

Part Three

1946/47

Avalanche, veux-tu m'emporter dans ta chute?

French: Avalanche, won't you carry me away in your fall?

Baudelaire

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Hothouse plant. – The talk of early or late development, seldom free of the death-wish for the former, is not binding. Whoever develops early, lives in anticipation. Their experience is an a prioristic, intuitive sensibility, which gropes in pictures and words for what is later redeemed in things and human beings. Such anticipation, satiated in itself, as it were, turns away from the external world and lends the color of something neurotically playful to the relationship to the latter. If early developers are more than just the possessors of skills, they are thus compelled to catch up, a compulsion which normal people are fond of dressing up as a moral commandment. One who develops early must painfully conquer the space of the relation to the objects, which is encompassed by one's ideation [*Vorstellung*]: they must even learn to suffer. The feel for the not-ego, which hardly ever bothers supposed late developers from within, becomes an urgent necessity for early developers. The narcissistic direction of the drives, indicated by the preponderance of imagination in its experience, is precisely what delays their development. They make their way retrospectively, with crass violence, through the situations, fears, and passions which were softened in their anticipation, and these latter transform themselves, in conflict with the narcissism of the former, into something sickly and consuming. Thus early developers fall prey to what is childish, which they once mastered all too slight exertion and which now demands its price; they become immature and even silly, while the others, who were at every stage precisely what they were expected to be,

are mature, and these now find unpardonable, what overwhelms formerly early developers outside of all proportion. Early developers are stricken by passion; sheltered all too long in the security of autarky, now they reel helplessly, where they once built castles in the air. It is not for nothing that the handwriting of early developers warns by its infantile traits. They are an embarrassment to the natural social order, and malicious good health feeds on the danger which threatens them, just as society mistrusts them as the visible negation of the equalization of success and exertion. What is fulfilled in their internalized economy, is the unconscious yet implacable punishment which was always in store for them. What was once proffered to them with illusory good will, is now cancelled out. Even in psychological destiny, an authority watches over to ensure that everything is paid for. The individual law is a puzzle-picture of the exchange of equivalents.

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Always more slowly ahead. – Running on the street has the expression of terror. The fall of the victim is imitated in the very attempt to escape the fall. The posture of the head, which would like to remained raised, is that of someone who is drowning, the tense face resembles the grimace of torture. They must look straight ahead, cannot even glance back, without stumbling, as if the pursuer [*Verfolger*: follower, persecutor] whose sight would cause them to freeze were breathing down their necks. Once one ran from dangers which were too desperate to stand and face, and those who are running after a bus speeding away still testify to this, without knowing it. The flow of traffic no longer has to reckon with wild animals, but at the same time it has not pacified running. This last estranges the bourgeois walk. The truth becomes apparent, that something is not right about security, that one must constantly evade the unrestrained powers of life, even if these are only vehicles. The body's habit of walking as something normal stems from the good old days. It was the bourgeois

manner of getting somewhere: physical demythologization, free from the bane of the hieratic step, the homeless fellowship of the road, the breathless flight. Human dignity insisted on the right to the gait, a rhythm not drilled into the body by command or terror. Going on promenades, being a flaneur were private ways of spending time, the legacy of the feudal pleasure-jaunts of the 19th century. Walking is dying out along with the liberal epoch, even where autos are not being driven. The youth movement, which groped for such tendencies with unmistakable masochism, challenged the parental Sunday excursion and replaced it with the voluntary march of power, which they christened with the medieval name of trip [*Fahrt*: journey, travel], while the Ford model quickly became available to the latter. Perhaps the cult of technical speediness, just as in sports, conceals the impulse of mastering the terror of running, by turning it away from one's own body and at the same time high-handedly outbidding it: the triumph of the increasing mile-marker ritually attests to the fear of being pursued. Whenever however human beings are told: "run," ranging from the children, who are supposed to fetch the mother a forgotten handbag from upstairs, all the way to the prisoners, who are commanded by their escorts to flee, in order to have a pretext for murdering them, then the archaic violence becomes audible, which otherwise inaudibly directs every step.

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Boy from the heath. – What one most fears for no real reason, apparently obsessed by a fixed idea, has the unnerving habit of occurring. The question which one would at no price like to hear, is asked by an assistant in a perfidiously friendly manner; the person, who one most wishes to keep distant from one's beloved, will end inviting the latter, even if the former is three thousand miles away, thanks to a well-meaning recommendation, leading to precisely the circle of acquaintances, from which the danger threatens. It is an open question as to what extent one

invites such terrors oneself; if one perhaps elicits that question from the malicious one by an all too eager silence; if one provokes the fatal contact, by requesting the mediator, out of a foolishly destructive trust, not to mediate. Psychology knows, that whoever envisions the calamity, also somehow wishes for it. But why does the latter seem to eager to meet them? Something appeals, in the reality, to the paranoid fantasy which distorts such. The latent sadism of all unerringly guesses the latent weakness of all. And the persecution fantasy is infectious: whoever encounters it as a spectator is irresistibly driven to imitate it. This succeeds most easily, when one gives it justifiable grounds, by doing what the other fears. "One fool makes many" – the abyssal loneliness of delusion has a tendency towards collectivization, which cites the picture of delusion into life. This pathetic mechanism harmonizes with the socially determining one of today, wherein those who are socialized into desperate isolation hunger for togetherness and band together in cold clumps. Thus folly becomes epidemic: vagrant sects grow with the same rhythm as large organizations. It is that of total destruction. The fulfillment of persecution manias stems from its affinity to bloody being [*Wesen*: nature, essence, character]. Violence, on which civilization is based, means the persecution of all by all, and those with persecution manias miss the boat solely, by displacing what is wrought by the whole onto their neighbors, in the helpless attempt to make incommensurability commensurable. They burn, because they wish to immediately grasp, with their bare hands, as it were, the objective illusion which they resemble, while the absurdity consists precisely of the perfected mediacy [*Mittelbarkeit*]. They fall as victims to the perpetuation of the context of delusion. Even the worst and most senseless conception of events, the wildest projections, contain the unconscious effort of consciousness, to recognize the fatal law, by virtue of which society perpetuates its life. The aberration is actually only the short-circuit of adaptation: the open foolishness of the one mistakenly calls, in others, the foolishness of the whole by its correct name, and the

paranoid are the mocking image of the right life, by choosing on their own initiative to make it similar to the wrong one. Just as sparks fly in a short-circuit, so too does delusion communicate with delusion truly like lightning. Points of communication are the overpowering confirmations of persecution manias, which mock the one who is ill for being right, and thereby only push them in deeper. The surface of existence immediately closes up again and proves to them, that things are not that bad and that they must be mad. They anticipate subjectively the condition, in which objective madness and the powerlessness of the individual pass, unmediated, into each other, as in Fascism, where the dictatorship of those who are persecution maniacs realizes the fears of persecution of its victims. The question of whether an exaggerated suspicion is paranoid or realistic, the faint private echo of the tumult of history, can thus be solely determined retrospectively. Psychology does not reach into horror.

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Golden Gate [in English]. – What dawns on those who are embarrassed or spurned, illuminates as harshly as the violent pain which wracks the body. They recognize, that in the innermost core of deluded love, which knows nothing of this and may know nothing, lives the demand of what is undeluded. They have been wronged; they derive their claim of justice from this and must at the same time reject it, for what they wish, can only come out of freedom. In such urgent necessity, those who are rejected become human beings. Just as love inalienably betrays the generality to the particular, by which alone the generality is honored, so too does the generality now turn fatally against love, as the autonomy of those who are nearest. Precisely the rejection, by which the generality asserts itself, appears to the individual [*Individuum*] as being excluded from the generality; whoever loses love, feels deserted by all, which is why they despise consolation. In the senselessness of the withdrawal they come to feel what is untrue of all merely individual fulfillment. Thereby however

they awaken to the paradoxical consciousness of the generality: of the inalienable and unimpeachable human right, to be loved by the beloved. With their petition, founded on no title or claim, they appeal to an unknown court, which out of mercy accords to them what belongs to them and yet does not belong to them. The secret of justice in love is the sublation of rights, to which love points with speechless gestures. "So must love, deceived / silly yet everywhere be." [lines by Hölderlin from *Tränen*, "Tears"]

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Only a quarter of an hour left. – Sleepless night: there is a formula for this, agonizing hours, stretching without prospect of end or dawn, in the vain effort to forget the empty duration. Horrifying, however, are the sleepless nights, in which time shrinks and runs fruitlessly through one's fingers. One turns the light out in the hope for long hours of rest, which would assist one. But while one cannot still one's thoughts, the healing nourishment of the night is squandered, and when one is finally ready, to see no more under the burning eyelids, one knows that it is too late, that soon the terrifying morning will arrive. The final hours of those who are condemned to death may elapse the same way, irresistibly, unused. What however is revealed by such a contraction of hours, is the counterpoint [*Gegenbild*] of fulfilled time. If in the latter the power of experience breaks the baleful spell of duration and gathers what is past and what is future into the present, then duration creates unbearable horror in the hurried, sleepless night. Human life becomes a moment, not by sublating duration, but by decaying to nothing, awakening to its futility in face of the bad infinity of time itself. In the overly loud ticks of the clock, one perceives the mockery of the eons for the span of one's own existence. The hours, which are already past like seconds, before the inner senses have grasped them, and sweep the latter away in their fall, register, how one including all of memory is ordained to forgetting in the cosmic night.

Human beings are made compulsorily aware of this today. In the condition of complete powerlessness, what life-span remains to the individual [*Individuum*] appears as little more than a brief reprieve from the gallows. One no longer expects to live out one's life to the end. The prospect of violent death and martyrdom, present to everyone, perpetuates itself in the fear that the days are numbered, that the length of one's own life stands under the sway of statistics; that becoming old has become an unspoken advantage, as it were, derived by beating the averages. Perhaps the life-quota provided for by society, revocable at any time, has been used up. The body registers such fear in the flight of hours. Time flies.

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All the little flowers. – The sentence, most likely from Jean-Paul, that memories are the only property which cannot be taken from us, belongs in the storehouse of a powerlessly sentimental consolation, which would like to think that the self-renouncing withdrawal of the subject into interiority is precisely the fulfillment, from which the consolation turns away. By establishing the archive of oneself, the subject commandeers its own stock of experience as property and thereby turns it once more into something entirely external to the subject. The past inner life turns into furniture, just as, conversely, every piece of Biedermeier furniture was memory made wood. The *intérieur* [French: interior], in which the soul stores its collection of curiosities and memorabilia, is invalid. Memories cannot be preserved in drawers and file cabinets, but rather in them is indissolubly interwoven what is past with what is present. No-one has them at their disposal in the freedom and arbitrariness, whose praise resounds in the swollen sentences of Jean-Paul. Precisely where they become controllable and objective, where the subject thinks of them as wholly secure, memories fade like soft wall-papers under harsh sunlight. Where however they retain their energy, protected by what is forgotten, they are endangered like anything which is alive. The conception of Bergson and

Proust, aimed against reification, according to which what is contemporary, what is immediacy, constitutes itself only through memory, the reciprocity of what is now and what is then, has for that reason not merely a providential but also an infernal aspect. Just as no earlier experience truly exists, which was not detached from the rigor mortis of its isolated existence by involuntary memorialization, so too is the converse true, that no memory is guaranteed, as existing in itself, indifferent towards the future of the one who harbors it; nothing which is past is safe from the curse of the empirical present, through the transition into mere representation [*Vorstellung*]. The most blissful memory of a human being can, according to its substance, be repealed by a later experience. Whoever loved and betrayed love, does something awful not only to the picture of what has been, but to this last itself. With incontrovertible evidence, an unwilling gesture while awakening, a hollow cadence, a faint hypocrisy of pleasure, inveigles itself into the memory, making the nearness of yesterday already into the alienation, which it today has become. Despair has the expression of what is irrevocable not because things couldn't go better next time, but because it draws the previous time into its maw. That is why it is foolish and sentimental, to wish to preserve what is past as pure in the midst of the dirty flood of what is contemporary. This latter, delivered unprotected to calamity, is left with no other hope than to emerge once more from this latter as something else. To those however who die in despair, their whole life was in vain.

107

Ne cherchez plus mon coeur. [French: Don't search for my heart, line from Baudelaire's poem *Causerie*]. – The heir of Balzac's obsession, Proust, to who every mundane invitation seemed to be the "open sesame" of the reconstituted life, leads into the labyrinths, where prehistoric gossip conveys to him the shadowy secrets of everything which gleams, until this

latter becomes obtuse and cracked under the all too near and longing eyes. But the *placet futile* [French: useless petition], the concerns of a historically condemned luxury class, which every bourgeois could calculate as superfluous, the absurd energy, which is wasted on the wasters, finds itself more thoroughly rewarded than the impartial gaze for what is relevant. The schema of disassembly [*Zerfalls*: disintegration, disincorporation], according to which Proust cites the picture of his “society” [in English in original], proves to be one of the great social tendencies of development. What goes to pieces in Charlus, Saint-Loup and Swann, is the same thing, which the entire generation born afterwards lacked, who no longer even knew the name of the latest poet. The eccentric psychology of *décadence* [French: decadence] outlines the negative anthropology of mass society: Proust gives an allergic accounting of what was later done to all love. The exchange relationship, which this last partially contradicted during the bourgeois epoch, has entirely absorbed it; the last immediacy falls victim to the distance of all adversaries to all others. Love freezes from the value, which the ego ascribes to itself. Its love appears to it as a loving more, and whoever loves more, does wrong. They incur the suspicions of the beloved, and are thrown back on themselves, falling ill due to their inclination to possessive cruelty and self-destructive imagination. “The relation to the beloved,” goes a passage in *Temps retrouvé* [French: time recovered, multivolume work by Proust], “may remain platonic out of entirely different reasons than the chastity of the woman and also not for the sake of the sensual character of love, which she inspires. Perhaps the lover is incapable, in the boundlessness of his love, of waiting for the moment of fulfillment with adequate dissimulation or indifference. He meets her incessantly, does not cease to write to her, attempts to visit her; she refuses, and he despairs. From this moment on she understands that if she only grants him her company or friendship, such a favor will appear, to someone who had already given up all hope, so great that she can spare

herself the trouble of giving him any more concessions, so that she can securely wait, until he finds himself prepared, because he is incapable of going without seeing her any longer, to end the war at any price: then she can dictate the terms of the peace, whose first condition is the platonic nature of the relationship... All this the woman guesses instinctively and knows that she can afford the luxury of never giving herself to the man whose unquenchable desire she feels, if he is too well-bred to hide it from her from the very beginning.” The young male prostitute Morel is stronger than his high-flying lover. “He always retained the upper hand, by only refusing himself, and in order to refuse himself, it probably sufficed for him to know he was loved.” The private motive of Balzac’s Duchess Langeais has spread universally. The quality of each one of the innumerable autos, which turn every Sunday evening back to New York, corresponds exactly to the prettiness of the girl sitting inside. – The objective dissolution of society manifests itself subjectively, by the fact that the erotic drive has become too weak, to bind self-preserving monads, as if humanity were imitating the physics theory of the exploding cosmos. The frigid unattainability of the beloved’s nature [*Wesens*], meanwhile an acknowledged institution of the mass-culture, is answered by the “unquenchable desire” of the lover. When Casanova named a woman unprejudiced, he meant that no religious convention hindered her from giving herself; today the unprejudiced woman is one who no longer believes in love, who doesn’t let herself be taken for a ride, by investing any more than she can expect back. Sexuality, for whose sake nevertheless the whole fuss is presumably about, has turned into the delusion, which consisted earlier in renunciation. By leaving no time anymore in the arrangements of life for a pleasure conscious of itself, and replacing it with physiological exercises, uninhibited sexuality is itself desexualized. Actually they no longer want the euphoria anymore, but merely the compensation, which stands for the effort, which they would like most of all to spare themselves as superfluous.

Princess Lizard. – The imagination is inflamed precisely by the women whose imagination has worn away. Those who glow with the most colorful nimbus, turned unremittingly to the outside, are entirely sober. Their attraction stems from their lack of consciousness of themselves, indeed the lack of a self at all: Oscar Wilde invented the name of the unenigmatic sphinx for them. They resemble their designated pictures: the purer their appearance [*Schein*] is, undisturbed by any sort of impulse, the more similar they are to archetypes, Preziosa, Peregrina, Albertine, who hint that all individuation is precisely mere appearance [*Schein*] and who nevertheless must always disappoint again through that, which they are. Their life is understood as an illustration or an everlasting children's festival, and such perception does injustice to their needy empirical existence. Storm has dealt with this in the deeply symbolic children's story "Pole Poppenspaeler." The Friesian boy falls in love with the little girl, who is traveling with a group from Bavaria. "When I finally turned around, I saw a red dress appear before me; and truly, and truly, it was the little puppet-player; in spite of her tattered clothing she seemed to me to be surrounded by a fairy-tale glow. I gathered up courage and spoke to her: 'Would you like to take a walk, Lisa?' She looked at me mistrustfully with her black eyes. 'Take a walk?' she repeated at length. 'Ah, you – you're the limit!' 'Where do you want to go?' – 'I wanna to go to the draper's shop!' 'You want to buy a new dress?' I asked foolishly enough. She laughed out loud. 'Get out of here! – No, only a little rag!' 'Little rag, Lisa?' – 'Sure thing! Just some scraps to dress up the doll; costs only a little bit!' Poverty forces Lisa to limit herself to what is shabby – "rags" – although she herself would be happy if things were otherwise. Misunderstanding, she must mistrust everything as exaggerated, which is not practically justified. Imagination steps too close to poverty. For what is shabby has magic only for the observer. And nevertheless imagination

needs poverty, to which it does violence: the happiness, which it clings to, is inscribed with the traits of suffering. Thus Sade names Justine, who falls into one trap of torture after another, *notre intéressante héroïne* [French: our interesting heroine], and even Mignon, in the moment in which she is beaten, the interesting child. The dream princess and the whipping-girl are the same, and they suspect nothing of this. Traces of this are still evident in the relationship of the northern peoples to the southern: the well-heeled puritan seeks in vain from the brunette from foreign lands, what the course of the world, which the former commands, severs not merely from themselves but above all from the vagrants. Those who are rooted envy the nomads, the search for fresh pastures, and the green wagon is the house on wheels, whose path is accompanied by stars. Infatigability, ensorcelled in unplanned movement, the unhappily inconstant, momentary pressure to continue to live, stands for something undistorted, for fulfillment, and yet nevertheless excludes it, similar to the innermost core of self-preservation, from which it pretends to redeem itself from. That is the circle of bourgeois longing for what is naive. What is soulless in those who, at the borders of culture, are daily forbidden self-determination, charm and torture at the same time, turns into a phantasmagoria of the soul for the well-heeled, who have learned from culture, to be ashamed of the soul. Love loses itself in what is soulless as in the cipher of what has soul, because the living are the arena of the desperate desire for salvation, which has its object only in what is lost: love arises in the soul first in its absence. It is precisely the expression of the eyes, which is closest to those of an animal – the creaturely expression – which is human, distant from the reflection of the ego. In the end the soul is itself the longing of the soulless for salvation.

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L'inutile beauté. [French: useless beauty]. – Women of especial beauty are condemned to unhappiness. Even those to have all the advantages, who

have birth, wealth, and talent on their side, seem as if pursued or obsessed with the pressure to destroy of themselves and all human relationships, in which they enter. An oracle puts before them the choice of dooms. Either they cleverly exchange beauty for success. Then they pay with happiness for its condition; since they can no longer love, they poison love to others and remain empty-handed. Or the privilege of beauty gives them the courage and security, to defy the exchange-contract. They take the happiness seriously, which is promised in them, and do not limit themselves, thus confirmed by the attraction of all, that do not at first have to prove their worth. In their youth they have the choice. This makes them indiscriminate: nothing is definitive, everything can be replaced. Quite early, without much consideration, they marry and dedicate themselves to pedestrian conditions, relinquishing [*entäussern*: to relinquish, disclose, realize] to a certain extent the privilege of infinite possibility, degrading themselves to human beings. At the same time however they hold fast to their childhood dream of hegemony, which their life flashes before them, and do not cease – therein unbourgeois – to throw away what, tomorrow, could be something better. That is their type of destructive character. Precisely because they were once *hors de concours* [French: outside of the competition], they are rendered subalterns in the competition, which they now manically pursue. Solely the gesture of irresistibility remains, while the latter already disintegrates [*zerfällt*]; magic disintegrates [*zerfällt*], as soon as expresses itself as domesticated, instead of portraying itself as hope. She who resists however is simultaneously the sacrifice: she ends up under the social order, which she once flew over. Her generosity is given punishment. The fallen woman as well as the obsessive one are martyrs of happiness. Incorporated beauty has in the meanwhile turned into a calculable element of existence, a mere replacement for the non-existing life, without reaching beyond the latter in the slightest. She has broken her promise of happiness to herself and others. She however, who stands for this happiness, takes on the aura of calamity and is herself overtaken by

calamity. Therein the enlightened world has completely and utterly absorbed mythos. The envy of the gods has outlived them.

