the "One" in states of greater fullness and sufficiency, in which such an experience fails and, in various forms and degrees, what has concrete sense of the universal is realized.e

Thus if by the universal subject is meant the point at which the manifold not only of sensible experience in general but also as the much of distinct forces, centers and beings is taken up and comprehended in a perfect system and intellectual transparency, it certainly cannot be said that the "I," insofar as it is the "E" that holds to the plane of discursive thought and puts on a philosophy, is the universal subject; neither, however, can it be said that the universal subject already exists, beyond the concrete "E," and of this represents the condition.e In the latter regard, the truth would be rather the reverse, for the universal subject if it is to be

reality within the frameworks of a doctrine of the-e

(35) For the developments of this deduction of the much, see the second book of this work: *Phenomenology of the Absolute Individual*, cit.

immanence presents itself as *one* of the possibilities that the concrete self, transforming itself, can implement, whereby this is the conditioned, that the conditioned, and not vice versa. One the assumption that such a direction is *intentional*, it will be to say that between the self and the universal subject there is no relation of coexistence, alterity or transcendental implication, but of continuity and progressiveness. That is, the ego, which the idealists define as "empirical" or "E-person," presents itself as the universal subject *in potency* and the universal subject as the *Vact* of that ego. Outside and before such a synthesis there is no concrete universal or universal subject or monad of monads. The dilemma remains the same: either such an entity presents itself as an abstract representation and a mere requirement of the subject; or the universal subject conceived as a possible mode of being of the subject itself, of the self. Between Moon and the other possibility can be inserted Finterpretation proper to the idealistic theory of the universal subject, with the logical necessity that can bind to it in the gnoseological setting, in the manner of a *postulate*. Where the self is committed to the path of the absolute Individual, this postulate is simultaneously a value, and a value that tends towards its realization.e

The second part of this work (36) will have to return to the universal subject understood as a possible experience in its relation to the "many." Here, it will be good to clarify one point in the meantime, concerning the aporia that, on the theoretical level, may arise about conditioning the unconditioned. Indeed, this is more or less what one is led to by the preceding considerations, nor is it a point that can be left out, being instead essential to the theory of immanence of freedom. The aporia, however, arises only because of a defect in critical reflection and, essentially, because one assumes simultaneously what is proper to two mutually exclusive points of view, not logically, but rather in the sense that each of them in so far as one given process destroys the basis on which the other rests, may be valid. It is by this means that doctrines not merely philosophical but also contemplating the process of a spiritual realization, such as Vedānta, Sufism and, to some extent, Neoplatonism itself, give rise to various difficulties, because they directly assert as truth that which is proper to what one called the "philosophy of God," that is, a set of views that are justified only from the standpoint of a *terminus a quo*, of a final stage that nevertheless it is not at all certain that the self *will* and *can* in any case reach.e

However, the opposite perspective must also be taken into account, with reference to the relativity or contingency of the category of time not only in its commonly known, experience-related, sensitive form, but also in relation to e

(36) That is, in *Phenomenology of the Absolute Individual* always considered a single whole by the author and published separately, as is now, only for practical reasons because of the overall bulk (Ed.).

all that admits of development and gradualness. Even without going into detailed considerations, it is quite evident that in the higher stages of the organization of the manifold, that is, of the actualization of the universal subject, just as a certain reduction of the law of the category of space will have to intervene (and of this has already been mentioned, though starting from a different problem), likewise a certain modification or removal of the category

of time itself, a certain thematization of consciousness, will have to be initiated. And this naturally leads to a removal, not theoretical and dialectical, but practical, factual, of the aporias already mentioned about the conditionality of the unconditional. In fact, as the state in which temporality is removed takes over, the condition itself—the process, the development—is *eo ipso* devoured, burned out, the conceivability of any "before," of any passing from an antecedent to a consequent falling away. The process dissolves as a mirage dissolves, or as ignorance dissipates into knowledge, or a symbol into its meaning. As truth then appears that never was there a going toward the unconditioned, that never was there a being that went toward it, that there never existed either a terminus *a quo* or a terminus *a quem*, that at no point was there anything other than the unconditioned.

Those who know how to lead individual truths back to the places pertaining to them, taking care not to confuse, can horizontalize what in various doctrines has reference to the concept of the universal subject and easily eliminate aporias, of the kind now indicated.

8. On "solipsism"

In the foregoing, indeed in general throughout the theory of the absolute individual recurs, more or less implicitly, the assumption of *solipsism*. Therefore, it will be good to clarify this point properly.

