

WILHELM DILTHEY

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SELECTED WORKS / VOLUME VI

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*Ethical and World-View  
Philosophy*



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RUDOLF A. MAKKEEL AND FRITHJOF RODI, EDITORS

## ETHICAL AND WORLD-VIEW PHILOSOPHY

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WILHELM DILTHEY

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*Ethical  
and World-View  
Philosophy*

EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY

RUDOLF A. MAKKEEL

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## PREFACE TO ALL VOLUMES

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This six-volume translation of the main writings of Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) is intended to meet a longstanding need. It makes available to English readers translations of complete texts representing the full range of Dilthey's philosophy. The multivolume edition will thereby provide a wider basis for research not only in the history and the theory of the human sciences but also in Dilthey's philosophical understanding of history, life and world-views. His principle writings on psychology, aesthetics, ethics, and pedagogy are also included, together with some historical essays and literary criticism.

Whereas the Spanish-speaking world, which assimilated Dilthey early and intensively under the influence of Ortega y Gasset, has had an eight-volume translation since 1944–45, the English-speaking world has approached Dilthey more hesitantly. The efforts made by H. A. Hodges to acquaint the British public with Dilthey met with only limited success. H. P. Rickman has translated parts of Dilthey's writings, and his introductions have sought to dispel the distrust of Continental Philosophy, which characterized the early phases of the Analytical Movement. While a few individual works have also been translated, a systematically collected edition will provide a more consistent rendering of important terms and concepts.

A sustained interest in continental thought has created a climate in which the still not adequately recognized philosophy of Dilthey can be re-appropriated. As phenomenological and hermeneutical theories are being applied to more complex and problematic questions, it is becoming more evident that the nineteenth-century roots of these philosophical theories must be reexamined. This is especially the case with problems surrounding the theory of the *Geisteswissenschaften*. As given its classical formulation by Dilthey, this theory was originally referred to in English as that of the "human studies" in order to differentiate it from the positivistic ideal of a "unified science." Currently, the more forthright title, "human sciences," has been adopted—but at the risk of becoming submerged in a universal hermeneutics and post-Kuhnian philosophy of science.



Given this new situation, the difference between the natural sciences and the human sciences will need to be reconsidered. If interpretation and the circularity associated with it are inherent to both the natural and human sciences, then the task will be to determine what kind of interpretation is involved in each and at what level.

The translations of Dilthey's main theoretical works on the human sciences will show that Dilthey's overall position was more flexible than has been realized. His distinction between understanding (*Verstehen*) and explaining (*Erklären*), for example, was not intended to exclude explanations from the human sciences, but only to delimit their scope. Moreover, the importance of methodological reflection in the human sciences should become more evident and serve to eliminate the persistent misconceptions of understanding as empathy, or worse still, as a mode of irrationalism. The German term *Geisteswissenschaften* encompasses both the humanities and the social sciences, and Dilthey's theory and works assume no sterile dichotomies rooted in a presumed opposition between the arts and the sciences.

The limits of a six-volume edition did not permit inclusion of some significant works: full-scale historical monographs such as the *Leben Schleiermachers*, major essays from *Weltanschauung und Analyse des Menschen seit Renaissance und Reformation* and *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels*. We trust that our volumes will generate enough interest in Dilthey's thought to justify the future translation of these and other works as well.

This edition arose through a close cooperation among the editors, their respective universities (Emory University, Atlanta, and Ruhr-Universität Bochum), and a great number of colleagues from various disciplines who served as translators. This kind of large-scale cooperation required an organizational framework. A group of Dilthey scholars consisting of Professors O. F. Bollnow, K. Gründer, U. Herrmann, B. E. Jensen, H. Johach, O. Pöggeler, and H. P. Rickman met twice in Bochum to assist the editors in selecting the content of this edition. Several translation sessions were held at Emory University to bring the translators together to discuss terminological difficulties, and other scholars have advised us as well (see list of advisory board in the front matter and Editorial note to this volume).

Dilthey is difficult to translate. In an effort to render the translations as coherent as possible, the editors prepared a comprehensive lexicon for the use of the translators. To guarantee the quality of the translations, they have been carefully edited. First we scrutinized the translations for problems left unresolved by the lexicon

and collected data for our bibliographical references. Then we went over each text, making revisions where necessary (1) to ensure that the allusions and idiomatic meanings of the original German have been preserved and (2) to make Dilthey's complex and indirect prose accessible to the modern English reader.

An Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship in 1978–79 made it possible for the editors to begin their cooperative efforts. The Fritz Thyssen Stiftung in Cologne enabled them to execute this project through a ten-year grant. The Translations Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities and Emory University have also made substantial means available for this project. The editors are grateful to all these institutions for their very generous support. Of course, this project would not have borne fruit were it not for the commitment of Princeton University Press and the encouragement of Sanford Thatcher, Ann Wald, Ian Malcolm, and Robert Tempio. Our appreciation to all who have helped in this time-consuming but worthwhile endeavor.

*Rudolf A. Makkreel  
Frithjof Rodi*



## EDITORIAL NOTE TO VOLUME VI

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In the preface we have already described our general procedures in revising translations for this edition. Coherence in the use of terminology has been our aim throughout, but when Dilthey uses terms nontechnically we have allowed the context to determine the best English equivalent. Thus, while we normally translate *Erlebnis* as “lived experience,” when Dilthey uses it together with other adjectives such as “religious,” we tend to drop the “lived” to avoid awkwardness. Brief notes about some of our most important terminological decisions have been provided where such terms first occur.

Words and phrases added by the editors of Dilthey’s *Gesammelte Schriften* have been placed in < >; those added by the editors of *Selected Works* in [ ].

The titles of works not already translated into English have been left in German. Otherwise, only the English title is used. When figures and works that are now no longer so well known are mentioned by Dilthey, we have provided brief annotations. But because they are not repeated, the index should be consulted for the first mention of names.

Dilthey’s own footnotes will have a (D) at the end. Those added by the *Herausgeber* or editors of the *Gesammelte Schriften* will have an (H) at the end. Our own footnotes will be unmarked.

We gratefully acknowledge the special support for this volume provided by an Emory College Research Grant in Humanistic Inquiry and by the Heilbrun Fund. We also thank Michael Hodgkin of Emory University for his assistance.



WILHELM DILTHEY  
SELECTED WORKS • VOLUME VI



## INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME VI

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The works in this volume present Dilthey's most deeply held views about the nature of philosophy and how it can guide human practices. They range from an extensive lecture course on ethics, two short texts on philosophy in crisis, a long essay on the changing nature of philosophy, his best-known essay on world-view types, and a final essay on the rootedness of religiosity in lived experience. These works are from the last two decades of Dilthey's life: the lecture course on ethics was given in 1890 and the religion essay was written just prior to his death in 1911. In all these writings, Dilthey is reflecting on the history of human problems with an eye to the future. The emphasis here is less on the theoretical and evaluative issues central to the understanding of human life and history that pervade most of his writings, and more on the ultimate questions that still haunt philosophical and religious thought. Three of these works were available in English before, but are out of print and have been carefully retranslated for this volume. The other three include a text on what philosophy can contribute to present-day culture, the already mentioned essay on religion and the lecture course on ethics. The latter work fills an especially important gap in our overall comprehension of Dilthey and will be discussed in some detail.

Dilthey started his lectures on ethics, posthumously published with the title *System of Ethics*, by acknowledging that any new philosophical ethics will only be effective if it can guide the life of individuals by taking their social situation into account. He promises a social ethics that will address the changes that have marked modern history ever since the French Revolution. He refers to social questions that were still unresolved, namely, the demands of the working classes as formulated in the theories of the socialists. He regards socialism as an attempt at "drawing the ultimate consequences of a very powerful line of thought in natural science," and adds that "if natural selection, heredity, and the animal nature of man really are to be viewed as the sole principles of social change, then the organization of the forms of life in society can only be grounded on these presuppositions"(36). He further notes that Karl Marx saw these



natural forces of human competition as being aggravated by the economic power of capital that threatened ever more workers with “a minimally bearable level of subsistence,” therefore necessitating “an alteration of the existing relationships of property, inheritance, marriage, and family” (36). Acknowledging the inadequacy of many social institutions, Dilthey nevertheless finds the Marxist solutions based on political economy too reductionist. A better solution to these problems must be found through a more comprehensive social ethics that will be able to put our animal nature in context.

Before working this out, however, Dilthey considers the three main ways in which social practices have been evaluated and justified by philosophers. He begins by saying that social institutions can no longer be defended by traditional idealistic principles based on theological and metaphysical systems that posit a transcendent reality. The modern naturalistic system of morality is an advance in attempting to derive its tenets from human nature. Dilthey, however, regards its focus on the competitive nature of human beings and their interest in individual self-preservation as too limiting. He also takes note of a third emerging nineteenth-century approach to ethics based on the study of group phenomena and socio-historical movements. In Germany, this produced a Hegelian type of developmental theory that subordinates individuals to communal ideals that unfold our human destiny. In France and England, it generated biologically rooted theories of evolution that stress our need to adapt to our circumstances. Here again Dilthey finds that no satisfactory solution has come about. To resolve the tensions that remain in the second and third approaches based on individual experience and group phenomena respectively, he concludes that a “critical consciousness” based on anthropological “self-reflection” is necessary. It is this new perspective that is then directed against utilitarianism, which is seen as a “compromise” between a reductive naturalism and a social ethical approach (see 49).

While approving of John Stuart Mill’s efforts to make naturalistic ethics more socially and historically engaged, he finds his goals to be unrealistic. This is because Mill’s utilitarian starting point narrows human beings to sense-based intellects (see 50). The utilitarian principle of maximizing happiness reduces ethics to an intellectual exercise of calculating pleasures that are at base sensuous. Dilthey welcomed Mill’s efforts to introduce qualitative differentiations into the feeling of pleasure as an improvement over Jeremy Bentham’s quantitative approach, but they still fail to uncover the true motives for human action. We do not merely act to quantitatively increase

or qualitatively enhance our happiness. Neither Bentham nor Mill has a real understanding of the ways in which human feelings are rooted in human drives and desires. Therefore, they cannot account fully for what motivates individual human agents. Ultimately, Dilthey dismisses utilitarianism as a social program that placed too much emphasis on governmental legislation.

A true ethics must be able to motivate individuals from within rather than through legislation from without. To better understand human motivation, Mill's utilitarianism needs a richer sense of human nature. Dilthey often criticized the associationist psychology of the British for not appreciating the true interconnectedness of our conscious states, and therefore he proposed a descriptive structural psychology to underscore that what we perceive, feel, and will forms a complex nexus.<sup>1</sup> What we perceive is not just sense-based, but also affected by how we feel and what we will. The delineation of this reciprocal nexus was to provide a contextual understanding for subsequent explanations of human behavior. For the sake of guiding ethical action, Dilthey also thought it important to look deeper for the kind of motivating impulses that can account for social cooperation among human beings. Isolating a special psychological feeling such as the sympathy of David Hume and Adam Smith is not going to adequately explain altruistic deeds. A more encompassing kind of anthropological reflection is needed.

Accordingly, Dilthey defines his task in the lectures on ethics as developing a "psycho-ethical" approach that is rooted in "anthropological-historical analysis" (104). Whereas traditional psychology has analyzed feelings mainly as responses to sense impressions that come from without, a psycho-ethical understanding of the feelings and incentives that can motivate us to act must be rooted in an anthropological analysis of the drives, instincts, and desires that impel us from within. Instead of considering human beings as primarily adapting to their surroundings by intellectual processes and felt responses, Dilthey argues that many of our actions are at root instinctive.

Like many modern philosophers, utilitarians have tended to construct our mental life starting with sense-impressions as the elementary constituents needed to cognize the world. What is cognitively represented is then assessed by feelings so that finally the will can decide how to respond to and act in the world. According to

<sup>1</sup> See Dilthey, *Ideas for a Descriptive and Analytical Psychology*, in *Selected Works* (hereafter SW), vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

Dilthey this intellectual reconstruction ignores not only the many ways in which our cognitive perceptions, feelings, and desires are directly interwoven, but also how they are affected by our instinctive life. The anthropological considerations that Dilthey seeks to relate to ethical self-reflection go all the way back to our biological makeup. Thus he states that “instinct and feeling . . . cannot be separated from each other within the concrete biological sciences” (73). Our behavior cannot be separated from the most basic reflex-mechanisms of our body, and much of it does not require any input from the will. Dilthey’s claim that “the schema of a living being consists of reacting to impressions so as to re-establish equilibrium” (70) has led Peter Krausser to characterize Dilthey’s anthropology as a cybernetic system. Although Dilthey did not yet possess the terminology of twentieth-century cybernetics to fill out his stimulus-response schema with concepts such as “self-regulation” and “feedback,” Krausser finds the basic features of self-maintaining functional systems in these lectures on ethics.<sup>2</sup> While there are aspects of this kind of perspective in Dilthey’s biological descriptions, it is unlikely that he would have been content to describe a human being as simply a causal system that reacts to stimuli from its milieu to learn to survive by a process of adaptation.

Throughout his writings, Dilthey makes it very clear that his life-philosophy is not to be reduced to a biological theory of organic self-preservation and mere self-propagation. Instead, he sees life as in essence generative and expansive. It encompasses both natural forces and emergent powers. Applying this to social life, Dilthey claims that the “psychological core of the original content of virtue” lies in “the joyful consciousness of power and the intensification of the feeling of life that is connected with it. We find its counterpart in a shared joy (*Mitfreude*) when observing others exert power” (83).

We even identify with the exertion of power by others as long as it is not directed against us to diminish ours. Dilthey states that “just as we see animals living in herds, we humans are instinctively governed by a drive for sociability” (126), which he defines as an anthropological sense of solidarity. This human solidarity encompasses a fellow-feeling (*Mitgefühl*) or bondedness-with-others that goes deeper than the sympathy (*Sympathie*) of the British moralists. Sympathy is a feeling “transferred from one living being to

<sup>2</sup> See P. Krausser, “Dilthey’s philosophische Anthropologie,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 1 (1963): 211–221.

another" (89). It affects us from the outside and can motivate us to act, but is it a reliable source of motivation? Dilthey asks similar questions about the "pity" that tragedy is said to arouse and the "compassion" for all living beings that Schopenhauer locates at the root of morality. Sympathy, pity, and compassion are modes of "suffering with (*Mitleid*)" that Dilthey regards as a mere "conjoint movement or being stirred" (*Mitbewegung*)" (89, 96) from without. Kant had criticized sympathy for being too passive and ultimately replaced it with an active moral feeling of participation (*thätige Theilnehmung*) in such late writings as *The Metaphysics of Morals*. Dilthey is less critical of sympathy but calls it a superficial psychological response. Moreover, he points to the limits of Schopenhauer's appeal to compassion by seeing our relations with others as a sharing of both suffering and joy. He writes:

Being engaged with and having our feelings stirred by suffering or joy outside us is an elementary phenomenon. It is everywhere connected with the imaginative re-creation and vicarious understanding of the inner states of others. But this presupposes an already existing consciousness of a bond and commonality, and is dependent on them. . . . [O]n the general foundation of fellow-feelings that reach back into animal life, we develop benevolence and respect for the interests of others (105).

It is by drawing on a dynamic fellow-feeling of solidarity that stems from within—the inner sense of belonging to something larger than ourselves—that we can gain the basis for fully engaging with others through practical understanding. Only then can the sympathetic response of feeling stirred by others become a true concern for them that will activate us. Similarly, the pity associated with tragedy ever since Aristotle is according to Dilthey, "merely the feeling that precedes the tragic sentiment. The latter is based on engagement, imaginative understanding, and re-creation. Consciousness of kinship is part of it and indeed elevates it to a higher level. On this, then, is grounded a kind of consciousness of the solidarity of human destiny" (102). The resulting tragic sentiment is the fellow-feeling of human solidarity in which the burdens of life are shared.

Anthropologically, we are naturally engaged with others around us, but the strength of this solidarity will vary. The extent to which we are motivated by a sense of solidarity is a function of the local sphere of commonality of objective spirit that nurtures us from birth on. Morally, however, it is our task to cultivate this local sense of solidarity into the incentive of benevolence (*Wohllwollen*), which

is potentially universal. Human beings must actively *will* the welfare of all others to be ethical. Just as the psychological feelings of sympathy and compassion were too ephemeral to move us to act with the conviction and consistency that defines ethical behavior, so the anthropological sense of solidarity cannot become an ethical incentive if it is not transformed into the “willing to do well” (*wohlwollen*) that characterizes benevolence.

With benevolence we are leaving the level of our instincts and drives for the level of explicit willing. It is interesting to note that Dilthey distinguishes three philosophical conceptions of the role of the will in ethics. The first assigns the will a *negative* role and expects us to deny our bodily and animal nature and to rise above it. This supra-worldly stance is assigned to Neo-Platonism, Christianity, Buddhism, and Schopenhauer. Because it negates life, this would be the least attractive ethical standpoint for Dilthey. Schopenhauer draws the ultimate consequence from it by declaring the individual self to be unimportant.

The second philosophical approach limits the will from without. This *restrictive* kind of ethics is identified with the Stoics and Kant who expect individuals to restrain their selfish inclinations when they come into conflict with the demands of practical reason. It is the ethical position that brings out what it means to submit to what reason prescribes as the right thing to do.

The third ethical approach attempts to limit the will from within. It develops a *formative* conception of the will that seeks to bridge the gap between the animalistic aspects of human life and our spiritual potential. Dilthey's efforts to properly understand the nature of human drives can be seen as directed at more fully explicating this formative standpoint into an ethics of resolve. It also coheres with his aim as a philosopher of life to articulate an ethical system that proceeds from the ground up. While accepting life as we inherit it, this formative approach to ethics also stresses the need to cultivate and shape it. Here Dilthey alludes to the moderating life-style of the ancient Greeks where self-control and resolve was essential (see 82–83).

The human benevolence that Dilthey wants to cultivate as a formative ethical stance is not some divinely inspired ideal, nor is it the purely rational sentiment that Kant proposed. Benevolence expands the natural bond (*Band*) that is felt in solidarity into a volitional commitment (*Bindung*) to others. It is at this point that Dilthey begins to speak of obligations and duties that bind us mutually. Solidarity and benevolence provide the background for the

recognition of a reciprocity of obligation. This means that “even when the will binds itself, not to another, but to itself—a case to which the label of obligation can be applied only by extrapolation—the will divides itself, so to speak, into earlier and later acts. We are truly obligated, however, only vis-à-vis another to whom we are bound because our will concluded an act or entered a relationship, requiring us to remain the same over time” (106). This stabilization of mutual dependence can then be institutionalized as a social system of justice. Dilthey writes: “When compulsion within an association is added to this relationship and endowed with absolute (not merely relative) coercive measures, then a judicial system of law emerges” (107). But what makes this possible is the individual will “view[ing] itself as committed to the world of values through duty and justice. . . . From a personal standpoint, this commitment involves a *sense of what is right or just*. It comes with its own feeling of duty to mutual order and possesses a moral value completely independent of any purposes” (107). The expression, “sense of what is right or just,” attempts to capture what Dilthey means by *Rechtschaffenheit*, which can also be translated as “uprightness.” But uprightness has the connotation of a private virtue, which loses the social dimension that Dilthey attempts to incorporate. This becomes more evident in the next part of the *System of Ethics*, which focuses on social ethics.

In this final part, Dilthey delineates what he considers the three main volitional incentives that drive the evolution of ethical life. The first incentive of the will is the striving for personal excellence along the lines of the formative kind of ethics we saw him espouse. The second incentive centers again on benevolence as a social virtue. The third volitional incentive is described as “the consciousness of the commitment that inheres in the duty to do what is right” (128). At the heart of this sense of commitment is the respect for others as ends in themselves. The respect for others that was reflexive or implicit in instinctive solidarity and felt in benevolence is now recognized to be at the core of the reflective commitment to do what is right. This socially directed sense of rightness is independent of any external enforceability.

In the concluding lecture of section three, Dilthey moves from the level of subjective volitional incentives to that of objective ethical principles. He does so by drawing on an early essay from 1864 in which he affirmed that moral oughts are unconditional, as Kant had claimed, and that accordingly they may be considered as synthetic a priori practical judgments. This may seem strange, not only

because Dilthey expressed his reservations about synthetic a priori theoretical judgments throughout his life, but also because the just discussed incentives of will were rooted in empirical instinctive relations such as solidarity. But now Dilthey makes it clear that the ethical obligations we adopt as adults have a prescriptive and normative quality that is not empirically derivable. The three social incentives that we spoke of earlier are now reformulated as synthetic a priori ethical principles and in doing so are given a new ranking. Now the commitment to what is right or just is given priority over the feeling of benevolence because it represents our most fundamental obligation. Dilthey refers to character when speaking of his commitment to what is right or just, and although he does not mention Kant here, it is interesting to note that it was at the level of character that Kant had specifically located the virtue of uprightness (*Rechtschaffenheit*) in his lectures on anthropology. By contrast, the virtue of beneficence (*Wohltätigkeit*) that follows up on benevolence merely manifests one's inborn good-heartedness according to Kant. The responsibility that comes with the uprightness that recognizes what is right is an achievement that presupposes active character formation.<sup>3</sup> Dilthey affirms that the commitment to what is right or just is unconditional, yet it is not abstract like Kant's categorical imperative. The commitment is based on respect for other human beings as ends in themselves rather than on Kant's respect for a higher law. Qua moral principle, this commitment to justice is called a *synthetic principle of unity* because it involves the obligation to identify with the rights of the other. The second ethical principle loosens this being bound by the other into the broader feeling of benevolence. Benevolence "does not place us into that rigid chain of mutual obligation through the will's sense of what is right, but rather in a free reciprocal relation of human sentiments that, without a feeling of compulsion, pervades the whole moral world" (135). The principle of benevolence transforms the respect for the rights of others into a caring for their fate.<sup>4</sup> It adds a more free and open-ended *synthetic principle of multiplicity* that encompasses

<sup>3</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Vorlesungen zur Anthropologie*, in *Kant's gesammelte Schriften*, herausgegeben von der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Berlin (AA), 29 vols. (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1902–1997), 25: 632.

<sup>4</sup> Dilthey considered women to be more attuned to this principle of benevolence than men, on the basis of which he made the unfortunate assumption that they are not likely to act in accordance with his first more fundamental principle of commitment. This led him to say things about their role in political life that go against his generally more liberal views about human social life.

both what unites and differentiates human beings. Although benevolence was also a Kantian virtue, Dilthey's affirmation of it seems to be more in the spirit of Lessing who encouraged a tolerance of difference.

It is not until he formulates his third ethical principle that Dilthey invokes universal *validity*. It moves beyond both the universal commitment of equity and what he calls the "unsurveyable" universality of benevolence to project a universal ideal of perfection. But this ideal does not provide the law-bound universal validity of a homogeneous consensus valid for all time. The attempt to articulate a universally valid morality will according to Dilthey produce different forms over time. He writes:

The urge toward perfection, like benevolence and fidelity to mutual justice, involves a creative synthesis of our moral organization; however, its conception and clarification in consciousness is obtained in combination with the theoretical content of the human spirit. Thus, there are as many different ways to understand the nature and basis of this urge for perfection and value as there are cultural stages (136).

The universal ideal of perfection produces a *synthetic plurality* of articulated cultural systems over time, some of which are religious and some secular. Thus the creative nature of morality expresses itself in three forms of synthesis: as the *unity* (*Einheit*) of commitment to what is right, as an encompassing but undifferentiated *multiplicity* (*Vielheit*) of benevolence, and as a differentiated *plurality* (*Mehrheit*) of systems that aim to perfect the "striving for inner worth" (136).

Whereas traditional ethics located the ideal of inner worth in individual character, Dilthey's social ethics also projects this ideal into the historical world of cultural development. Here we find the paradox that will define the rest of this volume: The very attempt to create a universally valid form of morality produces historically distinct ethical systems, each claiming to possess its own inner worth. In these lectures, Dilthey suggests that different ethical systems will have points of intersection that support each other in life, and merely clash in theory. But if the attempt to perfect morality in universally valid terms requires theoretical input about its social context that manifests itself in different organizational forms, then the clash among ethical systems cannot be waved aside. In the final paragraph of the *System of Ethics*, added by the editor Herman Nohl from another text by Dilthey, we see him reject ethical



theories that attempt to derive his three ethical principles from one overarching principle. We are urged to only accept ethical principles that are formed from the ground up. But this does not solve the problem of adjudicating among the various systems that have evolved over time and disagree precisely about which of the different ethical principles should be given priority. This is the kind of problem that will haunt Dilthey throughout his late writings. It lies in the recognition that the systematic totalizing produced by the philosophical striving for universal truth seems to aggravate the problem of relativism produced by our ever-widening historical understanding.

In the next essay, "Present-Day Culture and Philosophy," Dilthey reflects on the tasks of philosophy as it is about to enter the twentieth century. He bemoans the fact that his own age "is no wiser with respect to the great mystery of the origin of things, the value of our existence, or the ultimate worth of our activity than were the Greeks in the Ionian or Italian colonies or the Arabs during the age of Averroes. Indeed, because we find ourselves surrounded by such rapid scientific progress, these problems are more perplexing today than in any previous age" (146). Both the natural and human sciences have become increasingly professionalized and specialized. This has given philosophy the task of rethinking their systematic interconnection now that metaphysics has been repudiated. One consequence of the success of the sciences is the rise of positivism, which Dilthey describes as "the philosophy of the natural scientists. . . . They have found in the expansion of knowledge a clearly circumscribed purpose for their existence, and so, for them, the question of the value and purpose of life is resolved personally. Dispassionately and with resignation, they simply accept the inscrutable" (149). For Dilthey, philosophical reflection on the larger questions about the ultimate worth of our existence requires a broader life-philosophy that is not just based on personal considerations as he found it in the writings of Nietzsche and other contemporaries. Dilthey is especially critical of Nietzsche's notion that the will to power motivates individuals, for it leads their strivings to be "cut off from the purposive systems of culture, and thereby emptied of content" (155). Nor is Nietzsche's response to the rich resources of history adequate. Dilthey recognizes that the mere accumulation of "relative historical facts" can produce skepticism, but he warns that "not until we appropriate all forms of human life, from primitive cultures up to the present age, can we complete the tasks of seeking what is universally valid in the relative, of locating a secure future

on the basis of the past, and of raising the subject into historical consciousness" (159).

The increasingly dominant theme of the rest of this volume is that of philosophical systems and world-views. Here Dilthey could be said to be doing meta-philosophy. Dilthey's interest in the classification of types of philosophical systems coincided with his growing interest in their relation to the sciences. This may have been inspired to some extent by Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg, one of Dilthey's main teachers while he studied in Berlin starting in 1854. Trendelenburg distinguished between logico-metaphysical systems that stress the role of mechanical forces going back to Democritus and those that stress the role of rational thought as in Platonism. A third alternative is Spinozism, which he regarded as an attempt to find the identity of these two approaches: the scientific and speculative.<sup>5</sup>

But an even earlier 1852 journal entry by the nineteen-year-old Dilthey begins with a threefold distinction of life-attitudes that he associates with the rise of individualism in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries when the times were not yet ready to accommodate modern ideals. These attitudes are closer to what he would later define as world-views as distinct from philosophical systems. A typical German life-attitude was inspired by the adoption of lofty Fichtean ethical ideals that is followed by bitter disappointment with harsh reality. Here Dilthey refers to Goethe's *Werther* and Hölderlin's *Hyperion* as displaying painful yearning. He found a more empirical British counterpart in Lord Byron, who after experiencing disappointments in the life of sensuous pleasure and sexual passion seeks to overcome the consequent feeling of emptiness by seeking to defy the forces of tyranny and fighting for the liberation of Greece. A third response to this divide between reality and human ideals is found in the mature Goethe, who after having experienced Werther-like despair came to discern in life signs of eventual reconciliation. Also noted here is the influence of Spinoza's pantheism on the late Goethe.

Dilthey's first extensive delineation of a threefold typology of philosophical systems can be found in his 1898 essay "Die drei Grundformen der Systeme in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Fr. A. Trendelenburg, "Über den letzten Unterschied der philosophischen Systeme," in *Historische Beiträge zur Philosophie*, vol. II. (Berlin: Verlag von G. Bethge, 1855), 1–30.

<sup>6</sup> See Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften*, (hereafter GS) IV (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, Göttingen & Ruprecht, 1959), 528–554.