110

Constance. – Everywhere bourgeois society insists on the exertion of the will; only love is supposed to be involuntary, the pure immediacy of the feelings. In the longing for this, which means the dispensation from labor, the bourgeois idea of love transcends bourgeois society. However by unmediatedly putting up what is true as what is universally untrue, it inverts the former into the latter. It is not merely that pure feelings, as far as they are still possible in the economically determined system, socially turn thereby into the alibi for the domination of interest and testifies to a humanity, which does not exist. But rather the involuntariness of love itself, even where it is not arranged quite practically in advance, contributes to that whole, as soon as it establishes itself as a principle. If love is supposed to portray in society a better one, then it is capable of doing so not as a peaceful enclave, but only in conscious resistance. That however requires just that moment of caprice, which the bourgeois, to who love can never be natural enough, forbids it. Love means the capacity to not allow immediacy to wither from the ubiquitous pressure of mediation, of the economy, and in such fidelity it is mediated in itself, as tenacious counter-pressure. Those who love are only those who have the energy to hold fast to love. If social advantage, sublimated, still preforms the sexual drive-impulse, causes, through a thousand shadings of what is confirmed by the social order, now this person and now that one to appear spontaneously attractive, then the attraction which has once taken root contradicts this, by persisting where the gravity of society, above all in the intrigue which is regularly taken into society's service, does not wish it to be. The test of the feelings is whether they endure beyond the feeling through duration, even if it were only obsession. The kind which, under

the appearance [*Schein*] of unreflective spontaneity and proud of its presumed uprightness, rely completely and utterly on what it considers to be the voice of the heart, and runs away, as soon as it no longer thinks it perceives those voices, is in such sovereign independence precisely the tool of society. Passively, without knowing it, it registers the numbers, which roll out of the roulette wheel of their interests. By betraying the beloved, it betrays itself. The command of fidelity, which society legislates, is the means of unfreedom, but only through fidelity does freedom realize its insubordination against the command of society.

111

Philemon and Baucis. [Greek mythology:] – The household tyrant has his wife help him into his coat. She eagerly does the service of love and accompanies him with a glance, which says: what am I supposed to do, let him have his little joys, that's the way he is, only a man. Patriarchal marriage revenges itself on the man through the indulgence, which the woman practices and which has turned into a formula in the ironic lament of male vulnerability and dependence. Inside of the lying ideology, which posits the man as superior, lies a secret, not less untrue one, which reduces him to something inferior, to the victim of manipulation, maneuvers, deception. The hen-pecked husband is the shadow of the one who must venture out into hostile life. Children size up adults with the same narrow-minded perspicacity as the wife *vis-à-vis* the husband. In the disproportion between his authoritarian claim and his helplessness, which necessarily comes to light in the private sphere, something ridiculous is concealed. Every married couple appearing together is comic, and this is what the patient understanding of the wife attempts to balance out. There is scarcely any long-married woman, who does not disavow their spouse by whispering about small weaknesses. False nearness stimulates malice, and in the realm of consumption, those who have their hands on things are stronger. Hegel's dialectic of master and slave is as valid then as now in

the archaic social order of the house and is strengthened, because the wife tenaciously holds fast to the anachronism. As suppressed matriarch she becomes the master there, where she must serve, and the patriarch need only appear as such, in order to become a caricature. Such a simultaneous dialectic of the epoch has presented itself to the individualistic gaze as the “battle of the sexes.” Both opponents are wrong. In the disenchantment of the man, whose power rests on the earning of money which pretends to be human rank, the woman expresses at the same time the untruth of the marriage, in which she seeks her entire truth. No emancipation without that of society.

112

Et dona ferentes. [Latin: fragment of “Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes,” “I fear the Greeks though bearing gifts.”] – The German philistines of freedom have always put great store in the [Goethean] poem of *God and the Bayadere* [bayadere: Hindu temple dancing-girl], with the closing fanfare that immortals raise lost children in their fiery arms to heaven. The approved warm-heartedness is not to be trusted. It thoroughly appropriates the bourgeois judgment on bought love; it attains the effect of all-fatherly understanding and forgiveness only by impugning the lovely one to be saved with shuddering delight as someone who is lost. The act of mercy is bound up with reservations, which make it illusory. In order to earn redemption – as if an earned redemption could be anything of the sort – the girl may herself participate in the “bed’s pleasant festival,” “neither for pleasure nor gain.” Well, then why else? Doesn’t the pure love expected of her clumsily touch the magic, which Goethe’s dance-rhythm winds around her figure and which then indeed is no longer to be cancelled out by the talk of deep perdition? But she is supposed to become the sort of good soul throughout, who forgets herself only once. In order to be admitted to the enclosure of humanity, the paramour, whose toleration humanity brags about, must first cease to be one. The deity of

penitent sinners rejoices [quotation from Goethe's poem]. The entire expedition to where the last houses are, is a kind of metaphysical "slumming party" [in English in original], an event of patriarchal meanness, inflating itself twice over, by first raising the distance between the male Spirit [*Geist*] and female nature into something immeasurable and then draping the supreme power, which takes back even its self-created distinction, as the highest benevolence. The bourgeoisie needs the bayadere, not merely for the sake of pleasure, which they simultaneously begrudge her for, but in order to feel like a god. The closer they approach the edge of their realm and forget their dignity, the crasser the ritual of violence. The night has its pleasure, but the whore is nevertheless burnt. The rest is the idea.

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Spoilsport. – The affinity between asceticism and euphoria, noted by the humdrum wisdom of psychology, the love-hate between saints and whores, has the objectively valid ground, that asceticism accords to fulfillment more of its rights than cultural installment-payments. The hostility to pleasure is certainly not to be separated from the consensus with the discipline of a society, which has its essence [*Wesen*] in demanding more than it grants in return. But there is also a mistrust against pleasure which comes from the intuition, that the latter is in this world nothing of the sort. A construction of Schopenhauer unconsciously expressed something of this intuition. The transition from the affirmation to the repudiation of the will to life occurs in the development of the thought, that in every delimitation of the will by a barrier "which is placed... between it and its former goal" there is suffering; in contrast, "its attainment of the goal" would be "satisfaction, well-being, happiness." While such "suffering," according to Schopenhauer's intransigent cognition, could easily enough grow to the point that death itself would be preferable, the condition of "satisfaction" is itself unsatisfying, because

“as soon as a shelter is granted to human beings from urgent necessity and suffering, boredom is so close at hand, that it requires the killing of time. What occupies all living beings and keeps them in motion, is the striving for existence [*Dasein*]. They don’t know what to do with existence, however, what it is assured: thus the second thing, which they set into motion, is the striving to be free of the burden of existence, to make it imperceptible, ‘to kill time’, that is, to escape boredom.” (Schopenhauer, Collected Works, Grand Duke Wilhelm-Ernst Edition, Volume I: The World as Will and Idea. I. Introduction by Eduard Grisebach. Leipzig 1920, pg 415). But the concept of this boredom which is sublated to such unsuspected dignity, is something which Schopenhauer’s sensibility, which is hostile to history, would least like to admit – bourgeois through and through. It is, as the experience of antithetical “free time,” the complement of alienated labor, whether this free time is supposed to merely reproduce expended energy, or whether it is burdened by the extraction of alien labor as a mortgage. Free time remains the reflex of the rhythm of production as something imposed heteronomously, to which the former is compulsorily held fast even in periods of weariness. The consciousness of the unfreedom of all existence, which the pressure of the demands of commerce, and thus unfreedom itself, does not allow to appear, emerges first in the intermezzo of freedom. The *nostalgie du dimanche* [French: Sunday nostalgia] is not homesickness for the workweek, but for the condition which is emancipated from this; Sundays are unsatisfying, not because they are observed, but because its own promise immediately represents itself at the same time as something unfulfilled; like the English one, every Sunday is too little Sunday. Those for who time painfully extends itself, who wait in vain, are disappointed that it failed to happen, that tomorrow goes past once more just like yesterday. The boredom of those however who do not need to work, is not fundamentally different from this. Society as a totality imposes, on those with administrative power, what they do to others, and what these latter

may not do, the former will scarcely permit themselves. The bourgeoisie have turned satiety, which ought to be the close relation of ecstasy, into an epithet. Because others go hungry, ideology demands that the absence of hunger should count as vulgar. Thus the bourgeoisie indict the bourgeoisie. Their own existence, as exempt from labor, prevents any praise of laziness: the latter would be boring. The hectic bustle, which Schopenhauer refers to, is due less to the unbearable nature of the privileged condition than to its ostentation, which according to the historical situation either enlarges the social distance or seemingly reduces such through presumably important events and ceremonies, which are supposed to emphasize the usefulness of the masters. If those at the top truly felt bored, this stems not from too much happiness, but from the fact that they are marked by the general unhappiness; by the commodity character, which consigns the pleasures to idiocy, by the brutality of command, whose terrifying echo resounds in the high spirits of the rulers, finally by their fear of their own superfluity. No one who profits from the profit-system is capable of existing therein without shame, and it distorts even undistorted pleasure, although the excesses, which the philosophers envy, may by no means be so boring as they assure us. That boredom would disappear in realized freedom, is something vouchsafed by many experiences stolen from civilization. The saying *omne animal post coitum triste* [Latin: all animals are sad after mating] was devised by bourgeois contempt for humanity: nowhere more than here does what is human distinguish itself from creaturely sorrow. Not euphoria but socially approved love elicits disgust: the latter is, in Ibsen's word, sticky. Those who are deeply moved by erotic sentiment transform fatigue into the plea for tenderness, and momentary sexual incapacity is understood as accidental, entirely external to passion. It is not for nothing that Baudelaire thought the bondage of erotic obsession together with the illuminating spiritualization, naming kiss, scent and conversation equally immortal. The transience of pleasure, on which asceticism stakes its

claim, stands for the fact that except in the minutes heureuses [French: happy minutes], in which the forgotten life of the lover radiates from the arms and limbs of the beloved, there is no pleasure yet at all. Even the Christian denunciation of sex in Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata* cannot entirely cancel out the memory of this in the middle of all the Capucin-style preaching. What he reproaches sensuous love for, is not only the grandiosely overweening theological motif of self-denial, that no human being may turn another into an object – actually thus a protest against patriarchal control – but at the same time the memorialization of the bourgeois malformation of sex, in its murky entanglement with every material interest, in marriage as a humiliating compromise, however much of an undercurrent of Rousseau's resentment against pleasure raised to reflection runs in this. The attack on the period of the engagement is aimed at the family photograph, which resembles the word "bridegroom." 'And moreover there was that ridiculous custom of giving sweets, of coarse gormandizing on sweets, and all those abominable preparations for the wedding: remarks about the house, the bedroom, beds, wraps, dressing-gowns, underclothing, costumes.' [*The Kreutzer Sonata*, trans. R. Gustafson, Oxford UP: 1997, pg 107] He similarly mocks the honeymoon, which is compared to the disappointment after visiting an 'extremely uninteresting' fairground booth, extolled by a hawker. The exhausted senses are less to blame for this *dégoût* [French: disgust] than what is institutionalized, ordained, prefabricated in pleasure, its false immanence in the social order which adjusts it and turns it into something deathly sad, in the moment it is decreed. Such contrariness may grow to the point that all euphoria ultimately prefers to cease, inside renunciation, rather than violating the concept of euphoria through its realization.

Heliotrope. – Those awaiting the visit of the parents' guests, find their hearts beating with greater expectation than before Christmas. It is not due to the presents, but to a transformed life. The perfume, which the lady guest places on the bureau, while one is permitted to watch the unpacking, has a scent like memory, even when it is inhaled for the first time. The luggage with the stickers from the Hotel Suvretta [famous hotel in St. Moritz, Switzerland] and Madonna di Campiglio [famous hotel in Domolite mountains of Italy, near Trentino] are chests, in which the precious gems of Aladdin and Ali Baba, wrapped in expensive cloth, the kimonos of guests, are borne out of the caravanserais of Switzerland and south Tyrol on sleeping-wagon cushions for sated observation. And just as fairies talk to children in fairy-tales, so too does the guest talk earnestly, without condescension, to the children of the house. They ask knowledgeably about lands and peoples, and the guest, not acquainted with their daily habits and seeing nothing but the fascination in their eyes, answers with profound statements about the feeble-mindedness of a brother-in-law and the marital spats of the nephews. Thus the children feel accepted at a stroke into the mighty and secret alliance of adults, the magic circle of reasonable people. The rules of the day are suspended – perhaps tomorrow they may even be allowed to skip school – along with the borders between the generations, and whoever has not been sent to bed by eleven o'clock has an inkling of true promiscuity. The single visit ordains Thursday as a festival, in whose euphoria all of humanity seems to be invited. For the guest comes from far away. The guest's appearance promises the children something beyond the family and reminds them that this latter is not the only thing. The longing for inchoate happiness, in the pond of salamanders and storks, which the child painfully learned to restrain and which is distorted by the bogeyman of the black man, of the villain who wishes to kidnap them – here the children find that longing again, without fear. Amidst the nearest and dearest, there appears the figure of what is different. The fortune-telling gypsy, who is let into the

front door, is absolved in the lady visitor and transfigured into a rescuing angel. She dispels the curse on the happiness of what is nearest of all, by wedding it to what is most distant. The entire being [Dasein] of the child waits for this, and whoever does not forget the best part of childhood, must still be able to wait like this. Love counts the hours until the moment the parents' guests step over the threshold and once again reconstruct the washed-out life through something imperceptible: "Here I am again / back from the wide world." [lines from Mörike's *Peregrina*]

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Pure wine [part of figurative German expression, "to give someone pure wine," i.e. to tell someone the unvarnished truth]. – There is an almost foolproof criterium for determining whether a human being means you well: how they pass on unfriendly or hostile comments about you. Such reports are mostly superfluous, nothing but pretexts for expressing ill-wishes without responsibility, even in the name of what is good. Just as all acquaintances feel the inclination, to occasionally say something bad about someone, probably because they rebel against the greyness of the acquaintance, so is everyone simultaneously sensitive to the views of everyone else and secretly wish that they were loved, even where they do not love: the alienation between human beings is no less indiscriminate and universal than the longing to break through it. The news-hawker blossoms in this climate, for there is never any lack of material or calamities, and they can always count on the fact that those who wish to be liked by all, are agog to hear news of the opposite. One should relay derogatory remarks only when they immediately and transparently influence common decisions, to judgments of human beings one must rely upon, or with whom one has to work. The more disinterested the report, the murkier the interest, the suppressed pleasure, in inflicting pain. It is still harmless, if story-tellers simply wish to set two parties against each other while simultaneously putting their own qualities in the spotlight.

More often they represent themselves as the unelected arbiters of public opinion and thereby impress, precisely through their affectless objectivity, the entire violence of anonymity upon the victim, before which this last is supposed to bow. The lie becomes visible in the unnecessary concern for the honor of the one injured, who knows nothing of the injury, for clear relationships, for inner purity: upholding these latter in the entangled world only encourages, on the model of Gregers Werle [character in Ibsen's *Wild Duck*], entanglement. By virtue of moral fervor, the well-meaning turn into destroyers.

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And just hear, how evil he was. – Those who have unexpectedly ended up facing life-threatening dangers, sheer catastrophes, often report that they were to a surprising extent free of fear. The general terror does not turn specifically against them, but strikes them as mere inhabitants of a city, members of a larger association. They adapt to what is accidental, what is inanimate, as it were, as if it didn't really concern them. The lack of fear has its psychological explanation in the lack of readiness to be afraid *vis-à-vis* the overpowering blow. The freedom of eyewitnesses has something damaged about it, something related to apathy. The psychic organism, like the body, is compatible with experiences of an order of magnitude similar to itself. If the object of experience is raised out of proportion to the individual [*Individuum*], then the latter actually doesn't experience it anymore, but registers the former unmediatedly, through the non-intuitive concept, as something external to itself, something incommensurable, to which the latter relates as coldly as to the catastrophic shock. There is an analogy to this in what is moral. Whoever commits acts, which are egregiously unjust according to acknowledged norms, such as taking revenge on enemies, or refusing to be sympathetic, is scarcely conscious of their guilt and comes to realize this only with painful effort. The doctrine of reasons of state, the separation of ethics [Moral] and politics is

not untouched by this state of affairs. Its meaning stems from the extreme opposition between public essence [*Wesen*] and individual existence. The major crime presents itself to the individual [*Individuum*] in large part as a mere misdemeanor against convention, not merely because the norms which it injures are themselves something conventional, frozen, unbinding on the living subject, but because their objectification as such, even where they are founded on substance, evades the moral innervation, the realm of the conscience. The thought of specific acts of tactlessness however, the microorganisms of injustice, which perhaps no-one else noticed – that someone sits down too early in company, or put the guests' name-tags down during tea-time, rather than at dinner, as is customary – such trivialities may fill the delinquent one with irreproachable remorse and a passionately bad conscience, at times with such a burning shame, that they cannot allow themselves to be pardoned by any other human being and preferably not even by themselves. They are therein by no means as noble as all that, for they know, that the society which has no objections against inhumanity, objects all the more strongly to misconduct, and that a man who sends away his lover and vouches for himself as an upright man, can be sure of social approval, while the man who respectfully kisses the hand of an overly young girl from a good family, earns himself ridicule. However these luxuriously narcissistic concerns afford a second aspect: that of the refuge of experience, which rebounds from the objectified social order. The subject reaches into the smallest features of what is correct or incorrect and is capable of vouching for itself therein as acting rightly or wrongly; its indifference towards moral guilt, however, is tinged with the consciousness that the powerlessness of one's own decision grows with the dimension of their object. If one established in retrospect, that by failing to call one's girlfriend after an ugly quarrel, this in fact ended the relationship, then there is something faintly comic in the conception of this; it sounds like the mute girl in Portici [character in Daniel Auber's 1828 opera *The Mute Girl of Portici*]. "Murder," goes an

Ellery Queen detective novel, “is so... newspaperly. It doesn’t happen to you. You read about it in a paper, or in a detective story, and it makes you wriggle with disgust, or sympathy. But it doesn’t mean anything.” [Quote in English in original] That is why authors like Thomas Mann have described the catastrophes broadcast in the newspapers, ranging from train accidents to crimes of passion, grotesquely – ensorceling, as it were, the irresistible laughter which the solemn pomp of a burial would otherwise provoke, by making it the affair [*Sache*] of the poetic subject. In contrast to this, minimal violations are for that reason relevant, because we can see good and evil in them, without smiling, even if our earnestness is a bit delusory. In them we learn to deal with what is ethical [*Moralischen*], feeling it in our skin – as blushing – making it the subject’s own, the subject which glances as helplessly at the gigantic moral-law in itself as at the star-studded heavens, which the former is badly modeled after. That these occurrences would be amoral in themselves, while nevertheless spontaneously good impulses, human sympathy without the pathos of maxims, also occurs, does not devalue the infatuation in what is proper. For by expressing the generality straightaway, without bothering about alienation, the good impulse easily enough permits the subject to appear as something alienated from itself, as a mere agent of commandments, with which that subject imagines itself to be as one: as a splendid human being. Conversely, those whose ethical impulse is oriented to what is external, fetishistic convention, is capable of grasping the generality, in the suffering of the unsurpassable divergence of inner and outer – indeed by holding fast to this divergence in its hardening – without sacrificing themselves and the truth of their experience to such. Their over-voltage [*Überspannung*] of all distance intends reconciliation. That is why the behavior of monomaniacs is not without some justification in the object. In the sphere of daily interactions, on which they insist, all aporias of the false life return, and what their blind alley has to do with the whole, is that only there can they carry out the paradigmatic conflict in strictness and

freedom, which otherwise escapes their reach. In contrast, whoever conforms in their mode of reaction with social reality, finds their private life conducting itself as formlessly, as the estimation of power-relations which compels its form on them. They have the inclination, wherever they escape the supervision of the external world, wherever they feel at home in the expanded realm in their own ego, to reveal themselves to be inconsiderate and brutal. They revenge themselves on those who are near to them, for all the discipline and all the renunciation of the immediate expression of aggression, which was imposed on the former from a distance. They behave politely and with courtesy on the outside, towards objective enemies, but with coldness and hostility in friendly circles. Where civilization as self-preservation does not compel them towards humanity, they give free reign to their rage against such and rebut their own ideology of home, family and community. It is against this which ethics [*Moral*], however micrologically deluded, is aimed. It detects in the relaxed familiarity, in what is formless, the mere pretext for violence, the appeal to be good to each other, in order to be as malevolent as one wants to be. It subjugates what is intimate to the critical claim, because intimacies alienate, grope towards the inconceivably fine aura of the other, which first crowns them to a subject. Solely the acknowledgment of distance in who or what is most near [*Nächste*] mitigates foreignness: accepted into consciousness. However the claim of undiminished, already achieved nearness, the flat denial of foreignness, does the utmost injustice to the other, virtually negating them as particular human beings and thereby what is human in them, “adds them up,” incorporates them into the inventory of property. Wherever what is unmediated posits and ensconces itself, the bad mediacy of society is thereby insidiously affirmed. The issue [*Sache*] of immediacy can be taken up only by the most cautious of reflections. The test of this is made in the smallest of all things.