Together with power theory, solipsism forms a touchstone for incomplete idealism. Before solipsism, idealist philosophers almost without exception recoil. One would say that this doctrine is too strong for them, that they are afraid of it, so they are put on various speculations to avoid it, even at the cost of contradicting the principles-base of their philosophy. In few cases as in this one, the efficiency of an atheoretical element becomes apparent, which is essentially linked to the fact that the idealist as a man usually remains a petty bourgeois who feels the horror of emptiness, who cannot give an independent value to his own being, who cannot admit, yes, that "the world is my representation," but not to the extent that he feels lonely, that he does not need other subjects, around him, to *be*. After all, the reasons by which people usually try to avoid solipsism are not so much of a theoretical order as of a *moral* order. Instead, precisely because of this, that is, because of its implying the destruction of a fundamental existential anguish and insufficiency, the

solipsism should be taken as a premise in the theory of the absolute individual. It is only a matter of specifying the portal.

In our considerations on this issue we will follow the method already known, that is, at first we will state the inevitability of solipsism from thegnoseological point of view of abstract idealism, and at a later stage we will move on to a congruous integration of what emerges as truth at the first degree of investigation.

Solipsism is directly deduced as a special case from the formula $X \rightarrow F \rightarrow S$, which, as we know, summarizes the viewpoint of idealism. What is understood as an "other subject," at first glance cannot have value other than an X i.e. a certain group of representations and contents of consciousness, conditioned by the representative activity, or thought in general, of the subject. To this activity, as is well known, corresponds the term F in the formula of implications now recalled. Now, these two points suffice: *first*, that to conditionality on the part of mere representing we add the conditionality proper to procedures of a logical, inferential, inductive or postulative character (all of which still have a conditioning character); *second*, that we refuse to consider the term S . For the last instance, i.e., that one recognizes as the foundation anterior and superior to every mediation and faculty in action the pure subject and thus says $F \rightarrow S$ - it is enough, we said, to recognize these two points for solipsism to appear inevitable. The second point must be given special prominence, because, as we shall now see, the illusion, that it is possible to avoid solipsism can arise only in an idealism that makes abstraction of the individual power of the act. or thought, and this understands it as a primary reality in the terms of a thought in itself, of a universal phantom act. Of course, this can even be a possible state, that is, it is possible for the self to go into and almost lose itself in its function and for its central certainty to be made to resolve into that of the contents of its experience. And what occurs in the "way of the other," where solipsism cannot count as a truth. But in the totality of the theory of the Absolute Individual, this merely refers back to a higher-order, transcendental conditionality, the "way of the other" determining itself only on the basis of an option and judging itself, indeed, only according to the value of the absolute freedom of the One. For the general justification of solipsism, this suffices. It remains to highlight a few particular points.

Accepting the critical-transcendental viewpoint is not possible without also understanding that the "aseity" of other subjects, or monads, has a relative character, that is, it proceeds from a category, from a given function of the immanent principle. From the realm of theoretical pure reason one can, following Kant or Fichte, move to that of practical reason. It is not that, with such a passage, much more is gained. An ethical imperative, a moral law that impels me to recognize the reality and equal dignity of other subjects still has the character of a category, with aggravant that, as opposed to the purely spontaneous and necessitated functions of pure reason in action, here there is a margin for will and freedom: an imperative or a moral law is not, and is not determinative, other than insofar as it is for me, insofar as I assume it in adherence and recognition, or in aversion. Characters of direct necessity here, at most, might be had by a purely affective and empirical impulse, the very one to which the anti-Solipsist idealist is subject, namely, the unbridled, human need, for others to be.

Returning to the category of aseity, the considerations made by Kant in the *Critique of Judgment with regard to* the teleological understanding of organisms must therefore be applied to the use of it: aseity is to be understood in terms of a principle that is not constitutive of things but regulative of our knowing - in other words: the fact that in order to adequately explain in the world of representation the possibility of certain nodes of determinations - a

body, speech, intentional actions, etc. - similar to those I want to refer to empirically as me, I go to use the concept of other Ego, cannot ground an existential judgment in the sense of realism and make me mistake for an actual Ego what, precisely, I want to refer to empirically as me. - similar to those I want to empirically refer to me, I go to use the concept of other selves, cannot ground an existential judgment in the sense of realism and make me mistake for an actual self what, precisely, has the scope of a mere explanatory principle. Of the rest, a somewhat palpable argument has its weight in this regard, namely, that in the dream experience, too, similar immanent functions of the mind are at work, whereby in the dream, too, one thinks one is dealing with other subjects and other Egos, which, at least in the moment, allow themselves to be commanded and dissolved as little, as those of so-called real and objective experience, and with which the subject enters into relations analogous to those which in ordinary waking life he has with other real and supposedly real Egos.

To be even trivial, the observation has no less force, that "other subject" is contradiction in terms, because the subject as such is something immediate, a pure, naked "I-ness," a direct experience: now immediate can never be an *erepov*, but always an *avróv*. The other subject insofar as it is subject cannot be anything else, and insofar as it is "other" it cannot be subject, but object, that is, a representation, and the task of philosophy can only be to indicate the significance of both the formation of such representations and the possible, greater or lesser necessity presented by the corresponding formative process.