Further important steps on the way to the later formulations published in this volume are the lecture course “System der Philosophie in Grundzügen” of 1899<sup>7</sup> and a 1900 treatise on pantheism, which already contain a definitive delineation of three world-view types.<sup>8</sup>

“The Dream” is a talk that Dilthey gave in 1903 on the occasion of his seventieth birthday and offers an informal introduction to his three types of world-view. He describes how he became engrossed with an engraving of Raphael’s painting *The School of Athens* while overnighting in the castle of Count Yorck von Wartenburg. “Tired and sleepy as I was, I lay down and went right to sleep. And immediately Raphael’s picture and the conversations we had had were swallowed up in a busy dreamlife” (165). Dilthey began to imagine movement among these figures as later philosophers entered and intermingled with them. Gradually the three groups in the painting moved further apart. The three increasingly distant groups defined themselves in terms of differing world-views. The first group consisted of materialists leading up the positivism of August Comte; then he identifies proponents of an idealism of freedom, ranging from Plato to Kant; and finally, a group that hovered around Pythagoras and Heraclitus. The latter group, which also came to include Bruno, Leibniz, and Goethe, seemed the most encompassing in espousing “a ubiquitous, spiritual, divine force in the universe, a force that inhabits everything and every person, and which functions throughout according to natural laws, so that, apart from it, there is no transcendent order and no sphere of free choice” (167). But even this group could not satisfy the other thinkers and all attempts to mediate among the groups failed. When he awakens disappointed, Dilthey recognizes more than ever the conditioned and limited nature of every world-view, but also that historical consciousness allows us to understand why that must be. We can be consoled by the realization that each world-view “expresses, within the bounds of our thought, one side of the universe. Each world-view is to that extent true; but each is one-sided. It is impossible for us to see these sides simultaneously. We have access to the pure light of truth only in variously refracted rays” (168). The talk ends up with a kind of guarded optimism, encouraging us to “strive towards the light, toward the freedom and the beauty of existence. But not by means of a

<sup>7</sup> See Dilthey, *GS* XX, 237–252.

<sup>8</sup> Dilthey, “Der Entwicklungsgeschichtliche Pantheismus nach seinem geschichtlichen Zusammenhang mit den älteren pantheistischen Systemen,” *GS* II, 1957, 312–390.

new beginning that shakes off the past. We must take the old gods with us into every new homeland" (169). Again this is followed by a warning directed against Nietzsche's ahistorical image of human beings, for as Dilthey says often: "What man is, only his history can tell him" (170). Why Dilthey thinks that old gods should not be preemptively dismissed will become more evident in the last essay where the function of religiosity is reexplored. Philosophy will never totally replace religion, as we are again forced to recognize in the twenty-first century.

As in "The Dream," the 1907 essay "The Essence of Philosophy" does not yet offer a full presentation of Dilthey's typology of world-views. This is because it was expected to define philosophy more generally. It was written for a volume on *Systematic Philosophy* in a series entitled *The Culture of the Present* edited by P. Hinneberg. Together with some of the best-known German philosophers of the age, such as Rudolf Eucken, Theodore Lipps, and Wilhelm Wundt, Dilthey was asked to consider philosophy for its potential contribution to European culture at the beginning of the twentieth century. He explores the nature of philosophy in two stages, proceeding both historically and systematically. Central to the historical part is an attempt to derive the essential features of philosophy from a survey of its main formulations. Central to the systematic part is a theory of world-views, which on the one hand, considers the relation of philosophy to religion and poetry, and on the other hand, examines the formative law that guides the function of world-views and their typology.

The historical part of "The Essence of Philosophy" can be considered as one of the most concentrated Diltheyan texts that sums up the main ideas of his earlier works going back to *The Introduction to the Human Sciences*.<sup>9</sup> He is especially concerned to show why all systematic metaphysics must fail even while philosophy always manifests "the same tendency towards universality, towards grounding, the same direction of mind towards the whole of the given world" (198). Dilthey surveys European philosophy starting with the Greeks with the aim of gaining a first estimation of the essence of philosophy. The path begins with the Socratic love of wisdom and the Platonic conception of knowledge as science. This then leads to the Aristotelian conception of philosophy as an overall science, which in turn generates a process of internal differentiation into special sciences—a process that is still going on. A constant

<sup>9</sup> See Dilthey, SW 1.

theme of this historical survey is that metaphysics is never able to live up to what is expected of it, which then leads to ever new compensatory modes of philosophy such as Stoicism and the late Roman philosophies of life. Dilthey sees similar developments within the history of philosophy starting with the seventeenth century in which “the courage to strive for strict, universally valid knowledge and the transfiguration of the world by means of this knowledge” (186) leads to a new concept of metaphysics. Now philosophy seeks rigor through allying itself with the mathematical natural sciences while differentiating itself by methodological reflection aimed at universality and unconditional grounding. Although this constructive method of Descartes and Spinoza is undermined by the epistemological approach of Locke, Hume, and Kant, the transcendental critique of the latter led to a new German metaphysics ranging from Schelling to Schopenhauer (see 186–89). Assessing these formulations as well as subsequent attempts at metaphysical world interpretation by Johann Friedrich Herbart, Hermann Lotze, and Gustav Fechner, Dilthey concludes that “it is not possible to take the understanding of the world as it is given in experience and as it is cognized by means of the particular sciences and deepen it by using a metaphysical method that differs from their way of proceeding” (189–90).

Dilthey therefore turns to the possibilities of a non-metaphysical definition of the essence of philosophy and in doing so distinguishes three forms of it in his own time. These are 1) an epistemological approach that is primarily concerned with grounding the universal validity of the natural sciences, 2) an encyclopedia of the sciences as a comprehensive system, and 3) philosophy as the science of inner experience, that is, philosophy as a human science. Dilthey looks to Kant and Hermann von Helmholtz as representative of epistemological efforts to legitimate the empirical sciences. The encyclopedic approach includes Comte who is credited for “purifying the sciences from every indemonstrable excess resulting from metaphysical conceptions” (193). Hume is considered as one of the fathers of the third form of post-metaphysical philosophy in that he devoted himself to the “scientific cognizance of man as an intellectual, moral, and social creature” (195). Hume’s conception of the moral sciences eventually generated a more general theory of the human sciences that would also broaden our understanding of philosophy itself.

The first epistemological way of approaching philosophy provides discursive cognition (*Erkenntnis*) that is purely conceptual and

intellectual. Since Kant expected philosophy to also provide the certainty (*Gewissheit*) of a more comprehensive knowledge (*Wissen*),<sup>10</sup> he felt the need to relate “all cognition to the essential ends of human reason” (192) by replacing the traditional academic conception of philosophy with a world-oriented philosophy. But to the extent that the epistemological approach was primarily focused on our access to the world through outer experience, this goal of a more comprehensive knowledge remains an unfulfilled ideal according to Dilthey. The third or human-science approach that Dilthey pursued claims to have a more direct access to philosophical knowledge by relating outer experience to our inner experience. It aims to supplement our phenomenal cognition (*Erkenntnis*) of nature with concrete knowledge (*Wissen*) of the inner reality of human life.<sup>11</sup> Positivists like Comte who espouse the encyclopedic view of philosophy deny the reality of inner experience, but aim to overcome the discursive or piecemeal nature of cognition by constructing a comprehensive developmental account of all the sciences. Whether their efforts to establish the systematic relations among all the sciences adds up to philosophical knowledge is left undecided. But they certainly do not address the riddles of life that are rooted in our inner experience.

Beyond these three partial answers to the question about the essence of philosophy, there is according to Dilthey a need for a “standpoint above the parties” (197), namely, that of historical consciousness according to which each of the approaches actualizes one possibility of philosophizing. “Each brought to expression an essential feature of philosophy and at the same time its limitations pointed to the teleological nexus that conditions it as a part of a whole in which alone the complete truth is found” (199). Thus there is a historical nexus that leads from the metaphysical thought of the Greeks, who confronted “the riddle of the world and life in a way that was universally valid,” to the post-metaphysical approaches of modernity: “everything that takes place in philosophy

<sup>10</sup> Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*, B850.

<sup>11</sup> All sciences, including the human sciences, are conceptually mediated and thus cognitive according to Dilthey. But to the extent that the human sciences reflectively assess inner experience for its reliability (*Sicherheit*), they can also contribute to philosophical knowledge. The traditional rational demand for certainty (*Gewissheit*) that Kant still upheld is not humanly attainable according to Dilthey. For more on his views about the relation between cognition and knowledge, see *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, SW 3, 1–4, 24–33.

is determined in some way by this starting point and its basic problem" (198).

As Dilthey winds up the historical part of his search for the essence of philosophy, he makes it clear that it need not be restricted to the systems of professional or academic thinkers. He traces "the connecting links between philosophy, religiosity, literature, and poetry" (200) from Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism to Montaigne, Lessing, Nietzsche, and the life-philosophy of the late nineteenth century. This section of Dilthey's text forms a kind of transition to the second main part in which he focuses on the life-nexus that encompasses the individual and society to find philosophy's proper place there.

This new way of contextualizing philosophy allows us to recognize its more general function of expressing world-views. In defining the significance of world-views, Dilthey relies on the descriptive psychology that he began to develop in the late 1880s. Its central role was to articulate a psychic structure in which cognitive, emotive, and volitional functions cooperate in apprehending and evaluating what is actual and in determining our norms and the goals of our actions. This conception as refined in the "Ideas for a Descriptive and Analytic Psychology"<sup>12</sup> (1894) distinguishes three functions within this structural nexus, namely, world-cognition, life-experience, and principles of action. The central link in this structural coherence is life-experience. It goes beyond what world cognition has taught us by reflecting on what we value in life. It prepares us, not only for what kind of goals we set, but also for philosophical reflection more generally.

In addition to this way of relating philosophy to the structural nexus of individual human beings, Dilthey establishes a corresponding linkage of philosophy, religion, and poetry with the structure of society. What distinguishes these endeavors from other social systems is that they are removed from the practical concerns of everyday life. "The commonalities that bind religion, poetry, and philosophy, and which separate them from other spheres of life are based, finally, on the fact that the application of the will to achieve limited ends has been eliminated. Here human beings are emancipated from the attachment to specific givens in that they reflect on themselves and the overall relatedness of things" (210).

<sup>12</sup> See Dilthey, "Ideas for a Descriptive and Analytic Psychology," in *SW*, 2, 115–210.

It is at this point that Dilthey begins to analyze the concept of world-view itself. We have already seen that experience can lead us to reflect on life, and this can happen to those who are religiously or poetically inclined as well as to those who are more intellectually inclined. All world-views use the reflection inspired by life-experience to find an answer to the great riddles of life. What distinguishes religious world-views is that they evaluate our life-experience through communion with the invisible horizon of life. Dilthey points out that the “language in which religious communication about the divine is manifested must always be simultaneously sensory and spiritual” (219).<sup>13</sup> This imaginative fusion of the visible and invisible differentiates the religious world-view from both its subsequent poetic and philosophical counterparts. Poetic world-views gear the imagination to what is concretely visible in this world and attempt to give it a symbolic significance for life in general, and what distinguishes philosophical formulations of world-views is their attempt to surpass the imagination and conceptually define them in a universally valid manner.

The contextual reference to religion and poetry in the attempt to define the role of world-views in philosophy is a distinctive feature that characterizes not only this essay, but Dilthey’s philosophy in general. It distinguishes him, as someone coming to philosophy from theology, from Edmund Husserl, who came from mathematics and wanted philosophy to be recognized as a rigorous science that rises above reflection about world-views. It is thus worth noting that in the two years preceding the publication of “The Essence of Philosophy,” two important works by Dilthey about the affinity of philosophical, theological, and poetic questions appeared. One was *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels* of 1905, which includes a lengthy chapter on the development of Hegel’s world-view in relation to his theological studies.<sup>14</sup> The other was *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* of 1906 with essays on Lessing, Goethe, Novalis, and Hölderlin.<sup>15</sup> The sections on the world-view of Lessing and the development of

<sup>13</sup> This anticipates how Ernst Cassirer subsequently characterizes the mythical world: “In it . . . things and signification are undifferentiated, because they merge, grow together, condescend in an immediate unity.” *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms*, vol. 2 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), 24.

<sup>14</sup> See Dilthey, *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels, Gesammelte Schriften*, IV, 40–191.

<sup>15</sup> The essays on Goethe and Hölderlin are translated in Dilthey, *Poetry and Experience*, SW 5.



Novalis's world-view<sup>16</sup> count among Dilthey's important grounding documents for the so-called *geistesgeschichtliche* turn in literary and cultural studies. These works were more effective as a counterforce to positivistic tendencies in the human sciences than Dilthey's more extensive *Introduction to the Human Sciences*.

An impressive instance of this *geistesgeschichtliche* method in "The Essence of Philosophy" is the section entitled "Religion and Poetry in Relation to Philosophy." One might suspect that Dilthey would want to develop a hierarchical schema like Comte's law of three stages, but this is not the case. Dilthey is much more interested in showing that the "basic differences between the philosophical, religious, and poetic world-views produce the possibility that a transition of a world-view from the religious or artistic form into the philosophical form will occur and vice versa" (213–14). His theory of world-views does not construct a law of unilinear development but traces a more complex development in which there can be cross-fertilization. Thus he shows specific stages and forms in the development of the religious world-view from primitive magical actions and techniques to "a freer, esoteric relation between the soul and the divine" (217). The basic types of religious world-views can in many cases be regarded as preliminary stages of philosophical world-views. Poetic world-views are different in that the significance of experienced reality is not immediately expressible in the conceptual language of philosophy. This is because "a poetic world-view asserts itself most effectively, not in direct assertions, which are never exhaustive, but through the energy with which a manifold content is united and its parts are articulated to form a whole" (228–29).

The few pages about the structure and types of philosophical world-view anticipate what Dilthey will develop in more detail a few years later in the "Types of World-View," and will therefore be discussed later. But "The Essence of Philosophy" already develops the main argument for the impossibility of metaphysics. This is because the basic categories such as being, cause, value, and purpose are rooted in different attitudes adopted by individuals toward the world. These categories can neither be derived from each other nor from some higher principle. "It is, so to speak, only possible to perceive the world through one aspect of our relation to it—never the overall relation as it would be determined by the systematic unity of these categories" (236). Therefore, Dilthey recurs to his central

<sup>16</sup> See Dilthey, *GS*, XXVI, 78–112 and 194–204.

thought about overcoming relativism through historical consciousness. “What can be distilled from the enormous work expended by metaphysicians is the historical consciousness that they have repeatedly experienced the unfathomable profundity of the world. The last word of the spirit that permeates all these metaphysical efforts is not the relativity of each world-view, but the sovereignty of the human spirit over against each single one of them and at the same time the positive consciousness that in the various spiritual attitudes one and the same reality of the world is there for us” (237).

The disproportionately short parts 4 and 5 of “The Essence” warrant two comments. Their brevity points to the limited space allotted to each work in the volume on *Systematic Philosophy*. Thus Dilthey gives only a short summary of some of the functions of philosophy: philosophy as a theory of knowing, as a theory of theories, and as an inquiry into how life-experience nurtures the formation of a world-view as a mode of reflecting on life. The true essence of philosophy derives from the fundamental function of human self-reflection. It is this that leads philosophers to both turn inward and examine their place in society. Beyond that Dilthey discusses the relation of philosophy to the moral world by giving it firm standards, and finally he claims that one of its most important functions is to examine the inner relations among the sciences. In the section on “Extending the Spirit of Philosophy to the Sciences and Literature,” Dilthey offers insight into how philosophical critique can be applied to culture. Accordingly, “the spirit of philosophy can be found wherever a thinker has moved beyond the systematic form of philosophy to examine what is peculiar or obscure in human life such as instinct, authority, or faith” (244). Philosophy can be made effective outside its own traditional domain.

In the concluding sentence of “The Essence of Philosophy,” Dilthey returns once more to the need to coordinate historical and systematic considerations in making sense of the functions of philosophy. This was the leading theme of his *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, whose preface promised to “combine a historical approach with a systematic one in order to attain as much certainty as possible about the philosophical foundations of the human sciences.”<sup>17</sup> Just as there the historical development of the human sciences was used to examine their foundations, legitimacy, and interrelations, so here Dilthey speaks of the “three problems of grounding, justifying, and interconnecting the particular sciences” that must be related to “the

<sup>17</sup> Dilthey, *SW* 1: 47.

need for ultimate reflection about being, ground, value, purpose and how they are linked in a world-view" (247).

The essay entitled "The Types of World-View and Their Development in Metaphysical Systems" appeared in the influential volume *Weltanschauung, Philosophie und Religion*,<sup>18</sup> in which Dilthey together with four of his closest followers (Bernhard Groethuysen, Max Frischeisen-Köhler, Georg Misch, and Eduard Spranger) first presented themselves as a so-called school. Dilthey's essay does not reiterate the hope expressed in his talk "The Dream" nor the faith in historical consciousness of "The Essence of Philosophy." Whereas the talk of 1903 was imbued with the eclectic spirit of allowing differing schools of thought to coexist, now he writes that "the archives of history do not confirm the peaceful conversations depicted in Raphael's 'School of Athens' . . . . The contradiction between increasing historical awareness and the claim of the various philosophies to universal validity has become more and more severe" (252). No effective way has been found to express and articulate the overall connectedness of things in the universally valid way that the separate sciences have achieved. Philosophical systems have failed in their attempts to conceptually define the world in its totality, but perhaps there is another way to fathom what is ultimately real, namely, through world-views.

In "The Essence of Philosophy," Dilthey tried to open up philosophy and give it new cultural functions, including that of forming world-views, but in "The Types of World-View," he adopts a more existential tone to account for their formation. He laments that the growth in historical awareness has generally produced a sense of anarchy. Only later does he make it clear that a *reflective* conception of historical consciousness can overcome the destructive effects that mere increased historical awareness has had. True historical consciousness must be more than the collection of disparate data; it must place "the actually-existing conflict of the systems in their overall context" (272). What this means is that historical consciousness has to be understood in light of the third kind of post-metaphysical kind of philosophy discussed in "The Essence of Philosophy" that led to the emergence of the human sciences from the Humean moral sciences. Dilthey ends his introduction to "The Types of World-View" by claiming that "philosophy must seek the inner coherence of what is cognizable, not in the world, but in human beings. To understand

<sup>18</sup> Max Frischeisen-Köhler, ed., *Weltanschauung, Philosophie und Religion* (Berlin: Verlag Reichl, 1911).

life as lived by human beings is our aspiration today" (254). From the perspective of life, the real reason why philosophers have created their overarching systems is the human need to be guided by a world-view as they confront the future.

World-views are formed in response to the existential needs of life itself. Normally, our thoughts and actions are directed at the onward-moving chain of events that we are caught up in. But we can suspend this forward movement and shift to "a state of repose directed at the baseline of life," in which we also focus on what is felt. In this lived experience or existential state, "I respond to people and things, I take positions with respect to them, I fulfill their expectations of me and I expect something from them. Some make me happy, expand my existence and increase my strength, while others exert pressure on me and limit me" (254–55). I am not merely observing the world and acting on it, but orienting myself in it and judging it in light of my basic life-concerns (*Lebensbezüge*). To be sure, this momentary lived experience only gives me insight into my own world.

The second phase in the formation of a world-view involves a shift from the reflexivity (*Innewerden*) of lived experience (*Erlebnis*) to the reflection (*Besinnung*) of life-experience (*Lebenserfahrung*), which stores and compares these kinds of responses to our situation with those of others. Although each of us gathers a different fund of life-experience, "its common substratum is formed by insights into the power of chance, of the corruptibility of everything that we possess or love, hate or fear, and of the constant presence of death, which is all-powerful in determining for each of us the meaning and sense of life" (255). But attempts to find an overall sense of order from our life-concerns and the experiences based on them prove to be frustrating. Life shows ever new aspects that render it enigmatic as a whole. We cope with this by means of certain life-moods that are formed on the basis of certain recurring life-experiences. These life-moods (*Lebensstimmungen*) are attitudes that attune (*stimmen*) us to the world and can initiate the formation of a world-view that seeks to solve the riddle of life. There are, according to Dilthey, certain higher forms of life-mood that are especially suggestive for our attempts to understand the incomprehensible overall givenness of life. They evoke aspects of reality that speak to our life-concerns. At this initial level of their formation, world-views are metaphorical, and to that extent philosophical world-views overlap with poetic and religious world-views.

Fully developed philosophical world-views have a recurrent and more developed structure whereby a cognitive sense of what the

world is like leads to an evaluation of it, which in turn produces ideal goals that can serve to guide our life. To this extent world-views reflect our overall psychic life, which is not only intellectual, but also affective, and volitional. Even philosophical world-views “do not arise from the mere will to cognize. Conceiving what is actual is an important moment in their formation, but it is only *one* moment. World-views are rooted in life-conduct, life-experience, and the overall structure of our psychic life” (262). This more layered development is common to all world-views, even though they vary in accordance with the conditions that influence our lives. These further conditions include climate, ethnicity, political and national differences, as well as other cultural and historical changes. As varied as world-views may end up being, they are not random aggregates of beliefs, but integral configurations that disclose typical patterns that recur and strive for dominance. History discards many world-views, but because they are projective and speculative, they cannot be fully refuted. They are deeply rooted in human life and produce ever new constellations.

Before Dilthey analyzes the recurring types of world-view, he considers the spheres in which they are formed: namely, philosophy, religion, and literature or poetry. Many of the academic functions of philosophy, such as epistemology, are allied with the sciences, and because of their close ties with praxis, they are constrained by external organizations of society. What sets world-view formation apart is the release from these external pressures. Thus Dilthey focuses his analysis on those philosophers who possess what he calls “metaphysical genius” (263) as well as on religious thinkers and poets. From early on Dilthey was suspicious of metaphysical system building, especially as it was perfected by Hegel. In Book 2 of the *Introduction of the Human Sciences*, Dilthey allowed for metaphysical reflection as long as it does not become doctrinal or dogmatic. This suggests that what we should mainly expect from a metaphysical genius is a world-view that speaks to our more general life-concerns and promotes practical wisdom.

Dilthey begins his analysis of world-view types with religion. Because primitive peoples were limited in their ability to comprehend and control their circumstances, they turned to individuals who claimed to possess techniques of appealing to inscrutable higher forces. This made sorcerers, traditional healers, and priests into early intermediaries to the supernatural. Consequently, the meaning of what is actual, the worth of this life, and our practical ideals were derived from our relation to what is invisible. Dilthey writes

that “the efficacy of the invisible is the fundamental category of elementary religious life. Analogical thinking combines religious ideas with teachings about the origin of the world and human life, and about the origin of the human soul” (264). He distinguishes three main types of religious world-view. The first posits “an immanence of world-reason in the order of life and the course of nature” (265) and is often called pantheism. The second type points to “a spiritual All-One that provides the connectedness, truth, and value of all that has been dispersed into particular existing beings and to which they must return” (265). Dilthey sees this exemplified in Chinese and Indian panentheism. The third religious world-view type is modeled on “a creative divine will that brings forth the world and creates man in its own image or stands in opposition to a realm of evil and enlists the pious into its service for this struggle” (265). This religious world-view type corresponds to Judaic-Christian theism and would seem to produce dualisms.

The arts in general do not set out to create a world-view. Their main function is to represent singular events and scenes and to then develop them in ways that enhance their human significance without explicitly guiding us how to live our lives. However, for much of the past, artists were commissioned by religious institutions and expected to illustrate things relevant to religious world-views. Dilthey points out that there is much sublime art that was inspired by religious content, “as is shown by Giotto’s religious epic paintings, by great church architecture, and by the music of Bach and Handel” (267).

Poetry, however, has an inherent relation to world-view formation because its medium of language can call up much more of our life-experience than the visual and musical arts. By imaginatively exploring life-possibilities that human beings cannot otherwise realize,

poetry expands their selves and the horizon of their lived experiences. . . . Life is its point of departure and life-concerns about people, things and nature are made central. Thus universal life-moods come into being from the need to bring together the experiences that derive from life-concerns, and the overall essence of what is experienced in individual life-concerns is the poetic consciousness of the meaning of life (267–68).

Poetry transforms events into symbols of what characterizes life in general. Dilthey points to the novels of Stendhal and Balzac as portraying life as governed “by dark impulses rooted in a nature without purpose” (268). Goethe’s world-picture by contrast finds

“in life a creative force that unites organic formations, human development, and the orders of society into one worthwhile coherent whole” (268). Whereas Goethe regards nature as inherently purposive, Schiller derives purposes from the human will. His dramas show life as the stage for heroic deeds and thus prepare the way for a world-view that stresses the freedom of humans to assert themselves over against a deterministic nature and institutional forces.

Philosophers with a metaphysical bent have attempted to add logical and epistemic rigor in formulating world-views that are scientifically grounded. They replace the symbolic coherence of poetic world-views with conceptually articulated and systematically organized world-views. Whereas writers like Goethe and Balzac offered visions of the natural world into which human passions and feelings are interwoven, metaphysicians bring out the structural layering of fully developed world-views where the comprehension of what is actual provides the basis for an assessment of life that in turn sets the stage for the setting of purposes. Comprehension of what is actual forms a world-picture that sums up our cognition of reality. The assessment of life then expresses how we feel about the ways of the world and serves to clarify our values. Based on this kind of reflective evaluation it becomes possible to define the purposes, rules, and ideals that should guide our will. The challenge here is how to achieve these many tasks in a coherent and convincing manner. Since the scientific task of establishing universally valid assertions is premised on examining distinct spheres of reality separately, Dilthey doubts that any metaphysical effort to construct a total system can be universally valid. Each attempt will break down at some point and lead to alternative solutions.

Metaphysical systems have been classified in terms of empiricism and rationalism, realism and idealism. But in order to assess these systems for the world-views expressed in them, Dilthey's prepares us for his typology by distinguishing among “life-attitudes” that are defined by “relations of dependence, affinity, reciprocal attraction or repulsion” (274). Metaphysicians who resemble Balzac in seeing human consciousness and spirit as ultimately *dependent* on nature and as subordinate to its deterministic laws exemplify the world-view type of *naturalism*. Those metaphysicians who feel an *affinity* between nature and the human spirit and allow for a Goethean continuum of life, represent what Dilthey calls “*objective idealism*.” Finally, those who think in the more dramatic terms of *attraction and repulsion* tend toward an *idealism of freedom* that posits the moral independence of individuals.

The metaphysical world-view of naturalism goes back to the pre-Socratic philosopher Democritus and was further developed by Epicurus and Lucretius. In modern times, naturalism was refined by British empiricists like Hobbes and Hume, French philosophers such as d'Alembert and Comte, and German thinkers such as Ludwig Feuerbach and Ludwig Büchner. What unites these manifestations of this world-view type is the claim that natural processes exhaust what is actual. Spiritual life is merely formally distinct from what is physical and functions solely according to natural causality. Naturalism is pluralistic: "its epistemology is sensualism, its metaphysics is materialism, and its practical attitude is two-fold—a will for pleasure and a reconciliation with the overwhelming and alien course of the world by submitting to it in one's way of thinking" (276). More developed forms of naturalism such as that of Lucretius saw the limits of a life in pursuit of sensuous pleasures that are inherently ephemeral and came to find solace in contemplating the intellectual world order. We can conclude that naturalism gives priority to the cognitive aspects of human life over the affective and volitional.

By contrast, the idealism of freedom gives priority the volitional dimension of human life. Dilthey introduces it as "the creation of the Athenian spirit. In Anaxagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the sovereign, formative, and shaping energy of this idealism becomes the principle by which the world is understood" (282). And of course, it found its supreme flowering in Kant and Fichte. Dilthey also adds Maine de Biran, Bergson, and William James to his list. Opposition to naturalism is its defining principle: Our bodies may be physically conditioned, but our spirit is free. The sovereignty of the individual person at the same time creates an inner bond with other persons that is normative. The epistemology of the idealism of freedom transposes empirical facts into what Dilthey calls "facts of consciousness" (285) and may even go so far as to claim, as Kant does, that we legislate a formal lawfulness to nature so that we can make sense of its empirical content. In its Platonic form, the idealism of freedom conceives of reason as a formative power that "shapes matter into a world" (285). In Christianity, it finds a theistic formulation according to which God creates the world *ex nihilo*. The sensible world is given a supersensible source. The metaphysics of the idealism of freedom is dualistic and discloses polarities between the sensible and the supersensible, the immanent and the transcendent, the phenomenal and the noumenal.

The third world-view type, which is objective idealism, tends toward monism. Dilthey considers objective idealism to be the most pervasive



form of metaphysics. He finds it in “Xenophon, Heraclitus, and Parmenides, and everything associated with them, in the Stoic system, in Giordano Bruno, Spinoza, Shaftesbury, Herder, Goethe, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Schleiermacher” (287). Although not part of this original list, Leibniz is given special attention because he was able to enrich the austere monism of Spinoza with the intuition that “every individual thing mirrors the entire universe from its own place” (287–88). Leibniz expanded Spinoza’s pantheism into a panentheism that still allows God to be thought of as an individual being. “To conceive the universe as a single whole in which each part is determined by the ideal meaning nexus of the whole: that is the great new thought of Leibniz’s system” (288).