Il servo padrone. [Italian: the master as servant] – In regards to the dull-witted tasks, which are demanded by the ruling culture from subordinate classes, these latter become capable of such solely through permanent regression. Precisely what is unformed in them is the product of social form. The creation of barbarians through culture is however constantly deployed by this latter, in order to preserve its own barbaric essence. Domination delegates the physical violence, on which it rests, to the dominated. While these latter are given the opportunity of letting off steam with their warped instincts in what is collectively justified and proper, they learn to practice what the noble ones require, so that they have what it takes to let the noble ones remain noble. The self-education of the ruling clique, with all of the discipline, throttling of every immediate impulse, cynical skepticism and blind pleasure in command it demands, would not exist if the oppressor did not inflict, through those who are oppressed, a piece of the oppression on themselves, which they inflict on others. That is why the psychological differences between the classes are so much slighter than the objective-economic ones. The harmony of what is irreconcilable comes to benefit the continuation of the bad totality. The nastiness of the higher-ups and the gutsiness of the low-born understand each other. From the servants and governors, who bully the children of good households to teach them a lesson about life, to the teachers from Westerwald, who drive the usage of foreign words as well as all pleasure in language out of them, to the officials and clerks, who make them stand in line, the petty officers, who step on them, things go straight as a rail to the torturers of the Gestapo and the bureaucrats of the gas chambers. The impulses of the upper classes themselves speak early in favor of the delegation of violence to the lower ones. Whoever fears the good breeding of the parents, flees into the kitchen and warms themselves on the energetic expressions of the cook, which are secretly given over to

the principle of parental good-breeding. The fine people are drawn to the unrefined ones, whose brutality deceptively augurs, what the culture of the former is supposed to bring. They do not know, that what is unrefined, which appears to them as anarchic nature, is nothing but the reflex of the compulsion, against which they stiffen themselves. What mediates between the class solidarity of the upper classes and their ingratiation towards the delegates of the lower classes is their justified feeling of guilt towards the poor. Whoever who doesn't fit in, who learns however to fit in, who is saturated by "that's how things are done here" into the innermost core, ultimately turns into one themselves. Bettelheim's observation on the identification of the victims with the executioners of the Nazi camps contains a judgment on the higher seeding-grounds of culture, the English "public school" [in English in original], the German officer academy. The absurdity perpetuates itself: domination reproduces itself all the way through the dominated.

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Downwards and ever further. [quote from Schubert song] – The private relations between human beings seem to form themselves according to the model of the industrial "bottleneck" [in English in original]. Even in the smallest community, the level is determined by the most subaltern of its members. Whoever says something in a conversation which is beyond the grasp of a single person, becomes tactless. For the sake of humanity, the conversation is restricted to what is nearest, most dull-witted and banal, even if only one inhuman visage is present. Since the world has stolen speech from human beings, those who cannot be talked to are in the right. They need only stubbornly insist on their interest and their constitution, in order to prevail. The fact that the other, trying in vain to establish contact, ends up using a pleading or soliciting cadence, makes them weaker. Since the "bottleneck" [in English in original] knows no authority, which would be higher than what is factual, while thought and speech necessarily refer

to such an authority, intelligence turns into *naïveté*, and this is what the knuckleheads irrefutably perceive. The official fealty to what is positive acts like gravity, drawing everyone down. It shows its superiority to the opposing impulse, by refusing to even deal with the latter. Those who are more differentiated, who do not wish to perish, remain strictly constrained by the consideration of everyone who is inconsiderate. These latter need no longer be plagued by the disquiet of consciousness. Intellectual weakness, confirmed as a universal principle, appears as the energy to live. Formalistic-administrative task management, the desk-drawer separation of everything which only has meaning as something inseparable, the bull-headed insistence on arbitrary opinions in the absence of any foundation, in short the practice of reifying every stage of the failed ego-formation, withdrawing the latter from the process of experience and then maintaining it as a final “that’s just how I am,” suffices to conquer impregnable positions. One may be as certain of the understanding of others, who are similarly malformed, as of one’s own advantage. In the cynical self-trumpeting of one’s own defect lurks the intuition, that the objective Spirit [*Geist*] is liquidating the subjective one at the contemporary stage. They are “down to earth” [in English in original] like the zoological forebears, before these latter stood erect on their hind legs.

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Model virtue. – It is well-known how oppression and ethics [Moral] converge in the renunciation of the drives. But the ethical ideas do not merely oppress other ones, but are immediately derived from the existence of the oppressor. Since Homer, the concepts of good and wealth are intertwined in the Greek language. The *καλοκαγατηε* [Greek: perfection], which was upheld by the humanists of modern society as a model of aesthetic-ethical harmony, has always put a heavy emphasis on

property, and Aristotele's *Politics* openly confessed the fusion of inner value with status in the determination of nobility, as "inherited wealth, which is connected with excellence." The concept of the polis [Greek: city-state] in classical antiquity, which upheld internalized and externalized nature [*Wesen*], the validity of the individual [*Individuum*] in the city-state and the individual's self as a unity, permitted it to ascribe moral rank to wealth, without inciting the crude suspicion, which the doctrine already at that time courted. If the visible effect on an existent state establishes the measure of a human being, then it is nothing but consistency to vouchsafe the material wealth, which tangibly confirms that effect, as the characteristic of the person, since the latter's moral substance – just as later in Hegel's philosophy – is supposed to be constituted on nothing other than their participation in the objective, social substance. Christianity first negated that identification, in the phrase that it would be easier to pass a camel through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter heaven. But the particular theological premise on voluntary chosen poverty indicates how deeply the general consciousness is stamped by the ethos [*Moralität*] of property. Fixed property is to be distinguished from the nomadic disorder, against which all norms are directed; to be good and to have goods, coincided from the beginning. Good people are those who control themselves as their own possessions: their autonomous nature [*Wesen*] is modeled on material disposition. The rich are therefore not to be accused of being unethical – that reproach has ever belonged to the armature of political oppression – but given to understand, that they represent ethics [Moral] to others. In this latter is reflected having [*Habe*]. Wealth as goodliness [*Gutsein*: having goods/being good] is an element of the mortar of the world: the hard-bitten appearance [*Schein*] of such identity hinders the confrontation of the moral idea with the social order, in which the rich are right, while at the same time determinations of what is ethical different than those derived from wealth cannot be conceptualized. The more that the

individual [*Individuum*] and society later diverged in the competition of interests, and the more the former is thrown back on itself, the more stubbornly do individuals hold onto the conception of moral nature [*Wesen*] as wealth. It is supposed to vouch for the possibility of reunifying what has been divided in two, into inside and outside. That is the secret of the inner-worldly asceticism, which Max Weber wrongly hypostatized as the limitless exertion of the businessman *ad maiorem dei gloriam* [Latin: to the greater glory of God]. Material success binds individual [*Individuum*] and society not merely in the comfortable and meanwhile dubious sense, that the rich can escape loneliness, but in a far more radical sense: if the blind, isolated self-interest is driven only far enough, then it passes over, along with the economic one, into social power and reveals itself to be the incarnation of a universally binding principle. Whoever is rich or acquires wealth, experiences what is attained by the ego, “by one’s own initiative,” as what the objective Spirit [*Geist*], the truly irrational predestination of a society held together by brutal economic inequality, has willed. Thus the rich may reckon as benevolence, what testifies only to its absence. To themselves and to others, they experience themselves as the realization of the general principle. Because this latter is injustice, that is why the unjust turn regularly into the just, and not as mere illusion, but borne out of the hegemony of the law, according to which society reproduces itself. The wealth of the individual is inseparable from progress in society as “prehistory.” The rich dispose over the means of production. Consequently the technical progress, in which the entire society participates, is accounted for primarily as “their” progress, today that of industry, and the Fords necessarily appear to be benefactors, to the same degree which they in fact are, given the framework of the existing relations of production. Their privilege, already established in advance, makes it seem as if they were giving up what is theirs – namely the increase on the side of use-value – while those who are receiving their administered blessings are getting back only part of the profit. That is the

ground of the character of delusion of ethical hierarchy. Poverty has indeed always been glorified as asceticism, the social condition for the acquisition of precisely the wealth in which morality [*Sittlichkeit*] is manifested, but nevertheless “what a man is worth” [in English in original] signifies, as everyone knows, the bank account – in the jargon of the German merchants, “the man is good,” i.e. they can pay. What however the reasons of state of the almighty economy so cynically confesses, reaches unacknowledged into the mode of conduct of individuals. The generosity in private intercourse, which the rich can presumably allow themselves, the reflected glow of happiness, which rests on them, and something of this falls on everyone who they consort with, all this veils them. They remain nice, “the right people” [in English in original], the better types, the good. Wealth distances itself from immediate injustice. The guard beats strikers with a billy club, the son of the factory-owner may occasionally drink a whisky with the progressive author. According to all desiderata of private ethics [*Moral*], even the most advanced kind, the rich could, if they only could, in fact always better be than the poor. This possibility, while truly indeed left unused, plays its role in the ideology of those who do not have it: even the convicted con artist, who may anyway be preferable to the legitimate boss of the trusts, is famous for having such a beautiful house, and the highly paid executive turns into a warm human being, the moment they serve an opulent dinner. Today’s barbaric religion of success is accordingly not simply counter-ethical [*widermoralisch*], rather it is the home-coming of the West to the venerable morals [*Sitten*] of the fathers. Even the norms, which condemn the arrangement of the world, owe their existence to the latter’s own mischief [*Unwesen*]. All ethics [*Moral*] is formed on the model of what is unethical [*Unmoral*], and to this day reproduces the latter at every stage. Slave-ethics [*Sklavenmoral*] is in fact bad: it is still only master-ethics [*Herrenmoral*].

Knight of the rose. [Opera by Richard Strauss] – Elegant people are attractive due to the expectation that they are free in private from the greed for the advantages, which flow to them from their position, and from the stubborn prejudice in the closest relationships, which is caused by the narrowness of these last. One has confidence in their pleasure of adventure in thought, sovereignty *vis-à-vis* the state of their own interests, and refinement of forms of reaction, thinking that their sensitivity would turn at least in Spirit [*Geist*] against the brutality on which their privilege depends, while the victims scarcely have the possibility to recognize what makes them such. If however the separation of production and the private-sphere ultimately proves to be a piece of necessary social appearance [*Scheins*], then this expectation of unbound spirituality must be disappointed. Even the most subtle snobbery has nothing of *dégoût* [French: disgust] *vis-à-vis* its objective prerequisite, but rather seals itself off from its cognition. It is an open question as to what extent the French aristocracy of the 18th century took part, playfully-suicidally, in the enlightenment and the preparation for the revolution, a participation which the antipathy against the terrorists of virtue was so glad to imagine. The bourgeoisie in any case has kept itself free in its later phase from such inclinations. No-one dances anymore on the volcano, otherwise they would be declassified. Subjectively, too, the “society” [in English in original] is so thoroughly stamped by the economic principle, whose manner of rationality concerns the whole, that the emancipation from interests – even merely as intellectual luxury – is forbidden. Just as they are not capable of enjoying their immeasurably expanded wealth, they are equally incapable of thinking against themselves. The search for frivolity is in vain. What helps to eternalize the real distinction between the upper and lower strata, is the fact that the distinction between the modes of consciousness, both here and there, is vanishing more and more. The poor

are prevented from thinking by the discipline of others, the rich from that of their own. The consciousness of the rulers is inscribing in all Spirit [*Geist*], what previously religion endured. Culture turns for the high bourgeoisie into an element of representation. That one is clever or educated, is ranked under the qualities which make one worthy of invitation or marriage, like horse-riding skills, love of nature, charm or a faultlessly tailored suit. They are not curious about cognition. Free of cares, they mostly busy themselves with mundane details, just like the small bourgeoisie. They furnish houses, throw parties, make hotel and airplane reservations with virtuosity. Otherwise they nourish themselves on the refuse of European irrationalism. They bluntly justify their own hostility to the intellect [*Geistfeindschaft*], already suspecting – and not unjustly – something subversive in thinking itself, in the independence from anything which is already given or already existing. Just as in Nietzsche's time, when educated philistines believed in progress, the uniformly higher development of the masses and the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number, so too do they believe today, without quite knowing it, in the opposite: the revocation of 1789, the incorrigibility of human nature, the anthropological impossibility of happiness – actually only that things are all too good for the workers. The profundity of yesteryear has recoiled into the most extreme banality. Of Nietzsche and Bergson, the last canonized philosophers, nothing remains but the murkiest anti-intellectualism in the name of the nature, which its apologists mutilate. "Nothing is more annoying to me about the Third Reich," said in 1933 the Jewish woman of a general director, who was later murdered in Poland, "than the fact that we can no longer use the word earthly, because the Nazis have impounded it," and even after the downfall of the Fascists, the attractive Austrian lady of a wealthy house, on meeting a labor union leader at a cocktail party with a reputation as a radical, knew no better way to express her enthusiasm for his personality than the bestial expression: "and moreover he is totally unintellectual,

totally unintellectual.” I remember my own shock, when an aristocratic girl of shadowy origins, who could barely speak German to me with a thick foreign accent, expressed her sympathy for Hitler, with whose picture her own seemed incompatible. At that time I thought, sheer idiocy prevents her from seeing who she is. But she was more clever than I, for what she represented, no longer existed, and by cancelling out her individual determination, her class consciousness helped her being-in-herself, her social character, to break through. Those at the top are integrating with such iron force, that the possibility of subjective deviation falls away and nowhere can difference be sought anymore than in the distinguished cut of an evening gown.

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Requiem for Odette. [female character in Proust’s *Swann’s Way*] – The Anglomania of the upper classes of continental Europe is based on the fact that feudal practices are ritualized on the British isle, which are supposed to suffice in themselves. Culture is maintained there not as the divided sphere of objective Spirit [*Geistes*], as participation in art or philosophy, but rather as a form of empirical existence. The “high life” [in English in original] wishes to be the beautiful life. It brings those, who partake in it, ideological pleasure-winnings. By turning the shaping of existence into a task, in which one follows guidelines, preserves artificial styles, and keeps the delicate equilibrium of correctness and independence, existence itself appears as meaningful and calms the bad conscience of those who are socially superfluous. The incessant demand, to say and do that which is exactly appropriate to one’s status and situation, demands a kind of moral effort. It becomes difficult, to be who you are, and this is believed to be sufficient for the patriarchal noblesse oblige [French: obligation of the high-born]. At the same time the displacement of culture from its objective manifestations into the immediate life dissolves the risk that one’s own immediacy will be shaken by the Spirit [*Geist*]. This last is

reproached for disturbing assured styles, for being tasteless, although not with the embarrassing brutality of the East Prussian Junker, but rather according to a spiritual criterion, as it were – the aestheticization of everyday life. This gives rise to the flattering illusion, that one has been spared the split between superstructure and infrastructure, culture and corporeal reality. But rituals fall, in all their aristocratic trappings, into the late bourgeois habit of hypostatizing the attainment of something meaningless in itself as meaningful, degrading the Spirit [*Geist*] to the doubling of that which exists anyway. The norm which one follows is fictive, its social prerequisites have vanished along with its model, the court ceremony, and it is acknowledged not because it is experienced as binding, but for the sake of legitimating the social order, from whose illegitimacy one benefits. Proust thus observed, with the incorruptibility of someone susceptible to seduction, that Anglomania and the cult of a form-driven mode of living are to be found less in aristocrats than in those who wish to ascend into the heights: it is only a step from snob to parvenu. Thus the affinity of snobbery and Jugendstil [Art Nouveau], the attempt by a class defined by exchange, to project themselves into a picture of vegetable beauty, as it were, purified of exchange. That the life which organizes its own events is not any more of a life, becomes apparent in the boredom of the cocktail parties and the weekend invitations to the countryside, in the golf, symbolic of the entire sphere, and in the organization of “social affairs” [in English in original] – privileges, where no-one has any real fun and with which the privileged only deceive themselves, about how little opportunity for joy in the unhappy whole exists even for them. In the latest phase, the beautiful life is reduced to what Veblen characterized it as throughout the ages, ostentation, the mere being-selected, and the park offers no other pleasure anymore than that of the wall, against which those outside can press their noses. What can be crassly observed in the upper classes, whose malice is in any case being

irresistibly democratized, is what has long been true for society: life has turned into the ideology of its own absence.

122

Monograms. – *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo* [I hate the vulgar rabble and shun it], said the son of the freed slave.

When it comes to truly evil people, one cannot really imagine them dying. To say “we” and to mean “I” is one of the choicest of all slights. Between “I dreamt” [*es träumte mir*] and “I dreamed” [*ich träumte*] lie ages of the world. But which is truer? So little do spirits send dreams, so little is it the ego which dreams. Before the eighty-fifth birthday of an in all respects well cared-for man, I dreamed that I asked myself the question, what could I give him which would make him truly happy, and immediately received the answer: a guide through the realm of the dead. That Leporello complained about insufficient provisions and too little money, is a reason to doubt the existence of Don Juan. In early childhood I saw the first snow-shovelers in thin shabby clothes. In answer to my question: those are men without work, who were given this job so they can earn their bread. Serves them right, that they have to shovel snow, I cried out angrily, bursting into uncontrollable tears. Love is the ability, to perceive what is similar in what is dissimilar. Parisian circus advertisement before WW II: *Plus sport que le théâtre, plus vivant que le cinéma* [French: more sporting than the theater, more living than the cinema]. A film which followed the code of the Hays Office to the strictest letter might succeed in being a great work of art, but not in a world in which a Hays Office exists. Verlaine: the pardonable unpardonable sin [literally: the venial mortal sin]. *Brideshead Revisited* by Evelyn Waugh: socialized snobbism. Zille gives misery a slap on the butt. Scheler: the bedroom in philosophy [in French in original]. A poem of Liliencron describes a military fanfare. First it goes: “And around the corner crashing brays, like thumping tubas

on Judgment Day,” and it closes: “Did a bright butterfly dart / ching-ching boom, around the corner?” A poetic philosophy of history of violence, with Judgment Day at the beginning and the butterfly at the end. In Trakl’s *Along* there is the verse: “Say how long we have been dead”; in Däubler’s *Golden Sonnet*: “How true, that we have all long since died.” The unity of expressionism consisted of expressing the fact that the human beings into which life has withdrawn, wholly alienated from each other, are turned thereby into the dead. Among the forms which Borchardt tested, there is no lack of reworkings of folk songs. He avoided saying “In peoples’ tone,” and wrote instead: “In the tone of the people.” This sounds however just like “in the name of the law.” The restorative poet recoils into the Prussian police officer. Not the least of the tasks which stands before thought, is putting all the reactionary arguments against Western culture into the service of advancing enlightenment. The only true thoughts are those, which do not understand themselves. When the little old woman dragged wood to the stack of kindling, Hus called: *sancta simplicitas* [Latin: oh holy simplicity]. But what about the reason for his sacrifice, the Last Supper in both its forms? Every reflection seems naive beside the higher one, and nothing is simple, because everything becomes simple in the disconsolate flight-path of forgetting. You are loved, solely where you may show yourself as weak, without provoking strength.

123

The bad comrade. – Actually I should have been able to deduce Fascism from the memory of my childhood. It sent its emissaries there in advance, like a conqueror into the most distant province, long before it arrived: my school comrades. If the bourgeois class harbored since time immemorial the dream of the wild popular community, the oppression of all by all, then children with first names like Horst and Jürgen and last names like Bergenroth, Bojunga and Eckhardt, theatrically staged the dream, before the adults were historically ripe enough to realize it. I felt the violence of

the image of horror they were striving for so clearly, that all happiness afterwards seemed to be revocable and borrowed. The outbreak of the Third Reich did indeed surprise my political judgment, yet not my fearful premonitions. So closely had all the motifs of the permanent catastrophe brushed against me, so inextinguishably were the warning signs of the German awakening burned into me, that I recognized each one all over again in the features of the Hitler dictatorship: and often it appeared to my foolish horror, as if the total state had been invented solely against me, in order to inflict on me what I had been hitherto spared in my childhood, that state's prehistory. The five patriots who attacked a single schoolmate, beat him up and, when he complained to the teacher, defamed him as a classroom snitch – aren't they the same ones, who tortured prisoners, in order to prove the foreigners wrong, who said that torture was occurring? Whose hullaboo knew no end, when the smartest student made a mistake – didn't they surround the Jewish camp prisoner, grinning and embarrassed, making fun of him, after he all too clumsily sought to hang himself? Who couldn't write a single decent sentence, but found every one of mine too long – didn't they abolish German literature and replace it through their scribing [*Schrifttum*]? Many covered their chests with mysterious insignia and wanted to become naval officers in a landlocked country: they declared themselves leaders of storm troopers and detachments, the legitimizers of illegitimation. The involuted intelligent ones, who had as little success in class as the gifted tinkerer without connections under liberalism; who for that reason curried favor with their parents with woodsaw work, or indeed drew for their own pleasure on drawing-boards with colored inks during long afternoon days, helped the Third Reich to its cruel efficiency and are being betrayed once again. Those however who always defiantly stirred up trouble against the teacher and, as one called it, disturbed the lesson, the day – indeed, the hour – they graduated from high school, they sat down with the same teachers at the same table with the same beer, as a confederation of men, who were

born followers, rebels, whose impatient blows of the fist on the table already drummed the worship of the masters. They need only stay put, to catch up with those who were promoted to the next class, and revenge themselves on them. Since they, officials and candidates for death sentences, have stepped visibly out of my dreams and have expropriated my past life and my language, I don't need to dream of them any longer. In Fascism, the nightmare of childhood has realized itself.