The subject, in particular, has the *thinking quality*; but the other subject cannot have the quality of a thinking one, but rather of a thought one, i.e.: it is the mere representation, which I have, of a thinking subject. As B. Varisco, the knowing of others as a process "remains at all times foreign to each of us. If I could accommodate in my consciousness the cognitive process constituting another subject, I would be that other subject" (37).

(37) B. Varisco, *Lineamenti di filosofia critica*, VII, § I. Varisco does, however, make a

Recourse to the principle of *correlation* is the main expedient by which, within the framework of a critical philosophy, an attempt is made to avoid solipsism. But the inadmissibility of this principle has already been indicated. The so-called "actualistic" philosophy (that of the Gentilians) thinks of reconciling the reality of the One with that of other subjects on the basis of the idea, that self-consciousness is real only in correlation with the particular contents in which it is actualized, so that when these contents have the form and nature of other subjects, of distinct consciousnesses, they would be as real as I, the posing and the posing proceeding from the same act (similar argument is made to assert the reality of the family, of social units, etc.). Such an argument would carry some weight only if the point already indicated could be left out, namely, if beyond the act the *power of* the act were not to be admitted and if the *contingency of the* act with respect to that power were not to be recognized - on pain of falling into deviations now known -. Here is another variation of the same argument. As a starting point, one believes one can trace solipsism back to the formula: "I alone think, therefore I alone am," an already unacceptable formula. Then it proceeds in the following way: my thinking is always a determinate thinking, thinking of something; one cannot isolate the subject, but by saying "I" I distinguish myself from the rest, that is, I am forced to take equal notice of something else. Thinking always has a thought, the subject and object by inseparable correlative. One must say not "I think," but "The I thinks a thought,

thinks something, therefore I who think and the thing thought are." The one is no more real than the other, and this correlativity or, as one also calls it, "subobjectivity" would already suffice, in the present case, to compel recognition of the reality of others and to avoid solipsism (38).^e

Against this, it should first be noted that solipsism does not need to isolate the "I" from the rest, simply claiming its dignity in the order of conditions - that is: it cannot be said that the object makes the subject possible on the same basis that the subject makes the object possible. Indeed, let it also be given, but not granted, that by saying "I" I must distinguish myself from other, thus positing and recognizing other at the same time. But in addition to the "I" and the other there is *Vact of the "I"* distinguishing itself from the other, an act that is presupposed both to the "I" (if understood as the term of the correlation) and to the other. Now who does not see that the very power of *this* act, not the distinct, but the *distinguishing*, is the true I which therefore lies beyond, as a superior condition, the terms in which the distinction is articulated?^e

The argument now considered, moreover, can be dialectically reduced to absurdity by means of the following reference to "recurrent systems": Object and reservation: it is not that a thought of mine, my reason of being mine, cannot also be the thought of others (§4). It will be seen below where this argument can be made otherwise than in a merely hypothetical way.

(38) A. Pastor, *Il solipsismo*, Turin, 1925. pp. 26. 31. 38.

subject - says the opponent - are correlative. That's all right: but beyond this correlation the "I" reasserts itself as the one who posits it and can reduce it to a mere thought of its own. Then we would retort: but this I and this correlation that he posits are themselves correlative, stand in interconditionality. But since we would again oppose the same argument by going back to the principle that posits or thinks this new correlation or interconditionality, the result is a chasing after the indefinite. What then can decide the question but *V affirmation of* either side, by which it stops the series in its own favor with an absolute limit? Now, pay attention: when the solipsist does this, he is consistent, since for him the criterion of truth is the affirmation of the self. But the thing is otherwise for his opponent, who can oppose solipsism only on the condition that *he, too*, proceeds in the same way, albeit in favor of his own thesis (i.e., by arresting the *whole* series, which by right could never be arrested, by positing the condition note of the "I," but that of correlation) - without realizing that in doing so he is undoubtedly going to conform to the principle of the dependence of truth on an indeductible subjective act. He cannot therefore reassert himself on solipsism except by yielding to it at *precisely* the same point.^e

On this occasion, it can be noted how this, in the dialectic, is quite general in scope. The first principles of two conflicting doctrines almost always engender a recurring process similar to the one above. Now, there are two cases: either both sides recognize a common impotence to justify themselves against each other, and renounce it, leaving the problem of first principles open, undetermined; or they are forced to operate an act of arbitrariness that truncates the series, which, however, makes the corresponding doctrine, whatever it may be, not "true" except as a function of the concept of truth as a statement of the subject. Apart from the specific significance of such a situation for the solipsistic thesis, it corroborates what has been said about the relationship between rational and irrational.^e