Dilthey also differentiates the three types of world-view according to their epistemological-methodical approach. The approach of naturalism is to extend the deterministic laws of the physical world to what is ordinarily referred to as mind and spirit. The idealism of freedom attempts to derive this kind of natural lawfulness from universal formal conditions established by consciousness for both cognition and action. It champions the autonomy of the life of spirit. The approach that pervades objective idealism is very different according to Dilthey. It is rooted in a life-attitude that is contemplative, intuitive, and aesthetic. This contemplative attitude takes a momentary pause from the work of scientific cognition and the purposive strivings of moral action to also evaluate the world on the basis of feeling. It is a world-view that links our own being with the world as a whole. And “as we expand our own life-feeling into a feeling of kinship with the whole world and experience our affinity with all the phenomena of what is actual, we find a similar increase in our enjoyment of life and the consciousness of our own power” (289). The universality of objective idealism moves beyond the unilinear and explanative lawfulness of naturalism and the dualistic idealism of freedom to an intuitive mode of comprehensive and reciprocal understanding. It is the most systematic type of world-view because it discerns inner connectedness throughout the world. Yet it too cannot legitimate or justify its claim to be universally valid. The scientific standard of universal validity is premised on delimiting one’s sphere of inquiry. None of the three metaphysical world-view types satisfies that condition because they totalize. There is always some gap to fill that leads each of the world-view types to spawn “a restless dialectic” (292).

As a hermeneutical thinker and philosopher, Dilthey tends to avoid what he sometimes calls the pseudo-logical terminology of a

dialectic. Life is too complex and the forces active in the world are too inter-tangled for any dialectical logic to provide satisfactory answers to our ultimate questions. It is thus revealing that in the context of discussing world-views, he uses the term “dialectic” to point to their inner breakdown, whether in terms of the failure of metaphysical systematization or in terms of their ability to fully capture the *Zeitgeist* or spirit of an historical period. By allowing us to separate philosophical world-views from their supposed metaphysical consummation, Dilthey gives them a more prominent socio-cultural relevance. But even when historians appeal to them to characterize the *Zeitgeist* of a period, Dilthey warns that they should not be conceived monolithically. Thus he points out that there will always be cultural and other dynamic or productive systems that are not fully in tune with their age, and external organizations or institutions that still exert power despite having outlived their relevance.<sup>19</sup>

Although conceptually defined universally valid metaphysical systems are beyond our capacity, Dilthey never gave up his faith that we can know the world by means of universally valid scientific truths. His faith in universal history is not the Hegelian claim to know the *telos* of history in its totality, but the conviction that it is possible to cognize the productivity of history in the making. Our task is not to project the universality of the whole of history, but to discern what is universal in its parts. The hermeneutical challenge is to understand individuality as the intersection of universality and particularity. This is the spirit of objective idealism without the letter of any metaphysical dogma.

The last essay in this volume is also the last to flow from Dilthey's pen. He wrote it while vacationing in Tyrol, and it is incomplete because Dilthey died unexpectedly on October 1, 1911, from an outbreak of dysentery there. The essay is entitled “The Problem of Religion.” Because religion is deeply rooted in human life and has permeated its history, it is important according to Dilthey for both its adherents and its opponents to better understand its import. Many aspects of human culture such as the arts and philosophy grew naturally out of religion and only gradually became independent. This would eventually lead them to challenge religion “insofar as it originated from a restrictive, dogmatic faith and the pressures exerted by a powerful clergy. And this negation uses the weapon of reason to dissolve the irrational and transcendent aspects of faith” (298). Dilthey

<sup>19</sup> See Makkreel, *Dilthey, Philosopher of the Human Studies* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992), 394–399.

points to ways in which in ancient Greece, in Rome, and again in Arabic culture, an opposition developed between more philosophical rational religion and positive ritual-based religion. Similarly, in the Enlightenment, thinkers such as Lessing and Kant rationalized religion and valued it for its moral effects. But these kinds of rationalizations capture only part of the essence of what Dilthey regards as religiosity. Religion cannot be dialectically sublated into philosophy. It contains a mystical core that can only be accessed by lived experience. Dilthey finds more promise in the “inner development of Christian religiosity” that began with “the Catholic mysticism of Port-Royal, the English and then the American sects, [and] German-Protestant Pietism” (301). This renewed sense of religion was then deepened by Schleiermacher when he related mystical lived experiences to the intuitive insights of the Fichtean phase of transcendental philosophy. Whereas the mysticism of Saint Frances and Eckhart was a “rare experience of union with God,” Schleiermacher’s mysticism conveys a more “constant consciousness supported by a relation to the invisible context of things—a consciousness that arises from the recurring effects of this context on the psyche” (304). Schleiermacher reinterprets the religious experience as uniting a finite individual with the infinite coherence of things. Whereas traditional mystics tend to deprecate this-worldly existence relative to a transcendent reality, Schleiermacher’s mysticism affirms and sanctifies our life in this world-order. According to Dilthey,

probably the most profound insight of Schleiermacher’s universal intuition is that the religious lived experience contains in itself the basis for explaining the multiplicity of religions and the basis for justifying their legitimacy. Religion involves intuition and feeling evoked by the effects of the universe on the individual subject. Just as our psyche is alerted by the senses to the impressions of particular things, so we experience the universe in the intuitions and feelings that emanate from its unity (305).

This allows us to see the multiplicity of religions universalistically as a series of creative individuations rather than relativistically as a series of contingent particulars.

Dilthey continues by tracking how Schleiermacher influenced certain subsequent German theologians. But he also argues that the problem of religion should not be relegated to theologians. It should be studied from the standpoint of the human sciences in order to do justice to religiosity as a felt relation to the invisible. He also

notes approvingly that Carlyle and Emerson “link the religion of lived experience—to be sure, as it had developed in their native countries—with German transcendental philosophy” (303). However, Dilthey reserves special praise for the psychological religious insights that can be found in *The Varieties of Religious Experience* of William James. He describes James as someone endowed with an astonishing gift for seeing the realities of psychic life. “Uninfluenced by previous psychological system building, he possessed the resources that came with the acceptance of possible effects stemming from unconscious psychic life. In America, he found himself surrounded by sects in which religious lived experience asserted itself with great force, independent of tradition.” (312).

Dilthey admits that some of the cases studied in the *Varieties* are rather strange, but on the whole James expands our understanding of religion as only a genius can. Dilthey, who did not relate religion to a transcendent world, but discerns in religious experience a mystical link to an invisible horizon of life, clearly felt an affinity with James’s language of our religious sense of “the more.” He also admired the contributions of James because he was convinced that the human science of religion needs to be analyzed by a philosophically-framed psychology, which is referred to as “anthropology” in the last paragraph of this unfinished essay. This shift is important because the study of religion must also consider how our subjective experiences objectify themselves in shared practices. We saw that Dilthey began his social ethics by looking for an anthropological context for our respect for others. He found this in an instinctive sense of solidarity. What is acknowledged here is merely an initial and familial sense of kinship or fellow-feeling that can be ethically cultivated; solidarity is by no means an endorsement of a permanent submission to a collective will. Similarly, the mystical experience that Dilthey places at the core of religion is not a state of submission or resignation to an otherworldly being, but provides a supportive orientation that can activate our engagement with others in this life. As Dilthey stated in his “Plan for the Continuation of the Formation of the Historical World,” religiosity “points to something strange and unfamiliar” in our lived experience, “as if it were coming from invisible sources, something <pressing in> on life from outside, yet coming from its own depths.”<sup>20</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Dilthey, *The Formation of the Historical World in the Human Sciences*, SW 3:285.

Like Schleiermacher and James, Dilthey pointed to the centrality of lived experience in religion. Yet to capture the essence of religion, he also considered it important to follow out the many ways in which these experiences have been objectified in historical practices and expressed in doctrinal formulations. Unfortunately, Dilthey's unexpected death prevented him from indicating what the proper balance should be between these two approaches. One would suspect that some of the universal characteristics among the wide variety of established religions would derive from the same kind of processes that Dilthey pointed to in the formation of world-views. But since world-views are not as such institutionalized, other socio-political forces would need to be considered in order to account for doctrinal religions.

This concludes our six-volume edition of Dilthey's *Selected Works*. All the essays in this volume show that Dilthey made important contributions to practical as well as theoretical philosophy. From his social ethics to his attempts to put philosophy in a socio-cultural context and define its role in refining world-views, Dilthey's concern is to orient us in this life. Just as there is no one world-view type that can exhaustively articulate the meaning of life, so there is no simple progression from primitive religious manifestations of world-views to their artistic and philosophical forms. Personally, Dilthey seems to have been most attracted to the philosophical world-view of objective idealism for its inclusiveness, but also because it most readily lends itself to religious and poetic expression.

R.A.M  
F.R.

# PART I

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## SYSTEM OF ETHICS

(1890)

*Translated by  
Stephen W. Ball and Rudolf A. Makkreel*



# ONE

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## 1. The Problem of Contemporary Ethics

X, 13

### SECTION 1: ONLY A LIFE-BASED PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY CAN BE TRULY COMPREHENSIVE

Every true philosophy must derive principles from its theoretical insights to direct the life of the individual and to guide society. The discipline in which this derivation is conducted is called philosophical ethics.

The conclusions derived from natural science have led to the rejection of Christian morality. We are also seeing an erosion in European literature of ethical conceptions hitherto accepted, and a social movement that uses these altered perspectives to strive for the dissolution of traditional foundations of society and for a new order serving the interests of the working class. All of this imposes upon philosophy the task of developing principles that not only can guide the life of the individual, but also can provide solutions for the major issues of the life of society. Today's ethics must be a social ethics.

In the structural nexus of psychic life, thinking is interposed, as it were, between impression and reaction so that action can result. Even the play of children depends on this, as does the whole of culture. For the animate creature, thought and cognition stand within a teleologically structured nexus that extends from perception of the external world to a mutual adaptation between the world and itself. Thus, the philosophical comprehension of the world also has its goal in action. A philosophy that is not conducive to rules for practical action is completely unsatisfactory, as is speculation about the world that does not offer a perspective on human life or provide a guiding impulse for human conduct. Only a life-based, practical philosophy can be truly comprehensive. Every theoretical science contains presuppositions or principles for attaining certain ends

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assumed to be valuable. The determination of what in life is meaningful and valuable is the task of practical philosophy. Its object thus comprises the highest principles through which the means of practical action are established and goals posited.

So it is that all great philosophers from Plato and Aristotle to the present have secured the ultimate goal of philosophical thinking in determinations of the meaning of life and action. Political economy, politics, aesthetics, and theology are throughout in need of such practical principles.

## SECTION 2: THE CONDITIONS OF CONTEMPORARY ETHICS

There are times when a dominant perspective has been established about the goals of action and when society pursues these ends in its accustomed ways. In those times there is little interest in practical philosophy. By contrast, uncertainty about the principles of action in our day generates an extraordinarily strong interest in the study of morality. Perhaps not since the great epoch in which Christianity emerged from an indescribable social ferment and pronounced the redeeming word for those in need has there existed such unrest and uncertainty in society. It may be that never before or since have the ultimate presuppositions of human life and action been subjected to such a degree of erosion.

### Characterization of the Present Situation

**First Fact:** The dominance of a natural-science mentality has led to the conception of humans as animal beings that, through the mechanisms residing within themselves and their milieu, have attained the highest degree of adaptability through their intellectual and moral habits. The principles of the psycho-physical unity of life and of its development through natural selection, heredity, and adaptation have become central to modern biology, and the historical realm has been subordinated to these principles as well. This has produced a religious-metaphysical principle of secularism as the ideal of life in Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, and Ernst Haeckel, and [their] analysis of historical life-forms.

**Second Fact:** Next among the historical conditions of this situation is the emergence of the social question about the working class and

its efforts to transform society. This turn of events results from linking changes in societal life with the scientific changes just mentioned.

It has now been a hundred years since the educated middle classes fought in the French Revolution to obtain an independent political voice and a share in the government. Today, all the strata of society below this class strive for a greater share in the goods of life, and statecraft assumes the task of making this attainable through the restructuring of social institutions. The turbulence concomitant with such thoroughgoing change has called into question the ultimate pre-suppositions of society.

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The movement emanating from the working class has at the same time become the point of departure for a radical theory. When we look beyond these isolated movements and doctrines that have been successfully suppressed, this theory can be seen to have unfolded and spread continuously from the French Revolution on. In 1796, Babeuf<sup>1</sup> organized a conspiracy [for equality] directed at the distribution of goods. He was executed in 1797. Henri de Saint-Simon drafted a plan for a “physico-political science.” He expounded it in *Du système industriel* (1821–1822), then popularized it in his *Catéchisme des industriels* (1823–1824) and in his *Nouveau Christianisme* (1825).<sup>2</sup> It is based on the abolition of family inheritance. All property devolves upon the state at the owner’s death. There is only personal property, which must stand in a just relationship to work. He founded the socially oriented religious sect of the Saint-Simonians. Saint-Simon proceeds from the viewpoint of natural science. He demands the full implementation of the secular meaning of life. The medieval, feudal-military stage is replaced by a society based upon three classes: industrialists, scholars, and artists. Auguste Comte, who was born in 1798, was initially a collaborator with Saint-Simon and was especially involved with his *Catechism*. His own work is *Cours de philosophie positive* (1830–42).<sup>3</sup> Both of these men operate on the basis of a centralized planning of society. Fourier’s principle is opposed to this. It allows individuals to

<sup>1</sup> François-Noël Babeuf (1764–1797), French revolutionary and political organizer.

<sup>2</sup> These three pieces are excerpted in Claude-Henri (Comte de) Saint-Simon, *The Political Thought of Saint-Simon*, ed. Ghita Ionesco (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), Chs. VIII–X.

<sup>3</sup> Auguste Comte, *The Positive Philosophy*, trans. Harriet Martineau (New York, AMS Press, Inc., 1974).

follow their own impulses, and a harmonious society is supposed to result.<sup>4</sup>

Socialism developed by denying that property, marriage, and family should still be regarded as immutable pillars of society and its activities. Socialism can ground itself by drawing the ultimate consequences of a very powerful line of thought in natural science. If natural selection, heredity, and the animal nature of humans really are to be viewed as the sole principles of social change, then the organization of the forms of life in society can only be grounded on these presuppositions.

But socialism acquires its modern scientific form only through the combination of these doctrines with modern political economy. Especially Malthus's study of populations and Ricardo's law of wages provide it support.<sup>5</sup> The main work of modern socialism, Marx's *Das Kapital*, was built upon it. Lassalle aligned himself with this theory. Its main tenets are uniform throughout Europe. Let us sum up.

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1. Socialism derives its underpinnings from the natural sciences. Brain physiology and biology apply a general mechanistic approach to reduce spiritual life to a mere accompanying appearance (a shadow of what is actual).
2. Philosophically, it holds thought and moral action to be mere by-products of animal processes (principle of animalism).
3. The secular nature of life is its principle.
4. It divides history into a theological-militaristic stage that is followed by an industrial-scientific stage.
5. It involves an analysis of political economy.

In such a society, capital rules with the necessity of a natural law. Its proletariat will grow ever larger so that a minimally bearable level of subsistence will prevail. Only an alteration of the existing relationships of property, inheritance, marriage, and family makes a more just order possible.

**Third Fact:** Theology has gradually arrived at a complete analysis of Christian history and dogma. In opposition to the Catholic Church,

<sup>4</sup> See *Design for Utopia: Selected Works of (François Marie) Charles Fourier*, trans. Julia Franklin (New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1971).

<sup>5</sup> See Thomas Robert Malthus, *Principles of Political Economy* (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Inc., 1951). David Ricardo, "On the Principles of Political Economy and Taxation," in *The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo*, ed. Piero Sraffa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953), Vol. I.

as the most powerful organized force in the current European world with firm moral principles, we find both Protestant orthodoxy and religious skepticism. Given these circumstances, theological morality no longer exerts a general influence in the Protestant world. Here one must be especially careful not to adopt a double [standard of] truth. Whoever bases his theological views on Hume, Spencer, etc. and recognizes the putative results of modern science, cannot hope to vindicate skepticism as the basis of a transcendent world. If ideals are not immanent in human nature, then they cannot be made universally accessible to human reflection. Accordingly, the choice between utter darkness or a world of faith miraculously dispensed from heaven will be decided by a free-for-all among our instincts. The decision to believe will be made only by fools. Thus, either there is an ideality that inheres in the world and in the sciences, or none at all.

**Fourth Fact:** This struggle against society as it is, has also been addressed in the ideal domain of art. [There is a] parallelism between [current] trends in painting and poetry. While art in the eighteenth century contained a redeeming word for the educated, and subsequent formative novels and dramas delineated the idea of inner development, the latest inexorable tendency is to find the redeeming word for the moral misery of the uneducated classes. Animalism is represented by Balzac and Dumas in French art, then by Tolstoy and Ibsen.

*First Thesis:* The world is badly ordered; marriage, family, and property relations have become corrupted. Literature should depict this truthfully.

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*Second Thesis:* A more auspicious approach is necessary. The structure of [contemporary] drama has a doctrinaire tendency [to juxtapose] a naturalistic portrayal of things with some liberating person. The structure of the novel stresses what is inherited, etc. but it lacks the genius of ethical depth. [Its current] stress on animalism is pervasive. Tolstoy's renunciation of the world is the sister of this masculine animalism and bears the same features. Ibsen's individualism is old-hat for us.

Present European society searches for principles which, under quite altered circumstances, can illuminate the meaning of life and can define its goal. Everything old is worn out; theories deriving from the natural sciences seem to have undermined the very foundations that previously gave the elements of society their validity. Those who invoke the eternal validity of Christianity must

understand it anew for every age. In its present form it has become ineffective. It works for those simple souls who pit their inner experience against the thrust of modern science, but there is still no one with an understanding of Christian truth so new and profound that it could serve to determine the times. In this area too, only attempts and rudimentary beginnings are available.

Out of this whole situation there arises for philosophy an entirely new emphasis attaching to ethical questions, a new demand for ethical principles. In particular, it demands a principle that makes it possible to solve the overriding social question. Our effort will not involve a renunciation of contemporary sciences. Their legitimacy will be maintained, as will those of our social movement. We will go beyond the life that the individual leads. Family, property, and education will no longer be derived from a traditional principle.

Thus ethics finds itself in a wholly new situation. Its principles should provide guidance for the great problems of society.

## II

### Three Methods Used to Solve the Ethical Problem

#### SECTION 3: THE NATURE OF METHOD [AND ITS LIMITS]

We think of a disciplinary method as a procedure regulated by fundamental principles that enable us to apply our natural faculties of thought to the data of experience so as to achieve a purpose connecting thought and action through completely determined concepts and fully justified judgments. One such purpose involves the regulation of the life of individuals and of society. This has produced various methods. We distinguish three methods in ethics. They are differentiated by their choice of principles, mode of argumentation, and preference for certain kinds of life-conduct.

#### SECTION 4: THE METAPHYSICAL METHOD

The metaphysical method derives constant and universally valid principles for evaluating and conducting life from a concept of a world system. This metaphysical method has not merely an abstract existence within philosophy, but rather is a component of the

life-outlook of Indian, Greek, Roman, and Medieval thought. Each of us still relies on some abridged version of it.

### 1. The Metaphysics of a Moral Cosmic Reason and the Principle of Ethical Action in a Divine Realm.

[Originally] the value of the forms of the world was derived from the goodness and fullness of God's nature. All human activity completes, as it were, the work of God in the world. The religious metaphysics of the Parsees,<sup>1</sup> the Greeks, Romans, and Germanic peoples draws images and symbols of world coherence from the active ethical consciousness of these peoples, that is, from a feeling of the infinite value of life in one's daily strivings. All subsequent reflective contemplation and scientific cognition can only interpret or complete the wisdom of this feeling of life, not transcend it.

The theoretical, disciplinary expression of this active response to life in these leading nations is found in the systems of Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Medieval theology and metaphysics, the dogmatic teachings of the Reformation and the Protestant sects, and finally in deism and rationalism. Since this indigenous metaphysics can only die out along with these nations themselves, it will endure as an indestructible metaphysical consciousness even after metaphysical systems have been abandoned.

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### 2. The Metaphysics of Contemplative Reason and the Principle of World-Negation.

This kind of metaphysics shows affinities with and in most systems combines with the other side of the Indo-Germanic feeling of life, namely, a contemplative attitude that comprehends the immutable and negates the restlessness of the transitions of life. This appears as a naturally-rooted belief in Indian religious speculation. It is also a prominent component of Christian dogmatics, especially of Christian mysticism. Its monuments include the Vedanta philosophy, Plotinus, the writings falsely attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite, Meister Eckhart, a Gnosticism of the heart, divine contemplation, and logos as redemption through cognition. Its [disciplinary] philosophical system can be found in Schopenhauer, but in modern life, peace of mind can only be found through scientific thought and in art, not in religious mysticism.

<sup>1</sup> Zoroastrian sect that emigrated from Persia to India in the eighth century.

### 3. The Metaphysics of Formative Powers and the Principle of Self-Preservation.

The metaphysics of *natura naturans* and of self-preservation is merely a derivative manifestation of this deep, active feeling of life. This metaphysics places ethical reason in natural formative powers rather than in God. Therefore, it substitutes the functioning of the life-impulses of the individual, i.e., self-preservation, for the infinite value of a progressive process in service of divinely grounded values. Its power lies in perfection. Perhaps an indigenous metaphysics of this more animate sort is implanted in the Celtic and Slavic feeling of life. Epicureans, Hobbes, and naturalists since the eighteenth century have represented this standpoint in the sciences.

### 4. The Metaphysics of Materialism and the Principle of Animality

This metaphysical system results from a total rejection of the loftier views of life. It is supported by the overall movement of the natural sciences.

## *Critique*

- 20 1. The principles from which metaphysics begins can only be grasped by personal experience and thus they lead back to another method. They present themselves as principles that can be proved to be universally valid. The proof is supposed to be grounded in perception, in *a priori* logical laws, and operations of thought. However:
  - a) Perceptions and their connections are subject to critical reflection.
  - b) We do not know whether thought is capable of transcending the way things appear.
2. The entire foundation of the metaphysical method is the unprovable presupposition of a rational moral cosmic ground and cannot be given a purely scientific justification.
3. Circularity: an ethical feeling of life and its specification in a society determine its primitive conceptions and metaphysical theory, from which in turn ethical principles are derived.

4. Therefore ethical principles will differ in accordance with differences of race and level of culture. The conflict cannot be resolved. Consequently, our starting point must be inner experience.

## SECTION 5: THE METHOD OF INNER EXPERIENCE

The second method is that of inner experience. It determines the meaning of life and the goals of action based upon inner experience which is given in self-consciousness.

1. The emergence of the principle of inner experience:

Inner experience, detached from all metaphysical presuppositions, [provides] a principle for the symbols and images whereby we understand the world, and belongs, as it were, to the age of wisdom in antiquity. The emphasis on the subjective content of inwardness as a kind of independence, I find first in the Stoics, the later Academy, and Cicero, then more decidedly in the period of the emperors, Seneca, and Plotinus. Completely independently, it appears again in Christianity in absolute purity. The sayings of Jesus contained in the Gospel of Matthew are no doubt the most original part of what has come to us from Christ, and they contain nothing but a powerful, inexhaustibly deep ethical consciousness in which the transcendent world is reflected, so to speak, like stars in a river. Central to this consciousness is the peculiar link between an active, ethical feeling of life, namely, the teaching of a divine realm and the acknowledgment that in the context of this life, suffering, abasement, and sacrifice can bring about perfection just as much as the advancement of the self and the exertion of force. This principle is expressed through conscience (*conscientia*).

2. In the metaphysical epoch, this new principle of inner experience could not extricate itself from metaphysical presuppositions. The principle of inner experience was reflectively made prominent by Augustine, but was corrupted when Christian consciousness was transported into metaphysics. The same cloudy mixture appears in mysticism. In all of these ethical systems there is a unification of both methods, but without any clear consciousness of how to implement the primacy of this second method.

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3. The conditions of thought by which it could assert its independence: This separation could only become clear-cut after the method of analyzing the contents of experience had dissolved the fundamental metaphysical concepts of substance, causality, purpose, *formae*



*naturae*, and general essence. Thus the metaphysical bonds of the world nexus were destroyed. This took place by way of the Oxford school, Locke, and Hume. With it came a depreciation of the validity of [traditional notions of] qualities, space, and time. This occurred by way of Galileo, Descartes, Locke, Leibniz, and Kant. From this point on, the analysis of inner experience was the only way to grasp a reality that is metaphysical. All knowledge of nature is just a symbol of the unknown and ultimately unattainable. The first carry-over of this method occurred in the domain of ethics.

#### 4. Its Presuppositions:

a) The individual embodies the sufficient basis of the ethical by generating what is ethical, by being an ethical end in itself and a sovereign moral subject. This presupposition was established with great clarity by the Reformation movement; its development was especially energetic in the Protestant sects and in the Reformed Church, and from then it was carried over into theism and rationalism. The ethical substratum of the eighteenth century can be found in the independence and ideal directedness of the life of the person. The ethical process has its self-sufficient ground and sole aim in the person.

b) Accordingly, scientific analysis and the capacity to establish rules can be based on the factuality of the inner experience of the person. Even this proposition is regarded as self-evident. The English relate this method to the concept of "intuitionistic ethics." We Germans already have a clear expression for this method, namely, the method of inner experience; we need not flirt with the foreign expression as though it contained a special wisdom.

c) Thus, this method ultimately appeals to an inextinguishable and basic human feeling of moral freedom. Human beings discern a difference between the way in which mental processes cohere like premises and their conclusion, the way in which pleasant feelings and wishes compel psychologically, and the way in which the feeling of volitional independence is connected with the awareness of responsibility. It is from the latter that human beings first derive their sovereignty. If we were to deny this fact, the mechanistic world would be unbearable. <The concept of freedom is not metaphysical—it does not assert anything objective. It signifies only a state of consciousness, a feeling that accompanies certain relations in me. We are ethical subjects insofar as we have the feeling of freedom. The method

of inner experience contents itself with ascertaining this process of consciousness. We do not inquire as to the origin of the concepts of good and evil, or as to the place where they originated. The method of inner experience is analysis, restricted to the analysis of one's own person.<sup>>2</sup>

d) But this fact must be linked with the relativity of ethical valuation. The limited perspectives of Shaftesbury, Hume, Adam Smith, Condillac, Rousseau, and Kant, made a universally valid solution, or even an approximation of one, impossible. The conscience of the individual provides the basis for the unfolding of the ethical form of the individual's will. This is an attitude toward life, a form of the will rather than a determinate content of the will. I distinguish as the most general characteristic of the moral form of the will, its efforts to overcome the play of instincts—whatever their content. Particular ethical principles, however, each express some content of life, and this is historically conditioned, i.e., relative. Ethical principles and their content exhibit a variability that is conditioned by their cultural context. Accordingly, only a consideration of the overall contours of the historical development of ethical life, i.e., a *socio-historical standpoint*, can actually solve the problem of ethics.

5. The standpoint of inner experience is also unable to determine what constitutes ethical life.

a) Inner experience comprises the instinctive life and self-preservation, sympathetic feelings, consciousness of duty and the ethical law, consciousness of the intrinsic value of higher purposes. Inner experience attempts to establish a unity within these diverse facts.

b) One can attempt purely methodically to derive higher elements from the interaction of lower ones. The method is a kind of psychological experimentation how state A changes into B under condition C. The only proof that this method recognizes is the inner re-creation that occurs when there is no resistance.

c) But such resistance does arise when the attempt is made to derive our joy about the pleasure and perfection of others from [our

<sup>2</sup> Inserted by the German editors from lecture notes taken by one of Dilthey's students.

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own] self-preservation and instinctive life in a way that is sufficient to account for ethical action. Therefore, an independent principle of sympathy is assumed by Shaftesbury, Hume, and Adam Smith. However, from this one cannot derive commitment, but merely a feeling of fellowship or engagement that is a manifestation that cannot be counted on like Kant's principle of duty. Furthermore, the intrinsic value of higher goods cannot be derived from such feelings (Schleiermacher, Hegel, and the principle of ethical values or goods that are grounded in practical life).

Thus, within inner experience and the analysis based on it, a war of all against all ensues.

d) On the other hand, there is an explanative urge to establish a system based on a principle. This led to the unfortunate efforts to derive such ethical facts as duty, sacrifice, etc. from the principle of self-interest by means of an inner psychological process. The substance, so to speak, of this inner psychological procedure is simply egoism; all other feelings and principles must be derived from the particular mental processes of individuals. The English who supplied the grounds for this theory refer to this process as association. First, we have the naïvely reflected egoism of the Epicureans. They extract the consequence of this principle in graphic Greek terms: the happiness of the individual for which society and the state are merely instrumental. Peace of mind and friendship in accordance with a cosmic principle. The second stage is the English attempt at derivation—David Hartley its founder. Through associations subjective feelings of pleasure and their objects are gradually amalgamated. These objects become independent bearers of pleasurable feeling. The feelings of pleasure become increasingly pure and tranquil the more they are extricated from the self. Hume develops this standpoint. He made it clear that we attach general feelings to certain objects, but he did not elucidate the inherent worth of morality.