[written in] 1935

124

Puzzle-picture. – Why, in spite of a historical development which has driven towards oligarchy, workers are ever less able to know that they are such, can be gleaned from many observations. While the relationship of property-owners and producers is objectively congealing ever more rigidly, subjective class-membership is fluctuating more and more. This is abetted by economic development itself. The organic composition of capital demands, as has often been noted, control by technical managers rather than factory owners. These latter were the counter-party, as it were, to living labor, the former corresponded to the share of machinery in capital. The quantification of technical processes, however, its compartmentalization in the smallest operations, for the most part independent of experience and education, turns the expert status of the new-styled directors to a considerable extent into a mere illusion, behind which is concealed the privilege of being appointed. That technical development has reached a state, that all functions would actually be accessible to all – this immanent-socialistic element of progress is travestied by late industrialism. Membership in an elite appears achievable for everyone. One waits only for the cooptation. Eligibility consists in affinity, ranging from the libidinous cathexis of all wheeling and dealing, to sound technocratic sensibility, to freshly-cured *realpolitik*. They are

experts only of control. That anyone can do such, has not led to its end, but only that everyone may be called upon to do such. Preference is given to those who fit in most exactly. While the chosen ones certainly remain a vanishing minority, the structural possibility suffices to successfully preserve the appearance [*Schein*] of an equal chance under the system, which has eliminated the free competition which lived on that appearance [*Schein*]. That the technical forces would permit a non-privileged condition, is credited by all, even those in the shadows, to the social relationships, which hinder it. In general, subjective class-membership today shows a mobility, which causes the fixity of economic social order to be forgotten: what is rigid is also what can be moved about. Even the powerlessness of the individual, to calculate out its economic destiny, contributes to such a consoling mobility. What decides on the fall is not lack of proficiency, but an opaque hierarchal web, in which no-one, not even at the very top, may feel safe: the egalitarianism of the condition of being threatened. When the heroic flying captain returns home, in the most successful blockbuster film of the year, to be bullied by petit bourgeois caricatures as a “soda jerk” [in English in original], he does not only satisfy the schadenfreude of the spectators, but even strengthens them moreover in the consciousness, that all human beings are truly brothers [reference to the 1946 *The Best Years of Our Lives*]. The most extreme injustice turns into the deceptive image of justice, the disqualification of human beings into their equality. Sociologists however are confronted with the grimly joking question: where is the proletariat?

125

Olet. [Latin: *pecunia non olet*, “money does not stink”]- In Europe, the pre-bourgeois past has survived in the shame of having personal services or favors paid for. The new continent knows nothing of this anymore. Even in the old one, no-one did anything for nothing, but this was felt as a wound. To be sure, exclusiveness, which stems from nothing better than a

ground-monopoly, is ideology. But it was nevertheless imprinted deeply enough into the character, to stiffen its neck against the market. The German ruling class disparaged any way of earning money outside of privileges or control of production well into the 20th century. What was considered disreputable about artists or the educated, was what these latter most rebelled against, remuneration, and the private tutor Hölderlin as well as the pianist Liszt, had therein precisely those experiences, which set them in opposition to the ruling consciousness. Well into our day, the membership of human beings in the upper or lower classes has been crudely determined by whether they took money or not. At times the bad arrogance recoiled into conscious critique. Every child of the European upper crust blushed at the gifts of money, which relatives gave them, and although the primacy of bourgeois utility quelled such reactions and overcompensated for them, doubts remained nonetheless as to whether human beings were made merely for exchange. The remnants of what was older were, in the European consciousness, the ferment of what was new. In America by contrast no child of similarly well-off parents has any qualms about earning a few cents through newspaper deliveries, and such thoughtlessness is expressed in the habitus of adults. That is why Americans appear to untutored Europeans on the whole as a people without dignity, ready for paid services, just as conversely the former are inclined to consider the latter vagabonds and cardboard royalty. The self-evidence of the maxim, that there's no shame in working, the guileless absence of any snobbery *vis-à-vis* what in the feudal sense is dishonorable in market relationships, the democracy of the principle of commerce contributes to the continuation of what is utterly anti-democratic, of economic injustice, of human degradation. It occurs to no-one, that there might be certain services which would not be expressible in exchange-value. That is the real prerequisite for the triumph of that subjective reason, which is not even capable of thinking something which is true and obligated to itself, perceiving it solely as something which exists for

others, something exchangeable. If pride was the ideology over there [i.e. Europe], here it is delivering to customers. This applies as well to the creations of the objective Spirit [*Geistes*]. The immediate self-advantage inherent in the act of exchange, thus what is subjectively most limited, prohibits the subjective expression. Valorizability [*Verwertbarkeit*], the a priori of production consistently oriented to the market, does not permit the spontaneous need for such, for the thing itself, to arise. Even the cultural products produced and distributed throughout the world with the greatest of expenditures, repeat the gestures – even if only by virtue of an opaque machinery – of traveling musicians, who keep an eye peeled on the plate by the piano, while hammering out the favorite melodies of their patrons. The budgets of the culture industry run into the billions, but the law of form of their productions is the tip. What is excessively blank, hygienically clean in industrialized culture, is the sole rudiment of that shame, an adjutory picture, comparable to the suits of the highest hotel managers, who, in order not to look like head waiters, outclass the aristocrats in elegance and thereby make themselves recognizable as head waiters.

126

I.Q. – The modes of conduct appropriate to the most progressive technical state of development are not limited to the sectors, in which they are actually promoted. Thus thinking submits to the social supervision of its services not only where it is forced to do so by its occupation, but comes to resembles such in its entire complexion. Because thought has been well-nigh inverted into the solution of tasks assigned to it, what is not assigned is also dealt with according to the schema of the task. Thought, having lost its autonomy, no longer trusts itself to comprehend something real for its own sake, in freedom. This it leaves, with respectful illusion, to the highest-paid, and makes itself measurable for this. It tends to behave, for its own part, as if it had to unceasingly portray its usefulness. Even

where there is no nutshell to crack, thinking turns into training [in English in original] for some sort of exercise or other. It relates to its objects as mere hurdles, as a permanent test of its own being in form. Considerations, which would like to be responsible for the relation to the material [*Sache*] and thereby for themselves, invite the suspicion that they are vain, overblown, asocial self-satisfaction. Just as the neo-positivists split cognition into the scrap-heaps of empiricism and logical formalism, the intellectual activity of the types, who regard the unity of the sciences as written on their foreheads, is polarized in the inventory of the known and the test sample of the capacity for thought: to them, every thought turns into a quiz of whether they are informed or of their qualifications. Somewhere the correct answers must already be posted. Instrumentalism, the latest version of pragmatism, has long since become not merely an affair of the application of thinking, but rather the a priori of its own form. When oppositional intellectuals caught in such a spell wish to approach the content of society differently, they are crippled by the shape of their own consciousness, which is modeled in advance on the needs of this society. While their thought has forgotten how to think for itself, it has simultaneously turned into the absolute exam-authority of itself. Thinking means nothing other than checking at every moment, as to whether one can think. Thus the asphyxiating quality of every seemingly independent intellectual production, the theoretical ones no less than the artistic ones. The socialization of the Spirit [*Geistes*] holds it, roofed over, ensorcelled, under a glass, as long as society is itself trapped. Where thinking previously internalized obligations imposed from outside, today it today incorporates its integration into the all-embracing apparatus, and goes to pieces, even before its economic and political verdict can overtake it.

127

Wishful thinking. [In English in original] – Intelligence is a moral category. The separation of feeling and understanding, which makes it

possible to say, free and blessed are the knuckleheads, hypostatizes the historically achieved splintering of human beings into functions. The praise of simplicity [*Einfalt*] resonates with the anxiety that whatever has been separated might reunite and thus put an end to the mischief. “If you have understanding and a heart,” goes a couplet by Hölderlin, “show only one of each / Both condemn you, if you display them together.” [from Hölderlin’s poem *Good Advice*] The denigration of restricted understanding in comparison with infinite reason which echoes in philosophy, a reason which, as infinite, is at the same time undiscoverable by the ultimately finite subject, echoes in spite of its critical justification the old saw: “Be ever true and faithful” [quotation from Mozart song]. When Hegel demonstrated to reason its stupidity, he not only brought the isolated determination of reflection, the positivism of every name, to its measure of untruth, but became complicit in the ban on thought, severing the negative labor of the concept, which the method claimed to achieve, and swears by the highest height of speculation like the Protestant priest, who recommended to his flock to remain one, instead of relying on their own weak light. Rather, it is up to philosophy to seek out the unity between feeling and understanding precisely in their contrast: in the moral unity. Intelligence, as the power of judgment, opposes in its carrying out what is already given, by simultaneously expressing it. The capacity of judgment, which seals itself off from the drive-impulse, does justice to this last precisely by a moment of counter-pressure against the social one. The power of judgment is measured by the staunchness of the ego. Thereby, however, also in that dynamics of the drives, which is handed over by the division of labor of the soul to the feelings. Instinct, the will to stand fast, is an implication of the meaning of logic. By forgetting itself, showing itself incorruptible, the judging subject wins its victory. By contrast, just as the narrowest circle of human beings dumb themselves down, where their interests begin, and then turn their resentment against what they do not wish to understand, precisely because they could

understand it all too well, so too is the planetary stupidity, which prevents the contemporary world from seeing the absurdity of its own arrangement, the product of the unsublimated, unsublated interest of the rulers. Short-term and yet irresistible, it hardens itself into the anonymous schemata of the historical trajectory. This corresponds to the stupidity and obstinacy of the individual; the incapacity, to consciously unite the power of bias and bustle. It is regularly found in conjunction with moral defects, a lack of autonomy and responsibility, while so much is true in Socratic rationalism, that a clever person, whose thoughts are directed at objects and do not circle formalistically around themselves, can scarcely be conceived of as evil. For the motivation of evil, blind prejudice in the contingency of what is one's own, tends to dissipate in the medium of thought. Scheler's comment, that all cognition is founded in love, was a lie, because he demanded that love be something immediately viewed. But it would become the truth, if love pressed for the dissolution of all appearance [*Scheins*] of immediacy and thereby, to be sure, became irreconcilable with the object of cognition. Neither the synthesis of psychic compartments, alienated from each other, nor the therapeutic displacement of the ratio with irrational ferments, is any help against the splitting of thought, but rather the self-constitution of the element of the wish, which antithetically constitutes thinking as thinking. Only when that element is completely dissolved, without any heteronomous remnant in the objectivity of thought, does it drive towards utopia.

128

Regressions. – My earliest memory of Brahms, and certain not only mine, is *Cradle Song*. A complete misunderstanding of the text: I didn't know that Nägelein [flowers] was a word for lilacs or in many districts for pink flowers, but imagined the word meant little nail, the numerous pins by which the curtain around the heavenly bed, my own, was fastened, so that the child, protected in its darkness from every trace of light, could sleep

endlessly long, without fear – “until the cows come home,” as they say in Hessen. How distant the blossoms remain from the tenderness of such curtains. For us, nothing stands for undiminished brightness other than the unconscious dark; nothing for what we once could be, other than the dream, that we had never been born.

“Sleep in peace, sleep / close your little eyes so sweet / listen to the rainfall drip / hear the neighbors’ doggy yip / Doggy bit the beggar man / tore a hole in his pants / past the gate, the beggar flees / sleep in peace, sleep.” The first line of Taubert’s lullaby is terrifying. And yet both its final lines bless sleep with the promise of peace. This is not entirely due to bourgeois hardness, the comforting thought, that the intruder was scared off. The sleepily listening child has already half-forgotten the exile of the foreigner, who looks in Schott’s song book like a Jew, and intuits in the verse “past the gate, the beggar flees” peace without the misery of others. So long as there is even a single beggar, goes a fragment in Benjamin, there is mythos; only with the disappearance of the latter would mythos be reconciled. Would not violence itself be forgotten as in the onrushing wave of the child’s sleep? Would not in the end the disappearance of the beggar nevertheless entirely compensate, for what was done to him and which could not be compensated for? Doesn’t there lurk in all persecution by human beings, who, along with the little dog, incite the whole of nature against the weak, the hope that the last trace of persecution would be extirpated, which is itself the share of what is natural? Would not the beggar, who is forced out of the gates of civilization, find refuge in his homeland, which is emancipated from the bane [Bann] of the Earth? “Now rest and let your worries pass, the beggar comes home at last.” For as long as I can think, I’ve been happy with the song, “Between mountain and deep, deep valley”: by the two rabbits who were stuffing themselves with grass, who were shot at by hunters, and upon realizing they were still alive, ran off. But I only understood the lesson quite late: reason can

endure only in despair and crisis; it requires the absurd, in order to not be overcome by objective madness. One should act exactly like the rabbits; when the shot rings out, fall foolishly to the ground as if dead, collect oneself and one's senses, and if one still has any breath, run like blazes. The energy to fear and that for happiness are the same, the limitless state of open-mindedness for experience, raised to self-sacrifice, in which the one who is overcome can find themselves again. What would any happiness be, which did not measure itself according to the immeasurable sorrow of what is? For the course of the world is deeply unsettled. Whoever cautiously adapts to it, partakes of its madness, while only the eccentric holds fast and commands the absurdity to halt. Only the latter may navigate the appearance [*Schein*] of calamity, the "unreality of despair," and innervate from this, not merely that one still lives, but that there is still life. The cunning of the powerless hares redeems, along with themselves, even the hunters, whose guilt they pilfer.

129

Customer service. – The culture industry sanctimoniously claims to follow its consumers and to deliver what they want. But while it reflexively denigrates every thought of its own autonomy and proclaims its victims as judges, its veiled high-handedness outbids all the excesses of autonomous art. It is not so much that the culture industry adapts to the reactions of its customers, as that it feigns these latter. It rehearses them, by behaving as if it itself was a customer. One could almost suspect, the entire "adjustment" [in English in original], which it claims to obey, is ideology; that the more human beings try, through exaggerated equality, through the oath of fealty to social powerlessness, to participate in power and to drive out equality, the more they attempt to make themselves resemble others and the whole. "The music listens for the listeners," and the film practices on the scale of a trust the despicable trick of adults, who, when speaking down to a child, fall over the gift with the language

which suits only them, and then present the usually dubious gift with precisely the expression of lip-smacking joy, that is supposed to be elicited. The culture industry is tailored according to mimetic regression, to the manipulation of suppressed imitation-impulses. Therein it avails itself of the method, of anticipating its own imitation by its viewers, and sealing the consensus that it wishes to establish, by making it appear as if it already existed. What makes this all the easier, is that it can count on such a consensus in a stable system and can ritually repeat it, rather than actually having to produce it. Its product is by no means a stimulus, but a model for modes of reaction of nonexistent stimuli. Thus the enthusiastic music titles on the silver screen, the moronic children's speech, the eye-winking folksiness; even the close-up of the start calls out "How beautiful!," as it were. With this procedure the cultural machine goes so far as to dress down viewers like the frontally photographed express train in a moment of tension. The cadence of every film however is that of the witch, who serves soup to the little ones she wants to ensorcel or devour, with the hideous murmur, "Yummy soup, yummy soup? You'll enjoy it, you'll enjoy it..." In art, this kitchen fire-magic was discovered by Wagner, whose linguistic intimacies and musical spices are always tasting themselves, and who simultaneously demonstrated the entire procedure, with the genius' compulsion of confession, in the scene of the *Ring*, where Mime offers Siegfried the poisoned potion. Who however is supposed to chop off the monster's head, now that its blond locks have lain for a long time under the linden tree? [Unter den Linden: famous boulevard in Berlin]

130

Grey and grey. – Not even its bad conscience can help the culture industry. Its Spirit [*Geist*] is so objective, that it slaps all its subjects in the face, and so the latter, agents all, know what the story is and seek to distance themselves through mental reservations from the nonsense which

they create. The acknowledgment, that films broadcast ideology, is itself a broadcast ideology. It is dealt with administratively by the rigid distinction between synthetic day-dreams on the one hand, vehicles of flight from daily life, “escape” [English in original]; and well-meaning products on the other hand, which promote correct social behaviors, providing information, “conveying a message” [in English in original]. The prompt subsumption under “escape” [in English in original] and “message” [in English in original] expresses the untruth of both types. The mockery against “escape” [in English in original], the standardized outrage against superficiality, is nothing but the pathetic echo of the old-fashioned ethos, which denounces gambling, because it cannot play along with such in the prevailing praxis. The escape-films are so dreadful not because they turn their back on an existence squeezed dry, but because they do not do so energetically enough, because they are squeezed just as dry, because the satisfactions which they pretend to give, converge with the humiliation of reality, with renunciation. The dreams have no dream. Just as the technicolor heroes don’t allow us to forget for a second that they are normal human beings, typecast prominent faces and investments, what is unmistakably revealed under the thin flutter of schematically produced fantasy is the skeleton of cinema-ontology, the entire prescribed hierarchy of values, the canon of what is unwanted and what is to be imitated. Nothing is more practical than “escape” [in English in original], nothing is more wedded to bustle: one is kidnapped into the distance only to have it hammered into one’s consciousness, that even at a distance, the laws of the empirical mode of life are undisturbed by empirical deviations. The “escape” [in English in original] is full of “message” [in English in original]. That is how the “message” [in English in original], the opposite, looks, which wishes to flee from flight. It reifies the resistance against reification. One need only hear experts talk about how a splendid work of the silver screen has, next to other merits, also a constitution, in the same tone of voice that a pretty actress is described as even having

“personality” [in English in original]. The executive can easily decide at the conference, that the escape-film must be given, next to more expensive additions, an ideal such as: human beings should be noble, helpful and good. Separated from the immanent logic of the entity, from the thing, the ideal turns into something produced on tap, the reform of ameliorable grievances, transfigured charity, thereby simultaneously tangible and void. They prefer most of all to broadcast the rehabilitation of drunks, whose impoverished euphoria they envy. By representing a society hardened in itself, according to anonymous laws, as if good will alone were enough to help matters, that society is defended even where it is honestly attacked. What is reflected is a kind of popular front of all proper and right-thinking people. The practical Spirit [*Geist*] of the “message” [in English in original], the tangible demonstration of how things can be done better, allies itself with the system in the fiction, that a total social subject, which does not exist at present, can make everything okay, if one could only assemble all the pieces and clear up the root of the evil. It is quite pleasant, to be able to vouch for one’s efficiency. “Message” [in English in original] turns into “escape” [in English in original]: those swept up in cleaning the house in which they live, forget the ground on which it was built. What “escape” [in English in original] would really be, the antipathy, turned into a picture, against the whole, all the way into what is formally constituted, could recoil into a “message” [in English in original], without expressing it, indeed precisely through tenacious asceticism against the suggestion.

131

Wolf as grandmother. – The strongest argument of the apologists for film is the crudest, its massive consumption. They declare the drastic medium of the culture industry to be popular art. The independence of norms of the autonomous work is supposed to discharge it from aesthetic responsibility, a responsibility whose standards prove to be reactionary in

relation to film, just as in fact all intentions of the artistic ennoblement of film have something awry, something badly elevated, something lacking in form – something of the import for the connoisseur. The more that film pretends to be art, the more fraudulent it becomes. Its protagonists can point to this and even, as critics of the meanwhile kitschy interiority, appear avant-garde next to its crude material kitsch. If one grants this as a ground, then they become, strengthened by technical experience and facility with the material, nearly irresistible. The film is not a mass art, but is merely manipulated for the deception of the masses? But the wishes of the masses make themselves felt incessantly through the market; its collective production alone would guarantee its collective essence [*Wesen*]; only someone completely outside of reality would presume to see clever manipulators in the producers; most are talentless, certainly, but where the right talents coincide, it can succeed in spite of all the restrictions of the system. The mass taste which the film obeys, is by no means that of the masses themselves, but foisted on them? But to speak of a different mass taste than the one they have now, would be foolish, and what is called popular art, has always reflected domination. According to such logic, it is only in the competent adaptation of production to given needs, not in consideration of a utopian audience, that the nameless general will can take shape. Films are full of lying stereotypes? But stereotyping is the essence of popular art, fairy-tales know the rescuing prince and the devil just as films have the hero and villain, and even the barbaric cruelty, which divided the world into good and evil, is something film has in common with the greatest fairy-tales, which have the stepmother dance to death in red-hot iron shoes.

All this is can be countered, only by consideration of the fundamental concepts presupposed by the apologists. Bad films are not to be charged with incompetence: the most gifted are refracted by the bustle, and the fact that the ungifted stream towards them, is due to the elective affinity

between lies and swindlers. The idiocy is objective; improvements in personnel could not create a popular art. The latter's idea was formed in agrarian relationships or simple commodity economies. Such relationships and their character of expression are those of lords and serfs, profiteers and disadvantaged, but in an immediate, not entirely objectified form. They are to be sure not less furrowed by class differences than late industrial society, but their members are not yet encompassed by the total structure, which reduces individual subjects to mere moments, in order to unite them, as those who are powerless and isolated, into the collective. That there are no longer folk does not however mean that, as Romanticism propagated, the masses are worse. On the contrary, what is revealed precisely now in the new, radical alienated form of society is the untruth of the older one. Even the traits, which the culture industry reclaims as the legacy of popular art, become thereby suspect. The film has a retroactive energy: its optimistic horror brings to light what always served injustice in the fairy-tale, and evokes in the parade of villains the countenances of those, which the integral society condemns and whose condemnation was ever the dream of socialization. That is why the extinction of individual art is no justification for one which acts as if it its subject, which reacts archaically, were the natural one, while this last is the syndicate, albeit unconscious, of a pair of giant firms. If the masses themselves, as customers, have an influence on the film, this remains as abstract as the ticket stub, which steps into the place of nuanced applause: the mere choice between yes and no to something offered, strung between the discrepancy of concentrated power and scattered powerlessness. Finally, the fact that numerous experts, also simple technicians, participate in the making of a film, no more guarantees its humanity than the decisions of competent scientific bodies *vis-à-vis* bombs and poison gas. The high-flown talk of film art stands indeed to benefit scribblers, who wish to get ahead; the conscious appeal to *naïveté*, however, to the block-headedness of the subalterns, long since permeated by the thoughts of the master, will

not do. Film, which today clings as unavoidably to human beings, as if it was a piece of themselves, is simultaneously that which is most distant from their human determination, which is realized from one day to the next, and its apologetics live on the resistance against thinking through this antinomy. That the people who make films are by no means intriguers, says nothing against this. The objective Spirit [*Geist*] of manipulation prevails through rules of experience, estimations of situations, technical criteria, economically unavoidable calculations, the entire deadweight of the industrial apparatus, without even having to censor itself, and even those who questioned the masses, would find the ubiquity of the system reflected back at them. The producers function as little as subjects as their workers and buyers, but solely as parts of an independent machinery. The Hegelian-sounding commandment, however, that mass art must respect the real taste of the masses and not that of negativistic intellectuals, is usurpation. The opposition of film, as an all-encompassing ideology, to the objective interests of human beings, its entanglement with the status quo of the profit-system, its bad conscience and deception can be succinctly cognized. No appeal to a factually accessible state of consciousness would have the right of veto against the insight, which reaches beyond this state of consciousness, by disclosing its contradiction to itself and to objective relationships. It is possible, that the Fascist professor was right and that even the folk songs, as they were, lived from the degraded cultural heritage of the upper class. It is not for nothing that all popular art is crumbly and, like films, not “organic.” But between the old injustice, in whose voice a lament is still audible, even where it transfigures itself, and the alienation which upholds itself as connectedness, which cunningly creates the appearance [*Schein*] of human intimacy with loudspeakers and advertising psychology, there is a distinction similar to the one between the mother, who soothes the child who is afraid of demons with a fairy-tale in which the good are rewarded and the evil are punished, and the cinema product, which drives the justice

of each world order into the eyes and ears of audiences of every land harshly, threateningly, in order to teach them anew, and more thoroughly, the old fear. The fairy-tale dreams which call so eagerly for the child in the adult, are nothing but regression, organized by total enlightenment, and where they tap the audience on the shoulder most intimately, they betray them most thoroughly. Immediacy, the community produced by films, is tantamount to the mediation without a remainder, which degrades human beings and everything human so completely to things, that their contrast to things, indeed even the bane [Bann] of reification itself, cannot be perceived anymore. Film has succeeded in transforming subjects into social functions so indiscriminately, that those who are entirely in its grasp, unaware of any conflicts, enjoy their own dehumanization as human, as the happiness of warmth. The total context of the culture industry, which leaves nothing out, is one with total social delusion. That is why it so easily dispatches counter-arguments.