If we keep to the gnoseological level, it is thus hard to see how solipsism can be avoided.

and how one can be a consistent asseverator of transcendental idealism without also being a solipsist. It is only that the term "solipsism" is unfortunate, it lends itself to misunderstanding as one may believe that with the doctrine so designated one wishes to make psychic processes a personal monopoly and to regard others more or less as things and disanimated beings: a view, this, that the critical instance does not impose at all. Moreover, it has been said that the formula: "I alone think, therefore I alone am" cannot be admitted as a correct expression of the theory in question, and this is a very important point, for it is apt to lead us further in the inquiry. It is not of the "thought," but of the ether that we are dealing with in solipsism; not for the "I think," but only for the "I am" according to that nakedness, of which it has been said in considering Descartes' formula and the conditions for the posing of the problem of value, can the character of uniqueness be claimed.

Thought in general and, in particular, in its empirical, psychological extrinsicities, already has a somewhat collective character and does not lead beyond the sphere of conditioned reality. Not only that: in its place, we took care to point out that if self-consciousness is understood as something determined and mediated, the self is not even self-consciousness, even if it in self-consciousness - in a self-consciousness - goes to manifest itself. And now it becomes clear how opportune it was to fix this point, for it has been seen that it is precisely by resorting to dialectical processes that are supposedly constitutive for self-consciousness that one can attempt to undermine solipsism. Hence the usefulness of a further clarification of the relations of the One to the many.

For this purpose, one can take a cue from the critique of an argument by Varisco (39) based on the problem of subconsciousness. The reasoning is as follows: all thinking is consciousness of thinking, that is, thinking in act, in absolute, "subconscious thinking" is thus a contradiction in terms. However, it is appropriate to admit subconscious thinking if one is to account in a way that conforms tognoseological criticism for what is proper to concrete experience, which, referred to the individual subject, is a finite experience whence an antinomy, which one must try to resolve. The difficulty would be lessened if one admits that what finite consciousness must consider subconscious is instead thought in action as a universal thought, of which the individual would realize but a fragment and mode. This fragment and mode would then turn out to be organizable and integrable with other fragments and modes into an overall and not merely personal image of the world due to the fact that all that in universal thought is already one. - Such an order of ideas, which, apart from amendments in terms of critical philosophy, visibly leads back to the Leibnizian metaphysics of "pre-established harmony," can be considered here again because for ordinary consciousness one of the main foundations of its belief in the reality of things, apart from what was said in formulating the doctrine of deprivation, lies in the fact that other consciousnesses perceive them both simultaneously and when I am not there to perceive them, according to different views, which, however, agree to a great extent with my own and integrate it into the system of the objectifiable. But all these different viewpoints, these different thoughts and perceptions, if they are not to be considered as non-my own absolutely, cannot but fall precisely within the realm of subconsciousness: hence the problem posed by Varisco, as a special case of the one already dealt with in the previous paragraph.

The criticism of Varisco's proposed solution in the sense of anti-solipsism can be carried out as follows: First of all, it should be noted that the main foundation of the antinomy mentioned above lies in the fact that by saying sub-

(39) *Outlines of Critical Philosophy.* conscious is rather understood to be unconscious, and that thinking absolutely in act is illegitimately regarded as synonymous with thinking in general. By using the terms "in potency" and "in act," in place of "subconscious" and "conscious," the antinomy is already to a large extent removed. It is not necessarily the case that thought has to be completely in act, it can be, in either respect, in potency - either as the possibility or potency of an act that is not yet, or as the return of an act to the virtual state, from which it can be taken up again (the most common case of this is in remembering - and it is known that, empirically, a part of the subconscious consists precisely of what has once been experienced or thought and is no longer in act in consciousness). Having set the question in this way, it is clear that recourse to other and others to explain what cannot be admitted as mine in the fineness of a unified thought-in-act, does not impose itself at all. Just as it is extravagant to think that when my arm I have not yet raised it, this gesture is already up in otherness, where it waits to pass into me-rather than simply being my potentiality-and that, once the gesture is made, it does not return to its potential state but retains its actuality elsewhere. - Equally extravagant is the anti-Solipsistic inference to universal thought as the unity of all real subjects from "subconscious" thought, should one have brought the concept of thought back to the broader concept of activity and provided one wishes to remain in the field of critical philosophy. One may well admit this not merely personal substratum comprising multiple potentialities and possibilities reflected more or less in points of view different from those of an individual, without the need to hypostatize and "alter" it. This substratum coincides, after all, with precisely what has been called the naked potency of the individual, to which alone belongs transcendental multiplicity. From a Spinozian point of view it could certainly be objected that there is no sufficient reason why what is in potency should not pass to the act, where finiteness in the sense of being limited *ab extra* is excluded; but with equal right one can instead ask precisely the opposite: the reason why what is in potency *should* pass necessarily and indiscriminately to the fact. It is well known that the rejection of the spinozially interpreted *causa sui* and every other consimilar notion is a view-base of the present doctrine. Moreover, with regard to what, in particular, concerns the world of the subjective option, what was said in the previous paragraph about the principle of division and quantity must be brought into line.