#### SECTION 6: THE METHOD OF STUDYING MORAL GROUP-PHENOMENA, ASSOCIATIONS, ORGANIZATIONS, AND THEIR HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The method of studying these phenomena—social associations and organizations and their historical context finds the origin of ethical rules in the socio-historical communal life of humans and proceeds to study the development of humanity in the history of society in

order to determine the emergence, justification, and value of ethical laws.

1. This method was refined scientifically in our century, but it always presupposes ethical consciousness, as well as a consciousness of independence. The real actualization of a higher ethical life, by means of the cooperation of individual subjects in associations of an ethically productive character, has been attempted multiple times in history. The Pythagorean and Platonic schools, the Platonic ideal of the state, the great epoch of the Roman republic and its aristocracy, the Christian kingdom of God, the Catholic Church, the modern ethical bureaucratic state and its ideal in Hegelian politics: these are all its practical and theoretical creations. They exhibit a syndesmosis in which the attachments of an individual allow a communal spirit to shape it inwardly. The presupposition of this syndesmosis is that the ethical process is not consummated in isolated individuals, but in social and historical communal life. Consequently, the course of this process is not to be located in the individual. Whether the individual is the only goal remains questionable. Aristotle articulates the principle of substantive Greek ethical life: The detached individual is sub- or super-human; the true human being is a societal being. The Romans are the people who—by way of the concepts of *imperium*, *communio*, *officium*, *obligatio*, the separation of private and public law, etc.—have put the social conception of the individual into practice. The kingdom of God in Christian thought has the same effect: “No man comes to the Father but by me”<sup>3</sup>—the Christian principle of community. The underlying problem was coexistence with [political] sovereignty. The Catholic Church detached itself from the latter. Even today it is the strongest organized socio-ethical power in the world. This is attributable to the fact that fixed precepts have linked certain socio-ethical functions with fixed needs of human nature. The tenets that sinfulness is a social condition, and that the ethical process takes hold of the individual only through the medium of the socio-ethical religious whole (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*), are explicit theoretical expressions of the Catholic conception of ethical processes.

2. This presupposition corresponds to the methodological proposition that ethical analysis can only be carried out in the experiential

<sup>3</sup> John 14:6.

realms of socio-ethical group phenomena and their historical concatenations.

There are two factions in social ethics: either a human evolution in which history is construed as the unfolding of a rational system (German theories of development) or evolution as construed by the science of biology (French and English theories of development).

#### a) The German Theory of Development

25 The Hegelian model: The ethical ethos of the individual is conditioned by the unfolding of the ethos of humanity. The ethical ideal inherent in human nature takes shape in the stages of historical life. This development is implicit in the nature of the ethical process and its rule of self-realization. Absolute values and ends in themselves (goods) that extend beyond the individual emerge in this ethical process. The method of self-experience in the eighteenth century proceeded on the assumptions that the sole basis for the ethical processes that occur in the individual is to be found in the individual, who is the sole end in itself or intrinsic value. The first of these assumptions was erroneous and refuted by historicism and the historical school. A vital, collective psychic unity, operating in language, mythos, or the oldest poetry, generates the historical ethos of individual peoples according to Savigny, Grimm, and Niebuhr.<sup>4</sup> The other assumption was questionable. Here is the deepest problem of historical and ethical reality: <How does a communal spirit relate to the life of the individual? The doctrine of original sin and the communal process of salvation are in accordance with such a theory. Sciences exist not for the sake of the learned, but rather they serve the great process by which consciousness becomes ever clearer about the coherence of the world.><sup>5</sup>

#### b) The Biological Theory of Evolution in France and England.

Such a theory could make its appearance only after biological science, modern anthropology, the science of history as legitimated by the Germans, and moral statistics began to cooperate.

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Karl von Savigny (1779–1861), German legal scholar who emphasized that law is a product of the popular spirit of a nation (*Volksgeist*). Jacob Ludwig Karl Grimm (1785–1863), and his brother, Wilhelm Karl Grimm (1786–1859), philologists well-known for their collection of fairy tales, were influenced by Savigny while studying law at the University of Marburg in 1802–1806. Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776–1831), German historian. His influential work, *Römische Geschichte*, began a new era of historiography based on scientific historical scholarship.

<sup>5</sup> Inserted by the German editors.

It contains quite new material for a solution to the ethical problem. It cannot yet be ascertained whether by itself or in conjunction with the other methods it can supply a complete solution. But in any case, it contains the means for an external, empirical treatment of the problem which allows for partial, limited observations and on their basis arrives at sufficient principles. This method is reinforced when related to a limited use of the method of inner experience.

The biological theory of evolution takes its point of departure for morality in English utilitarianism and serves as a scientific crutch for it. Jeremy Bentham, a contemporary of the French Revolution, sought a principle that would circumvent such convulsions. His main work, *Traité de législation*, was extracted from Bentham's writings and published in 1801 by Etienne Dumont and translated into German in 1830 by Beneke<sup>6</sup> with valuable additions.<sup>7</sup> Bentham sought a principle for the guidance of society, for legislation. He defined his goal as "the greatest good of the greatest number" or "maximum happiness."

But there was the problem of relating intensity and extension, and then the problem of social order. Solution: Happiness increases with wealth; not, however, in the same ratio, but more slowly. Accordingly, with an equal distribution [it should be at a] maximum. This would lead to communism, but the infringement of private property endangers security. Security is a condition for all other goods. Thus, the atomistic conception of society, together with the utilitarian system, necessarily leads to socialism. The meaning of this principle, apart from its foundation, was in keeping with the political life of the eighteenth century. As a calculus of pleasure, it was indeed obscure, but it was valuable as a rule of averages. Its deficiency has to do with motivation. John Stuart Mill was the first to give a thorough treatment of this question in his book *Utilitarianism*. For the qualitative determination of value he had only a public standard. Its obligatory force arises from the fact that calculations about the striving for individual well-being make use of unconscious and obscure feelings. This, however, is only conceivable if it occurs not in the individual, but rather in social evolution.

The third necessary link is Herbert Spencer. He had the elements of evolutionary theory already before Darwin, but his late work,

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<sup>6</sup> Friedrich Eduard Beneke (1798–1854), German philosopher and psychologist.

<sup>7</sup> Several English translations. See *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, ed. by J. H. Burns and H.L.A. Hart (London 1970; Methuen paperback edition, 1982; with introduction by Hart).

*The Data of Ethics*<sup>8</sup> (German trans. by Vetter, 1849) rests entirely upon the doctrines of adaptation and heredity. The life of a human being must constantly be adapted to its conditions. Consequently, any principle that promotes adaptation and leads to a normal life is ethical. From this arises a relativism of ethical principles.

This standpoint dissolves into one of equating what is ethical with health. Animals, too, are ethical, and certainly the actions by which adaptation occurs are not intrinsically valuable, but mere means—work performed to attain pleasure. If all of this is ethically unsatisfactory, the method and manner by which it is implemented is physiologically untenable. We can grasp that with biological evolution new connections of nerves, and thus dispositions for more complicated reflex processes, develop. But a hereditary formation of nerve cells, whereby they become carriers of entire systems of representations and of inner moral dispositions, is, physiologically speaking, nonsense. Add to this the fact that the entire theory of heredity in this form has been called into question by Weismann.<sup>9</sup>

#### SECTION 7: THE CONFLICT OF METHODS SHOWS THE NEED FOR AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL AND CRITICAL FOUNDATION OF ETHICS

The conflict of methods gives rise to the need for an epistemological and critical foundation of ethics.

1. None of these three methods has been capable of interpreting the facts of the ethical world and deriving universally valid principles of action.

27 The system of our cognitive representations is closely tied to the formation of our feelings and our instinctive life, and all of them to our actions. But while in metaphysical theory ethical motivations are supposed to arise from theoretical considerations, in the natural metaphysics of European peoples we see the opposite, namely, a world-view emerging from active ethical motivations. This accords with the structure of thought in Plato and Kant.

<sup>8</sup> English version published by A. L. Burt Co., New York, Spencer's preface dated 1879.

<sup>9</sup> August Weismann, German biologist (1834–1914), known for his theory that heredity is based on germ plasm, which is independent of the external environment (rejection of Lamarck's theory of acquired characteristics).

2. The circularity of the metaphysical method:

A structural system can only produce genuine principles when cognitive results are gathered and subordinated to some volitional end. No theory that has a purely theoretical origin can influence life. The overstepping into metaphysical generalizations can only be justified in volitional terms. We know that something higher operates or works itself out in the nexus of the world only insofar as we can derive it ethically. Schleiermacher correctly saw that for us the absolute can only be given through such an inference.

3. The metaphysical method accommodates itself, then, to all stand-points. The majority of human world-view systems do not contradict the method of inner experience, because inner experience has determined them. In all circumstances the point of departure is inner experience. The territory of inner experience alone is stable and reliable. On this alone can metaphysical consciousness be grounded, and consequently only a critical treatment of the external world is capable of reconciling inner experience, a consciousness of the intelligibility of the world and the cognitive results of natural science.

4. Similarly, only critical consciousness can reconcile the theory of evolution and the facts of inner experience. The theory of evolution—which assumes a mechanistic system of nature, an epiphenomenal account of psychic processes and the derivation of evolution from a blind mechanism of the milieu, i.e., ultimately chance—must reduce ethical development to an irrelevant appearance accompanying the course of the world in its massiveness and necessity. These ethical processes are reduced to an affliction that strains consciousness but is powerless to change anything in the course of the world. It would remain the same without these correlated processes.

5. Thus, there exists a struggle between the lower and higher impulses in humanity, between the sensory, cognitive world-picture and uncurtailed inner experience in history. This is the ultimate cause of the insoluble conflict of human systems of metaphysics. Only through self-reflection can it be settled. Ethics is possible only on the basis of self-reflection.

At this point utilitarianism offers itself as a kind of ethical philosophy of compromise. Today it dominates European ethics especially because it appears to offer a practical and theoretical compromise between warring modes of conviction.



After having long prevailed in England, utilitarianism is now in disarray there. But it has become a kind of bourgeois philosophy in Germany. The thesis that ethics can be legitimated only by self-reflection and a critical consciousness—rising above sensory appearances and mere intellectual considerations—must be corroborated by a critique of utilitarianism. This is our first task in gaining a critical foundation of ethics.

### III

## Utilitarianism as a Compromise between a Sense-Based Cognitive Perspective and Ethical Consciousness

### SECTION 8: THE CONCEPT OF UTILITARIANISM AND ITS STANCE

As I consider the application of these methods in contemporary ethical works, only two systems emerge as truly deserving of thoroughgoing criticism. The first finds its complete, classical formulations in utilitarianism and is conspicuous in its effects. The other is present in the writings of the great historians, in the aspirations of our great statesman, but is not yet systematically worked out. It points to a psychological, historical principle and to cultural strivings.

At first, utilitarianism was the heir to the European system of natural morality and religion as well as natural law. This older system of the eighteenth century and the Enlightenment had its classical representatives in Leibniz, Locke, Rousseau, Kant, and Lessing. Whatever their differences, they agreed in the assumption that reason inheres in the systems of human culture and that it is capable of developing a rational coherence among them, which contains the principles of practical action.

This [natural] system had a devastating effect on the feudal, absolutist Catholic social order of France. In the French Revolution it proved itself capable of demolishing this order, but in its attempt at creating a new ethical order it proved to be bankrupt. In contrast, the same system in Germany, principally under the rule of Frederick the Great, brought about a genuine reform.

The utilitarian system emerged in England in the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century.

## SECTION 9: JEREMY BENTHAM

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### 1. The Principle [of General Well-Being]

The founder of the movement, Bentham, developed the principle of general well-being. All legislative acts and laws of customary morality should, according to this principle, serve as the basis for directing the will toward general well-being, and indeed Bentham refines this principle as that of the greatest possible happiness of the greatest number of people. He also demands that in establishing standards of action no other idea is to exert any influence.

With this principle he illuminates the complex and immense edifice of political and legal life. Inexorably, he demonstrates the irregularity and inexpediency of this edifice compared with the modern idea of comfort. He does not ask what interests, motives, and influences have determined that existing formation. He does not ask what functions have been and are exercised there. He judges the old edifice by his modern principle and finds that little of it is worth preserving.

Thus, Bentham's critique is revolutionary. It judges from the outside—from an abstract principle—what was formed on the basis of historical functions. If one concedes that this is legitimate, then Bentham obtains the right to his procedure of destruction. But his standpoint is not consistent when he holds on to the interests of the bourgeoisie, for the consequence of his standpoint is socialism.

### 2. The Means of Making This Principle Applicable to Legislation.

#### a) The Task and Its Meaning:

Bentham undertakes to discover a method by which this principle can be made useful for the concrete solution of legislative and socio-ethical problems. In this great endeavor, he can be designated as the founder of modern ethics, namely, social ethics, since every earlier system—for lack of intermediaries between principles and practical tasks—had made an impact only on the disposition of human individuals, but not on the practice of the affairs of nation-states.

### b) The Nature of the Solution:

This task demands that the values of feelings of pleasure and displeasure can be comprehensively surveyed, that they can be defined for specific tasks. Bentham's talent for tabulating and measuring the imponderable and incomprehensible is reminiscent of Mr. Pickwick. He selects as the determining factors of measurement: 1) intensity, 2) duration, 3) certainty, and 4) proximity.

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To them he adds 5) the consideration of whether these feelings in combination with each other will bring about others of a contrary kind. He stresses as an additional factor of appraisal 6) the dissemination of goods or evils among a certain number of people. Most useful for the implementation of the utilitarian system is Bentham's ranking of evils. The harm to a person that arises directly from an action is designated as an evil of the first order. Thus, loss of property or of life by murder is an evil of the first order. From this he distinguishes the evil that attaches to a harmful action indirectly or over the course of time. Thus, every single act of theft reinforces a feeling that endangers the institution of property and over the course of time a dissolution of the enterprising spirit, a diminution of the sense of justice. This consideration suggests that not only actions conducive to evils of the first order are objectionable, but also that actions that have no harmful first-order consequences at all or have even useful consequences of the first order may be just as objectionable—and in fact, according to the highest principle, objectionable to a greater degree—in that harmful consequences of a second or third order extend to the larger part of society. Bentham takes into consideration also the way in which temperament, health, education, occupation, and the power of goods or evils, influence our state of mind.

### c) The Inadequacy of the Solution—Criticism:

It is obvious that in the actual world, the affairs of state and the deliberations of legislators are constantly influenced by calculations of this sort. Every law proposed by some corporate body or other in Europe must be justified in terms of the influence it has on the welfare of the populace. But the calculation of the legislator cannot attain its [proper] outcome by a measurement of feelings. It must proceed from the way standards for the household of social life function and become discernible whenever needs manifest themselves. Any proposal is to be measured for its value relative to the functions of a social body, and outwardly for the urgency of the need. A military budget cannot be decided upon by a calculation

of the painful feelings it prevents. The conclusion to be drawn for scientific deliberation is that Bentham's task is insoluble; a standard for quantitative estimation is lacking; the possibility of adding sums of feelings is lacking; and finally, the indifference of consciousness, assumed by Bentham, regarding qualitative distinctions is merely a hypothesis that is not in harmony with the human feeling of life. One need only observe that contents are strived for and enjoyed. In terms of the satisfaction that I seek in life, it is the same according to Bentham, whether I eat oysters or contemplate a scientific proposition. The basic deficiency of his theory is its atomistic approach and its detachment from actual drives and needs.

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This consideration leads, then, to the conclusion that Bentham's conception must be replaced by a socio-historical one that proceeds from human drives and the functions of society.

### 3. The Stabilization of this Principle Through the Establishment of a Sanction:

Bentham must again, like the great Mr. Pickwick, compile and tabulate. There are four kinds of sanction: 1) the physical sanction, i.e., pleasure and displeasure follow from the course of nature = law of nature; 2) the moral sanction, i.e., the feelings of other persons evoked by a mode of action = Locke's law of public opinion; 3) the political sanction, i.e., the consequences that attach to certain actions based on the law and authority = rewards and punishments. Already Hobbes and Locke stressed the influence of this force upon the formation of customs. 4) The religious sanction, i.e., consequences attached to an action based on religious belief. They are simply registered by Bentham without comment.

The basic law of the sanction lies in the strengthening of one's motivational power by a combination of various sanctions; their invariable basis is what is natural. As the consequences work together, or intersect in an action, a strong relationship is established between action and the impression that it is good or bad. Its effects on conscience are not mentioned. That is no coincidence. The pangs of conscience and remorse in ourselves are simply the result of external relations. The main question of ethics becomes: Is conscience merely a reflex of the external consequences of actions?

## SECTION 10: JOHN STUART MILL

## I. Battle against the Idealistic Faction of the School of Inner Experience

Mill's investigation of the foundations of morals is, in its essential starting point, completely reminiscent of Hume's inquiry into the principles of morality, which in terms of content and form is the greatest work of British ethics.

33 Moral discriminations as such are an undeniable fact of human life. We call certain actions and inclinations right and others wrong insofar as they are approved or disapproved. We have pleasant feelings when considering actions and inclinations of the first kind, and opposite feelings when considering the second kind. Everyone is aware of the fact that these feelings are not identical with our ordinary feelings of pleasure and pain.

Two opposing theories attempt to explain these universally known and acknowledged phenomena: the idealist theory and the empiricist or positivist theory. Mill no doubt exaggerates the contrast between these two directions, for only at a few points of their development do they oppose each other as bluntly and exclusively as he portrays it. It is certainly a recurring characteristic of idealist ethics, however, that the distinction between right and wrong is regarded as an ultimate and not further derivable fact, as the work of a *sui generis* faculty, and that the accompanying feelings are designated as being as specific as some classes of sensory perception. By contrast, the empiricist school regards ethical claims much more as products of a highly advanced psychological development, compound phenomena to be analyzed by the same principles applied to other compound ideas and feelings, and above all it emphasizes the connection, denied by the intuitionist school, between these phenomena and human happiness.

The forcefulness and decisiveness with which Mill reacts against the intuitionist school makes it patently clear how little the recognition of the intellectual acuity of a Plato, a Coleridge, or a Carlyle, was capable of deceiving him about the deficiencies of those theories. If the intuitionist hypothesis with its presuppositions is really to be taken seriously, it is for Mill not much more than a flexible tool for glorifying prejudices and dismissing consideration of any deep-rooted belief or any feeling whose origin does not lie within the reach of memory.

Much that Mill says in this context sounds as though it is immediately directed against Carlyle, who of all the adherents of the

intuitionist school has exerted the most intellectual influence in England. Never have issues concerning the most profound problems of the practical content of life been approached with the impetuous and passionate appeal to immediate feelings and powers of imagination that Carlyle uses to override all scientific methods of investigation in ethics and social philosophy. More poet than philosopher, this inspired and spirited man has without question had a great impact on human minds, but Mill saw perfectly clearly that one can stir up excitement in this way without drawing closer to the actual demands of such difficult issues.

The contrast between an ethic that appeals to the external criteria of pleasurable and unpleasurable consequences, and one that is grounded only on inner conviction, is tantamount to the contrast between progress and a standstill in ethics, the contrast of an incessant, intelligent scrutiny and the worship of traditional customs. If we are to take the intuitionist theory seriously, we need to inspect it more closely and note that everything of practical use which that theory has contributed (i.e., all attempts to deduce and establish its norms) has been achieved at the price of consistency. Even theories which in principle reject external criteria (i.e., consideration of probable consequences) rely very extensively upon them, though admittedly in a disguised way. Mill has emphatically drawn our attention—as did Schopenhauer, Beneke, and Feuerbach before him in Germany—to the fact that Kant's very attempt to derive the maxims of his general lawgiving will from pure reason collapses into an objectionable attentiveness, bordering on the comical, about the possible consequences of a particular action. Even Fichte's form of the ethic of the categorical imperative escapes this difficulty only by representing the entire concrete structure of ethics as a necessary means for implementing a supreme purpose, namely, the pure autonomy of the rational being (which admittedly has nothing more to do with individual purposes) and by magically incorporating into this principle the entire content of the most perfect life. In this way one can protest against the doctrine of happiness and uphold an ethical concept of beatitude while secretly concealing within it something that possesses the same force as the simple and expanded feelings of value that eudaemonism openly exalts as its ethical principle.

## 2. THE HAPPINESS PRINCIPLE IN MILL

### 1. The Principle

The version of the happiness principle that Mill gives is the following: The ultimate goal of all human action, or the highest good in accordance with ancient philosophy, for the individual as for the species, is an existence as free from pain and as rich in pleasure as possible. Both are understood in terms of quantity as well as of quality, and of course the judgment of those whose experience is the richest and whose consciousness is the most fully mature is decisive. This ultimate goal of all action is at the same time necessarily the criterion of what is ethical.

### 2. The Standard of Measurement

35 This standard is not arbitrary, but rather is given in nature and experience. Judgments of comparative value can be made only by those who can compare based on acquaintance with diversity. No one would expect enlightenment about this from animals or from crude, sensual people who have never been acquainted with other kinds of enjoyment. When learned and thoughtful people are consulted, the result is the indubitable fact that there exist qualitative differences in feelings of happiness and unhappiness. That Mill stresses this is all the more interesting since its denial has led modern German pessimists to many of their most startling sophistries. Quite apart from ethical considerations, not a single person who has become capable of generating purely intellectual and social feelings even to a limited extent would want to exchange the capacity for such feelings for the greatest number and uninterrupted duration of purely sensual pleasures. This proposition is confirmed by the often-made observation that, conversely, dissatisfaction with life in relatively favorable circumstances is as a rule the result of intellectual narrowness and egoistic self-limitation. To be sure, the more limited the mental organization of a being is, the easier that being is to satisfy, and the more highly developed one's spiritual development and the more manifold one's needs, the more difficult it is to find happiness. But those natural distinctions of value between different forms of consciousness, independent of any misfortunes in the course of one's life, continue to be factually based: They are the foundation of everything which one calls "human dignity."

### 3. This Ethic Is Also Valid for Pessimists

Even pessimists—indeed, especially pessimists—must admit the validity of this conception, for the lower their estimation of the actual value of life, the more assuredly they measure precisely this unworthiness with respect to their ideal of happiness. Even if they regard happiness as unattainable, they must applaud all attempts to alleviate and reduce present suffering in the world. If nothing more, the utilitarian ethic can at least lend support to this negative eudamonism. But Mill is far removed from the pessimistic conception of life. Mill certainly sees with the unreserved clarity of the pessimist, all the infirmities and defects of life as it is, but this bleak condition of existence can be viewed as attributable to a deficient organization of human society, to the inadequate cultivation of our knowledge and our will—it is neither inevitable nor the last word about human development.

### 4. Moral Norms

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Thus, one can define the ethical in Mill's sense as the sum of human behavioral norms, the compliance with which would most extensively bring about such a state of happiness.

It goes without saying that this state of happiness, which appears as the goal of ethical behavior, can be understood only as those constituents of happiness which are dependent on the human will and the orderly accord of human strivings, and by no means as those constituents conditioned by relations of nature and the unpredictable play of chance. One might observe, then, that the officially cited version of Mill's formula has been given somewhat too absolute an expression, which fits our contemporary ethical ideal, to be sure, but is not quite so well suited to historical application. This discrepancy is not difficult to produce when one defines the ethical as the totality of norms through which, in the judgment of the intellectually pre-eminent men of every age and every people, the greatest sum of happiness in the sphere of human society would be produced, and when the latter concept of society is gradually elevated from a limited usage encompassing those united by ethnic or national affiliation or faith to an ever more universal conception.

### 3. REBUTTAL OF OBJECTIONS AGAINST UTILITARIANISM

The proposed principle is, then, subject to a series of objections.

Pleasure and pain—or in an expanded sense, happiness and unhappiness—are the sole incentives of all action. This proposition



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is pitted against the preferred view that the ethical good is instead to be pursued “for its own sake.” What does “for its own sake” mean? Obviously, nothing other than that the ethical is an end at which we remain standing and linger because our consciousness of the ethical provides contentment and the absence of it pains us. Thereby we merely disregard other aims and comforts that we may intend to achieve by ethical means, but in no way from all consideration of pleasure and pain entirely. But is there then no difference between what is ethical and feelings of pleasure? Undoubtedly in certain cases there is, but one must not exaggerate it. In every age, and for every individual in particular periods of his development, certain constituents of the ethical are pursued not for their own sake, i.e., due to the enjoyment immediately attached to them, but rather as means to the ends of avoiding other unpleasantness or attaining other enjoyment. Gradually, however, by virtue of an endlessly repeated transformation in human life, what was previously valuable only as a means becomes now an end in itself, i.e., an object of pleasurable and unpleasurable feelings.

In exactly the same way that Fichte, Hegel, and Feuerbach had done, and as every penetrating ethical theory must do, Mill calls attention to the partial opposition between inclinations and drives on the one hand, and the will, i.e., aspiration clarified and refined through developed reproduction and intellectual activity, on the other. While idealist theories place in the foreground the active impetus of the operation of reason, Mill emphasizes much more the force of habit by which the will, originally dependent upon inclinations and drives, finally acquires a certain independence. Consequently, due to deeply formed associations, it strives for things which originally aroused no immediate inclination, and certain ends are willed not because they are desired, but rather they appear desirable because we will them. This is a process that cannot fail to exist even in the ethical development of the most independent natures and is plainly the rule for the great majority of people. The beginning of ethical education is not otherwise possible than by associating right with pleasure and wrong with pain and having the novice immediately experience both pleasurable and painful feelings. Only in this way does the will gradually attain the readiness to want and attach enjoyment to things that were originally remote and that have no immediate value for it, but rather are valued only by virtue of a general appraisal as prerequisites to universal happiness.

What is ethical is therefore conceivable only as a product of development. This is the insight resulting from these considerations and with which Mill, on the one hand, has in the most favorable way filled a perceptible gap in the older Humean conception and, on the other hand, has strongly anticipated the later evolutionism with its ancillary psychology of association. Mill already recognized both directions in this development, which were later distinguished as the autogenetic and psychogenetic: Over the course of generations and through accumulated human experiences, a criterion of ethical evaluation with its particular demands emerges, and we find individuals adapting to the resulting norms. The development of this criterion is so far from being incomprehensible that one must only wonder how such an evident process could be enveloped in so much darkness. Each person knows on the whole quite well what he expects from others, what he finds pleasing and hurtful in them, and it would surely be odd if from this there did not arise, for each age and each people, a notion of what everyone wants from others, a standard of judging in accordance with a "general well-being."

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Admittedly, however, this evaluation of the individual from the standpoint of others according to their standards and expectations, as was demonstrated also by Feuerbach in an entirely analogous way, is by no means entirely the same as one's own judgment about what others expect of us—nor obviously identical with what we want ourselves. For this very reason it is a complete misunderstanding of utilitarianism to accuse this principle of eliminating all renunciation or sacrifice. All that utilitarianism says is that even acts of self-denial must have a eudaemonological background if they are to be ethically valid, that they have to be legitimized as somehow means to promoting this final purpose. Utilitarian ethics has learned from human history what a tough and unrelenting struggle it is in every age and for every people to wrest from the natural instincts of individuals what it holds as valuable and to enforce this. Almost all estimable qualities of humanity are the result, not of natural instincts, but rather of a victory of reflection and deliberate volition over the instincts. Courage, truth, and purity are instilled in humans by training. Everywhere individual persons must first have developed ethical qualities through their distinctive capacities before these can be apprehended as duties. And certainly, the impossibility of determining the consequences of an action in a given case will not be permitted as a valid objection against the utilitarian principle, for between the highest principle and a particular action there are maxims, evaluations about kinds of actions and character

traits, which are used to make a judgment. These [maxims and evaluations] provide a wealth of moral concepts whereby our heritage educates us. It is unnecessary to rack one's brains considering how the murder of a human being could affect the common good.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

39 Mill's honesty and broad-mindedness allow him to recognize the full difficulty of making comprehensible on the basis of his foundation, the motive for caring about the well-being of others, and here his own principle leads, then, to its opposite. Not because, as Jodl<sup>1</sup> indicates, utilitarians and idealists agree in acknowledging that the ethical is a property of the person and that this property consists in the unselfish willing of an objective or universal good. The reason is, rather, that Mill lapses into an erroneous circle in that he evokes the help of education and legislation. Education is supposed to link human happiness and actions having common utility; legislation is supposed to bring individual interest and the public interest into the greatest possible harmony. It assumes that education can generate an illusion after genuine enthusiasm has been theoretically annihilated. Over the years, Mill became increasingly inclined to sacrifice the logical implications of his principle to the feelings that promote human happiness. The harmony produced by legislation is certainly in line with the tendency of the principle, but only in the narrow sphere where laws can affect ethical actions.