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***Expensive reproduction.* [Piperdruck] –
Society is integral, before it ever
becomes ruled as totalitarian. Its
organization encompasses even those
who feud against it, and normalizes
their consciousness. Even intellectuals
who have all the political arguments
against bourgeois ideology handy, are
subjected to a process of
standardization which, whether in
crassly contrasting content or through**

the readiness on their part to be comfortable, brings them closer to the prevailing Spirit [*Geist*], such that their standpoint objectively becomes always more arbitrary, dependent on flimsy preferences or their estimation of their own chances. What appears to them as subjectively radical, objectively belongs through and through to the compartment of a schema, reserved for them and their kind, so that radicalism is degraded to abstract prestige, the legitimation of those who know what today's intellectuals should be for and against. The good things, for which they opt, have long since been acknowledged, their numbers accordingly limited, as fixed in the value-hierarchy as those in the student fraternities. While they denounce official kitsch, their sensibility is dependent, like obedient children, on nourishment already sought out in advance, on the clichés of hostility to clichés. The dwellings of young bohemians resemble their spiritual

household. On the wall, deceptively original color prints of famous artists, such as Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* or the *Café at Arles*, on the bookshelf derivative works on socialism and psychoanalysis and a little sex-research for the uninhibited with inhibitions. In addition, the Random House edition of Proust – Scott Moncrieff's translation deserved a better fate – exclusivity at reduced prices, whose exterior alone, the compact-economic form of the omnibus, is a mockery of the author, whose every sentence knocks a received opinion out of action, while he now plays, as a prize-winning homosexual, the same role with youth as books on animals of the forest and the North Pole expedition in the German home. Also, the record player with the Lincoln cantata of a brave soul, which deals essentially with railroad stations, next to the obligatory eye-catching folklore from Oklahoma and a pair of brassy jazz records, which make one feel

simultaneously collective, bold and comfortable. Every judgment is approved by friends, they know all the arguments in advance. That all cultural products, even the non-conformist ones, are incorporated into the mechanism of distribution of large-scale capital, that in the most developed lands a creation which does not bear the imprimatur of mass production can scarcely reach any readers, observers, or listeners, refuses the material in advance for the deviating longing. Even Kafka is turned into a piece of inventory in the rented apartment. Intellectuals themselves are already so firmly established, in their isolated spheres, in what is confirmed, that they can no longer desire anything which is not served to them under the brand of “highbrow” [in English in original]. Their sole ambition consists of finding their way in the accepted canon, of saying the right thing. The outsider status of the initiates is an illusion and mere waiting-time. It would be giving

them too much credit to call them renegades; they wear overlarge horn-rimmed glasses on their mediocre faces, solely to better pass themselves off as “brilliant” to themselves and to others in the general competition. They are already exactly like them. The subjective precondition of opposition, the non-normalized judgment, goes extinct, while its trappings continue to be carried out as a group ritual. Stalin need only clear his throat, and they throw Kafka and Van Gogh on the trash-heap.

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Contribution to intellectual history. – In the back of my copy of Zarathustra, dated 1910, there are publisher’s notices. They are all tailored to that clan of Nietzsche readers, as imagined by Alfred Körner in Leipzig, someone who ought to know. “*Ideal Life-goals* by Adalbert Svoboda. Svoboda has ignited a brightly shining beacon in his works, which cast light on all problems of the investigative Spirit of human beings [*Menschengeist*] and reveal before our eyes the true ideals of reason, art and culture. This magnificently conceived and splendidly realized book is gripping from beginning to end, enchanting, stimulating,

instructive and has the same effect on all truly free Spirits [Geister] as a nerve-steeling bath and fresh mountain air.” Signed: Humanity, and almost as recommendable as David Friedrich Strauss. “*On Zarathrustra* by Max Ernst. There are two Nietzsches. One is the world-famous fashionable philosopher, the dazzling poet and phenomenally gifted master of style, who is now the talk of all the world, from whose works a few misunderstood slogans have become the intellectual baggage of the educated. The other Nietzsche is the unfathomable, inexhaustible thinker and psychologist, the great discerner of human beings and valuer of life of unsurpassable spiritual energy and power of thought, to who the most distant future belongs. To bring this other Nietzsche to the most imaginative and serious-minded of contemporary human beings is the intent of the following two essays contained in this short book.” In that case I would still prefer the former. The other goes: “*A Philosopher and a Noble Human Being, a Contribution to the Characteristics of Friedrich Nietzsche*, by Meta von Salis-Marschlins. The book grabs out attention by the faithful reproduction of all the sensations which Nietzsche’s personality evoked in the self-conscious soul of a woman.” Don’t forget the whip, instructed Zarathrustra. Instead of this, is offered: “*The Philosophy of Joy* by Max Zerbst. Dr. Max Zerbst starts out from Nietzsche, but strives to overcome a certain one-sidedness in Nietzsche... The author is not given to cool abstractions, it is rather a hymn, a philosophical hymn to joy, which he delivers in spades.” Like a student spree. Only no one-sidedness. Better to run straight to the heaven of the atheists: “*The Four Gospels*, German, with introduction and commentary

by Dr. Heinrich Schmidt. In contrast to the corrupted, heavily edited form, in which the gospels have been delivered to us as literature, this new edition goes back to the source and may be of high value not only for truly religious human beings, but also for those ‘anti-Christ’, who press for social action.” The choice is difficult, but one can take comfort from the fact that both elites will be as agreeable as the synoptics: “*The Gospel of Modern Humanity (A Synthesis: Nietzsche and Christ)* by Carl Martin. An astounding treatise of edification. Everything which is taken up in the science and art of the present has taken up the struggle with the Spirits [Geistern] of the past, all of this has taken root and blossomed, in this mature and yet so young mind [Gemüt]. And mark well: this ‘modern’, entirely new human being creates for itself and us the most revivifying potion from an age-old spring: that other message of redemption, whose purest sounds resonate in the Sermon on the Mount... Even in the form of the simplicity and grandeur of those words!” Signed: Ethical Culture. The miracle passed away nearly forty years ago, plus twenty more or so, since the genius in Nietzsche justifiably decided to break off communication with the world. It didn’t help – exhilarated, unbelieving priests and exponents of that organized ethical culture, which later drove formerly well-to-do ladies to emigrate and get by as waitresses in New York, have thrived on the posthumous legacy of someone who once worried whether someone was listening to him sing “a secret barcarole.” Even then, the hope of leaving behind a message in a bottle amidst the rising tide of barbarism was a friendly vision: the desperate letters have been left in the mud of the age-

old spring, and have been reworked by a band of noble-minded people and other scoundrels to highly artistic but low-priced wall decorations. Only since then has the progress of communication truly gotten into gear. Who are we to cast aspersion on the freest spirits [*Geister*] of them all, whose trustworthiness possibly even outbids those of their contemporaries, if they no longer write for an imaginary posterity, but solely for the dead God?

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Juvenal's error. – It's difficult to write satire. It is not merely because of a condition, which needs the latter more than ever, which mocks all mockery. The means of irony have ended up in contradiction with the truth. Irony convicts the object, by taking it for what it claims to be, and without judgment, by blocking out, as it were, the reflecting subject, measuring it by its being-in-itself. It points out the negative by confronting the positive with its own claim to positivity. It sublates itself, as soon as it adds the interpreting word. It thus presupposes the idea of what is self-evident, originally of social resonance. Only where a compelling consensus of subjects is assumed, is subjective reflection, the fulfillment of the conceptual act, superfluous. Those who have laughter on their side, don't need proof. Historically, over the millennia, all the way to the age of Voltaire, satire has been happy to consort with those who are stronger and could be relied upon, with authority. Typically it agitated for older strata, threatened by the newer stages of the enlightenment, which sought to support their traditionalism with enlightened means: its immemorial object was the decline of morals [*Sitten*]. That

is why what once flashed like a rapier, appears to those born to later generations like a thick truncheon. The double-tongued spiritualization of the appearance [*Erscheinung*] always wishes to show the satirist as amusing, as the height of progress; the metric however is that which is endangered by progress, which remains nevertheless so widely disseminated as a valid ideology, that the phenomenon singled out for denunciation is dismissed, without even being granted a fair trial. The comedies of Aristophanes, in which obscene tales are supposed to expose fornication, functioned as the modernistic *laudatio temporis acti* [Latin: praise for times past] for the rabble, which it defamed. With the victory of the bourgeois class in the Christian era, the function of irony loosened up. It has at times run over to the side of the oppressed, especially where these latter were in truth no longer anything of the sort. Admittedly, as something imprisoned in its own form, it has an authoritarian legacy, which never totally divested itself of an unprotesting nastiness. Only with the decline of the bourgeoisie did it sublimate itself into the appeal of an idea of humanity, which no longer permitted any reconciliation with the existent and its consciousness. But even to these ideas, self-evidence was what counted: no doubt in the objective-immediate evidence arose; no witticism of Karl Kraus hesitates to decide who is responsible and who is a scoundrel, what is Spirit [*Geist*] and what is stupidity, what is language and what is a newspaper. The vehemence [*Gewalt*: violence, power] of his sayings is due to his quick-wittedness. Just as they stop at no question, in the lightning-quick consciousness of the matter-at-hand

[*Sachverhalts*], so too do they leave no question open. The more emphatically however the prose of Kraus posits its humanism as an invariant, the more it takes on restorative qualities. It condemns corruption and decadence, the literati and the Futurists, without having anything to commend itself over the zealots of the natural condition other than the cognition of their awfulness. That in the end the intransigence against Hitler showed itself to be yielding in the case of Schuschnigg, does not attest to a lack of courage, but the antinomy of satire. This latter needs something to hold on to, and he, who called himself the grouch [*Nörgler*], bent to its positivity. Even the denunciation of Schmock [stereotypical hack journalist] contains, beside its truth, its critical element, something of the “common sense” [in English in original], which cannot stand the fact that someone talks in such windy terms. The hatred of those who would like to seem more than what they are, holds them fast with the facts of their constitution. The incorruptibility *vis-à-vis* what is artificial, for the simultaneously unredeemed and commercially oriented pretension of the Spirit [*Geistes*], unmask those who failed to measure up to what stands before their eyes as something elevated. This elevation is power and success and stands revealed, through the botched identification, as itself a lie. But the *faiseur* [French: miracle-worker] always embodies at the same time utopia: even false jewels radiate with a powerless childhood dream, and this latter is condemned, because it failed, adducing itself, as it were, before the forum of success. All satire is blind to the forces, which are released during disassembly [*Zerfall*: disintegration]. That is why terminal decline has absorbed

the powers of satire. The scorn of the leaders of the Third Reich for emigres and liberal state officials was the latest version of this, a scorn whose power consisted solely in muscle-flexing. The impossibility of satire today is not to be blamed, as sentimentality would have it, on the relativism of values, on the absence of binding norms. Rather, consensus itself, the formal a priori of irony, has turned into the content-based universal consensus. As such, it would be the sole worthy object of irony and simultaneously pulls the rug from underneath it. Its medium, the difference between ideology and truth, has vanished. The former is resigned to the confirmation of reality through its mere duplication. Irony once expressed: this is what it claims to be, but that is what it is; today however the world alleges that things are just so, even in the radical lie, and that such a simple finding coincides with what is good. There is no crack in the sheer cliff of the existent, to which the grasp of the ironist may cling. Those who fall are regaled by the hellish laughter of the treacherous object, which disempowers them. The gesture of the non-conceptual “that’s that” is exactly the one which the world turns against each of its victims, and the transcendental consensus, which dwells in irony, becomes ludicrous before the real consensus of those which it should attack. Against the blood-drenched seriousness of the total society, which has absorbed its counter-authority as the helpless objection which irony formerly struck down, there stands solely blood-drenched seriousness, the understood truth.

Sacrificial lamb. – Dictating is not merely more comfortable, and is not merely a spur to the concentration, but has in addition an objective advantage. Dictation makes it possible for the author to slide into the position of the critic during the earliest phases of the production process. What one puts down is non-binding, provisional, mere material for reworking; once transcribed, however, it appears as something alienated and to a certain extent objective. One need not fear establishing anything, which ought not to remain, for one does not have to write: one takes responsibility by playing a practical joke on responsibility. The risk of formulation takes the harmless initial form of effortlessly presented memos, then work on something which already exists, so that one can no longer even perceive one's own temerity. In view of the difficulty, which has increased to desperate levels, of any theoretical expression, such tricks are a blessing. They are a technical means of assistance of dialectical procedure, which makes statements, in order to take them back and nevertheless hold them fast. Thanks however are due to those who take dictation, when they flush out the author at the right moment through contradiction, irony, nervousness, impatience and lack of respect. They draw rage to themselves. This rage is channeled from the storehouse of the bad conscience, with which authors otherwise mistrust their own texts and which the author would be that much more stubborn about leaving in the presumably holy text. The emotional affect, which ungratefully turns against the burdensome helper, benevolently purifies the relation to the matter [*Sache*].

Exhibitionist. [in English in original]- Artists do not sublimate. It is a psychoanalytic illusion to think that they neither satisfy their desires nor repress them, but transform them into socially acceptable achievements, into their entities [*Gebilde*]; incidentally, legitimate works of art are today without exception socially unacceptable. On the contrary, artists display violent, free-floating instincts, which simultaneously collide with reality and are marked by neurosis. Even the petty bourgeois stereotype of the dramatist or violinist as a synthesis of nerve-bundles and heart-breaking is closer to the mark than the no less petty bourgeois drive-economy, according to which the Sunday's children of renunciation are let loose in symphonies and novels. Their part is rather a hysterically exaggerated lack of inhibition *vis-à-vis* all humanly conceivable fears; a narcissism driven to the borders of paranoia. Against what is sublimated, they have idiosyncrasies. They are irreconcilable to the aesthetes, indifferent to cultivated milieus, and they recognize in the tasteful mode of life the inferior reaction-formation towards the propensity for what is inferior, as surely as the psychologists who misunderstand them. They have been attracted, everywhere from the letters of Mozart to his young Augsburg cousin to the word-jokes of the embittered tutor, to what is off-color, foolish, improper. They do not fit into Freudian theory, because it lacks an adequate concept of expression, in spite of all its insight into the functioning of symbolism of dreams and neuroses. It is certainly illuminating, that an uncensored drive-impulse, once

expressed, cannot be called repressed, even when it no longer wishes to demand a goal which it does not find. On the other hand, the analytic distinction between locomotor – “real” – and hallucinatory satisfaction points in the direction of the difference of satisfaction and undistorted expression. But expression is not hallucination. It is appearance [*Schein*], measured by the reality-principle, and would like to bypass this latter. What is subjective never seeks, however, to substitute itself through the appearance [*Schein*] in delusive fashion, as through a symptom, in place of reality. Expression negates the reality, by holding up to it, what does not resemble it, but it does not deny it; it looks at the conflict straight in the eye – the conflict which otherwise results in the blind symptom. What the expression has in common with repression, is that the impulse finds itself blocked by reality. That impulse, and the entire context of experience which belongs to it, is denied immediate communication with the object. As expression it comes to the unfalsified phenomenon [*Erscheinung*] of itself and thereby of resistance, in sensuous imitation. It is so strong, that it experiences its modification to a mere picture, the price of survival, without being mutilated on its way outside. Instead of setting the goal of its own subjective-censoring “processing,” it sets something objective: its polemical revelation [*Offenbarung*]. This distinguishes it from sublimation: every successful expression of the subject, one might say, is a small victory over the play of forces of its own psychology. The pathos of art stems from the fact that precisely by withdrawing into the imagination, it gives the hegemony of reality what is its due, and nevertheless does

not resign itself to adaptation, does not perpetuate the violence of what is externalized in the deformation of what is internalized. For that reason, those who achieve this must without exception pay dearly as individuals, because they are left helplessly behind their own expression, which outpaces their psychology. Thereby however they awaken, no less than their products, doubts in the ranking of works of art under cultural achievements *ex definitione* [Latin: by definition]. No work of art can, in the social organization, evade its membership in culture, but none, which is more than arts-and-crafts, exists which does not turn to culture with a dismissive gesture: that it became a work of art. Art is as hostile to art as artists. In the renunciation of the drive-goal it keeps faith with this drive-goal, unmasking what is socially desirable, which Freud naively glorified as sublimation, which in all likelihood does not exist.

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Small pains, great songs. – Contemporary mass culture is historically necessary not merely as the consequence of the embrace of the entire life by monster enterprises, but as the consequence of what today seems most utterly opposed to the prevailing standardization of consciousness, aesthetic subjectification. Indeed the more that artists went towards the inner, the more they learned to renounce the infantile fun of imitating of what is external. But at the same time, they learned, by virtue of reflecting on the soul, to control themselves more and more. The progress of its technics, which constantly brought greater freedom and independence from what is heterogenous, resulted in a kind of reification, the technification of inwardness as such. The

greater the virtuosity by which artists express themselves, the less must they “be” what they express, and the more what is to be expressed, indeed the content of subjectivity itself, becomes a mere function of the production process. Nietzsche sensed this, when he accused Wagner, the tamer of expression, of hypocrisy, without recognizing that it was not a question of psychology, but of a historical tendency. The transformation of expressive content from an unguided impulse into a material for manipulation makes it however simultaneously tangible, presentable, salable. The lyric subjectification in Heine, for example, does not stand in a simple contradiction to his commercial traits, rather what is salable is itself a subjectivity administered by subjectivity. The virtuoso usage of the “scale,” which has defined artists since the 19th century, crosses over out of its own drive-energy into journalism, spectacle, and calculation, not primarily through betrayal. The law of movement of art, which amounts to the control and thereby the objectification of the subject by itself, means its downfall: the hostility to art of film, which administratively looks over all materials and emotions, in order to deliver them to the customer, the second exteriority, originates in art as the increasing domination over inner nature. The oft-cited play-acting of the modern artists, however, their exhibitionism, is the gesture, through which they put themselves as goods on the market.

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Who is who. [in English in original] – The self-flattering conviction of the naivety and purity of artists or professors lives on in its inclination, to explain away difficulties by the

cunning interestedness, the practically calculating Spirit [*Geist*] of the counter-parties. But just as every construction, in which one is justified and the world is unjustified, every insistence on one's own title, tends to justify the world in oneself, so too do things stand with the antithesis of pure will and slyness. The intellectual outsider, who knows what to expect, behaves reflectively today, steered by a thousand political tactical considerations, cautious and suspicious. The ones who understand each other, however, whose realm has long since converged across party lines on the way to living-space [*Lebensraum*: notorious term of Nazi propaganda], no longer consider the calculations necessary, which they were once capable of. They are so reliably committed to the rules of reason, their state of interests have sedimented themselves so transparently into their thought, that they have once again become innocuous. If one investigates their shadowy plans, their judgments are metaphysically true, because they are related to the gloomy course of the world, but psychologically false: they end up in the objectively increasing persecution-mania. Those who commit betrayal and iniquity according to their function and sell themselves and their friends to power, require no cunning or ulterior motivation for this, no planning institution of the ego, but conversely need only rely on their reactions and the unthinking satisfaction of the demands of the moment, in order to easily fulfill, what others could achieve solely through tortuously complex machinations. They inspire trust, by proclaiming it. They watch to see how things fall out for them, live hand to mouth, and recommend themselves as simultaneously unegoistic and as subscribers

to a condition, which ensures that they will lack for nothing. Because all of them solely pursue their particular interest, without conflict, this interest appears once more as general and disinterested, as it were. Their gestures are open, spontaneous, disarming. They are nice and their critics are evil. Because they are not even left with the independence of action, which would oppose the interest, they depend on the good will of others and are themselves of good will. The abstract interest, as something entirely mediated, creates a second immediacy, while those who are not yet completely encompassed are unnaturally compromised. In order to not be ground beneath the wheel, these latter must thoroughly outbid the world in worldiness and are easily convicted of clumsy overcompensation. Suspicion, lust for power, lack of camaraderie, falsity, vanity and lack of seriousness are what they are compulsively reproached for. Social enchantment unavoidably turns those who do not play along into self-seeking types, while those without a self, who live according the reality principle, are called selfless.

