

§ 248

In this externality, the determinations of the Notion have the show of an *indifferent subsistence* and *isolation* (*Vereinzelung*) in regard to each other, and the Notion, therefore, is present only as something inward. Consequently, Nature exhibits no freedom in its existence, but only *necessity* and *contingency*.

Remark

For this reason, Nature in the determinate existence which makes it Nature, is not to be deified; nor are sun, moon, animals, plants, etc., to be regarded and cited as more excellent, as works of God, than human actions and events. *In itself*, in the Idea, Nature is divine: but as it is, the being of Nature does not accord with its Notion; rather is Nature the *unresolved contradiction*. Its characteristic is *positedness*, the negative, in the same way that the ancients grasped matter in general as the *non-ens*. Thus Nature has also been spoken of as the *self-degradation of the Idea*, in that the Idea, in this form of externality, is in a disparity with its own self. It is only to the external and immediate stage of consciousness, that is, to *sensuous* consciousness, that Nature appears as the First, the immediate, as mere being (*das Seiende*). But because, even in this element of externality, Nature is a representation of the *Idea*, one may, and indeed ought, to admire in it the wisdom of God. Vanini said that a stalk of straw suffices to demonstrate God's being: but every mental image, the slightest fancy of mind, the play of its most capricious whims, every word, affords a superior ground for a knowledge of God's being than any single object of Nature. In Nature, not only is the play of forms a prey to boundless and unchecked contingency, but each separate entity is without the Notion of itself. The highest level to which Nature attains is life; but this, as only a natural mode of the Idea, is at the mercy of the unreason of externality, and the living creature is throughout its whole life entangled with other alien existences, whereas in every expression of Spirit there is contained the moment of free, universal self-relation. It is equally an error to regard the products of mind as inferior to

natural objects, and to regard the latter as superior to *human works of art*, on the ground that these must take their material from outside, and that they are not alive. As if the spiritual form did not contain a higher kind of life, and were not more worthy of the Spirit, than the natural form, and as though form generally were not superior to matter, and throughout the ethical sphere even what can be called matter did not belong to Spirit alone: as if in Nature the higher form, the living creature, did not also receive its matter from outside. It is put forward as a further superiority of Nature that throughout all the contingency of its manifold existence it remains obedient to eternal laws. But surely this is also true of the realm of self-consciousness, a fact which finds recognition in the belief that human affairs are governed by Providence; or are the laws of this Providence in the field of human affairs supposed to be only contingent and irrational? But if the contingency of Spirit, the free will (*Willkür*) does *evil*, this is still infinitely superior to the regular motions of the celestial bodies, or to the innocence of plant life; for what thus errs is still Spirit.

Zusatz. The infinite divisibility of matter simply means that matter is external to itself. The immeasurableness of Nature, which at first excites our wonder, is precisely this same externality. Because each material point seems to be entirely independent of all the others, a failure to hold fast to the Notion prevails in Nature which is unable to bring together its determinations. The sun, planets, comets, the Elements, plants, animals, exist separately by themselves. The sun is an individual other than the earth, connected with the planets only by gravity. It is only in *life* that we meet with subjectivity and the counter to externality. The heart, liver, eye, are not self-subsistent individualities on their own account, and the hand, when separated from the body, putrefies. The organic body is still a whole composed of many members external to each other; but each individual member exists only in the subject, and the Notion exists as the power over these members. Thus it is that the Notion, which at the stage of Notionlessness (*Begriffslosigkeit*) is only something inward, first comes into existence in life, as soul. The spatiality of the organism has no truth whatever for the soul; otherwise there would be as many souls as material points, for the soul feels in each point of the organism. One must not be deceived by the show of mutual externality, but must comprehend that mutually external points form only one unity. The celestial bodies only *appear* to be independent of each other, they are the guardians of *one* field. But because the unity in Nature is a relation between things which are apparently self-subsistent, Nature is not free, but

is only necessary and contingent. For necessity is the inseparability of different terms which yet appear as indifferent towards each other; but because this abstract state of externality also receives its due, there is contingency in Nature, i.e. external necessity, not the inner necessity of the Notion. There has been a lot of talk in physics about polarity. This concept is a great advance in the metaphysics of the science; for the concept of polarity is simply nothing else but the specific relation of necessity between two different terms which are one, in that when one is given, the other is also given. But this polarity is restricted to the opposition. However, through the opposition there is also given the return of the opposition into unity, and this is the third term which the necessity of the Notion has over and above polarity. In Nature, as the otherness [of the Idea], there also occur the square or the tetrad, for example, the four Elements, the four colours, etc., and even the pentad, e.g. the fingers and the senses. In Spirit, the fundamental form of necessity is the triad. The totality of the disjunction of the Notion exists in Nature as a tetrad because the first term is the universal as such, and the second, or the difference, appears itself as a duality—in Nature, the Other must exist explicitly as Other; with the result that the subjective unity of the universal and the particular is the fourth term which then has a separate existence in face of the other three terms. Further, as the monad and the dyad themselves constitute the entire particularity, the totality of the Notion can go as far as the pentad.