Thus, about "other people's experiences" understood as other reference systems into which "my" experience can be integrated, the immanentist position can be maintained; there can always be seen potentialities which, variously distributed, in various ways surface, take shape and transmute within the sphere of my experience understood in a more general sense and dynamically. The problem of the relations that can be established among them has already been dealt with, also, in the previous paragraph: what is

is said about the universal, the one and the very also applies in specific reference to the multiple views, multiple systems of reference and multiple potentials of finite experience. The whole must be understood, as said, in terms of the dynamic-functional unity of a tensional field, where there is no place for a static and closed conception of finite being. Even simply as a "person," the subject is relation, movement, passing away, and Leibniz's idea is right, that to every state of the monad the whole universe, in its infinitude, is integral. With a mathematical imagination, one could say that my experience remains immultipliable in the terms of a function with a large number of variables and parameters, which go to correspond to the reference points constituted by others and what they can gradually say for me. Thus, on the whole, once include as my possible experience, potential or otherwise, other experiences, whether by the let us say so *social* criterion of the objective or the real, or by any other consimilar problem it will always be a balancing node, a particular subjective relational arrangement of the matter of my experience. Let us repeat, it is not that such an arrangement always resolves itself into an immediate, perfect and constant agreement, almost like the fitting together of the fragments of a single object; and if this is not the case, the presupposition for the assumption in rationalistic terms of a universal thought or something analogous as the basis for the possibility of the unification of the experience articulated in many systems of reference is lost. In fact, there may be either a state of relative agreement and equilibrium, or a state of incongruence,

contrast or contradiction, or, finally, a state in which the moment of correlation becomes susceptible to being overcome, in varying degrees or ways, by that of subordination. Once such considerations have been made to intervene, one may consider exhausted all that in the argument, from which we had started, may have value as an anti-Solipsistic instance. After that, among the three cases indicated, let us consider that of dysanomia or incongruity, to move on to another order of ideas.

In the same regards to the cognitive problem, this case can be real in both theoretical and empirical premises: the limit is madness or similar forms of dissociation of experience. All too numerous and trivial, then, are the other cases related to the world of thoughts, tendencies and actions in associated life, in which we see but little unity realized in the world of the many. Indeed, this very fact seems to give weight to another anti-Solipsistic instance, of a practical order. To common sense the argument may appear convincing, that if the world is my representation, it follows that in the person of "other" beings also posit my own "representations" which by no means conform to my will, which may indeed oppose it, think contrary to mine and even profess an anti-Solipsistic doctrine. To which is added the consideration of all that the "world of representation" in a genre has tragic, irrational, non-value, and that for that very reason-supposedly-could not have been intended and "placed" by me.

This argument, then, must be considered for that much that it affects the claim of rationalistic unity *in re* or *ante rem* of the many, provided that at the same time the generically idealistic interpretation is maintained. Against solipsism it, however, says nothing. For, as to the irrational and the rest, there is first of all the prejudicial question of a formal nature concerning the concept of value: to solipsism as part of the theory of the absolute individual is precisely to deny that something in itself, independently of the sovereign will, is good or evil, rational or irrational. In addition, one has the views that can be deduced from the metaphysics of negation delineated above. Secondly, one would have to ask again who would impose on the One the making of harmony and non-contradiction the principle that reigns supreme in the world of his "positions" or representations, the making of the sphere of experience in general absolutely co-extensive with that of a voluntary, rational and regulated activity. It is, strictly speaking, also conceivable to have a situation in which the self indulges in pure lived experience, in an indistinct, inebriated fruition in the present moment of spontaneity according to which the various determinations take shape, whatever they may be, dark or bright, convergent or divergent: without feeling any need to leave this pan or Dionysian state as it may be. This might correspond to a "formal solipsism," justifying itself on the basis of the simple general gnoseological idealist premise, implicit in the renunciation of materially resolving experience into an absolute reason: but - we repeat - it is exclusively the ego's thing to want this absolute reason, or not. Without wishing to derive an explanatory principle from what, in a small way, turns out to be factually possible with the phenomenon of personality dissociation, one may well conceive, moreover, of a dream, in which I experience tragic things and there are others who oppose my will and disappoint it: not for this reason would such an experience be regarded as something other than pure world of imaginings springing from my uncontrolled subconscious spontaneity. Nothing prevents extending such an interpretation to the so-called real and waking experience, where the "many" present themselves to me in a discordant or antagonistic function (40).