In case of a conflict Mill seeks a more deeply rooted moral motive, a sanction for the ethical duty to advance common utility. Even though he declares the existence of moral feelings to be doubtful, he falls back on the doctrine of sympathy. Indeed, when he bases his expectations on the religious doctrine of the unity of individuals with other persons around them, an innate moral disposition and an obscure metaphysical assumption become the refuge of a desperate utilitarianism. Mill refuses to see that such a metaphysical underpinning involves the abolition of the atomistic suppositions from which the maximum of happiness originated. Still more decisive is the bankruptcy of Mill's principle of utility concerning freedom. Here Mill—in unison with Pestalozzi, Humboldt, and Goethe—pits the principle of individual development over against the socialistic mechanization of society. While he postulates a duty of self-development, no motive for this is available in the utilitarian system. This is indicative, rather,

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Jodl (1849–1914), leading proponent of German positivism.

of a disposition in human nature, which must be an abomination to a genuine utilitarian. Thus, in a curious development—which Mill himself, not without self-flagellation, has portrayed—utilitarianism dissolves itself.

## SECTION 11: GENERAL CRITIQUE OF UTILITARIANISM

Without introducing any hypotheses, one can confront the utilitarian system with the following general considerations. The system in its English form relies ultimately upon the assumption of a natural harmony between personal well-being and the common good. This, however, is not harmony in the sense of the well-known words of the German emperor Charles V: "My brother, Francis I (king of France) and I are in agreement—we both want the same thing." The assumption is, rather, that action for the common good that is in accordance with the natural arrangement of society will also always best provide for others. But this is the case only when, and to the extent that, legislation and education accomplish such a result. Thus, if utilitarianism is to be maintained, the system of individual liberty must be given up and replaced with a system in which individuals are guided even in their innermost convictions. The same phenomenon occurs, then, in the sphere of morality that has taken place in the field of political economy. The older English economy could be traced back by Bastiat<sup>2</sup> to the principle of the natural harmony of interests in economic life. Mill was a chief proponent of this theory. But more recent developments in political economy prove, as does life itself still more clearly, that this is a fiction. On the assumption of the right to inherit, society left to itself falls prey to capitalism; every legal decree is a regulative power amid economic interests. Consequently, in the sphere of social ethics Mill's utilitarianism has had to relinquish its dominance to the principle of directing society toward the establishment of public well-being—i.e., to make way for the principle of socialism and its philosopher, Auguste Comte.

This result obtains also from the following consideration. Utilitarianism was an extremely congenial doctrine for the bourgeoisie as long as it was used merely to eradicate the remains of a feudal, ecclesiastical order. Utilitarianism entered into an alliance, then, with the radical liberalism of the bankers in England. As

<sup>2</sup>Frederic Bastiat (1801–1850), French economist who advocated free enterprise and the view that the pursuit of economic self-interest would promote the common good.

soon, however, as the principle of maximum happiness no longer possesses the propriety and modesty to respect property and the right of inheritance, it becomes evident that this principle leads undeniably to a socialistic system, to social democracy. As Bentham candidly recognizes, the greatest possible happiness of the greatest possible number is the only possible formula when one takes the totality of equally valued statistical units and adds up their quanta of pleasure. He recognized further the influence on this calculation of the principle developed by Bernoulli in his *mensura sortis*.<sup>3</sup> According to Bernoulli, the increment in well-being brought about by a profit is inversely proportional to the wealth already available.<sup>4</sup> According to Bentham, the growth in happiness due to a limited good is proportional not to the magnitude of the good, but rather to the ratio between this and the sum of the goods already possessed by the individual. As concerns the distribution of wealth and the particular possessions that comprise it, this implies that a given quantity which would have doubled a poor person's means to happiness will guarantee only a negligible increase for a rich person, and consequently the maximum happiness in a given society can be achieved only by a roughly equal distribution of the resources for enjoyment. To this must be added the fact that feelings generated by the contrast [between rich and poor] bring less happiness to the minority than the pain they create for the great majority.

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Thus, we are led over to the other side of utilitarianism, which today has seized upon this principle: the morality of socialism.

Hume once supported the unfortunate Jean-Jacques Rousseau and brought him to England—the success of which is well known. Then John Stuart Mill at a later date became interested in Comte; his attention became fixed on this great philosopher prominent in France. It was the attractive power that a superior form of the utilitarian principle had to exert on the English.

<But there is also a circularity in Comte's viewpoint which hinders a solution. If the goal is happiness, it is not logical to sacrifice my

<sup>3</sup> Daniel Bernoulli (1700–1782), Swiss mathematician and scientist. The cited work is a paper entitled “Specimen theoriae novae de mensura sortis,” which was written in c. 1730–31, and published in 1778 in *Commentarii academiae imperialis Petropolitanae*; German edition trans. Alfred Pringsheim, *Die Grundlage der modernen Wertlehre* (1896), i.e., the “Foundation of Modern Value Theory.”

<sup>4</sup> That is, roughly what has come to be known in economics as the “principle of decreasing marginal utility.” See discussion of Bernoulli's hypothesis in Joseph A. Schumpeter, *History of Economic Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 303ff.

own happiness, which I have in hand, for the benefit of others. Eudaemonism amounts to no more than the psychological illusion of morality. Our actual motives are quite different. A thirst for revenge with the destruction of oneself—self-sacrifice. The genius dedicates his life to scientific tasks. The powerful live out their passions and impulses. The great achievements of history could not have been produced merely by eudaemonism.>

## SECTION 12: THE EPISTEMOLOGICAL PRINCIPLE FOR THE POSSIBILITY OF MORALITY

1. The objective validity of the facts of ethical experience cannot be maintained from the standpoint of sensuous beliefs. From this standpoint every phenomenon requires a substantive basis: sensation, reproduction, memory, instinct, and feeling are conditioned by the course of their correlated physiological processes. Were the higher and free processes of ethical life to be separated from elementary psychic processes, they would have to inhere in a higher mental substance, whose cooperation with the lower physical processes would cancel the unity of consciousness. This psychic dualism had to emerge as soon as the higher facts of the mental life were recognized. Plato, Aristotle, medieval philosophy, and theology had to fall into this contradiction.

As soon as one denies the higher ethical facts in favor of a logically consistent scientific system, practical materialism arises. This insight, and the peculiar attempt to use the epistemological insights of the eighteenth century to solve the problem, may be regarded as the root of the Kantian system. However, Kant's dissolution of substance, of the metaphysical unity of the soul, and of unities of a material nature made room for the ethical world, but did not provide sufficient foundations for its possibility

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2. The reality or objective validity of what is given in inner experience consists in the fact that pleasure, pain, and passions constitute life itself. Their existence is identical with what is there for consciousness. The existence of a feeling and its being felt are not two different things; they are life. Everything else can be understood as in its service, as decoration or background.

3. The reality of the external world and of objects consists in the fact that, as a volitional unity, I definitely find myself dependent on

something other or different from myself. This is the real concept of cause. I find myself compelled to affirm a manifold of forces.

4. Thus, there is an epistemological position from which to consider the volitional unities who become the object of morality through a system of ethical laws.

In the abstract philosophy of modern Europe, the first fundamental conception to develop was the mechanistic view that all physical phenomena—light, temperature, etc.—can be explained by deriving them from processes of motion. This led to the theoretical demand to derive biological processes from physico-chemical ones. But sensation, feeling, representation, [and] thought were separated from these processes and assumed to be part of an integral sphere of conscious processes. The latter processes were related to the former in some mode of correlation, correspondence, dependence, etc.

#### Questions concerning This Complex of Hypotheses:

1. We cannot know which of the physical phenomena goes the deepest. All physical processes are associated with processes of motion. But this [association] is still not an identity, which, like its atomistic foundation, is a sheer hypothesis. Theoretical constructs like mass, force, and atoms have a meaning for a system of thought only insofar as they make it possible to order experience. A reality for them outside of thought cannot be demonstrated.

Along with the system of properties, and the changes and correlations that are given in sense, we are given inner states that involve a relation between outer and inner without our being able to give it a more [definitive] expression. Sensory organ and sense, brain and trace, retention, association, and reproduction go together like inner and outer.

43 In this sphere there exists a necessary linkage to which the physiological and psychological courses of events are subject—the latter is like the inside of the former.

2. The solution that Wilhelm Wundt suggests is thoroughly in accordance with the principles of transcendental idealism. On the one hand, as this psychologist explains, objective causality is a product of thought—more specifically, a product of the inherent logical causality of the mind. On the other hand, the postulated universal validity of objective causality generates the claim that our own thinking is to be seen as something necessarily established by objective

causality. Nevertheless, the first perspective holds the advantage. As Ernst Mach puts it, if one were acquainted with the world only by way of the theater and then went behind the mechanistic fixtures of the stage, one might well believe that the real world needed a rigging-loft and that everything would be gained if only this were found. Similarly, the intellectual aids that we use to represent the world on the stage of thought cannot be regarded as the foundations of the actual world!

3. Substance, cause, matter, and soul are mere metaphysical fictions when considered as things. Any commerce between these entities would be a fiction of the second degree. The system of concepts in which this commerce is explicated is necessarily and inescapably contradictory. Indeed, this contradiction is not greater in the dualism of Descartes—its inescapability does not emerge more sharply in occasionalism—than in Spinoza's philosophy of identity, this so-called monism so often used in modern natural science. For the presupposition of the equivalence of the mutual independence of these two orders is either to be given up in favor of one of them, or there is a metaphysical reality to be discovered behind both that projects this illusion. This contradicts, however, the thesis of the reality of psychical experiences. The monadology [of Leibniz] was thus an advancement to more consistent, deeper thinking. But correlation is a formula without intelligible content.

4. These contradictions disappear when one develops representations that correspond most closely with the nexus of life as such. In doing so, one must keep in mind how inadequately conceptual thought represents the nexus of life in order to be alert at every point for possible contradictions. All thinking about life-experiences can only attain a certain approximation within critically ascertainable bounds.

5. Let us start with the decisive point. Higher moral phenomena are given to us merely as processes on the foundation of a physically conditioned and determined animal vitality. As our thinking is linked with spatial imagery, it distinguishes a higher level, so to speak, from a lower level of psychic life. Corresponding to this spatial order or demarcation, there is a productivity in our life according to which higher processes can only proceed on the basis of lower processes, although these lower processes need never exist separately by themselves in the human psyche.



6. Thus, it is not the case that there are specific delimited psychic occurrences that are linked with the physiological and then spontaneous, free occurrences floating above them. On the contrary, a free vital spontaneity is everywhere immanent in the necessary linkage between fixed, material processes and lawful elementary principles of the psyche.

### Epistemological Determination Concerning the Legitimacy of the Three Methods<sup>5</sup>

1. If what is actual were given to us in perceptions, the last [socio-historical] method would be fundamental, needing only to be complemented by the second method of inner experience. This is how Spencer, Wundt, and others have proceeded.

By this method, no one will be able to resolve the difficulties involved in a teleological conception of developmental history if it is to deal adequately with ethical experiences.

If psychic processes are initially correlated with physiological processes, and if differentiation and increasing teleological adaptation occur in both spheres, then the question arises where the independent vital spontaneity of the moral processes begins. For the moral process has no correlate in brain states. Rather, these states are only its conditions.

Inner experience contains within it responsibility, duty, consciousness of freedom, the forgetting of oneself as the hallmark of the ethical, the sacrifice of oneself as its most beautiful blossom. All this does not grow from the stem of our animal nature; it cannot be derived from transformations of our instinctive life and changing conditions. Thus, from this standpoint there arises an insoluble antinomy between the empirical facts of conscience and the hypothetical theories of evolutionary thought.

The logical relationship is this: Inner experience cannot be explained by evolutionary theory. Inner experience can be contested and truncated by this theory but cannot be subsumed under it. Cognitive thought which avails itself of the hypotheses of a correlation between the physical and the mental, and of an ascending development in both realms, is unable to comprehend how the freedom of the moral could develop continuously and without a leap from the

<sup>5</sup> Three traditional methods of ethics were analyzed, starting at II, p. 38. The first was metaphysical, the second was based on inner experience, and the third was socio-historical.

territory of nature; nor can it comprehend how the moral can be correlated with the physical, or how it could extricate itself from this correlation.

From the standpoint of inner experience, however, there arise epistemological insights that show the impossibility of solving the foregoing problem and allow recognition of the correct relationship of the two methods to each other. Therefore, morality cannot avoid an epistemological foundation. Writings that proceed without such a foundation arrive at only a mixture of biological propositions and inner experiences, along with somewhat metaphysical conceptions in which contradictions can be smoothed away only by a kind of dilution or leveling.

2. Epistemology and the natural sciences supplement each other in a series of theses. There is, then, no doubt about them in modern thought. I merely assert them and will not quibble about their particular formulation[s]—there is no doubt about their main content. The most general proposition governing all cognition is that the entire world, lock, stock, and barrel, is an appearance for my consciousness, a fact of consciousness.

This entails that [only] inner states are grasped as real and that all the constituents of the external world are phenomenal; [cognition of] the latter is practically useful, but [only] as a system of signs for what is independent of us.

If this implies a limitation on the real content of human cognition, there is, however, behind this limitation on the extension of human cognition another more important limitation that relates to the mode of our cognition. That first limitation has achieved general recognition since Locke and Kant. Everyone acknowledges this. On the basis of this, Comte—and in Germany, Helmholtz<sup>6</sup> and others—have further constructed a cognitive system of the whole of nature, which throughout, in place of real reference points and connections, substitutes phenomena as reference points, and relations of equality and dependence as connections. And as the relationship of physical to psychic facts forms, so to speak, the center of this construction of what is actual, psychic facts are likewise placed in a correlative relationship with the physical. Moreover, since according to such a perspective everything is, as it were, embedded in a comprehensive

<sup>6</sup> Hermann Ludwig von Helmholtz (1821–1894), German physiologist and physicist, who was a founding father of modern philosophy of science.

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physical system, the correlative system of psychic facts appears altogether appended and secondary. Thus, according to the law of the conservation of energy, the alteration that psychic processes bring about in the external world can be explained in terms of their accompanying physical antecedents without any engagement of psychic life. In this way the physical nexus becomes a firm foundation, and the psychic nexus a world floating above it, and nothing is changed by the fact that the nature of the physical that is there for us in the signs of sensation and spatial relations, is unknown to us.

But when one also takes into consideration the intensive cognitive limits that are immanent to our knowledge, only then is there the possibility of doing justice to the inner experiences of self-consciousness, responsibility, and of a free, vital spontaneity. The standpoint of an incomplete epistemic critique could never acknowledge the presuppositions necessary to grasp these inner experiences. A representative of the idealism that results from this incomplete standpoint is Lange.<sup>7</sup>

The never-ending limits of cognition are conditioned by the fact that we not only directly experience the vital spontaneity of our own self as reality, but also that we use this pervasive vital spontaneity to unite the manifold givens of sense into objects and persons and finally explain and comprehend them.

Thus, we create around us a volitional actuality, a living externality that has an inner core that extends outwards and is filled with force. Everywhere relations of doing and undergoing, essentiality, meaning, and purpose.

We are, then, wholly incapable of looking behind us, so to speak, of going behind our own vital spontaneity to find a principle for the vital connection of our circumstances—i.e., to see into the nature of the transition of one circumstance to another.

At this point the insight first arises as to the immanent epistemic limitations of psychology and of the sciences based on it.

I experience at every moment how there originates from a feeling an instinctlike striving to hold onto it. I experience how pain leads to withdrawal and then, further, to hatred. I can discern the regularity of transition in delineating the transition of one situation into another. I cannot, however, reach back behind these to my own vital spontaneity. The givenness of a feeling, or the quality of a representation or of a volition cannot be derived from acts of feeling

<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Albert Lange (1828–1875), German philosopher and political activist. Originator of neo-Kantianism and author of *The History of Materialism*.

or representing. To do so would destroy the inner experience itself, according to which representation, volition, and feeling always remain distinct. It would replace this inner experience with something emerging in the process of thinking and which is there, however, only by means of separation and combination.

I can no more posit the independence of individual sensations in thought than deny their unity; for this unity is the condition of my very apprehension. That a manifold is variegated but remains one, is there in lived experience; it can be acknowledged by thought, but not denied. Thus, the decisive contributions of psychology are merely descriptive. An explanative psychology is conceivable only within these inherent bounds. Concepts that are derived from the external world should not be uncritically employed to construct psychic relations. We know nothing of a mental substance. We are only acquainted with processes and their convergences. The most that can be achieved is not the ever-sought-after causal reduction of states to each other, but rather an understanding of their functional cooperation directed at establishing a temporary equilibrium in the life of feelings. In abstract terms, a teleological perspective is merely derived from this special nexus in the living being. It is then used to designate a similar relation of constituents or functions in a material whole. Although we are certain of the existence of the reality of something independent of us in impulse, feeling, or will, the cognition of this external world is subjected to still other entirely different immanent limits. On the other hand, cognition admittedly has quite different advantages and artifices of perception when it learns to use them.

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That which stands against the will is given as cause or force. Insofar as this is independent from me but exhibits a regularity in its appearances, we can obtain a law that is a fact of the external world and just as certain as my own vital spontaneity. Furthermore, we can recognize or read off from the operation of forces in the external world that they involve a factor that strikes us as distancing. This factor of distancing, even if we assume the operation of remote forces, contributes to differences in their operation. With forces that operate contiguously it is possible for A to affect B, while excluding the possibility that A can immediately influence some C that is separated from A through B. This rigidity in the effects of forces at a distance from each other distinguishes matter from our own inner life, for in this the influence of psychic forces is not bound by such a relationship. The vital spontaneity of psychic influences is unifying.

That the outside appears to me as spatial and endowed with qualities, is a consequence of the psycho-physical cognitive nature of my senses, which again are an ultimate for me. I cannot reach behind them; I cannot in actuality reduce color or sound to a movement as if it were the sole existential; I can only compare within a systemic context, distinguish stages and in this way elaborate a system. Consequently, a consideration of the matter of nature leaves us unable to find unity, vital spontaneity, [and] coherence. All our thinking can only recognize coexistence, succession, identity, and uniformity; it can only combine, separate, compare, and relate. That means that thought has a tendency to mechanize.

## TWO

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### The Will and Our Ethical Dispositions

#### SECTION 1: THE BASIC ORGANIZATION OF THE LIVING BEING

The task of ethics is to gain a firm footing in the stream of development, to take a stand amid the alterations of living beings in their ascending line where everything appears relative and variable. If ethics is to do this in a universally valid way, how could it not take as its starting point the nature of psychic life, the processes of the will in the human being!

To react to impressions in order to restore equilibrium—that is the schema of living beings.

The drives inherent in our animal organization are excited by external stimuli and become operative; they exert a purposive influence on the external world by means of reflex mechanisms and thereby establish an adaptation between it and the individual.

This nexus of processes takes on a teleological character. The basic concept of the organic establishes itself at this point. When activated by a stimulus, a drive operates in accordance with the needs of the system of animal functions to which it is linked.

The purposiveness in the linkage of these psychic representations increases with the number of links in the chain. Ever more intermediate links insert themselves between the stimulus effect and the activation of drives. The simplest connection is observable in lower

animal life: Each momentary stimulation evokes a change in the inner condition of lower animals that leads to a movement of adaptation or rejection. Stimulus, altered state, and instinctive movement are always linked in this uniform way.

When separate organs appear, they become bearers of isolated psychic processes. Then there originates in this organic matter, with the return of the same stimulus, an inner condition that includes consciousness of the familiar or habitual: recognition. Separate sensory organs result in special sensory qualities. Memory and imaginary representations develop, and instinctive life then also differentiates itself—corresponding to the separation of organic systems there emerges a drive for nourishment, a drive for movement, a drive for security, etc. Reflex mechanisms form and separate from each other, [resulting in] an ever-advancing process of differentiation and refinement amongst the separate organs and functions.

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Thus, [the organism's] impressions come to correspond ever more to the variegated milieu. Instincts or drives form a system that accompanies, carries, and supports the animal functions. The play of feelings expresses the growing relations of instinctive states to the environment. Psychic formations such as sensations, perceptions, representations, thoughts, feelings, moods, affects, drives, volitions are differentiated, and the reactions of such an organism for the purpose of adapting to the external world mesh together into a manifold of movements, which are in large part supported by a reflex mechanism.

## SECTION 2: PURPOSIVENESS IN THE BASIC PLAN OF THE LIVING BEING

One could conceive of organisms in which adaptation to the external world was constantly maintained by intellectual processes. Such organisms would have to distinguish harmful and useful nourishment, good and bad air, by way of intellectual operations. The skill of psychic creatures is to do this through instinct and the feeling connected with it—to be sure in an abbreviated and disjointed fashion, but nevertheless in ample measure. There is no need for quasi-omniscience by which the intellect would provide for the affairs of animate beings. Instinct and feeling teach them to seek nourishment, to distinguish useful from harmful nourishment, drive them to reproduce, support natural selection, teach them to defend themselves, to hide.

This occurs by way of a regular connection of a pleasurable feeling with a relationship of usefulness between a living being and its environment, a connection of pleasurable feeling and the activation of an instinctive drive. If, on the contrary, there existed a regular connection between such a relationship and an unpleasant feeling, we could not live one day.

This simple stratagem of nature makes possible preservation, propagation, and improvement within the living being.

50 But when sensations are related in perception and thought, our grasp of the external world becomes more fundamental. Similarly, when feelings and instincts are integrated, our assessments of value rise above the momentary and the particular. As a result, the adaptation of individual living beings to their environment becomes ever more complete, and with that our psychic purposiveness increases. This is always the basic structure of all life even in the highest forms of historical life. All mysteries about historical existence and its achievements can be solved only on the basis of a biological foundation of psychic being.

### SECTION 3: THE CENTRALITY OF INSTINCTIVE AND AFFECTIVE LIFE

Thus what is so manifest, and often so dreadful, in the life of animals remains the case for human existence. A human being is a bundle of drives. On one side, there are sensory stimuli and representations; on the other side, there are movements. They are the tentacles, as it were, by means of which this system of drives sucks in impressions, [and] to which it reacts [by] grasping, appropriating or warding off what is outside. Never has human nature been more seriously misjudged than by those who espouse an aesthetics of the beautiful soul or an intellectualistic perspective. When the French Revolution conceived of man as a rational being to be treated as such, when the Enlightenment grounded the progress of the human race on scientific cognition, when France unleashed powers, set up humane goals and intended to lead humanity toward them through the working together of all classes—they completely misunderstood that these bundles of drives can at any time be held together only by a volitional force. History can be understood only when the centrality of the powerful volitional life of humanity is investigated. The Stoics of late antiquity, Neoplatonism, and Christianity just offered more mature, inwardly directed versions of this ancient insight.

#### SECTION 4: THE INNER RELATEDNESS OF INSTINCT, FEELING, AND VOLITION

1. In the description of the forms of mental life there is a separation between feeling, instinct, and volition, just as there is between representation and feeling. These expressions designate partial contents of psychic processes. As a partial content, a representation has no actual existence by itself. The act of representing always contains instinct and feeling within itself: a process characteristic of the self.

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2. Instinct and feeling, however, cannot be separated from each other within the concrete biological sciences. Here they appear as different forms through which the same process flows. This process consists in a reaction of the system of instinctive drives to an impression. Here it is unimportant whether feeling or instinct is the first form of this reaction. In whatever way this reaction comes about, it can appear in the form of feeling, in the form of instinct, or in the form of volition.

#### SECTION 5: THE SPHERES OF INSTINCT AND FEELING

1. Each actual state of feeling or instinct is composed of a plurality of simple ways of reacting. A melody from *Don Giovanni* contains a felt tonality, a feeling of harmony, rhythm, and a heroic affect.

2. These modes of reaction are indeterminate as to their number, but they can, like the sensations, be arranged into spheres. I call them spheres of feeling and instinct. One such instinctive sphere is that which time and again supports the process of seeking nourishment.

3. Together these [spheres] form the hidden side of the processes, within the subject, whose external sensible effects are found in perception, representation, imagery, and processes of motion. I get shoved while walking in the street. The external side of the process is a sequence of images, and their relations in thought; the internal side involves pain, anger, the striving to step aside, and so on.

4. There are three distinguishable forms of willing, conditioned by the kind of connection they have with other processes. Willing can involve the interest and attentiveness [of apperception], or formative imaginative activity, or [instinctive] volitional drives. They differ and cannot be reduced to each other, yet they are all forms of inner action guided by feeling. These three forms of willing



compose the inner core of human life like cells in a plant. Wundt wants to attribute everything to apperception, others to instinct. Overlooked is the formative activity of the imagination, which also involves a kind of volition. There are various forms of volition that converge on each other. Whether one should designate them as part of the will leads to verbal disputes. They evidently manifest an affinity, and yet at the same time each has a different psychic localization.

52 5. The way in which these individual actions are connected with each other into a unity of action in self-consciousness is quite different from the connections that we hypothetically assume to exist among the ultimate elements of a natural whole, or organism. Representations can, at any moment, enter into relations to each other quite independently of their momentary positions relative to each other in consciousness. Juxtaposition in space, after all, is in the first instance just the figurative expression for saying that corresponding distances modify effects. Distance is, then, the correlate for the power of modifying effects. Thus, there exists in the external world a network of fixed elements, of modification of forces, which elements serve as the constant conditions of the most general ways that unalterable forces operate. They provide the basis for the play of specific forces. These rigid conditions of operation do not occur in psychic life.

Here, consequently, there is no juxtaposition of specific psychic elements. With this goes the following: The unity of natural forces lies in lawful cooperation. Sensations, drives, and feelings cooperate differently. Feelings can under certain conditions merge completely, impulses can form an overall power; etc.

Thus, we find a unity of desires, feelings, and their gradual merging. We can allow for a concurrence among past and future satisfactions.

#### SECTION 6: THE PRIMARY SPHERE OF INSTINCTS AND FEELINGS—INSTINCTIVE MECHANISMS AND THE DESIRES, PASSIONS, AND AFFECTIVE STATES THEY PRODUCE

A reflex mechanism consists in a coordination of movements, aroused by a stimulus that can be accompanied by sensory content. Although it does not stem from our drives, it can be purposive within a limited scope. An example is sneezing and coughing.

When the aggregate of sensations excited by a stimulus, and the feelings connected with them, arouse an impulse—i.e., a tension manifested in our consciousness that strives for the activation of a movement by a meditating reflex mechanism—then we designate this process as instinctive and the psychological arrangement that it makes possible as an instinctive mechanism.

One can say that the most powerful forces of the moral world are hunger, love, and war. The physiological processes to which maintenance of the individual and of the species are tied contain a manifold of reflex mechanisms; however, some of the most important of these are quite removed from the will, i.e., merely automatic. Thus the reflex mechanisms of the respiratory process and the circulation of blood maintained by cardiac movement operate in short, regular intervals without the assistance of the will, and only pathological disturbances are accompanied by stronger feelings.

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From these, we differentiate those reflex mechanisms that are evoked by temporary stimuli and can be suppressed by the will. That the will can suppress them is an element of their purposiveness. Such mechanisms are coughing, sneezing, crying, and laughing.

They again differ from drives and instinctive mechanisms.

### The Drive for Sustenance

The consumption of food, which requires a selection and a taking possession occurs by means of the most powerful, elemental drive that serves the maintenance of the body. Here we move from hunger and thirst, as the most severe feeling of displeasure, to an irresistible drive that demands satisfaction, a most intense enjoyment in the satisfaction itself, and then the typical feeling of being satiated. Nature has imposed a severe penalty on the harmful abstinence from nourishment and a premium on the correct choice of nourishment. Thus, she has forced animals and humans even under ever so difficult circumstances to seek nutritive material and to take possession of it. We also see the life of lower animal forms, then that of the beast of prey and herbivorous creatures, which are quite predominantly occupied with relieving this drive in its various phases. Craving, seizing the prey, and the calm of satiation fill the day of the beast of prey. The life of the newborn is, according to the course of this drive, divided into unrest, crying, consumption of food, the calm of satiation, and sleep. Also, in the life of primitive peoples the phases of this instinctive organ take up the broadest space.

### The Sex Drive and Love of Children

No less impetuous is the drive that emerges to serve the maintenance of the species. Here, too, in pleasure, in the gratification of urgent cravings, nature has put a premium on that which, next to the maintenance of the individual, is most important.