Nature is the negative because it is the negative of the Idea. Jacob Boehme says that God's first-born is Lucifer; and this son of Light centred his imagination on himself and became evil: that is the moment of difference, of otherness held fast against the Son, who is otherness within the divine love. The ground and significance of such conceptions which occur wildly in an oriental style, is to be found in the negative nature of Nature. The other form of otherness is immediacy, which consists in the moment of difference existing abstractly on its own. This existence, however, is only momentary, not a true existence; the Idea alone exists eternally, because it is being in and for itself, i.e. being which has returned into itself. Nature is the first in point of time, but the absolute *prius* is the Idea; this absolute *prius* is the last, the true beginning, Alpha is Omega. What is unmediated is often held to be superior, the mediated being thought of as dependent. The Notion, however, has both aspects: it is mediation through the sublation of mediation, and so is immediacy. People speak, for example, of an immediate belief in God; but this is the inferior mode of being, not the higher; the primitive religions were religions of nature-worship. The affirmative element in Nature is the manifestation of the Notion in it; the nearest instance of the power of the Notion is the perishableness of this outer existence; all natural existences form but a single body in which dwells the soul [the Notion]. The Notion manifests itself in these giant members, but not *qua* Notion; this occurs only in Spirit where the Notion exists as it is.

§ 249

Nature is to be regarded as a *system of stages*, one arising necessarily from the other and being the proximate truth of the stage from which it results: but it is not generated *naturally* out of the other but only in the inner Idea which constitutes the ground of Nature. *Metamorphosis* pertains only to the Notion as such, since only *its* alteration is development. But in Nature, the Notion is partly only something inward, partly existent only as a living individual: *existent* metamorphosis, therefore, is limited to this individual alone.

Remark

It has been an inept conception of ancient and also recent Philosophy of Nature to regard the progression and transition of one natural form and sphere into a higher as an outwardly-actual production which, however, to be made *clearer*, is relegated to the *obscurity* of the past. It is precisely externality which is characteristic of Nature, that is, differences are allowed to fall apart and to appear as indifferent to each other: the dialectical Notion which leads forward the *stages*, is the inner side of them. A thinking consideration must reject such nebulous, at bottom, sensuous ideas, as in particular the so-called *origination*, for example, of plants and animals from water, and then the *origination* of the more highly developed animal organisms from the lower, and so on.

Zusatz. The consideration of the utility of natural objects contains this truth, that they are not an absolute end in and for themselves. This negative aspect, however, is not external to them but is the immanent moment of their Idea, which effects their perishability and transition into another existence, but at the same time into a higher Notion. The Notion timelessly and in a universal manner posits all particularity in existence. It is a completely empty thought to represent species as developing successively, one after the other, in time. Chronological difference has no interest whatever for thought. If it is only a question of enumerating the series of living species in order to show the mind how they are divided into classes, either by starting from the poorest and simplest terms, and rising to the more developed and richer in determinations and content, or by proceeding in the reverse fashion, this operation will always have a

general interest. It will be a way of arranging things as in the division of Nature into three kingdoms; this is preferable to jumbling them together, a procedure which would be somewhat repellent to an intelligence which had an inkling of the Notion. But it must not be imagined that such a dry series is made dynamic or philosophical, or more intelligible, or whatever you like to say, by representing the terms as producing each other. Animal nature is the truth of vegetable nature, vegetable of mineral; the earth is the truth of the solar system. In a system, it is the most abstract term which is the first, and the truth of each sphere is the last; but this again is only the first of a higher sphere. It is the necessity of the Idea which causes each sphere to complete itself by passing into another higher one, and the variety of forms must be considered as necessary and determinate. The land animal did not develop *naturally* out of the aquatic animal, nor did it fly into the air on leaving the water, nor did perhaps the bird again fall back to earth. If we want to compare the different stages of Nature, it is quite proper to note that, for example, a certain animal has one ventricle and another has two; but we must not then talk of the fact as if we were dealing with parts which had been put together. Still less must the category of earlier spheres be used to explain others: for this is a formal error, as when it is said that the plant is a carbon pole and the animal a nitrogen pole.