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Address unknown. – Cultivated philistines are wont to demand that the work of art should give them something. They are no longer outraged at what is radical, but draw back with the shamelessly modest assertion, that they just don't understand. This latter clears away the resistance, the last negative relation to the truth, and the offending object is catalogued with a smile under its own, under consumer goods, between which one has a choice and which one can reject, without incurring any responsibility.

One is just too dumb, too outmoded, one just can't keep up, and the smaller one makes oneself out to be, the more reliably do they participate in the mighty unison of the *vox inhumana populi* [Latin: inhuman voice of the people], in the guiding force [*Gewalt*] of the petrified spirit of the age [*Zeitgeist*]. What is not comprehensible, from which no-one gets anything, turns from an outraging crime into mere foolishness, deserving of pity. They displace the temptation along with the spike. That someone is supposed to be given something, by all appearances the postulate of substantiality and fullness, cuts off these latter and impoverishes the giving. Therein however the relationship of human beings comes to resemble the aesthetic one. The reproach that someone gives nothing, is execrable. If the relation is sterile, then one should dissolve it. Those however who hold fast to it and nevertheless complain, always lack the organ of sensation: imagination. Both must give something, happiness as precisely what is not exchangeable, what cannot be complained about, but such giving is inseparable from taking. It is all over, if the other is no longer reachable by what one finds for them. There is no love, that would not be an echo. In myths, the guarantor of mercy was the acceptance of sacrifice; love, however, the after-image of the sacrificial act, pleads for the sake of this acceptance, if it is not to feel itself to be under a curse. The decline of gift-giving today goes hand in hand with the hardening against taking. It is tantamount however to that denial of happiness, which alone permits human beings to hold fast to their manner of happiness. The wall would be breached, where they received from others, what they themselves must reject with a sour grimace. That however

is difficult for them due to the exertion which taking requires of them. Isolated in technics, they transfer the hatred of the superfluous exertion of their existence onto the energy expenditure, which pleasure requires as a moment of its being [*Wesen*] all the way into its sublimations. In spite of countless small moments of relief, their praxis remains an absurd toil; the squandering of energy in happiness, however, the latter's secret, they do not tolerate. That is why things must go according to the English expression, "relax and take it easy" [in English in original], which comes from the language of nurses, not the one of exuberance. Happiness is outmoded: uneconomic. For its idea, sexual unification, is the opposite of being at loose ends, namely ecstatic tension, just as that of all subjugated labor is disastrous tension.

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Consecutio temporum. [Latin: sequence of tenses] – When my first composition instructor tried to drive the atonal nonsense out of me and failed to persuade me through tales of the erotic scandals of the atonal composers, he fell back on trying to pin me down, where he thought my weakness lay, in the wish to be up-to-date. The ultra-modern, so ran his argument, was already no longer modern, the stimulus I sought had already faded away, the figures of expression, which excited me, belonged to an outmoded sentimentality, and the new youth had, as he liked to call it, more red blood cells in them. His own pieces, where orientalist themes were regularly extended through the chromatic scale, proved such hyper-subtle considerations to be the maneuvering of a concert director with a bad conscience.

But I was soon to discover, that the fashion which he upheld against my modernity, did in fact resemble, in the Ur-homeland of the great salons, what he had cooked up in the provinces. Neoclassicism, that type of reaction which does not acknowledge itself to be such, but goes so far as to portray the reactionary moment as advanced, was the leading indicator of a massive tendency, which under fascism and in mass-culture quickly learned to deal with the tender considerations of the artistes, who were always hypersensitive anyway, and to unite the spirit [*Geist*] of Courths-Mahler with that of technical progress. What is modern has truly become unmodern. Modernity is a qualitative category, not a chronological one. The less it can be reduced to an abstract form, the more necessary is its rejection of the conventional superficial context, of the appearance [*Schein*] of harmony, of the social order, which is reinforced by mere duplication. The Fascist street thugs, who clamored furiously against Futurism, understood more in their rage than the Moscow censors, who put Cubism on the index of banned works, because it remained behind the Spirit [*Geist*] of the collective times in private impropriety, or the impudent theater critics, who find a play by Strindberg or Wedekind passé [French: obsolete], but find an underground news report “up-to-date” [in English in original]. Nevertheless the smug banality expresses a dreadful truth: that in the wake of the train of the entire society, which would like to dragoon all expressions into its organization, what remains behind is what opposes the wave of the future, as the wife of Lindbergh called it – the critical construction of essence [*Wesen*]. This latter is by no means merely ostracized by a

corrupted public opinion, but the absurdity affects the matter [*Sache*]. The hegemony of the existent, which constrains the Spirit [*Geist*] to do exactly what it does, is so overpowering, that even the unassimilated expression of protest assumes the aspect of something tacked together, disoriented, clueless *vis-à-vis* the former, and recalls that provincialism, which once prophetically suspected modernity of being retrograde. The psychological regression of individuals, who exist without an ego, goes hand in hand with a regression of the objective Spirit [*Geistes*], in which dull-wittedness, primitivity and the sell-out push through what has long since historically decayed as the most modern historical power and thereby consign everything which does not enthusiastically join the train of regression to the verdict of yesteryear. Such a quid pro quo of progress and reaction makes orientating oneself *vis-à-vis* contemporary art nearly as difficult as *vis-à-vis* politics, and moreover cripples production itself, such that whoever holds fast to extreme intentions is made to feel like a backwoods hick, while the conformists no longer sit shyly in their arbors [*Gartenlaube*: arbor, also the name of 19th century family magazine], but barrel ahead like rockets into the pluperfect tense.

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La nuance / encor'. [French: "nuance / once more"; quotation from Verlaine's *Poetic Art*] The demand that thinking and knowing should renounce nuances is not to be summarily dismissed, as merely giving in to the prevailing dull-wittedness. If the linguistic nuance could no longer be perceived, then that would concern it itself and not merely

reception. Language is, according to its own objective substance, social expression, even where it separated itself as something brusquely individual from society. The changes which it encounters in communication, reach into the non-communicative material of the author. What is spoiled in the words and speech-forms of common usage, arrives in the sequestered workshop as damaged. However the historical damage cannot be repaired there. History does not merely influence language, but also occurs in the midst of it. What continues to be used in spite of customary usage, presents itself as fatuously provincial or unhurriedly restorative. All nuances are so thoroughly attacked and inverted into “flavor” [in English in original], that even advanced literary subtleties recall degraded words like gleaming, thoughtful, snug, aromatic. The institutions against kitsch become kitschy, artsy-craftsy, with an overtone of something idiotically consoling from the world of women, whose soulfulness, replete with flutes and folk-costumes, became standard issue in Germany. In the obligatory level of junk, with which happily surviving intellectuals apply to the vacant posts of culture, what yesterday still stylized itself as consciously linguistic and hostile to convention reads today like Old Frankish foppery. German culture seems to be faced with the alternative of a dreadful second Biedermeier or paper-administrative banality. The simplification, however, which is suggested not merely by market interest, but from excellent political motives and finally from the historical consciousness of language itself, does not so much overcome the nuance, as tyrannically promote its decay. It offers the sacrifice to the omnipotence of society. But this

latter is, precisely for the sake of its omnipotence, as incommensurable with the subject of cognition and foreign as it was in more innocuous times, when it avoided daily language. That human beings are being absorbed into the totality, without the totality being mastered by human beings, makes institutionalized speech forms as void as the naively individual valeurs [French: standards], and the attempt to refunction such by accepting them into the literary medium remains just as fruitless: the engineering pose of those who cannot read a diagram. The collective language, which lures authors, who mistrust their isolation as Romanticism, is no less Romantic: they usurp the voices of those for whom they cannot at all immediately speak, as one of them, because their language, through reification, is so separated from them as everyone is from everyone else; because the contemporary shape of the collective is in itself speechless. No collective today, which is entrusted with the expression of the subject, is already a subject. Whoever does not follow the dictates of the official hymn-tone to festivals of liberation, which are supervised by totalitarians, but means in earnest what Roger Caillois ambiguously enough recommended as *aridité* [French: aridity], experiences the objective discipline solely as privation, without getting back a concrete generality for this. The contradiction between the abstraction of that language, which wishes to clean house with what is the bourgeois-subjective, and its expressly concrete objects, lies not in the incapacity of the author, but in a historical antinomy. That subject wishes to cede itself to the collective, without being sublated in it. That is why precisely its renunciation of the private maintains

something private, something chimerical. Its language mimics, on its own initiative, the strict construction of society and imagines that it could make the very cement speak. As punishment, the unconfirmed common language incessantly commits faux pas [French: misstep, mistake] of materiality [*Sachlichkeit*] at the expense of the material [*Sache*], not so different from the bourgeoisie, when they wax rhetorical. The logical consequence of the decay of nuance is neither to obstinately hold fast to what is decaying, nor to extirpate every single one, but wherever possible to outbid the very quality of being nuanced, to drive it so far, until it recoils from subjective shading into the purely specific determination of the object. The writer must take the greatest care to ensure that the word means the thing and only this thing, without sidelong glances, in connection with the chiseling of every turn of phrase, listening with patient effort for what bears the linguistic, in itself, and what does not. Those who are afraid, however, of falling in spite of everything behind the spirit of the times [*Zeitgeist*] and of being thrown on the trash-heap of discarded subjectivity, are to be reminded that what is newly arrived and what is, according to its content, progressive, are no longer as one. In a social order, which liquidates the modern as retrograde, then what may befall what is retrograde, if it is overtaken by the judgment, is the truth over which the historical process rolls. Because no truth can be expressed, than the one which is capable of filling the subject, the anachronism becomes the refuge of what is modern.

Which follows German song. [conclusion of Hölderlin's Patmos] – Artists like George have rejected free verse as an inferior form, as a hybrid of meter and prose. They are rebutted by Goethe and Hölderlin's late hymns. Their technical gaze takes free verse, for what it considers itself. They are deaf to the history, which stamps its expression. Only in the epoch of its decay are free rhythms nothing but intermittent prose sections, set in an elevated tone. Where free verse proves itself to be a form of its own essence [Wesens], it has emerged from the metrical strophe, pressing beyond subjectivity. It turns the pathos of the meter against its own claim, the strict negation of what is most strict, just as musical prose, emancipated from the symmetry of the eight-beat meter, is due to the implacable principles of construction, which matured in the articulation of what is tonally regular. In free rhythm, the rubble of artistically rhymeless antique strophes finds its voice. These latter, foreign, extend into modern languages and serve, by virtue of such foreignness, to express what is not exhausted in communication. But they give way, unsalvageably, to the flood of language in which they were raised. They signify, with brittleness, in the midst of the realm of communication and not to be separated from the latter by any caprice, distance and stylization – incognito, as it were – and without privilege, until the wave of dreams washes over the helpless verses, as in Trakls lyrics. It is not for nothing that the epoch of free verse was the French revolution, the debut of human dignity and human equality. But isn't the conscious procedure of such verse similar to the law, which language above all obeys in its unconscious history? Isn't all worked prose actually a

system of free rhythms, the attempt to provide cover for the magic bane [Bann] of what is absolute and the negation of its appearance [Scheins], an exertion of the Spirit [Geistes], to rescue the metaphysical force [*Gewalt*] of the expression by virtue of its own secularization? If this were so, then a ray of light would fall on the labor of Sisyphus, which every prose author has taken on themselves, since demythologization has passed over into the destruction of language itself. Linguistic quixotry has become a commandment, because every sentence structure contributes to the decision as to whether language as such, ambiguous from Ur-times to the present, falls prey to the bustle and the dedicated lies, which belong to such, or whether it becomes a sacred text, by making itself demure towards the sacred element, from which it lives. The ascetic sealing off of prose against verse is tantamount to an oath of fealty to song.

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In nuce. [Latin: in the kernel] – The task of art today is to bring chaos into order [*Ordnung*: social order].

Artistic productivity is the capacity of volition in involution. Art is magic, emancipated from the lie of being the truth. Since works of art were at one time derived from the fetishes – can one blame the artists, when they behave just a little fetishistically towards their products? The art-form which since time immemorial raised the representation of the idea to the highest pitch of spiritualization [*Vergeistigung*], drama, is simultaneously according to its innermost prerequisites oriented towards an audience.

When Benjamin remarked, that the dumb language of things is translated in painting and sculpture into a higher, yet related one, then one can assume in the case of music that it rescues the name as pure sound – but at the price of its separation from things. Perhaps the strict and pure concept of art is to be derived only from music, while great poetry and great painting – precisely the greatest – necessarily carry along with them something material, something which strides beyond the aesthetic ensorcelment, something not dissolved into the autonomy of form. The deeper and more consequential aesthetics becomes, the more inappropriate it is to, say, the significant novels of the 19th century. Hegel perceived this interest in his polemic against Kant. The belief disseminated by aesthetes, that the work of art, as an object of immediate intuition [*Anschauung*], is to be understood purely out of itself, is not valid. The work of art has its boundary by no means merely in the cultural prerequisites of an entity, its “language,” which only the initiated can follow. Rather, even where there are no such difficulties in the way, the artwork demands more, than just abandoning oneself to it. Whoever wishes to find the *Fledermaus* beautiful, must know, that it is the *Fledermaus*: their mother must explain to them, that it is not about an animal with wings but about a costume mask; they must remember, that someone said: tomorrow you may go to the *Fledermaus*. To stand in the tradition meant: to experience the work of art as something confirming, affirming; in it, one takes part in the reactions of all those who ever saw it before. If that once falls away, then the work is exposed in its bareness and fallibility. The production turns from a ritual into idiocy, the music turns

from a canon of meaningful phrases into stale and worn-out ones. It is truly no longer so beautiful. Mass culture draws from this its right to adaptations. The weakness of all traditional culture outside of its tradition delivers the pretext, to improve it and thereby to barbarically violate it. What is consoling in the great artworks lies less in what they express, than the fact that they succeeded in defying existence [*Dasein*]. Hope is closest of all to those who are inconsolable. Kafka: the solipsist without ipse [Latin: something] Kafka was an enthusiastic reader of Kierkegaard, but he is connected to the existential philosopher only insofar as one can speak of “annihilated existences.” Surrealism breaks the *promesse du bonheur* [French: promise of happiness]. It sacrifices the appearance [*Schein*] of happiness, which mediated every integral form, to the thought of its truth.

144

Magic flute. – That culturally conservative ideology, which casts enlightenment and art as a simple opposition, is untrue insofar as it fails to recognize the moment of enlightenment in the genesis of what is beautiful. Enlightenment does not merely dissolve all the qualities, which adhere to what is beautiful, but simultaneously posits the quality of what is beautiful in the first place. The disinterested pleasure which works of art excite according to Kant, can only be understood by virtue of a historical antithesis, which trembles in every aesthetic object. What is considered with disinterest is pleasurable, because it once claimed the most extreme interest and exactly thereby cancels out contemplation. This latter is a triumph of

enlightened self-discipline. Gold and precious gems, in whose perception beauty and luxury are still mixed up in each other, were venerated as magical. The light which they reflected, counted as their selfsame essence [*Wesen*]. What was struck by that light, fell sway to their bane [Bann]. That bane served early attempts to control nature. They saw in them instruments to subjugate the course of the world with its own energy, cunningly wrested from such. The magic adheres to the appearance [*Schein*] of omnipotence. Such appearance [*Schein*] fell apart with the self-enlightenment of the Spirit [Geistes], but the magic lived on as the power of luminous things over human beings, who once trembled in awe of them, and whose eyes remained ensorcelled by such a view, even where its stately claim was seen through. Contemplation, as the remainder of the stock of fetishistic worship, is simultaneously a stage of its overcoming. By giving up its magical claim, by renouncing the violence, as it were, with which the subject endowed it and thought to practice with its help, luminous things transform themselves into pictures of something free of violence, into the promise of a happiness cured of the domination over nature. That is the Ur-history of luxury, which has migrated into the meaning of all art. In the magic of what reveals itself in absolute powerlessness, of what is beautiful, complete and void in one, the appearance [*Schein*] of omnipotence is negatively reflected back as hope. It has escaped every test of strength. Total purposelessness denies the totality of what is purposeful in the world of domination, and only by virtue of such repudiation, which the existent fulfills in its own principle of reason out of the latter's consequentiality, has the

existing society, to this day, become conscious of a possible one. The bliss of contemplation consists of disenchanted magic. What radiates, is the reconciliation of mythos.

145

Art-figure. – To the unprepared, the heaped up atrocities of household ornaments are shocking due to their affinity with art-works. Even the hemispherical paperweights, which show a fir-tree landscape under glass with the title, greetings from Bad Wildungen, somehow recalls to mind Stifter's green Fichtau, and the polychrome garden gnome recalls a wight out of Balzac or Dickens. Neither the subjects nor the abstract similarity of all aesthetic appearances [Scheins] are at fault here. On the contrary, the existence of foolish and blatant junk expresses the triumph, that human beings managed to produce out of themselves a piece of what otherwise ensorcelles them as toilers, and symbolically break the compulsion of adaptation, by themselves creating what they feared; and the echoes of the same triumph resonate from the mightiest works, even though they renounce that triumph and style themselves as pure selves without relation to something imitated. In both cases, freedom from nature is celebrated and remains thereby mythically entangled. What human beings were in awe of, turns into their own disposable thing. What pictures and postcards have in common, is that they make the Ur-pictures tangible. The illustration "*L'automne*" [French: autumn] in the reading-book is a déjà vu [French: already seen], the Eroica [Beethoven's Third Symphony], like great philosophy, represents the idea as total process, yet as if this latter were immediately,

sensuously present. In the end the outrage over kitsch is the rage, that it wallows shamelessly in the happiness of imitation, which has meanwhile been overtaken by a taboo, while the power of art-works is still secretly being fed from imitation. What escapes the bane [Bann] of existence, its purposes, is not only what is better and protests, but also what relates to self-preservation as what is less capable and dumber. This stupidity grows the more that autonomous art idolizes its divided, allegedly innocent self-preservation, instead of the real, guiltily imperial one. By presenting the subjective institution as a successful rescue of objective meaning, it becomes untrue. What convicts it of this is kitsch; the latter's lie does not even feign the truth. It draws hostility to itself, because it spills the beans about the secret of art and the affinity of culture to what is savage. Every work of art has its indissoluble contradiction in the "purposefulness without purpose," by which Kant defined the aesthetic; by representing an apotheosis of making, the capacity to control nature, which posits itself as the creation of second nature – absolute, free of purpose, existing-in-itself – while nonetheless the making of things, and indeed the radiance of the artifact, is inseparable from precisely the purposeful rationality which art wishes to break out of. The contradiction between the making of things and the existent is the life-element of art and circumscribes its law of development, but it is also its shame: by following, however mediatedly, the preexisting schema of material production and "making" its objects, it cannot for its part escape the question of the "what for," whose negation is precisely its purpose. The closer the mode of production of the artifact stands to material mass

production, the more naively, as it were, does it provoke that fatal question. Works of art however seek to silence the question. “What is perfect,” in Nietzsche’s words, “should not be something which has become.” (*Human, All Too Human*, Vol. I, Aphorism 145), namely it should not appear as something made. The more consequentially however it distanced itself by perfection from the making of things, the more brittle its own existence, as something made, necessarily and simultaneously becomes: the endless pains taken to wipe away the trace of the making of things, damages artworks and condemns them to something fragmentary. After the disassembly [*Zerfall*: disintegration] of magic, art has undertaken to preserve pictures for posterity. In this work however it avails itself of the same principle which destroyed pictures: the root of its Greek name is the same as that of technics. Its paradoxical interweaving in the process of civilization brings it into conflict with its own idea. The archetypes of today, synthetically prepared by film and hit-songs for the desolate intuition of the late-industrial era, do not merely liquidate art, but blast the delusion into existence, through flagrant idiocy, which is already immured in the oldest works of art and which lends power to even the most mature. The horror of the end casts a harsh light on the deception of the origin. – It is the chance and limitation of French art, that it never completely uprooted the pride in the making of small pictures, just as it differentiates itself most strikingly from the German kind, in the fact that it does not acknowledge the category of kitsch. In countless significant manifestations it throws a reconciling gaze on what is pleasing, because it was skillfully produced: what is

sublimely artistic holds on to sensuous life through a moment of harmless pleasure in the *bien fait* [French: well done]. While this renounces the dialectic of truth and appearance [*Schein*], and thereby the absolute claim of what has not yet become perfection, the untruth of those who Hadyn called the grand moguls is also avoided – those who would utterly reject the fun of little dolls or postcards and fall prey to fetishism precisely by driving out the fetish. Taste is the capacity to balance in art the contradiction between what is made, and the appearance [*Schein*] of what has not yet become; the true art-works however, never as one with taste, are those which develop that contradiction to the extreme and come to themselves, by going to pieces on such.