An even more apt reference problem in question is the following: it is possible to conceive of a situation analogous to that of one who composes a play with several parts, notes only, but who,

(4) Such an anti-Solipsistic argument resembles that of a certain atheism, which believes it can infer the nonexistence of God from the fact that the world does not appear to conform to a given human concept of justice. If anything, the only legitimate inference would be that of a God who exists but does not conform to such a concept, of a God, as Hume put it, "whose character succeeds in unjustifiable to natural reason."

as a Molière, one such part takes on and portrays. Now, this work does not necessarily have to be a happy ending, and not instead a tragedy. But even in the second case it will not cease to be a fiction. It may happen that the person who plays a part identifies with it to the point of forgetting, by acting it, that he is an actor, indeed the one who conceived and preordained the whole play, whether coherent or not, sad or happy, of the various characters. But the moment this person returns to himself, he will recognize the whole precisely as a fiction, valid at best in a symbolic-representative function.

This analogy can be asserted in regard to another objection that, from a somewhat philistine point of view, can be advanced against solipsism, saying that what refers to the struggles, tragedies, "achievements" of humanity, history and culture would become a frivolous thing if everything were solipsistically reduced to a phantasmagoria enclosed in the sphere of a single center of consciousness, in the world of my solitary representation. Such an argument can only appeal to the simplicity of a bourgeois spirit and has little philosophical merit: if that view were to be grounded in reality, it is surely not the fact, that to someone's taste it appears "frivolous," that makes it any less true. Besides, if one were to remain on the empirical plane and employ arguments of convenience, more than one could easily be convinced, given one's views, that the world of men and their affairs as a whole is such, that the best would be, for such people, to regard it precisely as a dream, if not also as a bad dream. But one can raise the same argument to a higher plane and note that what is tragedy and seriousness to men cannot fail to assume a character of comedy and jest in the eyes of a God. Indeed, the conception of the entire universal manifestation as a divine jousting- *Ultimate*- belongs to systems of high metaphysical stature, such as the Vedānta and Tantrism (41), in the same way that the symbolism of the theater applied to the world in the terms just now mentioned has also been used by wisdom traditions, in which various elements can be found precisely for the integration of abstract idealism (42). In the many and in their affairs a "philosophy of God" can indeed be nothing but a jousting among various objectified possibilities of the one substance, a jousting recomposed in a single consciousness: only that the whole then takes on such a fullness of meaning that, by comparison, if ever an unserious thing is what the

(41) See J. Evola, *The Yoga of Power*, cit. ch. 3.

(Perhaps it is no coincidence that it is called "Lilán" the only female character in the poem *à 4 voix* that Evola published in 1921 for the *Collection Dada under the title La parole obscure du paysage intérieur* - N.d.C.).

(42) Cf. R. Guénon. *Aperçus sur l'initiation*. Paris, 1945. The "grand theater of the world" is the title of a well-known drama by Calderón, and the same theme can be found in a metaphysical framework as early as Plotinus.

men can take as serious. Nor are there those who are alarmed when the "lonely desert of divinity" is mentioned in mystical theology. Senonché theology must be interpreted in the manner of symbolism for what is proper to given levels-possible, but not necessary-of transcendental experience in general. And here, after all, there is only to demythologize such perspectives and make them valid in transcendental philosophy.

According to the deduction made in the previous paragraph, every "other" subject goes to concretize and objectify a given possibility of the One. On this basis, beyond the general gnoseological view of the world as representation, it is possible to consider the "other" as

transcendentally identical with "me," thus definitively overcoming all that individualistic and psychologistic may, at first, present the solipsistic thesis. This, in fact, is tantamount to saying that the other is as real as "me," or that "me" is as unreal as the other: which, however, can only be directly and factually true under the condition of a first shift in perspective and a first transformation in depth of consciousness. The identity of "me" with any other subject can evidently be realized only when, not theoretically but in a factual experience, one can grasp oneself as and in the power that posits, according to freedom, indeed according to indifference, "me." Only then can one recognize the other in the value of a position strictly identical to "me," as a manifestation of the same power and thus resolve what previously appeared as mere representation into *absolute meaning*. At such a level there will be a multiplication of the "I" and its remaining, at the same time, identical with itself; and the "e" then, can feel indifferent as to its "place," i.e., it ceases to be bound as to the particular subject and the particular self-consciousness, which must specifically count as its manifestation.