The two forms under which the serial progression of Nature is conceived are *evolution* and *emanation*. The way of evolution, which starts from the imperfect and formless, is as follows: at first there was the liquid element and aqueous forms of life, and from the water there evolved plants, polyps, molluscs, and finally fishes; then from the fishes were evolved the land animals, and finally from the land animals came man. This gradual alteration is called an explanation and understanding; it is a conception which comes from the Philosophy of Nature, and it still flourishes. But though this quantitative difference is of all theories the easiest to understand, it does not really explain anything at all. The way of emanation is peculiar to the oriental world. It involves a series of degradations of being, starting from the perfect being, the absolute totality, God. God has created, and from Him have proceeded splendours, lightnings and likenesses in such fashion that the first likeness is that which most resembles God. This first likeness in its turn, is supposed to have generated another but less perfect one, and so on, so that each created being has become, in its turn, a creative being, down to the negative being, matter, the extreme of evil. Emanation thus ends with the absence of all form. Both ways are one-sided and superficial, and postulate an indeterminate goal. That which proceeds from the perfect to the imperfect has this advantage, that then we have before us the type of the complete organism; and this is the type which picture-thinking must have before it in order to understand the imperfect organisms. What appear in the latter as subordinate, for example, organs which have no functions, is first understood through the more developed organisms which enable

one to see the place the organ fills. The perfect, if it is to have the advantage over the imperfect, must exist not only in picture-thinking but also in reality.

The basis of the idea of metamorphosis is also a single Idea which persists in the various genera and even in each particular organ, so that these genera and organs are only the diverse forms of a single, self-same type. Similarly, one speaks of the metamorphosis of an insect, in that the caterpillar, the pupa and the butterfly, are one and the same individual. In the case of individuals, the development certainly takes place in time, but it is otherwise with the genus. With the existence of the genus in a particular form, the other modes of its existence are necessarily postulated. Water being given, then air, fire, etc., too, are necessarily postulated. It is important to hold fast to identity; but to hold fast to difference is no less important, and this gets pushed into the background when a change is conceived only quantitatively. This makes the mere idea of metamorphosis inadequate.

Under the same heading, too, comes the idea of the *series* formed by things, and especially living things. The desire to know the necessity of this development leads to the search for a law of the series, a basic determination which, while positing difference, repeats itself in such difference and in so doing also produces a fresh difference. But to enlarge a series merely by the successive addition of elements similarly determined, and to see only the same relationship between all the members of the series, is not the way in which the Notion generates its determinations. It is this very fact of imagining a *series* of stages and the like, which has been such a hindrance to any progress in understanding the necessity of the various forms of Nature. To seek to arrange in serial form the planets, the metals or chemical substances in general, plants and animals, and then to ascertain the law of the series, is a fruitless task, because Nature does not arrange its forms in such articulate series: the Notion differentiates things according to their own specific qualitative character, and to that extent advances by leaps. The old saying, or so-called law, *non datur saltus in natura*, is altogether inadequate to the diremption of the Notion. The continuity of the Notion with itself is of an entirely different character.

§ 250

The *contradiction* of the Idea, arising from the fact that, as Nature, it is external to itself, is more precisely this: that on the one hand there is the *necessity* of its forms which is generated by the Notion, and their rational determination in the organic totality; while on the other hand, there is their indifferent *contingency* and indeterminable irregularity. In the sphere of Nature contingency and

determination from without has its right, and this contingency is at its greatest in the realm of concrete individual forms, which however, as products of Nature, are concrete only in an *immediate* manner. The *immediately* concrete thing is a group of properties, external to one another and more or less indifferently related to each other; and for that very reason, the simple subjectivity which exists for itself is also indifferent and abandons them to contingent and external determination. This is the *impotence* of Nature, that it preserves the determinations of the Notion only *abstractly*, and leaves their detailed specification to external determination.