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Trader's shop. – Hebbel raises the question, in a surprising diary entry, as to what “would take the magic from life in one's later years.” “Because we see in all the brightly colored, jerkily moving puppets, the rotor which sets them in motion, and because just for that reason the enticing multiplicity of the world dissolves into a wooden monotony. When a child sees the acrobats singing, the musicians playing, the girl carrying water, the coachmen driving, it thinks to itself, all this is happening due to pleasure and joy in the matter; it cannot even begin to imagine that these people also eat and drink, go to bed and get up again. We however know, what it's all about.” Namely, about acquisition, which commandeers all those activities as mere means, reducing them to abstract labor-time, as something exchangeable. The quality of things turns from their

essence [*Wesen*] into the arbitrary phenomenon [*Erscheinung*: appearance] of their value. The “equivalent-form” disfigures all perceptions: what is no longer illuminated by light of one’s own determination as “pleasure in the thing,” pales before the eyes. The organs do not grasp anything sensual in isolation, but observe whether the color, tone and movement is there for itself or for something else; they grow weary of the false diversity and submerge everything in grey, disappointed by the deceptive claim of qualities that they still exist at all, while they are guided by the purpose of appropriation, to which they for the most part owe their existence. The disenchantment of the world of intuition is the reaction of the sensorium to its objective determination as a “world of commodities.” Only things cleansed of appropriation would be simultaneously colorful and useful: neither can be reconciled under universal compulsion. Children however are not so much entangled in illusions about the “enticing multiplicity” as Hebbel thinks, rather it is that their spontaneous perception still comprehends the contradiction between the phenomenon and fungibility, which the resigned one of adults no longer even dares to reach, and seeks to escape it. Play is their counterstrike [*Gegenwehr*: counter, resistance]. What strikes incorruptible children is the “peculiarity of the form of equivalence”: “Use-value turns into the form of appearance of its opposite, value.” (Marx, *Capital I*, Vienna 1932, page 61). In their non-purposive doing they deploy a feint on the side of the use-value against exchange-value. Precisely by divesting the things which they handle of their mediated utility, they seek to rescue in their interaction

with them whatever has good will towards human beings, rather than towards the exchange relationship which deforms human beings and things in equal measure. The little wagons on wheels lead nowhere, and the tiny barrels on them are empty; but they keep faith with its destination [*Bestimmung*: determination], by neither practicing nor taking part in the process of the abstractions which level out that destination [*Bestimmung*: determination], but rather preserve them as allegories of what they are specifically are. They wait, scattered to the winds and nevertheless unentangled, to see if society finally cancels out the social stigma on them; to see whether praxis, the life-process between the human being and the thing, will cease to be practical. The unreality of games announces that what is real, is not yet real. They are unconscious practice exercises of the right life. The relationship of children to animals rests entirely on the fact that in the latter, which Marx even begrudged the surplus value they deliver to workers, utopia is cloaked. Because animals exist without any mission recognizable to human beings, they represent their own names as expression, as it were – as what is utterly not exchangeable. This endears them to children and makes their contemplation a joy. I am a rhinoceros, signifies the form of the rhinoceros. Fairy-tales and operettas know such pictures, and the ludicrous question of the woman, who asked how we know that Orion is really called Orion, rises to the stars.

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Novissimum Organum. [The newest organon: reference to Bacon's *Novum Organum*, the new organon] – Long ago it

was shown that wage-labor formed the modern masses, and indeed has produced the workers themselves. The individual [*Individuum*] is universal not merely as the biological substrate, but simultaneously as the form of reflection of the social process, and its consciousness of itself as something existing in itself, as the appearance [*Schein*] which it requires to raise its capacity of achievement, whereas individuals function in the modern economy as mere agents of the law of value. The inner composition of the individual [*Individuum*] is to be derived in itself, not merely out of its social role. What is decisive in the contemporary phase is the category of the organic composition of capital. What this meant in the theory of accumulation was, “the growth in the mass of means of production, compared with the mass of labor-power which brings it to life” (Marx, *Capital I*, Vienna 1932, page 655). When the integration of society, especially in the totalitarian states, determines subjects ever more exclusively as partial moments in the framework of material production, then the “transformation in the technical composition of capital” perpetuates itself through the technological demands of the production process in those it not only encompasses, but indeed first constitutes. The organic composition of human beings is increasing. That through which subjects are determined in themselves as means of production and not as living purposes, rises just like the share of machinery *vis-à-vis* variable capital. The prevalent talk of the “mechanization” of human beings is misleading, because it thinks these latter as something static, which undergoes certain deformations due to an “outside influence,” as an adaptation to conditions of

production external to them. But there is no substrate of such “deformations,” nothing which is ontically interiorized, on which social mechanisms merely act from outside: the deformation is not the illness of human beings, but the illness of the society, which raises its children as “hereditarily disadvantaged,” just as biologism projects onto nature. It is only by means of the process, which initiates the transformation of labor-power into a commodity, permeating human beings utterly and completely and making every one of their impulses simultaneously commensurable and objectified into an a priori variety of the exchange-relationship, is it possible for life to reproduce itself under the dominating relations of production. Its organizational follow-through [*Durchorganisation*] demands the amalgamation of what is dead. The will to live sees itself referred to the repudiation of the will to live: self-preservation annuls life in subjectivity. It follows that all the achievements of adaptation, all the acts of conforming described by social psychology and cultural anthropology, are mere epiphenomena. The organic composition of human beings refers by no means only to specialized technical capabilities, but – and this is something the usual cultural critique wishes at no price to reveal – equally to their opposite, the moment of what is natural, which indeed for its part already originated in the social dialectic and now falls prey to it. What still differs in human beings from technics, is incorporated as a kind of lubrication of technics. Psychological differentiation, as it originally emerged in freedom and out of the division of labor and the compartmentalization of human beings according to

sectors of the production process, itself steps in the end into the service of production. “The specialized virtuoso,” wrote a dialectician thirty years ago, “the seller of their objectified and substantialized [*versachlichten*] intellectual capacities... ends up in a contemplative attitude towards the functioning of their own objectified and substantialized [*versachlichten*] capacities. This structure shows itself most grotesquely in the case of journalism, where it is precisely subjectivity itself – knowing things, moods, the capacity to express – which turns into something abstract, as independent from the personality of the ‘owner’ as from the material-concrete essence of the objects, which are dealt with independently and nomothetically [*eigengesetzlich*] as if by a moving mechanism. The ‘lack of sensibility’ of journalists, the prostitution of their experiences and convictions, is only comprehensible as the peak of capitalist reification.” [citation from György Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, London: 1971, page 100] What was here established as the “phenomena of degeneration” of the bourgeoisie, which it itself still denounced, has meanwhile emerged as the social norm, as the character of full-fledged existence under late industrialism. It has long since ceased to be merely a question of the sale of what is living. Under the a priori of salability, what is living makes itself, as the living, into a thing, into equipage. The ego consciously takes the entire human being into service as its apparatus. In this reorganization, the ego gives, as a kind of enterprise director, so much of itself to the ego as a means of directing the enterprise, that it becomes wholly abstract, a mere reference-point: self-preservation loses its self. Personal

characteristics, from genuine friendliness to hysterical outbreaks of rage, become serviceable, until they finally slide perfectly into their situation-specific assignment. With their mobilization, they transform themselves. They remain only as light, fixed and empty shells of impulses, as material transportable at will, devoid of personal traits. They are no longer subjects, but the subject directs itself at them as its internalized object. In their boundless accessibility toward the ego, they are simultaneously alienated from the latter: entirely passive, they no longer nourish it. That is the social parthogenesis of schizophrenia. The separation of personal characteristics as much from the basis of the drives as from the self, which commands them where it previously merely held them together, causes human beings to pay for their increasing inner organization with growing disintegration. The division of labor which is fulfilled in the individual [*Individuum*], its radical objectification, ends up as its diseased splitting. Thus the “psychotic character,” the anthropological prerequisite for all totalitarian mass movements. Precisely the transition from fixed characteristics to pushbutton modes of behavior – seemingly enlivening – is the expression of the rising organic composition of human beings. Quick reactions, free of any mediation through constituted being, do not restore spontaneity, but establish the person as a measuring instrument, at the disposal of and read by the center. The more immediate their signal, the deeper in truth is mediation reflected in them: in promptly answering, non-resisting reflexes, the subject is entirely dissolved. So too with the biological reflexes, models of the contemporary

social ones, which measured by subjectivity are something objectified, something foreign: it is not for nothing they are often called “mechanical.” The closer organisms come to death, the more they regress to jerkiness. It follows that the destructive tendencies of the masses, which explode in the totalitarian states of both kinds, are not so much death-wishes as manifestations of what they have already become. They murder, so that whatever seems living to them, resembles them.

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Knacker's yard. – The metaphysical categories are not merely the veiling ideology of the social system, but simultaneously express its essence [Wesens], the truth about it, and in its transformations are precipitated those of the most central experiences. Thus death falls into history, and conversely this latter conversely is understood through the former. Its dignity resembled that of the individual [*Individuums*]. The autonomy of such, which originated in the economy, fulfilled itself in the conception of its absoluteness, as soon as the theological hope of its immortality, which empirically relativized it, faded away. This corresponded to the emphatic picture of death, which entirely wiped out the individuated [*Individuum*], the substrate of all bourgeois conduct and thinking. Death was the absolute price of absolute value. Now it falls, along with the socially dissolved individuated [*Individuum*]. Where it is clothed with the old dignity, it chatters away with the lie, which already stood ready in its concept: to name what is impenetrable, to predicate what is subjectless, to prefabricate what falls out. In the administered

consciousness, however, the truth and untruth of its dignity are done for, not by virtue of an otherworldly hope, but in view of the hopeless lack of energy of the secular world. “Le monde moderne,” noted the radical Catholic Charles Péguy already in 1907, “*a réussi à avilir ce qu'il y a peut-être de plus difficile à avilir au monde, parce que c'est quelque chose qui a en soi, comme dans sa texture, une sorte particulière de dignité, comme une incapacité singulière d'être avili: il a vilifié la mort.*” [French: The modern world has succeeded in debasing something which perhaps is the most difficult thing to debase in the world, because it is something which in itself, as its texture, has a peculiar sort of dignity, a singular incapacity to be debased: it debases death.] (*Men and Saints*, New York 1944, page 98). If the individuated [*Individuum*] which death annihilates is null, devoid of self-control and of one's own being, then the annihilating power also becomes null, as if in jest at the Heideggerian formula of the nihilating [*nichtenden*] nothingness. The radical replaceability of the individual practically makes its death – in complete contempt – to something revocable, as it was once conceptualized in Christianity with paradoxical pathos. Death however becomes totally incorporated as a *quantité négligeable* [French: negligible quantity, minute smidgeon]. For every human being, with all their functions, society stands ready with a waiting replacement, who regards the former from the very beginning as the bothersome holder of the job, as a candidate for death. The experience of death is accordingly transformed into the exchange of functionaries, and what does not completely go from the natural relationship of death into the social one, is

consigned to hygiene. Because death is no longer perceived as anything more than as the dropping out of a natural life-form from the social club of society, this has finally domesticated it: dying merely confirms the absolute irrelevance of the natural life-form in relation to what is socially absolute. If the culture industry anywhere testifies to the transformations in the organic composition of society, then it is through the scarcely concealed confession of this state of affairs. Under its lens, death begins to become comic. The laughter which greets it in a certain genre of production is in all likelihood ambiguous. It still registers the fear of something amorphous under the net which the society has spun over the entirety of nature. But the veil is so vast and tightly-knit, that the memory of what is not covered seems foolish, sentimental. Since the decline of the detective novel in the works of Edgar Wallace, which seemed to mock their readers through increasingly less rational constructions, unsolved mysteries and crass exaggerations, and nevertheless magnificently anticipated therein the collective imago of the totalitarian horror, the genre of the murder-comedy has formed. While it continues to poke fun at the false shudder, it demolishes the pictures of death. It represents the corpse as what it has turned into, as a stage prop. It still resembles human beings and is nevertheless only a thing, as in the film *A Slight Case of Murder*, where corpses are incessantly transported to and fro, allegories of what they already previously were. Comedy savors the false abolition of death, which Kafka described long ago in the history of the *Hunter Gracchus* with panic: for the same reason, music is also beginning to be comic. What the Nazis perpetrated on

millions of human beings, the modeling of the living on the dead, then the mass production and cheapening of death, threw its shadow in advance on those who are spurred to laugh at corpses. What is decisive is the assimilation of biological destruction in the conscious social will. Only a humanity, which is as indifferent to death as to its members – one which itself has died – can administratively inflict death on myriads. Rilke's prayer for one's own death is the pitiful deception of the fact that human beings still only croak.

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Come off it. – The critique of the tendencies of contemporary society is automatically countered, before it is fully expressed, by saying that things have ever been so. The excitement thereby so promptly abjured, testifies merely to the lack of insight into the invariance of history – to an unreason, which proudly diagnoses everyone as hysterical. Moreover, the critic's attacks are said to be merely hamming it up for the gallery, a means of claiming special privileges, while whatever they are nonetheless upset about is well known and trivial, so that no-one can be expected to waste their attention on such. The evidence of the calamity comes to benefit its apologists: because everyone knows everything, no-one is supposed to say anything, and it may then continue unchallenged, hidden by silence. What is affirmed is what philosophies of all political stripes have trumpeted into the heads of human beings: that whatever has the persistent gravity of existence on its side, is thereby right. One need only be dissatisfied to be already suspected of being a global

dreamer [*Weltverbesserer*]. The consensus employs the trick of ascribing to opponents a reactionary thesis of decay, which is untenable – for is not horror in fact perennial? – by discrediting the concrete insight into the negative through its alleged failure of thought, and those who rise up against the shadow, are maligned as agents of the shadow. But even if things were ever so, although nonetheless neither Timur nor Genghis Khan nor the British colonial administration of India deliberately burst the lungs of millions of human beings with poison gas, then the eternity of horror is revealed by the fact that each of its new forms outbids the older ones. What endures is no invariant quantum of suffering, but of its progress towards hell: that is the meaning of the talk about the growth of antagonisms. Any other kind would be innocuous and would pass over into mediating phrases, the renunciation of the qualitative leap. Those who register the death-camps as a minor accident in the victory procession of civilization, the martyrdom of the Jews as world-historically insignificant, do not merely fall behind the dialectical insight, but invert the meaning of one's own politics: of stopping the extremity. Quantity recoils into quality, not only in the development of the productive forces, but also in the increase of the pressure of domination. If the Jews are exterminated as a group, while the society continues to reproduce the life of workers, then the comment that these former are bourgeois and their destiny unimportant to the larger dynamic, turns into economic spleen, even insofar as mass murder is in fact explicable by the decline of the profit-rate. The horror consists of the fact that it always remains the same – the continuation of “prehistory” – but

unremittingly realizes itself as something different, something unforeseen, overwhelming all expectations, the faithful shadow of the developing productive forces. The same duality applies to violence, which the critique of political economy pointed out in material production: “There are determinations common to all stages of production, which are generally fixed by thought, but the so-called universal conditions of all production are nothing but... abstract moments, by which no real stage of production can be understood.” [Marx, *Grundrisse*, page 88] In other words, to abstract out what is historically unchanged is not neutral towards the matter [*Sache*], by virtue of its scientific objectivity, but serves, even where it is on target, as a fog in which what is tangible and assailable disappear. This latter is precisely what the apologists do not wish to concede. On the one hand they are obsessed by the *dernière nouveauté* [French: latest novelty] and on the other hand they deny the infernal machine, which is history. One cannot bring Auschwitz into analogy with the destruction of the Greek city-states in terms of a mere gradual increase of horror, regarding which one preserves one’s peace of mind. Certainly, the martyrdom and degradation suffered by those in the cattle-cars, completely without precedent, casts a harsh, deathly light on the most distant past, in whose obtuse and unplanned violence the scientifically organized kind was already teleologically at work. The identity lies in the non-identity, in what has not yet been, which denounces what has been. The statement that it’s always been the same, is untrue in its immediacy, true only through the dynamic of the totality. Whoever allows the cognition of the increase of

horror to escape them, does not merely fall prey to cold-hearted contemplation, but fails to recognize, along with the specific difference of what is newest from what has gone before, simultaneously the true identity of the whole, of horror without end.

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Extra edition. – Central passages in Poe and Baudelaire set up the concept of what is new. In the former, in the description of the maelstrom, whose shudder is equated with “the novel” [in English in original], which none of the traditional reports is supposed to adequately give any idea of; in the latter, in the last lines of the cycle *La Mort* [French: death], which chooses the plunge into the abyss, indifferent as to whether it is heaven or hell, “*au fond de l'inconnu pour trouver du nouveau*” [French: to the bottom of the unknown to find the new]. Both times it is an unknown threat, which the subject entrusts itself to, and which in a dizzying recoil promises pleasure. What is new, a blank spot of consciousness, which one awaits with closed eyes, as it were, seems to be the formula by which pleasure can be taken in horror and despair, as stimulus-value. It causes evil to flower. But its stark outline is a cryptogram of the most unambiguous reaction. It circumscribes the precise information, which is communicated by the subject to a world become abstract, the industrial epoch. What is rebelled against in the cult of the new and thereby in the idea of what is modern, is the fact that there is no longer anything new. The unchanging uniformity [*Immergleichheit*] of machine-produced goods, the net of socialization, which in equal measure catches and

assimilates objects and the gaze at those objects, transforms everything which is encountered into something which has already been, to the accidental exemplar of a species, to the model's doppelganger. The layer of what has not yet been thought, what is without intention, in which alone intention flourishes, seems to be consumed. The idea of the new dreams of this layer. Itself unattainable, it puts itself in place of the fallen god in view of the first consciousness of the decline of experience. But its concept remains under the bane [Bann] of its illness, and its abstraction testifies to this, turning powerlessly to the concretion which glides away from it. Much could be learned about the "Ur-history of what is modern" [concept from Walter Benjamin] by analyzing the change in the meaning of the word "sensation" – the exotic synonym for Baudelaire's nouveau [French: new]. The word became universalized in European education through epistemology. In Locke, it means the simple, immediate perception, the opposite of reflection. It later became the great unknown and finally, what is exciting on a mass scale, destructively intoxicating, the shock as consumer good. To still be able to perceive anything at all, regardless of quality, replaces happiness, because omnipotent quantification has taken away the possibility of perception itself. Instead of the fulfilled relation of experience to the thing, something what emerges is something at once merely subjective and physically isolated, sensation, which exhausts itself in the reading of a manometer. Thus the historic emancipation of being-in-itself is reconfigured into the form of the intuition, a process which the sense-psychology of the 19th century allowed for, by reducing the

substrate of experience to a mere “basal stimulus,” from whose particular constituted nature the specific energies of the senses were supposedly independent. Baudelaire’s poetry however is filled with that flash of light, which the closed eye sees when struck by a blow. As phantasmagoric as this light, so phantasmagoric is the idea of the new itself. What flashes, while sedate perception still only achieves the socially preformed mold of things, is itself repetition. The new, sought for its own sake, to a certain extent reproduced in the laboratory, hardened to a conceptual schema, turns in the abrupt appearance [*Erscheinen*] into the compulsory return of what is old, not so dissimilar to the traumatic neuroses. To the dazzled, the veil of temporal succession tears away from the archetypes of unchanging uniformity [*Immergleichheit*]: that is why the discovery of the new is satanic, eternal return as damnation. Poe’s allegory of the novel consists of the breathlessly circling movement, nonetheless at a standstill, as it were, of the boat spinning in the whirlpool. The sensations, in which masochists abandon themselves to the new, are as much regressions. This much is true of psychoanalysis, that the ontology of Baudelaire’s modernity, like every other one which followed it, answers to the infantile partial drive. Its pluralism is the colorful *fata morgana* [Latin: mirage], in which what the monism of bourgeois reason glosses as allegorical hope, is that reason’s self-destruction. This promise comprises the idea of what is modern, and for the sake of its core, for unchanging uniformity [*Immergleichheit*], everything which is modern takes on, once it is barely aged, the expression of something archaic. *Tristan*, which rises in the 19th century as an obelisk of

modernity, is at the same time the towering monument to the repetition-compulsion. The new has been ambiguous since its enthronement. While it links everything which presses beyond the unity [*Einheit*] of the ever more fixed existent, it is at the same time the absorption by the new, which, under the pressure of that unity, decisively promotes the disassembly [*Zerfall*] of the subject into convulsive moments in which the subject deceives itself that it is still alive, and thereby ultimately promotes the entire society, which drives out the new in state-of-the-art style. Baudelaire's poem of the female martyr of sex, the murder victim, allegorically celebrates the sanctity of pleasure in the terrifyingly emancipating still-life of crime, but the intoxication in view of the naked headless body is already similar to that which drove the prospective victims of the Hitler regime to buy newspapers, greedily and powerlessly, in which the measures were announced portending their doom. Fascism was the absolute sensation: in a declaration during the time of the first pogroms, Goebbels boasted that at least the Nazis weren't boring. The abstract terror of news and rumors was enjoyed in the Third Reich as the only stimulation, which sufficed to momentarily heat the weakened sensorium of the masses white-hot. Without the nearly irresistible violence of the desire for headlines, which caused the heart to seize as if thrust back into primeval times, the unspeakable could not have been borne by the onlookers, let alone the perpetrators. In the course of the war, eventually the most terrifying news was spread among the Germans and the slow military collapse was not hushed up. Concepts like sadism and masochism no longer suffice. In

the mass society of technical dissemination they are mediated by sensation, by the comet-like, far removed, to-the-extreme new. It overwhelms the public, which squirms under the shock and forgets who the monstrosity is being perpetrated on, oneself or others. The content of the shock becomes truly indifferent *vis-à-vis* its stimulus value, just as it ideally was in the invocations of the poets; it is even possible that the horror savored by Poe and Baudelaire, once realized by dictators, loses its sensational quality, burns out. The violent rescue of qualities in the new was devoid of qualities. Everything can, as the new, divested of itself, be enjoyed, just as the numbed morphine addict finally reaches indiscriminately for any drug, even atropine. Every judgment perishes in sensation, along with the distinction of qualities: that is what actually allows sensation to become an agent of catastrophic retrogression. In the terror of regressive dictators, what is modern, the dialectical picture of progress, culminates in an explosion. The new in its collective form, something already hinted at by the journalistic traits in Baudelaire as much the noise of drums in Wagner, is in fact external life, cooked up as a stimulating and enervating drug: it is not for nothing that Poe, Baudelaire and Wagner were addictive personalities. The new turns into the merely evil first through totalitarian guidance, wherein that tension of the individual [*Individuums*] to society, which once realized the category of the new, is canceled out. Today the appeal to the new – regardless of what kind, provided only it is archaic enough – has become universal, the ubiquitous medium of false mimesis. The decomposition of the subject is completed by handing itself over to a constantly

different, unchanging uniformity [*Immergleichheit*]. This sucks everything fixed out of personal character. What Baudelaire was capable of achieving by virtue of the picture, devolves to fascination devoid of will. Breach of faith and un-identity, the pathic catering to the situation, are activated by the stimulus of something new, which as a stimulus is already no longer stimulating. Perhaps humanity's refusal to have children is thereby explained, because everyone can prophesy the worst: what is new is the secret figure of everyone not yet born. Malthus belongs to the Ur-fathers of the 19th century, and Baudelaire had reason to exalt what is infertile. Humanity, which despairs of its reproduction, unconsciously casts the wish to survive onto the chimera of never known things, but these latter resemble death. They point to the downfall of an entire constitution, which virtually no longer needs its members.