In terms of analogy, this would be equivalent to the actor ceasing to identify with his part, no longer believing himself to be what he represents, such that he does not confuse his infinite principle with a *mask* of it (43). In terms, instead, of transcendental consideration, in this there will be an aspect of the consummation of spontaneity and deprivation present in the functions and powers to which corresponds the appearance of the many subjects as necessity-bound determinations in the world as representation. The "other" becomes real in a degree of the process in which deprivative being is transformed into actual being, whereby this reality of it is also its transparency, its becoming in the central consciousness through an intellectual intuition and direct perception that grasps its essence, whatever

(43) It is known that the original sense of the Greek "person" is precisely mask, the mask used anciently to represent a given party. Therefore, as it was said, it was found more appropriate to use, to designate the immanent principle, the Greek individual, which implies the idea of material indivisibility, rather than person or personality.

That precisely it is as a determinate "I." Finally, in praxis, it will be developments not unlike the general one of transcendental asceticism, which will reflect the value-base proper to the way of the absolute individual: it will be an assumption, an assumption in relation to identity, and a distancing and disengagement at the same time. Considering this last point, it is moreover evident that the state in which the other subjects become real because they are assumed and experienced as acts, is not that in which the very becomes the last instance for a reaffirmation, let us say, metaphysical, of the principle of aseity, but it is that in which at the same time from this matter of the very is released a superior power of the One that overtakes them and takes them back, according to different degrees, as in their further dimension in depth. It is in this that their otherness is made transparent and that by the same token the resolution of the contingency of their mutual affairs and relations into the superrational and superpersonal unity of an overall meaning is also produced. The degrees of such a realization are evidently those of the realization of the universal subject and, in their details, will be considered under the aspect of as many categories of the Absolute Individual in the last section of the second part of this work (44). In the world of the Unique and of value as affirmation, the moment relative to the very remains, even if the ultimate truth cannot be the human one of a murky dream so full of tragedy, suffering, struggle and darkness, but that of an Olympian consciousness, contemplating a "divine comedy"-worthy enough, to that it itself, eventually, does not repulse representing a part of it.

In referring not to an abstract gnoseological consideration, for which it would be problematic, but to supra-rational experiences, one could assert, here, an argument already mentioned, namely, that should one be able to assume in consciousness the cognitive process constituting another subject, one would indeed be this other subject: but that it is not necessarily the case that what is my thought cannot also be the thought of another. In this case it is precisely a matter of just making it clear that "mine" becomes a higher dimension than the consciousness of the other, a dimension in which the limitation that defines the other as such is removed in one respect. While the other consciousness sheds its light only from a given point in the cognitive process that constitutes it, prior to it there being, for it, nothing but subconsciousness, the consciousness of the one who assumes it also illuminates the antecedent tract of that process, the tract comprising the absolute beginnings; only from that point does it then become one with it. This situation thus remains theoretically conceivable, nor is there any lack of special experiences that testify to its reality a posteriori. They are experiences in a series, the lower limit of which is obsession, the

(44) Cf. J. Evola. *Phenomenology of the Absolute Individual*, cit., "Epoch of Domination," §§ 20-30 (ed.).

whose upper limit is what in mystical theology has the name of "indwelling." Moreover, in this regard the very phenomenon of telepathy has its own significance: it, too, bears witness to partial, momentary "unions," to the introduction of a subject into the thought of "another" subject and, to tell the truth, into his thought as a process and into the prepersonal roots of it, for otherwise it would not be explained how the phenomenon of direct knowledge of the other thought is possible even in the verified case - that the other speaks a different language, unknown to the first: if thought already articulated and individualized in verbal forms were to

enter the question, there would be no way to conceive of anything like it. Moreover, there is to consider the other case, in which the thought "read" is a subconscious thought of the other, not yet formulated by him. Only in the order of such phenomena one must apply the distinctions already mentioned. If it is active phenomena, the *powers of* an integrated consciousness, that we are dealing with, it is confirmation of what has been said as to their transcendental conditionality. That is in the traditions, where such possibilities have been considered, disidentification, disengagement from one's own thought—that is, not simply being "my" thought—is generally referred to as the condition for direct knowledge of another's thought and soul.

Wanting to take the other view, i.e. that of another subject, the idea that a thought "his" may not be his alone, but proceed from a superordinate power that suggests it to him and, as it were, induces it in his mind, may be admitted in the, if nothing else, hypothetical, considering how much passivity a large part of ordinary mental processes present, especially if they are "intuitions" and "creations." On this, it has been said in its place, and it always remains conceivable that what has the character of passivity and spontaneity in a finite subject has for its counterpart an action and will in a subject superordinate to it. It is evident that this view can also be used in regard to the remarks made to indicate that, in many cases, actions of power can take place inadvertently, in this case by means of beings who preserve the illusion that it is they who think and act.