Remark

The infinite wealth and variety of forms and, what is most irrational, the contingency which enters into the external arrangement of natural things, have been extolled as the sublime freedom of Nature, even as the divinity of Nature, or at least the divinity present *in* it. This confusion of contingency, caprice, and disorder, with freedom and rationality is characteristic of sensuous and unphilosophical thinking. This impotence of Nature sets limits to philosophy and it is quite improper to expect the Notion to comprehend—or as it is said, construe or deduce—these contingent products of Nature. It is even imagined that the more trivial and isolated the object, the easier is the task of deducing it.* Undoubtedly, traces of determination by the Notion are to be found even in the most particularized object, although these traces do not exhaust its nature. Traces of this influence of the Notion and of this inner coherence of natural objects will often surprise the investigator, but especially will they seem startling, or rather incredible, to those who are accustomed to see only contingency in natural, as in human, history. One must, however, be careful to avoid taking such trace of the Notion for the total

* It was in this—and other respects too—quite naïve sense that Herr Krug once challenged the Philosophy of Nature to perform the feat of deducing *only* his pen. One could perhaps give him hope that *his* pen would have the glory of being deduced, if ever philosophy should advance so far and have such a clear insight into every great theme in heaven and on earth, past and present, that there was nothing more important to comprehend.

determination of the object, for that is the route to the analogies previously mentioned.

In the impotence of Nature to adhere strictly to the Notion in its realization, lies the difficulty and, in many cases, the impossibility of finding fixed distinctions for classes and orders from an empirical consideration of Nature. Nature everywhere blurs the essential limits of species and genera by intermediate and defective forms, which continually furnish counter examples to every fixed distinction; this even occurs within a specific genus, that of man, for example, where monstrous births, on the one hand, must be considered as belonging to the genus, while on the other hand, they lack certain essential determinations characteristic of the genus. In order to be able to consider such forms as defective, imperfect and deformed, one must presuppose a fixed, invariable type. This type, however, cannot be furnished by experience, for it is experience which also presents these so-called monstrosities, deformities, intermediate products, etc. The fixed type rather presupposes the self-subsistence and dignity of the determination stemming from the Notion.

§ 251

Nature is, in itself, a living Whole. The movement through its stages is more precisely this: that the Idea *posits* itself as that which it is *in itself*; or what is the same thing, that it returns *into itself* out of its immediacy and externality which is *death*, in order to be, first a *living creature*, but further, to sublate this determinateness also in which it is only Life, and to give itself an existence as Spirit, which is the truth and the final goal of Nature and the genuine actuality of the Idea.

Zusatz. The development of the Notion towards its destination, its end or, if you like, its purpose, is to be grasped as a positing of what it is in itself, so that these determinations of its content come into existence, are manifested, but at the same time not as independent and self-subsistent, but as moments which remain in the unity of the Notion, as ideal, i.e. posited moments. This positing can therefore be grasped as an utterance or expression, a coming forth, a setting forth, a coming-out-of-self, in so far as the subjectivity of the Notion is lost in the mutual outsideness of its determinations. But it preserves itself in them, as their unity and

ideality; and this going out of the centre from itself to the periphery is therefore, looked at from the opposite side, equally a taking up again of this outer into the inner, an inwardizing or remembering (*Erinnern*) that it is it, the Notion, that exists in this externality. Starting therefore from the externality in which the Notion at first exists, its progress is a movement into itself, into the centre, i.e. a bringing of immediate and external existence which is inadequate to itself, to subjective unity, to being-within-self: not in such a way that the Notion withdraws itself from this externality, leaving it behind like a dead shell, but rather that existence as such is within self or conforms to the Notion, that the being-within-self itself exists, which is Life. The Notion strives to burst the shell of outer existence and to become for itself. Life is the Notion which has attained to the manifestation of itself, which has explicated, set forth, what it is in itself; but the Understanding finds this the most difficult of things to grasp because what it finds easiest to grasp is the most simple of things, i.e. the abstract and the dead.

c. Division

The Idea as Nature is:

- I. in the determination of asunderness or mutual outsideness, of infinite separatedness, the unity of form being outside it; this unity, as *ideal*, is only *in itself* and is consequently a unity which is only *sought*. This is *matter* and its ideal system—Mechanics;
- II. in the determination of *particularity*, so that reality is posited with an immanent determinateness of form and with an existent difference in it. This is a relationship of Reflection (*Reflexionsverhältnis*) whose being-within-self is natural *individuality*—Physics;
- III. in the determination of *subjectivity*, in which the real differences of form are also brought back to the *ideal* unity which has found itself and is for itself—Organics.