54 According to G. W. Schneider,<sup>1</sup> the drive to procreate is connected with the love of descendants. We can already observe care for the young in spiders and insects. In animals it is partially associated with periods. In all vertebrates, selective mating proceeds in the same way: searching for and following a partner, courting through affectionate play, jealousy about rivals, fighting and expelling them. We find all of this already in marine life and more generally in mammals, just as in popular novels about human life. Just like humans, birds court by means of song. They also woo through playful movements, aerial gyrations, dances, fluttering around. Birds and mammals give themselves airs in front of the females, show off and fight with rivals. In humans, this foundation is linked with many higher feelings: complete partnership for life, inviolability of fidelity, historical feelings.

### Protective and Defensive Impulses

Just as elementary and powerful are those drives or impulses that are connected with reflex mechanisms to answer hostile attacks from without by defensive movements or by escaping to find refuge and safety. These defensive and protective mechanisms likewise have a very elementary power that makes them irresistible; they are likewise the seat of strong affects such as anger, hate, fright, consternation, and aggression—then back to repose in safety. Defensive action follows involuntarily upon an attack. One perceives in animals that instantaneously snap back, and in human movements of pushing away, how involuntary the connection is between action and the reaction and how difficult it is to control.

Simple defensive and protective impulses determined by stimuli are already seen in their typical configurations in lower animals. The contractive impulse of lower animals is such an elementary form.

<sup>1</sup> Georg Wilhelm Schneider, *Der Tierische Wille* (Leipzig, 1880), 150ff. In the preface to the German edition of Dilthey's *System of Ethics*, the editor notes that Schneider's book, along with that by Horwicz, is the main support for Dilthey's central thesis that utilitarianism is inconsistent with "modern science."

When they are touched, mussels close their shells, worms escape into the sand, snails into their casings. Another impulse that responds to hostile encroachment is the defensive movement. Some animals squirt out fluids of a repulsive sort, which manifests itself as swearing in many humans, while other animals defend themselves with jaws, with dorsal fins, with claws or hoofs. Small animals coil together and play dead, while others scare their enemies with loud noises, by sudden alterations of their bodily form, [or] threats with weapons. We find simple defensive forms displayed in the drives, affects, and movements of animals, which we meet again in human society.

No doubt the higher animals exhibit more complicated forms of protection and defense; here too the dual form of escape and warding off appear everywhere in resisting an attack according to the temper and means of the creature. Schneider narrates how once at a Naples aquarium a man-eating shark was put in a tank with a large number of triggerfish, which optically vanished like lightning upon first being perceived by their already dying foe. As they could not flee, they pressed themselves against the rocks in such a way as to become difficult to spot. One sees the snipe lower itself deftly in its hiding place; catlike predators also crouch like birds; it is the same movement that humans involuntarily make against certain forms of attack. Other animals protect themselves by carefully fabricated coverings, and then those more complex instincts emerge that lead upward from the worm burying itself in the sand to villages of termites.

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Defensive movements stand in contrast to the above. They give rise in the animal world to the emotions of courage, of anger, of hate. We often see very courageous male birds, easily excited to anger and aggression, defend themselves against even quite superior enemies! The bear and the gorilla sometimes snatch weapons from humans, smash them and chew them to pieces. The cunning affects involved in repelling an enemy in the higher animal world, and then in the human world makes itself particularly conspicuous. Birds ruffle their feathers; the cobra spreads out the skin on each side of its throat into a large plate, the so-called shield. Other animals arch their back or bristle, bare their teeth, or break out into howling.

All these forms of defense recur as impulsive movements within the human world and develop [from sudden affects] into conscious, long-lived emotions. Similarly, weaker human beings crouch, escape, and hide; the more courageous defend themselves—both classes try threats. In response to attacks on them many humans at first inflate themselves; if the attacks become more violent, then. . . . Impulsive

threats are implicit in raising one's voice, in clenching one's fists, and in exposing one's teeth.

### Transformation into Affects and Passions

56 The reaction against a disturbing encroachment transforms itself, upon repetition and increasing clarity as to the cause, into the affect of revenge. When this enters into a stronger connection with the will, hate results as an enduring passion. Hatred has quite diverse sources. We can hate someone because he witnessed a dishonest act of ours, i.e., from a sense of shame. Likewise, we hate someone who expects a sacrifice from us which we do not want to make. Even here a disturbing encroachment presents itself to us. Other forms are religious hatred and hatred of foreigners. It can likewise arise from comparative feelings.

Hate is a derivative passion. It disappears with the affect that was its source. Hate always feeds on the originating feeling that carries it. In contrast, love adapts gracefully and tenderly to the contents of life's relationships. Hate remains obsessed with its originating feeling.

Vengeance belongs to the natural ethos of primitive peoples: the feeling of revenge, anger, resentment, punitive action, reparation, a crude insult. One displaced lover attacks the other. The duel is civilized vengeance. In life, or when represented in drama or novels, sympathy is turned toward the object of vengeance. To bear a grudge is not regarded as a virtue. In short, vengeance is considered as natural in modern civilization, but ineffective. And if vengeance becomes a lasting feeling, it is considered to be of inferior worth. On the other hand, we see a new demand for reconciliation.

Fright is correctly depicted by Bain<sup>2</sup> as a primary affect. A shock from an external attack is discharged in a reflexive process. It is consequently an especially remarkable form of defensive and protective effort against attacks, viz., against sudden and very strong ones. Fright has its counterpart in movement. It is an instrument in the art of raw effects. *King Lear*, the witch scene of *Macbeth*, and Weber's *Der Freischütz* inspire fright even when this is diminished by being spatially remote and by our consciousness of stage illusion.

Albrecht Dürer's *Knight, Death and the Devil* embodies the composure of a great soul even in a state of fright.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Bain (1818–1903): Scottish philosopher and psychologist.

### The Impulse to Move and the Need for Rest

Muscular states constantly release impulses that stand in regular relations to the mechanisms of movement. The impulse to move is operative in all the muscles that we can control. They condition the bodily feeling of life at any given moment. They mark off, so to speak, the muscular system from the external world. How powerful they are is shown in the pain and unrest of confined predatory animals or in imprisoned human beings. We do not put ourselves in motion in order to achieve a goal; movement is our nature.

The feelings of movement, the restlessness of organic life, receive an intensification through changes in the states of the organs. They release stimuli, which then produce impulses.

The need for freedom involves the spiritualization of these impulses. These impulses provide the sensory background for this need, since from a sensory standpoint, it requires the absence of any restriction on movement.

The impulse to move is followed, in rhythmic alteration, by the demand for rest. This sensory feeling, too, is in the first instance physiologically grounded on the state of our muscles and the connected nerves. But then it becomes the basis of mental states, of rest, leisure, deep contentment, in which this form of feeling and motivation enters into connections with those of other classes.

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## SECTION 7: THE PROCESSES INVOLVED IN THE TRANSFORMATION OF DRIVES INTO DESIRES AND PASSIONS.

### The Place That These Affects, Desires, and Passions Have in Our Bio-Social Economy.

1. When a drive establishes itself, its effects persist even in the transformations that it undergoes. And indeed, our drives continue to operate in transformations in which only analysis can recognize them. Example: the love of money can become an all-controlling passion. Its driving force consists, however, in the fact that it represents pleasures which stand in relation to the instincts, and even more in the fact that money contains a kind of guarantee for the drive of self-protection and provides a measure of security for the feeling of freedom connected to the impulse for mobility.

2. Our drives appear (as Schneider first showed) in four forms, which develop separately according to psychological laws. We can

distinguish sensory, perceptual, representational, and intellectual drives. Each of them involves a transformation of the instinctive life that is both elementary and pervasive. The elementary [or instinctive drives] are refined to become better suited for integration into the household of moral life. [Yet] all elementary drives persist, in whatever strength, by means of their transformation into desires [and] passions within the economy of the individual and of society. We cannot get rid of our drives. They can be transformed, limited in their effect, but not eradicated. They are the indestructible source of all volitional processes.

Our drives assert themselves within the strictures of the tendency to achieve satisfaction of these desires with the least possible friction to disturb their effect. For such friction results in a diminution of the self-preservation and power that we strive for. The upshot of this way of satisfying drives, then, is that hatred [and] conflict are avoided, while cooperation for expediency is sought. Thus, one eliminates the hatred from vengeance, and retains only a purposive retaliation.

- 58      3. On the other hand, the cultivation of purposiveness in this process is based on a purposive coordination of movements by which a drive is actualized. This coordination is hereditarily transmitted (cats, hounds, hunters, and homebodies). Such development is an important component of social progress. The burden of consciousness is diminished as we use more and more of our drives as slaves. Finally, coordination is completed through the cooperation of many persons. This will produce an ethos of justice, political institutions, and a division of labor.

### Sensory Feelings That Are Independent of Drives

1. To the extent that drives are powerful, their natural force flows incessantly from the inner core of our animal-human nature just as a mountain stream makes its way. The motivational mechanisms in the animal world and primitive cultures are subject to periodic alteration. It indicates a higher level of culture when their appearance requires stimuli from determinate forces in the external world. Here we can distinguish feelings and motivating impulses in which the nature of the stimuli prevails, and accordingly feelings and drives manifest themselves less energetically and merge with our representational life. Here, then, the power of the milieu exceeds that of the living being. The drives and passions, of course, always seek

an outlet, but then the living being finds itself merely conditioned from the outside. And to the extent that the intellect becomes stronger and the will freer, our dependence is borne more heavily, fear and hope take over, and chance occurrences become a torment to humanity.

2. Thus, in addition to the drives and their system, there emerges a system of objective causes of feelings in the external world and the regular responses of our feelings toward this system.

3. And here there emerges still more clearly a fact of volitional life that accompanies all volitional phenomena. This fact points to the retroactive effect of drives upon these [phenomena]. Felt and impulsive volitions evoke a concentration, an increased stirring of consciousness, which is comparable to a strong and expanding wave. This stirring of volitional consciousness is matched by the appearance of elementary processes linking the conceptual representations involved. Thus an enhanced radiance surrounds the passions.

#### SECTION 8: NEGATIVE, RESTRICTIVE, AND FORMATIVE ETHICS

1. All of these drives have an outer side, according to which they are exhibited to sensory perception as bodily organs, functions, [and] processes. In them the necessity of external nature governs. Being hungry, the drive to eat originating in the unconscious, is psychic and yet at the same time a natural process. I call this mental state of affairs "psychic animality."

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2. Once these drives have been allowed to mature we can begin to reject and combat them by exerting pressure from without. A morality that does this we call *restrictive*. But insofar as [a morality] completely rejects them and attempts to nullify psychic animality altogether, we call it *negative*. The morality of the Stoics and Kant was restrictive. The morality of the Neoplatonists, Christian communities, the Buddhists, and Schopenhauer is negative. Both standpoints involve the suppression of nature and strife, and so there arises a dualism in the will between high animality and a spiritualistic will.

3. The principle of the cultivation of instinctive life is abstractly articulated in Schleiermacher's *formative* ethics. It shapes the drives. That it involves a *formative* cultivation marks a great advance, but



a concrete foundation is lacking. This [foundation] lies in the recognition and utilization of psycho-physical relationships. *The means of cultivating psychic animality into a joyful form of life in harmony with the higher life is the diet—understanding this word in its broadest sense.* The beautiful lifestyle of the Greek ethos in its prime was founded on dieting. Plato already complains about its dissolution through luxury. Moderation and the correct control of nutrition, the intensification of bodily exercise and activities, are the true means of maintaining a joyful life in a healthy body, and the sex drive in its natural, moderate form.

#### SECTION 9: FEELINGS CONDITIONED BY OUR OWN WILL AND THE MOTIVATING IMPULSES THAT STEM FROM THEM.

We enter a territory that is difficult to deal with, and until now unexplored. But it contains the first mode of ethical power we aim to disclose.

60 Indeed, we grasp here the core of an ethics of resolve. The British of the eighteenth century did not define this core correctly because their psychological analysis was incomplete. The judgment of the spectator is, to be sure, conditioned by sympathy, but this judgment has its primary foundation in those feelings that derive from our volitional life. Consequently, judgment based on sympathy is only secondary. On the other hand, Aristotle's *eudaemonia*, the consciousness of the internally grounded strength of character in the Stoics, the moral principle of Kantian ethics are formulae for the volitional core. But because their psychological understanding was insufficient, their principles appear one-sided and isolated. Kant's sense of duty is a merely formal conception.

Courage, strength of character, perseverance, firmness, consistency, loyalty, [and] joyful energy in work, are the felt manifestations of these volitions that express the joy of the will in itself, a feeling accompanying the volitions that arise from our inner nature. These states of feeling are thus independent from the environment and the conditions of life. If we succeed in strengthening their power, then the decision over happiness and unhappiness falls to our own person, and indeed in the very disposition of our will. Thus the heroic feeling of life is grounded in these states of mind and shapes itself on the basis of their relations.

The heroic will is the ideal of all nations in the epoch of their youth, resolve is the main component of their ethical ideal in the

time of their adulthood, and only aging peoples develop a contemplative ideal of life.

A broader perspective opens up with the thesis that a strong human being inclines toward converting a surplus of power into an active, benevolent effect. A cheerful self-esteem finds itself stirred sympathetically and wants to embrace the whole world. Weakness, by contrast, makes [one] tepid and gloomy, full of aversion. There is also a connection between loyalty and a sense of obligation.

That is the leverage that we are looking for. We want to grasp the psychological core of the original content of virtue.

I. The simplest feeling of this type is the joyful consciousness of power and the intensification of the feeling of life that is connected with it. We find its counterpart in a shared joy when observing others exert power. Volitional energy pleases, and weakness displeases.

1. The exertion of effort through which an impulse executes a movement and [overcomes] resistance to it is the initial measure in the sensory sphere of the joyful consciousness that accompanies action, and the pleasure that it gives a spectator. Here the amount of effort that was expended by the will is measured by how an executed movement overcomes obstacles.

A child that passively allows itself to be struck by another who is not stronger experiences shame. A man, who upon being struck has allowed no defensive action to follow can never forgive himself for that, regardless of the power of the adversary. Here we see the consciousness of weakness at work. It seems to affect us only when no spectator is on hand. When spectators are watching, the feeling is linked with how the action is reflected in the judgment of the audience, and how this is in turn reflected in the actor. This reflex is reinforced by the judgmental manifestations of laughing, shrugging, etc. But even when the affected person is alone, there are, so to speak, spectators around, viz., it is imagined how they would judge.

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At this point moral and aesthetic feelings converge. The enjoyment of power that is manifested when movements are speeded up, made more purposive and elastic—the satisfaction taken in a steady stride, in the leap of the lion, in physical male energy—is conditioned by the relation of impulse, expended effort, [and] muscular movement. And from there comes the elation generated by rolling thunder, [or] the rising tide of the sea. At this primitive level moral and aesthetic feelings are not separate.

2. A higher level of culture can be assigned to the feeling of power [that accompanies] the will when directed toward spiritual goals.

The cunning of the *Odyssey's* hero, his crafty mental energy, could not be held up as an ideal in a still heroic epoch, if this mental feeling of power had not been coupled with superior physical power and physical fortitude. Also, in the ideal of epic Nordic poetry, the craftiness of seafaring men is constantly coupled with their power.

It must also be conceded that the energy of a formative, shaping power is not as much accompanied by the joy of life as that of the impulse involved in bodily movements, and the energy of effort expended in attending to spiritual subject matters is again accompanied by a lesser degree of the enjoyment of life, and in the corresponding joy of spectators. The expenditure of effort recedes more and more into invisibility. The fortitude to accept suffering is, from an ethical standpoint, just as invisible as it is superior in magnitude to that of impulsive deeds, but it lacks the heroic glow that surrounds an active folk hero. This fortitude becomes, so to speak, metaphysical—receding into mystery, silence, invisibility, inaudibility, intimacy.

II. Next to the joyful consciousness of power as an essential feature of a will that possesses a surplus of will power, reaching its goal whatever the perils, we find courage, and its intensification in boldness.

62 The link between willpower and courage can be substantiated by many facts. First of all, a surplus of power is generally conducive to courage. To have heart, be bold-hearted, take heart, etc. points to this physiological basis. A slender body can produce a surplus of disposable energy; a giant can have a deficiency of physical power. That courage is conditioned by physical circumstances is easiest to see in the fact that even the coward can get up his courage with a drink—Dutch courage. Even food has an effect. But more accurately, it has to do with the available, surplus energy of the will. This can admittedly have physical conditions, but we have no reason to view it as merely a correlate of physical functions. A powerful body structure is unable to signal the kind of courage that exceeds physical superiority. Indeed, one observes that powerful bodies [often] exhibit a lack of courage precisely when faced with suffering.

Courage is manifested in quick and yet measured movements and in firm facial expressions. When in bed, human beings find themselves, so to speak, out of action and when disposable will

power is reduced by fatigue, even the courageous are befallen by heavy thoughts.

The essential characteristic of courage lies precisely in the joyfulness and the elevated and resolved attitude with which a person confronts danger. King William III of England was said to be serious and self-absorbed on the whole, but cheerful precisely when in danger.

This joyous feeling is connected with a kind of oversight of danger or certain suffering—arising from a quite original quality of the will with regard to dangers or certain misfortunes that cannot be further explained. Just as there are people who sense danger everywhere, not through an attribute of the intellect but of temperament, who are always weighed down by misfortune, so there are others who shrug all of that off. This is simply an original quality of the will and does not result merely from a surplus of power.

An increase in courage with respect to dangers (not to certain misfortune) is boldness. The courageous meet danger firmly; those who are bold seek it out.

### 3. ENERGY, DILIGENCE, WORK—THE ACTIVE FORCE CONSTANTLY APPLIED TO WORK

Work is the exertion of force that is devoted to some endeavor. This exertion is an essential feature or form of willing and is in agreement with courage in the concentration on a goal, in the expenditure of power, [and] in associated sacrifices.

The distinction is that the nature and the conditions of life demand a great, heroic exertion of will in the case of courage, but a steady and unremitting exertion and resolve of will in the case of work. In both cases, the volitional exertion is connected with a strengthening of the feeling of life.

Tetens<sup>3</sup> assumes that this exertion of will has the consequence of increasing psychic power. This appears to agree with experience. One can assume that from the reservoir of pent up bodily powers, or that of psychological pent up (unconscious) powers, such a trans-  
action takes place, or that with a correlative bodily process such an increment in psychic power occurs. Such a view would have to assume, then, an increase of differentiated powers in the psychic

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<sup>3</sup> Johannes Nikolaus Tetens (1736–1807), German philosopher, who advocated the empirical analysis of the mind through self-observation.

realm. The most natural view would [postulate] a certain release of the inner tension of psychic forces contained in organic nature, which one could also label the unconscious. This panpsychism or pantheism, as Fechner conceives it,<sup>4</sup> may correspond quite well with the facts. If this panpsychism can be upheld, then the principle of evolution, the development of nature, would fall squarely on the psychological inner side.

#### 4. CONSISTENCY, PERSEVERANCE, AND THE PLANLIKE UNITY OF VOLITIONS

The power of volition and of feeling results in a lasting and continued effect. Thus, in the back and forth of willing and feeling we witness the energy of [these processes].

It is sublime to see William of Orange, through many years calmly and without any outward indication, preparing the revolt of the *Netherlands*. It is sublime to see Kant, from the 1760s quietly preparing for the *Critique of Pure Reason* of 1781. It is foolish when one mourns for a dead person, but soon cannot do without amusements and remain in solitude.

This effect [of perseverance] is enhanced by a volitional uniformity which is a correlative basic condition for the enhancement of the will. This uniformity is always produced only from a variegated life of drives. The more powerful these drives, the greater the expenditure of will needed for this uniformity. But the acquired cohesion of volitional acts will be the richer for it. The possibility of this production of uniformity lies, however, in the characteristics of consciousness that make self-consciousness possible. Thus, consistency, loyalty, and plan-based unity are an accomplishment of the exertion of power under conditions that reach down into the deepest metaphysical nature of human volitions. Here too an essential feature of the will is present that coheres with this metaphysical nature, which is experienced as a joyous enhancement of the person and appreciated as valuable in others.

<sup>4</sup> Gustav Theodor Fechner (1801–1887), founder of psychophysics, and exponent of the view that all of nature is ultimately spiritual. Initially a professor of physics in Leipzig during the 1830s, Fechner wrote a book on the “mental life of plants” in 1848.

## 5. THE DEVOTION OF THE WILL TO EMERGENT PURPOSES THAT EXCEED OUR OWN LIFE

There arises in the will a further basic, seemingly archetypal, phenomenon. Psychic life appears expanded and intensified in relation to the size and powerfulness of the images it assimilates and of the concepts, the value, and the purposes to which it is devoted.

This [devotion] is a characteristic without which there would be no greatness and no sublimity at all in the human world. One cannot derive these effects on the soul from greatness as such, but rather must derive them from the capacity to be aroused by greatness [and] sublimity. On this, then, rests the devotion of the will to great, supra-individual purposes of life, cultural systems, and associations.

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## SECTION 10: THE MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS OF ONE'S OWN VOLITIONAL DISPOSITION AND ACTIONS INHERENT IN THESE ARCHETYPAL PHENOMENA OF MORAL LIFE

1. Volition proceeds in three stages when it runs its full and normal course, so to speak. Our drives, and those feelings that are conditioned by the external world and its inherent objective causes, produce a system of needs that is preserved in the forms of feeling, passion, affect, and volition. These evoke an exertion of the will that produces achievements in one form or another, which [in turn] serve the drives, impulses, and needs of human nature in its relation to the objective causes. And from these activities arise multiple forms of satisfaction, contentment, enjoyment, and leisure.

2. The nexus of drives and desires is necessary and, so to speak, the mechanical and merely inner side of animality. All socially formative activity connected with the consciousness of freedom involves the exertion of the will in its various forms.

3. This exertion of will is, on the one hand, accompanied by inherently unpleasant feelings, but on the other hand, when a sufficient supply of will power is available, this exertion is in all cases—as an exercise of courage, as work, as plan-based activity—accompanied by a heightened state of feeling: It provides a kind of fulfillment.

4. And indeed this exertion of will is accompanied by a consciousness of freedom, causing a growth of volitional energy—and thus it enters into a metaphysical nexus inscrutable to us.

SECTION 11: AFFECTIVE JUDGMENTS ABOUT  
THE ACTIONS OF OTHERS AND THE PRINCIPLE  
FOR THE EVALUATIVE DETERMINATIONS THAT  
INHERE IN THESE ARCHETYPAL PHENOMENA

65 The process in which the experience of self-worth of a disposition of will and the affective judgment about the worth of others are linked is amenable to several psychological interpretations. One can derive the ethical judgment as reflecting the experience of the volitional disposition having its own worth; or one can view both kinds of feeling as equally original; or one can derive the consciousness of self-worth as reflecting the evaluation of others (Hume); or one can conceive of both kinds of evaluative feeling as originating from the success and usefulness of an inherent disposition by means of an inference. The latter conception is definitely shown to be erroneous by the analysis of the processes just considered. *We can now begin to refute utilitarianism by taking note of certain psychic facts.* The joyful expansion of the self that accompanies the activation of energy, of courage, and the consequent validation of conviction—is a primary lived experience from which the value-judgment about such features of the will arises. Those who reduce the feeling of the value of courage or strength of character to their utility will never have had any aspect of the heroic feeling of life pulsate within them.

However, we have no way of deciding whether the affective judgment about others is a primary process or derivative.

In any case, there is a constituent of consciousness that contains a sense of harmony or kinship and connects the experience of self-worth with the affective judgment about the volitional disposition of others. The solidarity of all human beings, the knowledge of it given in feeling, forms its basis. This conscious solidarity extends to all creatures:

In certain circumstances, this feeling develops, as is well-known, an extraordinary power. It is dangerous to drive cattle over an area that is red with the blood of their kind. The sight of impending danger has indeed often enflamed even quite uninvolved bystanders to [perform] heroic acts and even to the self-denying sacrifice of their own lives. Aside from the emotion prompted by danger to oneself, there is scarcely a stronger, more captivating one. That the solidarity of fellow-feeling

extends beyond the bounds of humanity is made evident by the fact that the killing of animals fills one with quite analogous, sometimes weaker feelings.<sup>5</sup>

Compassion, pity, empathy, sympathy, benevolence, and the feeling of honor all have the same basis, which is also adapted to moral judgment.

At this point, one can understand and appraise the famous teachings of Hume and Adam Smith, according to which the basis of moral judgment about the actions and volitional dispositions of other persons lies in sympathy. This sympathy is, according to Hume, ultimately a kind of conjoint movement, a pulsation transferred from one living being to another. Adam Smith has thoroughly analyzed this conjoint feeling of human beings, and he finds that ethical behavior draws its common cognitive and real basis from sympathy. According to him, the re-creation of a feeling evoked by what signals or occasions it is weaker than the original feeling.

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The deficiency of this theory is that it wants to proceed without taking account of personal ethical experience because it is viewed as merely derivative. In actuality, however, the joy found in acting courageously, energetically and in making sacrifices for others is always linked with felt experiences of the intrinsic value of such volitional dispositions.

## SECTION 12: THE PSYCHOLOGICAL ILLUSION INVOLVED IN THE EUDAEEMONIC AND UTILITARIAN CONCEPTION OF THE FOREGOING BASIC MORAL PHENOMENA

My main contention about utilitarianism was that it remains stuck at the psychological surface of the ethical world. This world can now be given a deeper first grounding.

The volitional dispositions that are accompanied by the joyous consciousness of a raised level of feeling and evoke admiration, enthusiasm, and approval from others—are the mainsprings of all actions that go beyond the life of the drives and the utilization of the objective causes of feelings in the interest of the person. They are the moral forces that stand altogether alone in producing the general good based on the life of drives, but aimed at guiding the latter

<sup>5</sup> Adolf Horwicz, *Analyse der qualitativen Gefühle* (Magdeburg: Faber, 1878), 309–310. (D).



and overcoming them, as well as in producing a harmony of drives that is conducive to the well-being of the individual.

Courage can also enter into the service of crime. Accordingly, the history of great robbers has an attraction not only for the crude, but also for the higher instincts and natural feelings of the masses, which counterbalances the abhorrence of crime. Courage is an available higher power to which approbation attaches, but it is also capable of immoral application. Nevertheless, by virtue of its higher essential nature, courage can form an order that reaches beyond animal life and promotes well-being.

Plan-based activity can be used in any dubious market enterprise and in the pursuit of a career directed by a bold egoism.

The forces that effectuate solidarity, active and energetic cooperation, common well-being, and the higher achievements of society, prove to be useful to [social] interests and conducive to enjoyment and well-being.

67 This produces the psychological illusion that the successful results of these forces account for the joy in their exercise and the approval of the same in others.

This illusion, however, dissolves the concrete impulse into a sentimental morality of well-being. The heroic feeling, the joy in creating, and devotion are eliminated in service to a dull leveling and mechanization.

The ethical [import] of these feelings cannot be separated from their power in bringing about contentment. For courage, consistency, etc., yield a satisfaction, that liberates us from external affects, fear, hope, etc. These feelings have the capacity of keeping the passions and drives under control to some extent. Thus, the possibility of attaining an inner contentment emerges.

This possibility must be combined with that of reducing friction in the affects. Here [we must consider] our feelings for others.

### SECTION 13: FEELINGS FOR OTHERS AND THEIR CULTIVATION INTO ETHICAL PROCESSES

1. All feelings for others, i.e., feelings that are aroused through contact with other persons, are complex and most of them to a very high degree. They are formed by the interaction of stimuli released by several processes that originate through various circumstantial factors. A corporal rushes toward a certain soldier in his troop formation with a loud curse thereby exciting both the culprit and his fellow soldiers. The unease or alarm of those who are not involved contains within

itself a mix of quite diverse emotional factors, although its effect is entirely simple. The sudden, loud noise, the harsh expressions, a vague feeling that something is not right also with oneself, the suspicion that it could be one's own turn on another occasion—all of these factors are instantaneously fused with each other in this unease.<sup>6</sup>

2. Thus, in surveying these feelings and impulses, one must start with specific ones; it would be quite incorrect to lay down compassion, benevolence or love as a general class of feeling and then to consider specific feelings as their modifications. Many moralists do this; they invert the actual situation by considering the universal first. Compassion, love, friendship, patriotism, and humaneness are quite diverse and highly complicated feelings, dispositions, inclinations.

3. But in all of them an elementary relationship forms a presupposition which at present cannot be further clarified. Every feeling for others can only originate by means of an imaginative re-creation of what occurs in the other person (theory of understanding). This re-creation is not an intellectual process, but rather is achieved by means of a movement of the same feelings, motivating impulses and incentives that take place in the other person. Thus, it always rests on a commonality, a solidarity of human nature. This re-creation extends not only to pleasure or pain in others; compassion and shared joy are strictly speaking only partial feelings abstracted from this actual process of imaginative re-creation.