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Theses against the occult. – I. The penchant for the occult is a symptom of the regression of consciousness. It has lost the energy to think what is unconditional and to withstand the conditional. Instead of determining both, in unity and difference, in the labor of the concept, it heedlessly mixes them up. What is unconditional turns into a fact, what is conditional becomes immediately essential [*wesenhaft*]. Monotheism crumbles into a second mythology. “I believe in astrology, because I don’t believe in God,” responded an interviewee in an American social psychological study. The juridically-minded [*rechtsprechenden*] reason, which raised itself to the concept of a god, seems to be caught up in the latter’s fall. The Spirit [*Geist*] dissociates itself into spirits

[*Geister*: spirits, ghosts] and thereby forfeits the capacity to recognize, that the latter no longer exist. The veiled tendency of calamity of society cons its victims in the false revelation, in the hallucinatory phenomenon. They hope, in vain, that its fragmentary obviousness will enable them to look at the total doom in the eye and withstand it. Panic breaks out once again after millennia of enlightenment on a humanity, whose domination over nature as domination over human beings surpasses in horror whatever human beings had to fear from nature.

II. The second mythology is even more untrue than the first. The latter was the precipitate of the state of cognition of its epochs, each of which showed its consciousness of the blind natural context to be somewhat freer than the previous one. The former, disturbed and entangled, throws away the cognition it once achieved of itself in the middle of a society, which eliminates through the all-embracing exchange relationship even what is most elementary, which the occultists claim to control. The gaze of the mariner at the Dioscuri [twin guardian deities of sea-voyagers in ancient Greece, rendered as statues on the ship's prow], the animism of trees and streams, in all the delusory bedazzlement at what is inexplicable, were appropriate to the historical experiences of the subject *vis-à-vis* its action-objects. As a rationally utilized reaction towards the rationalized society, however, in which the booths and consultation rooms of the spirit-seers of all grades, the reborn animism denies the alienation to which it testifies and on which it lives, and surrogates a nonexistent experience. The occultist draws the most extreme

conclusion from the fetish-character of the commodity: threateningly objectified labor springs at them from objects in the guise of countless demons. What is forgotten in a world which has turned into products, its producedness [*Produziertsein*] by human beings, is recalled in divided, inverted form, as something existing in itself which is added to and equated with the in-themselves of objects [*An sich der Objekte*]. Because these latter have frozen under the light of reason, losing the appearance [*Schein*] of being animated, that which animates them, its social quality, makes itself something naturally-supernaturally independent, a thing among things.

III. The regression to magical thinking under late capitalism assimilates thought to late-capitalist forms. The dubious-asocial marginal phenomena of the system, the ramshackle institutions which squint through the cracks in its walls, indeed reveal nothing of what would be outside, but manifest the energies of disassembly [*Zerfalls*] in the interior that much more. The small-time sages, who terrorize their clients in front of a crystal ball, are toy models of the big-time ones, who hold the destiny of humanity in their hands. The obscurantists behind “Psychic Research” [in English in original] are as quarrelsome and conspiratorial as society itself. The hypnosis exerted by occult things resembles totalitarian terror: in contemporary processes, both converge with each other. The smile of the augury has overgrown itself into the scornful laughter of society; it feeds on the immediate material exploitation of souls. The horoscope corresponds to the directives of bureaus on nationalities

[*Völker*: literally peoples or nations, but meaning a homogenous ethnic group], and number-mysticism is preparation for administrative statistics and cartel prices. Integration proves in the end to be the ideology of the disintegration into power-groups, which exterminate each other. Whoever casts their lot with them, is lost.

IV. The occult is a reflex-movement of the subjectification of all meaning, the complement of reification. When the objective reality seems more deaf to the living than ever before, they seek to worm out its meaning through an abracadabra. Meaning is indiscriminately ascribed to the next worse thing: the rationality of what is real, which is no longer quite convincing, is replaced with dancing tables and rays from heaps of earth. The refuse of the world of phenomena [*Erscheinungswelt*] turns into the *mundus intelligibilis* [Latin: world of intelligible realities] of the ailing consciousness. It comes close to being the speculative truth, just as Kafka's Odradek would almost be an angel, and is nevertheless, in a positivity which leaves out the medium of thought, only barbaric error, the subjectivity which has relinquished [*entäusserte*] itself and thereby fails to recognize itself in the object. The more complete the disdainfulness of what is passed off as "Spirit" [*Geist*] – and in anything more animated the enlightened subject would of course recognize itself – the more the meaning sensed there, which in fact is totally absent, turns into the unconscious, compulsory project of the historically – if not necessarily clinically – disintegrating [*zerfallenden*] subject. It would like to make the world similar its own disassembly [*Zerfall*]: that is why it deals with stage-props and

malicious wishes. “The third reads out of my hand / It wants to read my misfortune!” In the occult, the Spirit [*Geist*] groans under its own bane [Bann] like those caught in a bad dream, whose torment increases with the feeling, that they are dreaming, without being able to wake up.

V. The violence of the occult, just like Fascism, to which it is linked by thought-schemata of the sort which purvey anti-Semitism, is not only pathic. It consists rather of the fact that in the lesser panaceas, cover-pictures, as it were, the consciousness hungry for truth thinks it can grasp the dimly present cognition, which official progress of every type assiduously withholds. It is that society, by virtually excluding the possibility of the spontaneous recoil, gravitates towards total catastrophe. The real absurdity is the model for the astrological one, which puts forward the impenetrable context of alienated elements – nothing is more foreign than the stars – as knowledge about the subject. The threat which is read out of the constellations, resembles the historical one, which rolls on in unconsciousness, in what is subjectless. They can bear the thought that everyone is a prospective victim of a whole, which is merely formed from themselves, only by transferring that whole away from themselves onto something similar, something external to it. In the miserable idiocy which they propagate, the empty horror, they allow themselves to let out the clumsy misery, the crass fear of death and nevertheless to continue to repress it, as they must if they wish to continue to live. The break in the life-line which indicates a hidden cancer is a fraud only in the place where it is asserted, in the hand of the

individual [*Individuums*]; where it would not give a diagnosis, in the collective, it would be correct. Occultists rightly feel drawn to childishly monstrous natural-scientific fantasies. The confusion they create between their emanations and the isotopes of uranium, is ultimate clarity. The mystic rays are modest anticipations of the technical ones. Superstition is cognition, because it sees all of the ciphers of destruction together, which are scattered on the social surface; it is foolish, because it still clings to illusions, in all of its death-drive: glossing the answer, from the transfigured form of society, displaced into the heavens, which can only be provided by the real transfiguration of society.

VI. The occult is the metaphysics of knuckleheads. The subalternity of mediums is no more accidental than the apocryphal nature and triviality of what is revealed. Since the early days of spiritism, the beyond has announced nothing more portentous than a greeting from a dead grandmother next to a prediction, that a journey is in the offing. The excuse that the spirit-world cannot communicate to feeble human reason any more than this latter is able to take in, is just as silly, the auxiliary hypothesis of the paranoid system: the *lumen naturale* [Latin: “natural light,” in the sense of everyday human reasoning] achieved greater things than the trip to the grandmother, and if the spirits do not wish to acknowledge this, then they are mannerless kobolds, with whom one had better break off all contact. The obtusely natural content of the supernatural message betrays its untruth. While it hunts outside for what is lost, what it runs into there is only

its own nothingness. In order not to fall out of the grey prosaicness, in which they feel right at home as incorrigible realists, they adjust the meaning, on which they refresh themselves, into what is meaningless, before which they flee. The phoney magic is nothing other than the phoney existence, which the former illuminates. That is why it makes itself at home with what is down to earth. Facts, which differ from what is the case, only in that they are nothing of the sort, are worked up into the fourth dimension. Their *qualitas occulta* [Latin: hidden quality] is solely their non-being. They deliver the world-view of idiocy. Abruptly, drastically, the astrologists and spiritists issue a response to every question, which does not even solve the latter, but cancels any possible solution through crude suppositions. Their sublime realm, conceived as analogous to space, no more needs to be thought than chairs and flower-vases. It thereby reinforces conformism. Nothing pleases the existent more, than the position that existence, as such, is supposed to be meaning.

VII. The great religions have either, as in the Jewish one, kept in mind the salvation of the dead, after the ban on graven images, with silence, or taught the resurrection of the flesh. They have their gravity in the inseparability of what is spiritual [*Geistigen*] and what is corporeal. There is no intention, there is nothing “intellectual” [*"geistiges"*], which would not somehow be grounded in corporeal perception and demand corporeal fulfillment. To the occultists, who consider themselves above the thought of resurrection and do not at all wish for actual salvation, this is too crude. Their metaphysics, which even Huxley can no

longer distinguish from metaphysics, rests on the axiom: “The soul swings high into the air / the body rests on the couch over there.” The feistier the spirituality, the more mechanistic: not even Descartes separated it so cleanly. The division of labor and reification are driven to the extreme: body and soul are cut from each other in a perennial vivisection, as it were. The soul is supposed to dust itself off, in order to continue, in lighter regions, its eager activity right at the point it was interrupted. In such a declaration of independence, however, the soul turns into the cheap imitation of what it was falsely emancipated from. In place of the reciprocity, which even the most rigid philosophy upheld, the astral body sets up shop, the ignominious concession of the hypostatized Spirit [*Geist*] to its opponent. Only in the allegory of the body is the concept of the pure Spirit [*Geists*] is to be grasped at all, and the former simultaneously sublates the latter. With the reification of the spirits, the spirits are already negated.

VIII. Occultists fulminate against materialism. But they want to weigh the astral body. The objects of their interest are supposed to simultaneously surpass the possibility of experience and be experienced. Everything is supposed to be done strictly scientifically; the greater the humbug, the more carefully controlled the test arrangement. The pomposity of scientific controls is taken *ad absurdum* [Latin: to the point of absurdity], where there is nothing to control for. The same rationalistic and empiristic apparatus which put an end to the spirits, is employed to mandatorily foist them off on those who no longer trust in their own ratio. As if any elementary spirit would flee from

the trap of the control over nature, which is posited by their fleeting essence [*Wesen*]. But even this the occultists make use of. Because the spirits don't like controls, a door must be held open to them in the middle of security precautions, so that they can make their appearance undisturbed. For the occultists are practical types. They aren't driven by idle curiosity, they seek tips. Things go in a jiffy from the stars to futures trading [*Termingeschäft*: future transactions, futures, options]. Mostly the information amounts to ill tidings for some acquaintance, who was hoping for something.

IX. The cardinal sin of the occult is the contamination of Spirit [*Geist*] and existence, the latter of which turns into an attribute of the Spirit [*Geistes*]. This last originated in existence, as an organ designed to preserve life. Since existence is reflected in the Spirit [*Geist*], this latter turns at the same time into something else. What exists negates itself as the memorialization [*Eingedenken*] of itself. Such negation is the element of the Spirit [*Geistes*]. To ascribe it once more to positive existence, even if it were that of a higher social order, would deliver it to that which it stands against. Later bourgeois ideology had made it once more into what it was in pre-animism, something existing-in-itself according to the measure of the social division of labor, of the break between physical and intellectual labor, and of the planned domination over the former. In the concept of the Spirit [*Geistes*] which exists in itself, the consciousness ontologically justifies and eternalizes privilege, by making it independent of the social principle, which constitutes it. Such ideology explodes into occultism:

the latter is an idealism which has come into itself, as it were. Precisely by virtue of the rigid antithesis of being and Spirit [*Geist*], this latter turns into a department of being. If idealism had promoted the idea solely for the whole, that being would be Spirit [*Geist*] and this latter would exist, then the occult draws the absurd consequence from this, that existence means determinate being: “Existence is, according to its becoming, above all being with something non-being, so that this non-being is taken up in simple unity with being. The non-being thus taken up in being, the fact that the concrete whole is in the form of being, of immediacy, comprises the determination as such. “ (Hegel, *Science of Logic I*, ed. Glockner, Stuttgart 1928, page 123). The occultists take not-being as a “simple unity with being” literally, and their kind of concreity is a fraudulent abbreviation of the path from the whole to the determinate, which can claim that the whole, as something once determined, is thereby nothing of the sort anymore. They call to metaphysics, *hic Rhodus hic salta* [Latin: here is Rhodes, here is where you jump]: if the philosophical investment of Spirit [*Geist*] with existence can be determined, then, they feel, any random, scattered existence must ultimately justify itself as a particular Spirit [*Geist*]. Consequently, the doctrine of the existence of the Spirit [*Geist*], the most extreme exaltation of bourgeois consciousness, would already teleologically bear the belief in spirits, its utmost denigration. The transition to existence, always “positive” and justification for the world, implies at the same time the thesis of positivity of the Spirit [*Geist*], its arrest as a thing [*Dingfestmachung*], the transposition of what is absolute into the phenomenon

[*Erscheinung*]. Whether the entire tangible world, as “product,” is supposed to be Spirit [*Geist*] or any sort of thing any sort of Spirit [*Geist*], becomes irrelevant and the world-spirit turns into the highest spirit [*Geist*], to the guardian angel of what exists, of what is de-spiritualized. The occultists live on this: their mysticism is the enfant terrible [French: scandalous young guard] of the mystical moment in Hegel. They drive the speculation to defrauding bankruptcy. By passing off the determinate being as Spirit [*Geist*], they subject the objectified Spirit [*Geist*] to the test of existence, and it must turn out negatively. No Spirit [*Geist*] is there.

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Not to be misused. – Dialectics originated in sophistry, a procedure of discussion designed to shake dogmatic assertions, and, as public prosecutors and comics call it, to make the weaker word into the stronger. It formed as a consequence of the perennial method of critique which opposed *philosophia perennis* [Latin: age-old philosophy], the asylum of all thoughts of the oppressed, even what they themselves could never think. But as a means of being right, it was from the very beginning also a means of domination, the formal technics of apologetics with no concern for content, serviceable to those who could pay: the principle, of always and successfully turning the tables. That is why truth or untruth does not stand in the method as such, but in its intention in the historical process. The split of the Hegelian school into a left and right wing was grounded in the ambiguity of the theory no less than in the political situation of the immediate pre-1848 period.

Dialectics encompasses not just the Marxian doctrine, that the proletariat becomes, as the absolute object of history, its first social subject, capable of realizing the conscious self-determination of humanity, but also the joke, which Gustave Doré put into the mouth of a parliamentary representation of the *ancien régime* [French: feudal order]: that without Louis XVI the revolution would never have happened, therefore this latter is to be thanks for human rights. Negative philosophy, universal dissolution, constantly dissolves too that which dissolves. But the new form, in which both what is dissolved and dissolving claim to be sublated, can never step forwards purely in antagonistic society. For as long as domination reproduces itself, so too will the old quality recrudescence in the dissolution of what dissolves: in a radical sense, there is no pure leap. That would first of all be the emancipatory event, which actually happens. Because the dialectical determination of the new quality sees itself referred back to the violence of the objective tendency, which hands down the bane [Bann] of domination, it stands under the almost unavoidable compulsion, whenever it achieves the negation through the labor of the negation, to substitute what is bad about the old for the non-existent other. The profundity, with which it plumbs the depths of objectivity, is bought at the price of participating in the lie, that objectivity would already be the truth. By strictly delimiting itself to extrapolating the non-privileged condition, from what owes to the process the privilege of existing, it bows to restoration. This is registered by private existence. Hegel objected to the latter for its nullity. Mere subjectivity, insisting on the purity of its own principle, would entangle

itself in antinomies. It would go to pieces on its mischief [*Unwesen*], hypocrisy and malevolence, to the extent it does not objectify itself in society and the state. Ethics [Moral], autonomy posited on pure self-certainty, and even the conscience are mere appearance [*Schein*]. If “there is nothing ethically real” (Hegel, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, ed. Lasson, 2nd Printing, Leipzig 1921, page 397), then it logically follows in the *Philosophy of Law* that marriage is placed higher than the conscience, and that this latter is said, even on its own grounds – which Hegel, along with Romanticism, designates as irony – to be “subjective vanity” in a double understanding of the term. This motif of dialectics, which operates through all layers of the system, is simultaneously true and untrue. True, because it unveils the particular as necessary appearance [*Schein*], the false consciousness of what is split off, of being only itself and not a moment of the whole; and it causes this false consciousness to melt away through the energy of the whole. Untrue, because the motif of objectification, “disclosure” [*Entäusserung*: relinquishment, disclosure, realization], is degraded into a mere rationalization, into a pretext for precisely the bourgeois self-preservation of the subject, as long as the objectivity, which thought upholds in opposition to what is badly subjective, is unfree, regressing behind the critical labor of the subject. The word disclosure [*Entäusserung*], which expects the redemption of private caprice from the obedience of the private will, acknowledges, by expressly holding fast to what is external as what is institutionally opposed to the subject, in spite of all protestations of reconciliation, the enduring irreconcilability of subject and object, which for its part

comprises the theme of dialectical critique. The act of self-disclosure [*Selbstentäußerung*] is tantamount to renunciation, which Goethe described as salvational, and thereby justification for the status quo, then as now. Out of the insight, for example, into the mutilation of women through patriarchal society, in the impossibility of wiping away the anthropological deformation without its prerequisite, it is precisely implacable dialecticians, without illusions, who may deduce the standpoint of the master-in-the-house, speaking on behalf of the remaining stock of the patriarchal relationship. In this they lack neither for good reasons, such as the impossibility of relations of a different nature [*Wesen*] under contemporary conditions, nor even humanity towards the oppressed, who have to pay the bill for false emancipation; but all this, though true, would turn into ideology in the hands of masculine interest. Dialecticians know the unhappiness and the abandonment of the unmarried spinster, of what is murderous in separations. By anti-romantically awarding priority to the objectified marriage over the ephemeral passion, not sublated into the common life, they would turn themselves into the representatives of those who propagate marriage at the cost of affection, who love what they are married to, therefore the abstract property-relationship. The final step of such wisdom would be, that the person really doesn't matter so much, if they would only adapt to the given constellation and do their duty. To protect itself from such temptations, an enlightened dialectics requires the unceasing suspicion against every apologetic, restorative element, which nevertheless comprises a part of what is unnaïve. The threatening relapse of reflection into

what is unreflected is betrayed by the superiority, which switches on the dialectical procedure and holds forth, as if it were itself that immediate knowledge of the whole, which is excluded precisely by the principle of dialectics. The standpoint of the totality is assumed, in order to slap down every determinate negative judgment by the opponent with the sign of the cautionary “that’s not what was meant,” and simultaneously to violently break off the movement of the concept, suspending dialectics with reference to the insurmountable gravity of facts. The calamity occurs through the *thema probandum* [Latin: self-evident supposition] one makes use of the dialectic instead of losing oneself in it. Then the sovereignly dialectical thought would regress back to the pre-dialectical stage: the sedate exposition, that every thing has its two sides.

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At the end. – The only philosophy which would still be accountable in the face of despair, would be the attempt to consider all things, as they would be portrayed from the standpoint of redemption. Cognition has no other light than that which shines from redemption out upon the world; all else exhausts itself in post-construction and remains a piece of technics. Perspectives must be produced which set the world beside itself, alienated from itself, revealing its cracks and fissures, as needy and distorted as it will one day lay there in the messianic light. To win such perspectives without caprice or violence, wholly by the feel for objects, this alone is what thinking is all about. It is the simplest of all things, because the condition irrefutably call for such cognitions, indeed because completed negativity,

once it comes fully into view, shoots [*zusammenschiesst*] into the mirror-writing of its opposite. But it is also that which is totally impossible, because it presupposes a standpoint at a remove, were it even the tiniest bit, from the bane [*Bannkreis*] of the existent; meanwhile every possible cognition must not only be wrested from that which is, in order to be binding, but for that very reason is stricken with the same distortedness and neediness which it intends to escape. The more passionately thought seals itself off from its conditional being for the sake of what is unconditional, the more unconsciously, and thereby catastrophically, it falls into the world. It must comprehend even its own impossibility for the sake of possibility. In relation to the demand thereby imposed on it, the question concerning the reality or non-reality of redemption is however almost inconsequential.