Zusatz. The division is made from the standpoint of the Notion grasped in its totality, and it indicates the diremption of the Notion into its determinations; and since in this diremption the Notion explicates its determinations and gives them a self-subsistence, though only as moments, the process is one of self-realization in which the Notion posits itself as Idea. But the Notion not only sets forth its moments, and not only articulates itself in its differences, but it also brings these apparently

self-subsistent stages back to their ideality and unity, to itself; and only then, in fact, has it made itself the concrete Notion, the Idea and the Truth. It seems, therefore, that there are two ways of presenting both the Division and the scientific exposition: one way would start from the concrete Notion, and in Nature this is Life, which would be considered on its own account. It would then be led to consider the externalized forms of the Notion, the forms being thrown out by the Notion to exist separately as spheres of Nature, the Notion being related to them as to other—consequently more abstract—modes of its existence; this way would close with the complete extinction of life. The other way is the reverse of this. It starts with the, at first, only immediate mode of the Notion's existence, with its uttermost self-externality, and it closes with the true existence of the Notion, with the truth of the whole course of its exposition. The first way can be compared to the process implied in the conception of emanation, the second, to the process implied in the conception of evolution (§ 249, *Zusatz*). Each of these forms taken separately is one-sided, but they exist together; the eternal divine process is a flowing in two opposite directions which meet and permeate each other in what is simply and solely *one*. The First, let it be called by the loftiest name, is only an immediate, even though we mean by it something concrete. Matter, for example, negates itself as an untrue existence and from this negation emerges a higher existence. From one aspect, it is by an evolution that the earlier stages are cancelled but from another aspect matter remains in the background and is produced anew by emanation. Evolution is thus also an involution, in that matter interiorizes itself to become life. In virtue of the urge of the Idea to become objective to itself, the self-subsistent becomes a moment: the senses of the animal, for example, made objective and external, are the Sun and the lunar and cometary bodies. Even in the sphere of Physics these bodies lose their independence although they still retain the same form with some modifications; they are the Elements [air, fire, and water]. The subjective sense of sight existing outwardly is the Sun, taste is water, and smell is the air. But as our task here is to posit the determinations of the Notion, we must not start from the most concrete, the true sphere, but from the most abstract.

Matter is the form in which the self-externality of Nature achieves its first being-within-self, an abstract being-for-self which is exclusive and therefore a plurality, which has its unity, as what brings the independent many into a universal being-for-self, at once within and outside itself: gravity. In the sphere of Mechanics, being-for-self is not yet an individual, stable unity having the power to subordinate plurality to itself. Heavy matter does not yet possess the individuality which preserves its determinations; and since in matter the determinations of the Notion are still external to each other, its differences are not qualitative but indifferent or purely quantitative, and matter, merely as mass, has no form. Form is acquired by individual bodies in Physics, and with this we have at

once gravity revealed for the first time as the mastery of being-for-self over multiplicity, a being-for-self which is no longer merely a striving but which has come to rest, although at first only in the mode of appearance (*nur auf erscheinende Weise*). Each atom of gold, for example, contains all the determinations or properties of the whole lump of gold, and matter is immanently specified and particularized. The second determination is that here, still, particularity as qualitative determinateness, and being-for-self as the point of individuality, fall together in unity, and therefore body is finitely determined; individuality is still bound to definite exclusive specific properties, does not yet exist as totality. If such a body enters into a process in which it loses such properties, then it ceases to be what it is; the qualitative determinateness is therefore affirmatively posited, but not at the same time also negatively. The organic being is totality as found in Nature, an individuality which is for itself and which internally develops into its differences: but in such a way that first, these determinations are not only specific properties but also concrete totalities; secondly, they remain also qualitatively determined against each other, and, as thus finite, are posited as ideal moments by Life, which preserves itself in the process of these members. Thus we have a number of beings-for-self which, however, are brought back to the being-for-self which is for itself and which, as its own end (*Selbstzweck*), subdues the members and reduces them to means: this is the unity of qualitatively determined being and gravity, which finds itself in Life.

Each stage is a specific realm of Nature and all appear to have independent existence, But the last is the concrete unity of all the preceding ones, just as, in general, each successive stage embodies the lower stages, but equally posits these, as its non-organic nature, over against itself. One stage is the power of the other, and this relation is reciprocal. Here can be seen the true meaning of *powers* (*Potenzen*). The non-organic Elements are powers opposed to what is individual, subjective—the non-organic destroys the organic. But equally the organism, in its turn, is the power which subdues its universal powers, air, water; these are perpetually liberated and also perpetually subdued and assimilated. The eternal life of Nature consists in this: first, that the Idea displays itself in each sphere so far as it can within the finitude of that sphere, just as each drop of water provides an image of the sun, and secondly, that the Notion, through its dialectic, breaks through the limitation of this sphere, since it cannot rest content with an inadequate element, and necessarily passes over into a higher stage.