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4. Here the following distinction becomes important. In imaginatively responding to a cry of pain, my consciousness of solidarity may be stronger than that of another person. The cry may mean more to me than to the other person. This has to do with the fact that in some the elements of communion with fellow human beings are more developed [than in others]—an original moral distinction.

Understanding or imaginative re-creation always results from the same processes that transpire in the other person. In every aspect it is accompanied by a consciousness of commonality, of identity. This takes the form of a lived experience. This consciousness grows with every process that I share with others. It is diminished every time that I experience separation. Habituation is the strongest

<sup>6</sup>Horwicz, *Analyse der qualitativen Gefühle*, 310. (D).

factor. When I raise it explicitly to consciousness, the ethical principle of love as well as the poetry of love can become effective.

There are also other feelings that contribute to the reflexive reactions of the self, e.g., the sense that what has happened to someone else can also happen to me. Then there are the associations that Hobbes and Spinoza emphasize. Solitude allows us to be reduced to our weak self.

At this point we discover anew the psychological one-sidedness and superficiality of utilitarianism. We do not only re-create feelings that contain pleasure or displeasure and those that express gain or loss. Dispositions, strivings, and motivating impulses are also re-created and evoke feelings that are connected to the re-creative process itself. Greatness can expand the psyche; smallness can arouse pleasant feelings of superiority by way of comparison. Above all, however, everything that strengthens solidarity, eliminates friction, and results in cooperation, mutual transparency, genuine understanding, and agreement, evokes a corresponding pleasant feeling. By contrast, a divergence of interests, lack of understanding and transparency, alienation, are sensed as painful feelings of various degrees.

69 The feeling of solidarity would be misconceived if one tried to derive it from the consideration of the advantageous consequences of community, genuine understanding, and agreement. There can be no doubt that awareness of these consequences is a factor in [such] feelings; however, in many cases the force of these feelings goes immeasurably far beyond this consideration of consequences so that this explanation can hardly be accepted. The motivating responses to someone drowning, going hungry, or freezing, can result in the greatest sacrifice in which the consideration of the consequences for ourselves remains insignificant. The elementary basis for these responses is established at an age when the calculation of consequences is still excluded. Already at the age of one-and-a-half years, my son cried whenever he believed that any of us were hurting ourselves, or that any of us were being harmed by another person.

It is equally the case that compassion is not at all as archetypal as Schopenhauer assumes. Compassion is rather a partial content of the more encompassing phenomenon of solidarity.

This solidarity is the same phenomenon that in the realm of knowledge asserts itself as universal validity and as a striving for it and its preservation. Just as constancy, coherence, and universal validity are the basic incentives of thought, so in practical life [the basic incentives are] consistency, the capacity to plan, and solidarity. They are evidently metaphysical relations, which like seminal symbols

are expressed in these basic traits and are akin to each other in the intellectual and moral spheres.

#### SECTION 14: BENEVOLENCE

1. The consciousness of solidarity is not a theoretical insight, but rather a felt and sensible state. In all its forms it is rooted in an animalistic co-stirring of nervous systems, but this, taken in and for itself, can lead to the cruelty of wild animals and the enjoyment that idle people find in funerals and scandalous stories just as much as it can lead to fellow-feeling. In the feeling of fellowship there is the consciousness of a bond as an intermediate stage that leads to active participation.

2. This disposition of our feeling and willing develops in the various forms of common life; in each of these forms the consciousness of a bond is a productive power. Its original nucleus first becomes visible, as it were, when a bond weaves itself in the smiling and affectionate glances between mother and child. We already experience it here before a sexual union brings about an actual bond. Additional forms lie in the consciousness of the family, in polite society, in political associations, in love, and in friendship as fellowship. The feelings of solidarity develop through these stable relationships; they provide the schooling for all higher feelings of benevolence, love, and sacrifice. In the stable network [of these relationships] we always find the genuine substance of [such feelings].

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3. Finally, the free forms of interest, love and friendship, and sociable feelings emerge; they never are part of the ethical substance of life; they are merely its ornaments.

4. From all these feelings, we extract as their common moral substance an emotional attitude that we call benevolence, which we will now describe.

Benevolence liberates us from the narrowness involved in the consciousness of self-worth. It widens our outlook: the benevolent will expands itself to wherever there is well-being, suffering, and human worth. Kant refers benevolence exclusively to the happiness of others. Lotze<sup>7</sup> appears to agree with him when he—against

<sup>7</sup> Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817–1881), German philosopher, originally a physiologist and physician, who attempted to unify German idealism and natural science.

Herbart,<sup>8</sup> admittedly with complete justification—observes that benevolence does not involve a bare relation of wills, but rather presupposes well-being and suffering in a second will. With that he designates, however, only the outer bound at which benevolence begins: [assuming that] one does not include in benevolence anything like the preservation of non-sentient organisms, which after all is grounded on other motives—provided that there is no disguised benevolence here [operating] through the poetic power to imagine sentience in such [organisms]. Benevolence in its full and complete actualization concerns others as persons, in accordance with their unconditional worth, as imagined by analogy with the experience of self-worth. Thus, [benevolence] widens and deepens itself constantly according to the content of the object that provides its motivation, and according to the insight of the benevolent subject into this content and [its] constant and true interest. Since benevolence attaches our will to the world of values, through the well-being, suffering, and worth, not of ourselves, but of others, it raises itself above the level of individual persons and must organize them into a larger whole by means of a third synthesis.<sup>9</sup>

5. The connection between fellow-feeling and active benevolence is expressed in the concept of *participation*. This concept of participation aptly indicates that solidarity is the basis of benevolence.

6. Indifference and aversion pass imperceptibly into each other. The lack or absence of any kind of bond, together with a distance from the activities of other human beings that reduces them to mere ciphers, result in an indifferent attitude toward [their] happiness or unhappiness:

It seems undeniable that a very great number of persons, perhaps the great majority of those whom we are acquainted with, leave us completely indifferent. For instance, when we read in the newspaper that Smith is dead, even knowing that Smith is

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<sup>8</sup> Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841), German philosopher and educational reformer.

<sup>9</sup> Dilthey took this paragraph from an earlier essay entitled “Versuch einer Analyse des moralischen Bewußtseins” originally published in 1864. See GS, VI, 46–47. In that essay, Dilthey spoke of three moral synthetic claims on us: the first synthesis demands that we live up to our own sense of self-worth, and the second points us to the worth of others. The third synthesis relates us to something larger than ourselves in which we participate.

the man that we saw every day with the grey hat and yellow gloves walking toward X at such-and-such a time, the coffee still tastes just as good to us on this morning as on any other. But when we want immediately to conclude from this that we are totally indifferent to Smith, that would certainly be very premature. Let us take a similar case for comparison. We have right in front of us a page of the newspaper from an unfamiliar, large city, and our eye scans totally apathetically across the names Miller, Meyer, Klutentreter, and Schöten-sack, who died, got married, or were lucky to become fathers. Here we feel nothing, absolutely nothing. But why so? Because we do not know anything about all these good people. Here it is naturally not surprising that no feeling stirs within us, because all the conditions for generating feeling are completely lacking.<sup>10</sup>

In all such cases, the reason for indifference is unfamiliarity with the inner life of the person involved. We can assess neither the humanity, nor the degree of suffering, in that person. In other cases, a pleasant feeling outweighs [a concern for others]; news of the death of a remote acquaintance does not appreciably disturb our appetite at breakfast. Again in other [cases], a low degree of dislike or aversion hides behind the indifference that we express. A human being whose appearance does not inspire our affection, is already for that reason the object of a slightly discernible aversion. This dislike grows when we are approached by the demand for sacrifice.

I just read in the newspaper (1890) that a 14-year-old babysitter killed the child entrusted to her while the parents were at church. The delinquent stated the reason for the act to be a dislike for the little creature and disinclination for the duties of a babysitter. Here the minimal concern for someone who is indifferent to us turns into hatred. In many cases murder is committed because of worries about sustenance. Suspension of the solidarity of feeling and hatred for other human beings as a kind of barbaric degeneration must be viewed as the real basis for many acts of murder. A youth meets a man on the street and strikes him dead for the sake of a new pair of boots.

<sup>10</sup> Horwicz, *Analyse der qualitativen Gefühle*, 428. (D).

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7. Certain processes can arouse reactive-feelings. Something bygone can arouse a feeling of thankfulness or revenge. However, where emotional disposition or circumstances alter this simple course, [we obtain feelings] of either ingratitude or forgiveness. Likewise, trust and mistrust arise in anticipation of future feelings. Thankfulness comes with a sense of being obligated. This is indeed expressed in the phrase “much obliged.” In serving another an obligation is being assumed, as it were, and thankfulness is the emotive expression of it. Consequently, thankfulness is burdensome where no inner bond exists.

8. The feeling and the impulse that respond to an injury, we call revenge. Exclusion from the union of solidarity, arising from revenge or other causes, we call hate. It is the inner renunciation of the consciousness of being bound. It therefore [contains] something constrictive, abnormal; the psyche strives to be freed from it. Accordingly, in hate we find ourselves diminished, internally torn; habitual hatred deteriorates the soul.

The feelings of benevolence are connected to a pleasant expansion of the self. The feeling of hatred destroys the inner harmony of the soul and diminishes its level of feeling.

#### SECTION 15: COMPASSION (SYMPATHY AS A MORAL PRINCIPLE AND ALTRUISM IN THE POSITIVIST SCHOOL)

Contrary to the position we have developed so far, many ethicists detach sympathy and compassion from the consciousness of solidarity and regard them as a being stirred by feeling. This conception can be thought of as the animalistic explanation of benevolence and of love.

There have been important researchers who, whenever they consider what appears in society and the moral world in terms of its actual incentives, are driven to probe what motivates benevolence, sympathy, and compassion. In doing so, they find themselves inclined to isolate a feeling [of being-stirred] from the more uplifting aspects of the human spirit and [instead] look for it in the elementary level of animalistically based feelings.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Starting with the next paragraph of these ethics lectures, Dilthey again quotes from his 1864 essay, “Versuch einer Analyse des moralischen Bewusstseins.” See *Gesammelte Schriften*, VI, 34–39.

A well-developed theory—that stems from an invisible link with a systematic whole and is compatible with the state of modern ethical research since Kant—is finally produced by Schopenhauer. Another exponent of this theory at present is Lotze. At least he acknowledges in his *Microcosmus* that:

for an impartial person . . . to care for oneself is natural but not morally meritorious. To do good for someone else and to increase the sum of pleasure that the world enjoys, is the only task in whose fulfillment all his moral duties converge.<sup>12</sup>

We may nevertheless make a hypothetical supposition based on the system in question here, if we are permitted to combine this quotation with Herbart's explication of justice: Conflict displeases, or better yet, what displeases us about conflict is exclusively the malevolence of the parties; this seems to indicate that justice and benevolence belong together.<sup>13</sup> But what displeases us in conflict, which contains a violation of justice, is not in the first instance that malevolence has free play, but rather that there is a breach of the sense of what is right or just and the duty of being committed to it. Unfortunately, the chapter on ethics in Lotze's *Microcosmus* gives such a limited insight into the principle and systematic aim of Lotze's ethics that we must turn to Schopenhauer's ethics, without being able to develop Lotze's purer version of its motivation.

Schopenhauer worked out his theory twice: synthetically in the fourth book of *The World as Will and Representation*, [and] analytically in the prize essay *On The Basis of Morality*. In the former work, the overall theory is shown to be the ethical consequence of his subjective idealism. All multiplicity is only apparent, for all individuals of this world manifest the one and only true being of the Will. Accordingly, the distinction between I and not-I is abolished. Now when this same negation of our independent and isolated existence that is achieved in philosophy by means of thought is expressed in action—when the cognitive insight “my being exists in every living being” bursts forth in a deed, then we have obviously reached the metaphysical ground of all moral behavior in humanity. The phenomenon that emerges in this process, however, is compassion.

<sup>12</sup> Lotze, *Microcosmus: An Essay Concerning Man and His Relation to the World*, trans. Elizabeth Hamilton and E. E. Constance Jones (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1887), Vol. I, Book V, Chap. V, 693.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 691.



## CRITIQUE OF THIS THEORY

Correctly viewed, what we have here is an analogy rather than an identity with the psychological phenomenon of compassion. Both the penetrating power and the weakness of Schopenhauer's procedural method derive essentially from the way he marshals phenomena in the world of experience to verify metaphysical propositions of the most abstract kind. The[se] general propositions are not the result of scientific induction from observations and yet the observations purport to prove the general propositions. The world of laws that mediates between single observations and ultimate principles is pushed out of philosophy, leaving us with an arbitrary stitching together of these concrete phenomena and ultimate grounds in their free playground.

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Compassion is directed at another person qua other and is unconditionally different from the sensation of a pain. Accordingly, we can experience compassion with ourselves only by very artificially standing apart from ourselves as onlooking strangers. Can this compassion be regarded as somehow identical with an intuition (or whatever one would call this mystical act), through which the partition between ourselves and others as distinct existences is to be lifted and through which this distinctness would become merely illusory? This mixing of two quite heterogeneous acts can be seen in the following self-contradictory utterances: "The deed of a generous person expresses a cognitive awareness" and "this cognitive awareness manifests itself as compassion." The truth underlying this analogy is that homogeneity is a presupposition of compassion and that a growing or expanding sense and recognition of this homogeneity also allows the intensity and scope of compassion to grow. Herein lay the great power that Christianity exercised on the growth of benevolent sentiments: It joined humans together in various forms of brotherly fellowship.

A curious consequence of his metaphysical concept of compassion is drawn by Schopenhauer when he relates "genuine virtue" to a "goodness of disposition"<sup>14</sup> that renders the fate of a stranger equivalent to one's own: It is a disposition that according to Schopenhauer could never go beyond these limits. Indeed, recognizing the identity of the I and the not-I contains nothing more, and it is impossible for anything different to result from it. But this shows how compassion must, in fact, be distinguished from Schopenhauer's

<sup>14</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover Publications, 1966), Vol. I, 367–369.

cognitive insight, for almost every intimate link that arouses strong compassion produces sacrificial actions in which we do something for someone else that we would never do for ourselves. The heterogeneity of compassion and the recognition of identity that [Schopenhauer] discerns in action can be made clearer if we assume that we are devoted to a great number of people. If there appears in all of them only the same Will as in me, our sacrifice here, too, can go only so far as a complete equalization of their fortune with ours. On the contrary, the individual actually senses his relation to the whole quite differently in that he puts his entire life on the line even for an only insignificant advancement of the whole.

When it comes, then, to the further question of the justification of the principle [of compassion] apart from this unity of metaphysical and psychological conceptions of compassion, we do best to look for this in Schopenhauer's essay *On the Basis of Morality*.

There we are skillfully primed for the thesis that compassion is the only motive of the moral world. Skepticism is used as a scare tactic that only self-denying actions can refute. Then the anti-moral forces emerge that reduce all this to egoism. In the meantime, purity of heart, pensiveness, and similar virtues are completely ignored. Thus, we arrive at the proposition: "The absence of all egoistic motivation is, therefore, the criterion of an action of moral worth."<sup>15</sup>

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To prove this proposition, axioms are provided that already contain the main point to be demonstrated. Thus, according to the third axiom, only well-being and suffering move our wills.<sup>16</sup> Consequently, a moral incentive appeals to well-being and suffering, either our own or that of others. Insofar as the above proposition that egoism and moral worth exclude each other is applied here, the true moral motive is already there. There is only one moral motivation, namely, that the well-being and suffering of another should be immediately mine. This line of argument dispenses with a deeper investigation of the driving forces in our motivations. In this way, it also achieves at the same time the advantage of seeing naked egoism whenever our motivations take ourselves into consideration.

With this motive, compassion is identified through the hypothesis of the distinctive positivity of pain. This hypothesis has hardly anything going for it, with perhaps this exception: When popular consciousness is informed that pain is not something negative

<sup>15</sup> Arthur Schopenhauer, *On The Basis of Morality*, trans. E.F.J. Payne (Bobbs-Merrill, 1965), Chap. III, Sec. 15, 140.

<sup>16</sup> See Schopenhauer, *On The Basis of Morality*, 141.

because it is the opposite of pleasure, but rather is of a positive nature, the most natural [conclusion] is to regard pleasure, the opposite of pain, as negative. Schopenhauer repeats, over and over again in ever new, suggestive phraseology, that when a wish is satisfied, it disappears as does its enjoyment. This presupposes that enjoyment exists only in comparison with the wish, which, in turn, already presupposes that it is negative. This doctrine is untenable and most obviously refuted by any thorough psychological theory that makes room for higher forms of pleasure that do not presuppose any needs rooted in pain. The upshot for [Schopenhauer's] principle of ethics is that the most ideal form of benevolence, the supportive participation in the happiness of others, can only be incorporated into it in a roundabout way. In fact, joyous emotional engagement with others is a wholly original human sentiment.

Shared joy has the same significance in the moral world as compassionate suffering. Both would lack inner worth if they contained nothing but a mere repetition of the same sentiment—even if it were also mediated by the recognition that the Will in the I and the not-I is the same. Only when we sense a pain as essentially foreign to us, but as ours in terms of how we assess it, does the moral nature of compassion rise above a mere psychological engagement. This becomes even clearer in the case of benevolence.

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The supplements to *The World as Will and Representation* in the second volume provide an adequately clear explication of the true nature of [the above] principle in Schopenhauer:

On this metaphysical identity of the will as thing-in-itself rest in general three phenomena despite the vast multiplicity of its appearances, which can be brought under the concept of *sympathy*: 1) . . . *compassion*, which is, as I have shown, the basis of justice and philanthropy, *caritas*; 2) *sexual love*, with capricious selection, *amor*, which is the life of the species, asserting its priority over that of individuals; 3) *magic*, to which also belong animal magnetism and sympathetic cures.<sup>17</sup>

There is, however, only one ethical act in which the Will becomes its own subject: the denial of the will. Everything else is only a phenomenal process or striving. And thus it is actually only an accommodation to our occidental outlook that we talk about moral motives other than that of denial. This way of submerging the moral

<sup>17</sup> *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. II, Supplements to Fourth Book, Ch. 47, pp.601–02.

into the physical leads to the utmost point on which Kant and Schopenhauer are quite diametrically opposed. In understanding the elementary forms of morality we find in Kant's "Doctrine of Virtue" that "Amphiboly in Moral Concepts of Reflection" according to which the cruel treatment of animals is objectionable only because compassion for human suffering—a disposition very conducive to morality—would be gradually extinguished.<sup>18</sup> Here it cannot be contested that this view falls far short of the penetrating way in which Schopenhauer, to the extent that pains are experienced in the world, recognizes the alleviation of these pains as a motive of immediate ethical significance.

Schopenhauer derives justice from compassion. It arises, so to speak, at a lower level of compassion, in that it restrains me from harming others (*neminem laede!*) Justice is accordingly a negative mode of compassion. If compassion lies at the origin of justice and right, the distinctive character of the latter, which is to exhibit general laws originating from the nature of things and to obligate humans unconditionally, must be arbitrarily arrived at. Then suddenly,<sup>19</sup> the possibility materializes that instead of unregulated stirrings of compassion, rational reflection adopts once and for all the firm resolve to respect the rights of everyone. Abruptly, Schopenhauer allows for the existence of principles that very inadequately represent the universal nature of justice and right. But as they are only derived from the fact that a maxim could indeed be formed from the awareness of the suffering produced by acts of injustice, it is easy to show that the love of humanity could also lead us to adopt such resolutions and embrace such principles. Strangely overlooked here is the possibility of deriving the *universality* of the precepts of justice from their negative character, which is the distinct advantage of locating the origin of right in the love of humanity. Instead, the negative character of justice is used to derive the "right of *compulsion*."<sup>20</sup>

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Ethics is never any better than the metaphysical view of the world on which it is based. When nothing truly exists in the world except as a dull Will without the power to represent, all phenomena become illusory, and then the one crucial point is to overcome this illusion—partially in compassion and totally in the denial of

<sup>18</sup> See Immanuel Kant, *The Metaphysics of Morals*, trans. Mary J. Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 192–193.

<sup>19</sup> See Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I, 339f.

<sup>20</sup> See Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. I, 340.

the will. In a world where intelligence itself is only secondary and where every purpose pending before the will is a foolish affirmation of our own existence, only the passive motive remains. The nerve of action, positive purposes that fulfill our existence, have vanished. This ethics begins at the same starting point as the life-celebrating eudaemonic school in that well-being and suffering provide the entire content of our motives. When this motivation, solely and completely determined by well-being and suffering, enters into an odd alliance with Kant's principles, the following disjunctive conclusion follows: Promoting one's own well-being or preventing one's own suffering is no moral motive; increasing the suffering of others or disturbing their well-being is an immoral motive. All that is left (assuming such a motivational law) is the overcoming of the suffering of others. This ethics, then, is encapsulated in the ancient Indian prayer: "May all living creatures remain free from pain." But then one suddenly sees this law of motivation, not in Kant's way, but quite arbitrarily violated by the Will denying itself.<sup>21</sup>

*Pity<sup>22</sup> and the Tragic Effect*

Fellow-feeling plays a great role in all tragic and dramatic poetry, for the tragic has to do with suffering.

Pity, however, is merely the feeling that precedes the tragic sentiment. [The latter is a fellow-feeling] based on being-stirred, imaginative understanding and re-creation. Consciousness of a kinship is part of it and indeed elevates it to a higher level. On this, then, is grounded a kind of consciousness of the solidarity of human destiny. We see projected onto the magnified magic mirror of the stage the contours of the great agents of human suffering. Thus, Lear is everywhere that ingratitude is felt as an ethical anomaly or as injustice; and Hamlet is everywhere that ethical sensitivity confronts the hard and rough machinery of the world. Faust says to Gretchen:

78 "The woe of all mankind seizes me."<sup>23</sup> This glimpse into solidarity [and] community (thus, an emotional universality) at once heightens and releases inner tensions. The pain of life is transformed into a living thing. In *Xenien*, Schiller speaks of "the great, gigantic

<sup>21</sup> This ends the passage taken from Dilthey's 1864 essay.

<sup>22</sup> Moving from Schopenhauer to the Aristotelian conception of tragedy, the word *Mitleid* is no longer translated as compassion, but as pity.

<sup>23</sup> Goethe, *Faust, Part I*, the Dungeon Scene.

destiny that elevates humans, while it crushes them.”<sup>24</sup> Why tragedy? Consciousness is raised through understanding, but what is ultimate in life, its ultimate tension at least, is to see death coming and not fear it.

## SECTION 16: RESPECT FOR THE OTHER AS AN END IN ITSELF

This feeling of solidarity is connected to that of the independence of the other person.

1. The external or what cannot be controlled by the will is there as alien. Thus, the will is the first to experience that something alien, uncontrollable, something other, is there.

2. The will experiences the antagonism of an alien volitional force: It holds its ground, so to speak, against that force. This alien volitional force excites fear to the extent that it is obscure and unintelligible. The unintelligibility or irrationality of a manifestation of will is connected with fear even at the level of the highest culture.

3. But as one experiences more and more the homogeneity of all other human beings with oneself, an understanding of them and a solidarity of interests emerge; these same feelings pulsate in other persons, and an emotional coordination allows me to take an interest in them. Others exhibit the same will and striving to control objects; the other is the same as myself; I can imaginatively put myself in the place of others. Wills cooperate in a group; they experience the solidarity of their purposes.

4. The will of the other also possesses a core, just like my will, in the attainment of satisfaction within the life of feelings. My will has in this way even its absolute point: It is hereby aware of itself as being there for its own sake. This goes as far as the satisfaction of the moral feeling (contentment). I discover the same core in others. Compassionate and shared joy allows me to feel it.

5. Thus, respect or esteem for other persons develops so that they possess, as do I, a core in the life of their feelings, by which they

<sup>24</sup> Friedrich Schiller, *Xenie* #407, in Goethe and Schiller, *Xenien*. Dilthey mistakenly referred to the *Die Braut von Messina*.

rely on themselves and are there for themselves. For where a self-consciousness appears—which relates to the past as well as to the future through feelings, and completes the cycle of stimulation and action by producing a satisfying mental state—there exists a purpose, an end in itself. By end-in-itself we could not possibly mean anything other than this.

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6. This consciousness pervasively underlies all formulae that purport to derive basic concepts of duty and right. Esteeming oneself (as an end in itself), acknowledging the worth of the other (as end in itself), solidarity between the other and me based on an inner relationship: These are states of affairs that we are not in a position to derive further (Cicero, natural law, etc.). The most perfect formula is found in Kant: Respect every human being like yourself, as an end in itself. Its real content appears less perfectly in the categorical imperative since it purports to derive, from the mere concept of reason the subordination of the will under a law that respects everyone as much as myself. It is in the will and the feelings connected with it that we locate the determinations that express themselves in a whole group of facts: fellow-feeling, sympathy, consciousness of commonality, consciousness of solidarity, respect for other human beings as self-conscious, independent beings with their own center of feeling and willing. That formula of the categorical imperative, however, draws together these determinations of feeling and willing—which are related, but distinct—into an abstract unity.

#### SECTION 17: THE RELATION BETWEEN RESPECT FOR THE INTRINSIC WORTH OF OTHERS AND THE OBLIGATION OF GRATITUDE, PROMISING, AND TRUTHFULNESS

##### A Methodological Generalization from the Preceding

1. Here, in one instance, a peculiarity of the components and processes in the life of feeling and willing becomes prominent. By comparing stimulating images and their constituents, one can develop, within certain limits of reliability, the elements of perception and primary processes. We can ascertain, likewise within certain limits, the driving mechanisms that have a controllable, bodily correlate in reflex mechanisms. By contrast, we have no such advantage with higher-level capacities, volitions, and feelings. We can only link an anthropological-historical analysis with a psychological-ethical one.

This yields the result that certain basic characteristics of volitions, which we can also conceive as their elementary processes, manifest themselves in different but related ways when the milieu is changed. This is how the activation of power, energy, courage, and the eagerness to work are related. Fellow-feeling, solidarity, and respect for others as ends in themselves are similarly related. The archetypal phenomenon is that each instance of fellow-feeling, of love, has its roots in commonality and solidarity, and does not cancel the consciousness of being an intrinsic end oneself, but encompasses it.

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2. This archetypal phenomenon is manifested in life-experience in such a way that this union of inner understanding and inner belonging encompasses a primordial activation of a feeling of fellowship and care for others. This fact is everywhere demonstrable through the study of primitive peoples and can then also be shown as the basis of the ethical development of cultured nations. Whoever finds himself outside the solidarity of the nomadic tribe is considered alien and hostile.

3. Accordingly, the assumption of an original benevolent feeling that encompasses all living beings is a fiction. Being engaged and having our feelings stirred by suffering or joy outside us is an elementary phenomenon. It is everywhere connected with the imaginative re-creation and vicarious understanding of the inner states of others. But this presupposes an already existing consciousness of a bond and commonality, and is dependent on them. Thus, on the general foundation of fellow-feelings that reach back into animal life, we develop benevolence and respect for the interests of others (i.e., for what is centered in their feelings and will and for what emanates from them).

4. This general characteristic of the volitions relating human beings receives a modification and reshaping when particular volitions of persons interact in regular relationships. The volition and accomplishment of A, who is equal in value to B, cannot be accepted without obligating B to eventually undertake a corresponding feat. We designate the second undertaking an obligation or duty; it bears the character of an ought. The acceptance of an express commitment must lead the unity of the I to fulfill this obligation. Contract, law, justice, and the sense of what is right or just are based on this relation. Likewise, what is inner must completely express itself in



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language, gesture, and deed where there is real solidarity: For genuine understanding and commonality are entirely rooted in this transparency, and accordingly they are the prerequisite for love, friendship, duty. Thus, truthfulness in this highest sense is the basis for life's closest relationships. It excludes not only lying, but also secrecy, which is just as dangerous. Moreover, truthfulness, as the congruence of what is inner and what is uttered is the condition of human communication insofar as there is commonality. The ethical consciousness of the value of truthfulness is accordingly grounded on the fact that establishing a cohesion among human beings is entirely founded on the disclosure of what is inner to what is outside and the establishment of this commonality is the basis of all moral feelings of association and of benevolence. Truthfulness is the general condition under which individuals do not regard each other as alien, inscrutable, and therefore repulsive, but rather open themselves up to each other. Thus, it is the actual basis of societal and moral life. i.e., truthfulness parallels industriousness in supplementing the most primary virtue of sympathetic feeling. Together, they make a social world possible.

## SECTION 18: COMMITMENT AND DUTY

1. To the extent that self-consciousness forms a personality on the basis of an identity with oneself, an enduring commitment arises through a tacit or express act of the will. This commitment also occurs when what is done is performed on the presupposition of mutuality and when its acceptance establishes a mutual life-relationship.