The "passing into the other" as a possibility is also adumbrated in germ in the affective sphere, in the varieties of what, according to its literal meaning, the word "sympathy" or even "com-passion" expresses: feeling together with the other, experiencing the emotional state of the other, something that already leads beyond the generic situation in which other feelings, not less than other people's thoughts, are but my representations of feelings. Hebbel defined love as a "regaining in the other"; this formula could apply to the process in general, whereby the other is resolved: when in it we recognize and experience a possibility equal to that which constitutes "my" particular being: it is regained in the active unity of the one center. It is a fact that love has almost always been conceived as a "value" and a moral or religious precept, does not prevent Tessaer quite visible, that it in given currents was elevated to a higher and objective plane and conceived as a means: a means intended to remove the limitation of the person and to propitiate the release of self from self and the universalization of consciousness. In that case, love is

loses all its sentimentalistic and humanitarian bangs, it can have a power analogous, up to a certain degree, to that of pure intellectual asceticism (45) and not contradict that higher, nakedly ontological-based ethics that as a value recognizes only "being" and power.

Not without relation to this it will be good to add the following considerations. It is evident that the identity between "me" and "others," to be metaphysical-transcendental, has nothing to do with mystical-pantheistic positions, presented almost always as the counterpart and fallacious justification, precisely, of moralistic and humanitarian views. Schopenhauer's philosophy is characteristic for such confusions. "Will" in it is hypostatized in the terms of an entity, in which all individuals would be one, their separation belonging solely to the realm of "phenomenon," of mere representation. Removed the "phenomenon," one therefore enters a night, in which all cows are black, while just then one would starve the possibility of understanding the very much and substituting for the representation of a different subject the actual experience of it -- but always on the basis of a power that differentiates and ascends: the Schopenhauerian "will" is noted repeatedly -- being able only to count as the indistinct substratum of spontaneity. That then the very identity of "me" and other subjects in the sign of the one substance does not necessarily ground a morality of love, is well understood: from the premise, admitted that it may be, one can deduce at most the idea, that in hurting other one hurts oneself and that by an immanent law of compensation in the short or long run one will suffer the consequences. But why might one not want to hurt oneself and why should one love oneself? Who says one should spare the other when it is understood that one is prepared not to spare oneself? Views of the kind now hinted at are, at their core, naturalistic and eudemonistic, and the asceticism of a moralistic-humanitarian-based compassion is revealed as the opposite of a true asceticism of an active and integrative kind.

What, on the other hand, can be deduced from a completed transcendental idealism is simply that, at a given stage, "me" goes to represent a *quantum* of value neither greater nor lesser than the other, every possibility differentiated and placed in the terms of a subjective being, after all, without similars. Along the process of universalization may, likewise, take shape a consciousness that considers "my" feelings, "my" passions and "my" actions no different than those of others, ceasing to make "my" a privileged system of reference according to an irrational identification. Thus, one does not go from "selfishness" to "altruism," but one goes beyond both selfishness and altruism, both hate and love, into a domain, in which action competes with an essential character of impersonality and nonhumanity.

It may be added that already the general premises of gnoseological idealism go to disprove the idea, that this doctrine advocates an indi-

(45) Cf. J. Evola, *The Doctrine of Awakening*, cit. individualistic of consciousness. If anything, the reverse is true, for the counterpart of "the world is my representation" is implicit recognition, that I am in a world, where in a certain way I am engaged, where nothing there is, from which I can abstract myself, that does not have a certain meaning, overt or covert, for me, that does not represent, in the last analysis, almost a fragment or organ of my being and consciousness. In criticizing the Stoic position on the basis of the doctrine of deprivation, it has been seen that, with Integrating Idealism, this perspective is not contradicted, but rather confirmed. Thus someone might be led to formulate even language of a responsibility and commitment with respect to all that exists, particularly with respect to other subjects. This, however, would certainly not know to be the point of view of the present doctrine, for in order to make such an idea valid in a way intelligible to common thinking one would have to recognize, at the same point, in one way or another, objective and nonnative values. Such a position can thus be said to be possible, but not necessary. However, the principle of a certain solidarity or implication of an ontological and cosmic kind remains firm, at an indetermination of the consequences that

can be drawn from it in particular cases in deontology.e

One can add still this: it binds directly to the transcendental truth realized an indifference identical to a kind of *heroic sympathy*, which practically can stand as a touchstone for the extent to which the "I" has truly transcended the limit of the person, thus also for measuring its strength. Whatever face F "other" presents, happy or unhappy, obscure or bright, abject or noble, it should clothe prominently the principle: "This is also me," or, rather, "I can be, I can want this too," not in the sense of the already condemned promiscuous and pantheistic identity, but precisely in the sense of the recognition of one's own transcendental *possibility*, and yet also of a kind of load test, of endurance. It is the feeling of infinity-as true unconditionality and elusiveness-that one grasps in being able to intrepidly assume the person of any other being, in feeling that one can absolutely *will* it. This is, after all, one of the ways, along which the irrational is illuminated in absolute reason, the constraint is severed, the experience of the very and the world becomes that of freedom itself.e

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