2. Thus, the will is committed and limited as it strives to move from a state of need to satisfaction. This possibility is based on the capacity of the will to not be overwhelmed by impressions, but rather to remain true and bound to itself over time.

It is committed, however, only as a consequence of something which it has itself expressly or tacitly affirmed, through an act which it undertook or through a relationship in which it entered. Both are based on mutuality. Even when the will binds itself, not to another, but to itself—a case to which the label of obligation can be applied only by extrapolation—the will divides itself, so to speak, into earlier and later acts. We are truly obligated, however, only vis-à-vis another to whom we are bound because our will concluded an act or entered a relationship, requiring us to remain the same over time.

3. Right and duty in this sense encompass, therefore, the whole sphere of well-grounded mutuality, even when this ground involves no legal constraint, no compulsion of duty or prohibition. Indeed, it extends even to relationships in which mutual obligation is not based on any expressly laid-down arrangement, but on a legitimate and tacit mutual presupposition.

4. And here a constant growth in the commitment to what is right is to be observed, in that more and more is included in this mutuality. Thus, the position of those who provide service is increasingly absorbed into this mutual relation over the course of history. An advance beyond the patriarchal conception of society occurs whenever a relation based on the exclusive rule of benevolence shifts to one of law and duty. Only they provide the full (though not always legally binding) protection of interests, due to their distinctive character of universality and binding obligation, according to which a violation of the commitment to what is right evokes an entirely different reaction than when benevolence is withheld.

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5. When compulsion within an association is added to this relationship and endowed with absolute (not merely relative) coercive measures, then a judicial system of law emerges. Such a system is distinguished from the already specified ethical relations merely through its power to enforce. The solution to the fundamental problem of justice and law is, on the one hand, to ground it in the ethical dispositions and developments to which we have referred. But on the other hand, it comes with the power to enforce and is unthinkable without this. It would be incorrect to overlook these two sides. One could think of the judicial system as founded merely on the power of enforcement, but then one overlooks the great facts of customary and international law. A judicial system is marked by an original duality: Internally, it stems from associations based on private and family rights; externally, it manifests itself in criminal law and revenge. This then expresses itself in two respective feelings of justice.

Insofar as the will views itself as committed to the world of values through duty and justice, the moral world attains its completion objectively in a hierarchy of values.

6. From a personal standpoint, this commitment involves a sense of what is right or just. It comes with its own feeling of duty to mutual order and possesses a moral value completely independent of any purposes. One should not conceive of laws and duties as mere

mechanisms by which benevolence is actualized—as Lotze seems inclined to do—since this attitude of the human will towards the world of values is unconditionally distinctive and possesses a totally independent moral value.

Hume, in order to prove that justice is only a means to general utility, depicted a world of luxurious abundance in which a system of laws would be completely superfluous. But then the sense of what is right and the order of values would at the same time vanish from such a world, (since] the need for them is not situational, but rather is grounded in human nature. Judicial relations would then derive more from family rights, or from the lawful ordering of the higher values, forms of dependence, etc. As long as there are wills aiming at values and standing in relationships, there will also be lawfulness.

83 The same problem manifests itself in the other case presented by Hume, where one imagines an unbounded benevolence that unites the human race into one family and replaces justice. One would thereby think away the clear, distinct division that exists between our own will and the world of values.

#### SECTION 19: A GENERAL VIEW OF THE CONNECTION BETWEEN HISTORICAL UNDERSTANDING, ETHICS, AND ART (THE IDEAL OF HUMAN LIFE)

1. The process of imaginative re-creation succeeds with phenomena that are based on commonality. The consciousness of this commonality originates in the re-creative processes of life and is developed by human intercourse and associations.
2. This commonality excludes inscrutability, alienation, unintelligible willfulness.
3. On this basis universal validity in aesthetics, logical necessity in thought, and solidarity in ethics are generated.
4. And associations do indeed cultivate, on the basis of mutual understanding and the sympathy inherent in it, and under the conditions of the common group interests, the propagation of benevolence extending from the tribe to the state, and finally to the whole of humanity. This community of interests finally allows the concept of general welfare to arise.

A new refutation of utilitarianism: We can now see that utilitarianism reverses the actual state of affairs. In utilitarianism, the complex, eventual product, namely, the tendency to bring about general welfare, is put first. It then derives from welfare the general facts contained within it.

On the other hand, on the basis of imaginative re-creative processes, a higher life is introduced, assuming that it proceeds to increase intelligibility. All imaginative products serve to form a sphere of higher mental life.

## SECTION 20: APPLICATION TO EDUCATION AS ONE OF THE MAIN ASPECTS OF MORAL DEVELOPMENT

This shows that ideality is altogether the result of processes of imaginative re-creation: and, to be sure, those processes that are especially favorable to emulating higher human nature.

Emulation occurs initially through social relations. Personal role models are important for the upbringing of every human being. Fathers and teachers should be role models. [Consider] the formative power of great contemporary individuals and the enormous influence of their examples, as well as great individuals from the past and the human feelings in poetry that [build] human culture. <The natural sciences cannot shape a person, who on the basis of sympathy, benevolence, [and] a comprehensive outlook, can achieve something in political life, in social organizations, in society. Clarity of intellect is cultivated in relation to nature, but the development of the highest moral characteristics is firmly connected with exposure to the greatest figures of literature and history. The simple greatness of classical authors cannot be replaced. [If] Homer, Plato and their ideals were to be replaced by Newton, Voltaire, and Diderot, then the core of education, the value of re-creating what is important, would disappear.>

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## SECTION 21: THE VARIETY OF ETHICAL DISPOSITIONS OR THE ETHICAL ORGANIZATION OF HUMAN LIFE

1. Ethical dispositions can no more be reduced to a determinate number than can the categories of thought. Even a fixed differentiation among them turns out to be impossible. This is the same state of affairs that can be established about the elementary processes of intelligence and the categories that derive from them. Sensory capacities behave the same way. All this has to do with a fundamental

characteristic of mental life that everywhere poses difficulties for scientific research. Variations and transformations are generated by altered circumstances and conditions, etc.

85 2. We cannot even sharply separate ethical dispositions from other basic features of the will. The nature of each mental disposition derives from the fact that certain volitions or regular volitional characteristics tend to recur. This is conditioned in many cases by the way that a certain form of volition is connected with a pleasant state of feeling. Cowardice and courage are equally evoked in the course of life, but we can designate courage as an ethical disposition. Since courage is connected with the intensification of the feeling of life, it generates the tendency to prefer it. But such dispositional tendencies cannot always be directly designated as ethical; habit is also a function of practice that [is] favorable to mental life. Likewise, the tendency to subordinate isolated volitions to those that contain a rule. It cannot be determined whether those dispositions that lead to an ethical life should be considered as already ethical; still less can their number be established.

3. The Various Dispositions. An Overview: a) The natural cycle [by which] feelings turn into actions. b) Habituation as an ethical force, custom, habit, etc. c) Beyond the changes of our desires and their fulfillment, there is the attitude that does not change and always operates in accordance with a rule. d) The right relation between need and the means to satisfaction. When we cannot adapt to what is actual through our actions, we have to do it through feeling in an internal way. Here lies the source of religion. This relation, too, by which humans internally adjust when denied adaptation to external objects, is an ethical disposition.

4. We can no more designate these dispositions as primitive than we can classify them. But if we view them synoptically, they offer a certain metaphysical interpretation. This fact is important for the cultivation of religion. They converge, to produce a metaphysical relation, according to which persons are mutually bound together in an ethical realm of persons.

## THREE

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### The Evolution of the Ethical and the Principles of a Social Ethics

#### 1: We Have Developed Ethical Dispositions: How Do They Change?

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#### SECTION 1: THE RELATION BETWEEN ETHICAL DISPOSITIONS AND ETHICAL CONSTELLATIONS OF POWER WITHIN SOCIETY

##### Introduction

In the great forms or forces that operate everywhere in society, namely, self-development, work, property, companionship, and marriage, utilitarianism sees only parts of a machine that have the effect of producing general welfare. [Utilitarianism relates these forms] to what is ethical as means to an end. Society is [conceived as] a machine whose construction requires incredible insight.

By contrast to this conception, I propose the following: These forces or forms of society originate from drives and ethical dispositions of the individual person in societal association. Their tendency toward the general welfare originates from particular relationships among volitional processes and states of feelings. As a system of movement arises from the cooperation of forces, so a total social sphere of feelings emerges as society evolves.

1. Strivings and feelings merge in society. All of the volitional strivings that occur in society produce a system of experiential states whose intensity is subject to decrease or increase. Thus, one can call them feelings, but they are qualitatively quite diverse. The tension of the will when it feels bound by duty, and the peace of having

fulfilled one's duty, have little similarity with the course of sensual desires and sensual pleasure.

2. General welfare can thus be designated as the goal of these volitional strivings in society.

87 3. The satisfaction of drives affords a temporary contentment, but the states of mind connected to ethical dispositions contain permanent satisfaction. Thus, only when individuals and society give a priority to ethical dispositions can there be permanent contentment. When a society increasingly facilitates the satisfaction of drives within certain bounds, and makes this a self-evident presupposition, then it opens up the possibility of acquiring permanent contentment through the development of ethical dispositions. In comparison with exalted moral principles, these are modest and prosaic considerations, but they correspond to the reality of things.

4. <sup>1</sup> . . . Needs and their satisfaction possess an all-compelling power only within the range in which they are required for self-preservation. Otherwise they are isolated, transitory, leave behind satiety and boredom. At the same time, they will come into conflict with the higher characteristics of the will if the latter are not taken into account. What is the overall end of this life? This is the ultimate question from this animalistic standpoint. But a permanent contentment is brought about through the development of the inherent disposition of strivings and strong, joyful emotions that are always ready to expend energy to cooperate without friction in solidarity with one's fellow creatures.

Thus, the great principle of active life takes shape: joy in the exertion of will and its activation through a solidarity of interests.

88 From these dispositions, then, there emerge through evolution, the forces and forms of social life. When I speak of force in relation to the social sciences, I include a connection of some kind of psychological state of affairs with a feeling that mediates the transition to action. The strivings of someone who is hungry is such a force. The raised level of feeling in the attestation of courage is such a force. This force is present whenever a state of affairs is connected with a feeling that guides the will. All ethical dispositions are forces; they combine with drives into mass forces and specific constellations.

<sup>1</sup> The first brief paragraphs of this subsection are not translated here because they are repeated in an expanded form on the next page of the German text, which will be translated in its entirety.

## SECTION 2: SOCIETAL FORCES

Main thesis: The evolution of society takes place through the interaction of individual forces amidst a milieu. As these consist of drives, feelings, [and] ethical dispositions, societal evolution is to be derived from their interaction.

First, I will consider particular forces that regularly recur and operate together in societal life. Hunger, the sex drive, habit, and the consciousness of kindred relations are such forces.

We do not assert that these are primary; it is enough that they are irreducible and cannot be derived from the bare abstractions of benevolence or other partial facts such as compassion. Compassion is only the shared experience of a single condition, but shared experience extends further. Carlyle smoking quietly with his mother in a courtyard offers a serene image of silent understanding as the highest form of communion. So is the seeming boredom of married life.

These properties have the tendency to further human welfare because they are the formative aspects of social life. The development of well-being is a function of the development of society itself. The evolution of moral life only occurs on the basis of social evolution in general.

What is ethical cannot be determined a priori. Nor can it be derived from a few ethical processes. We must examine moral evolution, and the results will differ widely from epoch to epoch. Those agencies that make it possible to have enduring satisfaction and more refined states of feeling warrant our initial designation as ethical forces. What is ethical or goodness itself is initially what evolution makes of these forces.

These regularly recurring single forces generate larger, second-order societal forces, and indeed the coordination of several of them produces a higher whole. Such wholes are coordinative social forms.

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I maintain that the great, real forces or forms of socio-historical life cannot be derived from utility but arise from vital moral dispositions. Work as a constitutive principle of society, individual development, property, fellowship, the nature of the family, and the ideal of fellowship are all rooted in these vital moral dispositions.

1. *Work* is a steady and enduring exertion of will. [There is a] problem of deriving forms from the exertion of will. [Work] carries a satisfaction in itself. Whereas the satisfaction of drives is quickly extinguished, [that from work] can bring about continued satisfaction.



2. Work is the basis of all societal achievements. "Achievement on the basis of what we are" is an empty phrase. Lasting satisfaction and control of the passions is connected to work. From this [comes] the norm of modern ethical life: As all enjoyment derives from one's own work and the work of others and as no one is permitted to use others merely as means because all human beings are of equal value, the expectation of greater enjoyment in life comes with the duty to work harder. It is the task of society to make this postulate compelling.

3. *Individual development* is the necessary form in which persons satisfy their drives, form a core of lasting satisfaction through the exertion of force, and attain an independence or autonomy relative to externally operating sources of pleasure and displeasure. With this we can establish the norm that the organization of society must make possible an individual development for all. Slave labor cannot be permitted. Each worker will be a member of society.

4. An immediate, volitional life-manifestation that inheres in the will and gives it form, is *property*, extending over the products of work. It [exists] simply in the continuity of the will in bringing about a result. And what is acquired through accumulation is property that also includes the means of labor. All inheritance law can be justified only if the will expending itself in work is allowed to inhere in its products even beyond death. Whence, the norm: The will finds satisfaction only in controlling the products accumulated by work. If this [control] were abolished, [the will] would be hampered. If property were theft<sup>2</sup> and everything were [held] in common, then the strong, industrious will would create secretive property through theft. The enslaved will is in the long run more unbearable than any other evil, because it affects everyone equally. The tendency in society to ordinarily allow needs to be satisfied leads to increasing control over nature. What exceeds need becomes the sphere of the will as free activity and extends to others in the associations of life.

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5. Every kind of fellowship expresses the need for kinship, community, etc. The basic form is found in the consanguinity of the tribe or the clan.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *What Is Property?* trans. B. Tucker (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1876).

6. Marriage and family offer a developing form of working community that we do not think can be surpassed. Marriage actualizes the ideal of completely overcoming alienation. This could only be tied to the sexual union and common children. This [is] the greatest mystery of the world.

Utilitarianism assumes that general welfare is the goal. Then marriage, property, etc., are derived from this goal—not from living impulses, but rather from a calculating reason that juggles means and ends. This outlook is a correlate of the mechanical [world picture.] It can provide a mechanical concatenation of means, but it can never actually account for what characterizes the realm of the will.

### SECTION 3: THE EVOLUTION OF ETHICAL LIFE

1. There is no tendency, operative at all times, to generate public well-being. There are no everlasting commands of conscience or ethical judgments. Drives, a constant causal conditioning of feelings, [and] higher characteristics of the will interact at a primitive cultural level. The picture that arises from this requires imaginative completion; however, so-called primitive peoples give us at least an analogue. Here we typically find a mixture of crude drives, individual ethical dispositions, and degenerate dispositions in the life of human impulses.

Letourneau, president of the Anthropological Society in Paris and professor of anthropology there, has provided a comprehensive collection in his book on the evolution of morals.<sup>3</sup> His result is that general, inherited moral precepts are nowhere to be found at the lowest level of civilization. He finds cannibalism, infanticide, slavery, killing of the elderly, the treatment of women as mere domestic animals, sexual transgressions of all kinds. Potentates display an utter absence of humanity in many cases. A traveler in Africa narrates about the well-known king Mutesa of Uganda: A female offered him a freshly plucked fruit. Red with anger, the king declared that it was the first time a woman had dared to offer him anything. He had her cut to pieces.

2. Concerning the life of the drives, one sees some of the main points where the savages lack moral feelings, and how these feelings

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<sup>3</sup> Charles Jean Marie Letourneau (1831–1902), *L'évolution de la morale* (Paris, 1887).

gradually become more accessible. Infanticide survives in abortion; sexual promiscuity in prostitution; slavery and cannibalism in the treatment of the lower classes. The fear of potentates and their exorbitant life of pleasure survives in monarchical social spheres and the preponderance of religious prohibitions over ethical impulses and the power of superstition survives in ecclesiastical societies and in trials about witchcraft, etc.

3. Human strivings involve a principle of development that can be ascertained in the individual as well as in society. Negatively put, we can say that the content of the drives does not provide sufficient ground for the development of humanity that takes place in society. This could only lead to an increase in the means of satisfying drives. And if one adds sympathy, there arises an auxiliary realm of concern for others.

But from the inherent dispositions of the will—whose most important elements we have analyzed—there emerge a few appreciable, yet permanent, effects that add up and result in an elevation of the overall ethical status of humanity. Already Hume says that human evolution is ultimately based not on strong incentives, but on scarcely noticeable, delicate, ever-recurring ones. Herein lies the explanation for why moral incentives are partially sought in reason.

Positively put, we can see that the boundless tendency toward the means of enjoyment produces an aggregation that allows the intellect to establish techniques for dominating nature. Thus, in society there emerges a gradual unburdening of the will with regard to the satisfaction of drives. We call progress in civilization the process by which this satisfaction, on the one hand, becomes ever more comprehensive, the utilization of constant sources of pleasant feelings becomes ever more all-embracing, while at the same time this demands ever less of an expenditure of labor. At first, this unburdens the upper classes; subsequently, the lower classes are given more time free from manual labor. Similarly, ever more processes in biological development can dispense with an attentive exertion of the will.

According to a fundamental law of the will, volitional strivings that are often repeated lead to habituation. Thus, habit, tradition, [and] custom are produced in the individual and in society. Whenever uniformities are assimilated by consciousness, rules of action arise. They contribute significantly to moral evolution. The more we rely on constant and habitual practices or raise ourselves to [the level of] a rule, the more we unburden the will. It continues

to operate unobtrusively in habit or rule, instead of by perpetual interventions.

3. The activities of the will that I have designated as ethical dispositions can now freely unfold. The development of the individual, love and concern for human association, and devotion to the goals of culture take the place of an irregular satisfaction of passions.

4. This evolution is, however, constantly disturbed by the expansiveness of the drives and passions. Luxury, a craving for pleasure, [and] desires to dominate grow with the advance of civilization. Therefore, the history of society exhibits the need for great moral or religious transformations of the will. Here we go beyond mere evolution. There are also more profound processes that occur in the collective will and disrupt the course of evolution by means of catastrophes.

5. But despite such catastrophes we can see the durability of forms and products that have come into existence—associations, institutions, cultural or spiritual creations, etc.

#### SECTION 4: PRIMITIVE HUMAN BEINGS, THEIR MILIEU, AND THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIETY

Society develops through the cooperation of external factors and the milieu in which human beings live with the inner tendencies found in human nature. We see how an animal species increases or decreases the number of its members, remains stationary or migrates according to its relation to external circumstances. Every aggregate of human beings behaves in the same way. And indeed such a human aggregate is affected by the climate, the configuration of geographical terrains, flora and fauna. Operating as internal factors are characteristics of the body, the senses and intelligence, feelings, drives, and will.

As concerns the body, primitive people exhibit meager development of their lower extremities, considerable bulk in the jawbones and teeth and in the digestive organs. Primitive people are less capable than civilized people in expending a large amount of power throughout a long period of time; this is conditioned by inferior nutrition and the proportionately smaller scope of their nervous system. But primitive people show a greater capability of enduring harmful influences, and a greater indifference with regard to

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unpleasant or painful sensations. To the degree that the brain is less developed, puberty begins earlier. Their affects are not regulated by a relationship over a long interval of time and systematic planning in their satisfaction; they are capricious, moved by momentary impulses, incapable of regular activity and persistent work whose gratification lies in the future. They exhibit a childlike cheerfulness that is not darkened by any thoughts about what is to come; they give themselves entirely to freedom in their life-manifestations and affective activity. Their wish and desire for approval is so great that they quietly endure the pains that accompany the expansion of their lower lip by a piece of wood, the piercing of their cheeks to hang and display precious stones, and the insertion of quills in their nasal septum. Though having a firm love for children, the Fuegians sell their children as slaves, and the inhabitants of New Guinea will barter away a child to a merchant for a trifle that they happen to need.

On the other hand, one finds in them already a large element of good-naturedness. The course from desire to enjoyment is not inhibited by good breeding. The drives are not subordinated to systematic planning by the will, nor are habitual work practices cultivated. Their intellectual characteristics manifest themselves in acute senses and the inclination to imitate. They are incapable of going beyond the concrete. They lack interest in the new and are amazed by nothing. Their sluggish memory and imitative nature betray a treadmill-like attitude. Their intellect develops more quickly and reaches its limits earlier.

#### SECTION 5: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHICAL CONSCIOUSNESS IN ASSOCIATIONS—AUTHORITY AND DUTY

1. According to recent research, the earliest association is not the family, but rather the tribe, the clan. Even today, with many primitive peoples, the family lags behind the clan association in social significance. In many cases there is no definite designation for the act of contracting a marriage. Religious ceremonies accompanying the act of marriage are of a relatively later time. And yet native peoples attach religious ceremonies to such decisive life-acts as the declaration of manhood and adoption.

2. Primitive conceptions of marriage diverge. The one is matriarchal, the other patriarchal. The first is rooted in the idea of consanguinity.

The child descends from the mother. In the free life of hunters and fishermen, the bond between father and son is loose. The strong bond is with the mother. Thus matriarchal law results. Polyandry is also compatible with such a basic legal conception, and it can emerge as a consequence of the deficiencies of females. Matriarchy results in the principle of maternal hereditary succession. The child is not heir to the father, but rather to the brother of the woman, the uncle. Patriarchy is not rooted in consanguinity, but rather in property. The man extends his authority also over wife and children. Now the family develops on the basis of patriarchal sovereignty and plays a prominent role in the evolution of ethical dispositions.

## SECTION 6: CUSTOM, JUSTICE, AND ETHICAL LAW

A custom arises when the ethical dispositions already discussed develop in the context of these early forms of association. Two characteristics of the will are especially effective here. Volitional strivings attain a certain uniformity within an association, and through practice and habituation some of them are handed down from generation to generation. The will submits to the concept of habit. By this we mean each mode of behavior that has become steady and unchangeable through practice. It can rule the individual in his action. When common duties are accepted in a community a general practice comes about. Such a practice becomes custom insofar as it functions as a rule or norm in a community.

Custom is somewhat like instinct. Instinct involves the transformation of conscious movements into an impulsive mechanism by means of habit. The consciousness of motives is preserved in a custom, and the habitual volitional practice that arises in a community remains animated by these motives. Nevertheless, Ihering<sup>4</sup> has called attention to a peculiar transformation of purposes even while a habitual practice maintains itself. The process is analogous to that of changes in the meanings of words. The external habits of life persist, and after their purpose has disappeared, another purpose is inserted. Thus, the funeral banquet, which was originally part of the worship of the dead, has been maintained and still continues today for other practical reasons. The custom of drinking a toast to someone goes back to the ritual of sacrificing wine to a god. Drinking

<sup>4</sup>Rudolf von Ihering (or Jhering) (1818–1892), German legal scholar, considered the founder of sociological jurisprudence; author of *Geist des römischen Rechts* and *Der Zweck im Recht*, among other works.

blood reduces to drinking out of a so-called blood cup merely as a symbol of brotherhood or friendship. Similarly, the custom of giving a tip for services refers back to an originally tendered drink of which today there is no longer any memory.

95 A custom is kept intact not only by habitual practice, but even more by the judgment of peers about deviations from it. Thus deviations from customs can be punished in ways that impact us as grievously as legal punishment. The means of internal coercion of customs can be just as strong as the external ones of laws.

### SECTION 7: RELIGION, THE IDEAL, AND THE ACCEPTANCE OF DUTY AND LAW IN AN OVERALL CONTEXT

In the earliest times accessible to us, science, poetry, and belief in primitive animistic ideas and the myths attached to them, are interrelated. Irreligious peoples seem not to exist. At first, primitive conceptions are the starting point for cults and ceremonies that are connected to self-preservation and have no relation to ethical life. But ancestral cults and sacrificial offerings manifest features that enter into relation with the ethical dispositions discussed earlier.

The respectful remembrance of ancestors is a feature that is seldom lacking even in primitive peoples, and it everywhere easily combines with those influences that are otherwise exercised by our feelings and wishes for the memory of a past forever removed from perception. The weaknesses and deficiencies of the dead are forgotten, and their virtues magnified, in accordance with the saying "*De mortuis nihil nisi bene*" [Of the dead nothing but good is to be said] whose validity is preserved for all levels of existence. But in primitive peoples this feature of reverence gains its imposing influence on their state of mind, above all by means of imagery about the afterlife of the dead. The soul that gives up the breath of life is often thought of as a shadow or as an ephemeral image of the person that remains for a longer or shorter time at the scene of its earthly deeds. Or when it leaves that place in order to enter a special realm of the dead, it nevertheless—for as long as the remembrance of the deceased survives at all—stays in touch with the living and shares with them its pain and joy. The dream and vision that the native child regards as a lived actuality serves to renew this exchange [with the deceased] in case it threatens to break off.

The mysterious coming and vanishing of such visions—indeed, even the dread that the sight of the dead evokes—produce an

easy relation between it and another chain of representations. That which is mysterious at the same time passes for magical. Happiness and unhappiness are traced back to the demonic beings surrounding us, and spirits of the dead are allowed to insert themselves, as the assumption suggests itself that they participate in the destinies of those left behind. Soon it happens [that] they assist the living with their advice, give them good ideas, and like other demons that bring fortune or misfortune, they actively and directly intervene in their destiny. It is not unusual therefore for souls to also differentiate themselves into good and bad demons, and for the brave and the praiseworthy to live on as charitable spirits while the profligate and criminal survive as ghosts dispensing harm.

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It may be that the ethical drive that is placed in and for itself in the idealized memory of ancestors is impaired and at times completely suppressed by being mixed with notions of ghosts and magic. But here it is not to be forgotten that, on the other hand, the very motives that excite hope or fear in humans are in a position to exert an enduring influence. When the idealizing reverence for forefathers is no longer completely disinterested—when they are at the same time invoked as protective and feared as vengeful spirits, then indeed the ethical influence that exercises the personal characteristics ascribed to ancestors in memory does not need to disappear. In fact, there is enough evidence available to demonstrate more specifically that this influence operates in two directions.

First of all, it is the personal example that arouses emulation. If the tendency to idealize the characteristics of an ancestor in memory is already an ethical moment in and for itself, then the notion created by this drive has an effect similar to that of the living actuality for which it is retained. The deceased person is a better ethical role-model than any living person could be, because the imagination furnishes its imagery with good qualities either without any limitations or with only those limitations that the conditions of actual life always bring with them. By nature, humans never have absolute perfection, but when we imagine an ideal, we can always only put greater stress on the characteristics that are regarded as admirable and set aside those that strike us as odious. However deficient this ideal may be, there is, in the influence it exerts, the tendency toward its own perfection, and thus the possibility for an unlimited development.

Secondly, the idealizing light that diffuses over past generations in reverent remembrance has an effect back on the present. An old



man in the twilight of his life already draws some of the veneration that will be bestowed on him after his death. The worship of the dead, originally deriving from the natural feeling of piety, operates under the coloring that religion confers on this feeling, retroactively strengthening its intensity. Through the veneration of living parents, of old age, and of fellow tribesmen who stand out for their praiseworthy characteristics or their rank—affects are aroused that seem to be related to that of religious commitment.

This is an example of the general process by which peoples in progressive civilizations transform primitive ideas about forefathers or ancestors, heroes, or gods into a conception of an ideal, mentally satisfying existence.

Thus, ideals representing heroes or gods originate within religious processes on the basis of an ethical view. One such ideal of the Greeks is Heracles:

He is the working, suffering hero, harassed by labours and persecutions, yet bravely persevering in the midst of all misfortunes, and finally receiving the reward of virtue in his elevation to the rank of a god. His myth thus reflects a view of life that takes the world and its tasks seriously enough, but still, on the whole, looks cheerfully and hopefully to the end. Heracles is not miserable under his burdens, does not break down, when left without divine assistance, under the load upon his shoulders: he is a mighty man of valour, who helps himself by his strength and endurance.<sup>5</sup>

Thus, natural religions are moralized by means of our ethical dispositions. Ideals first arise within these natural religions. Only later will ideals be further developed in the poetry that is inspired by religion. The ethical ideal then becomes one of the strongest powers of the world of human conduct.

In the same way, we find imagery about life after death connected with the natural religions. A special land of the dead, an island of the departed, and resting places in the luminous vaults of heaven are envisioned. Only later do we see the Greeks add to this the idea of retribution.

Furthermore, notions about the gods lead to the idea of ethical commands. Just as deities stand in a relationship to human beings

<sup>5</sup> Wilhelm Wundt, *Ethics: An Investigation of the Facts and Laws of the Moral Life*, Vol. I, 94, trans. Edward Bradford Titchener, Julia Henrietta Gulliver, and Margaret Floy Washburn (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897).

that make sacrifices to them, and the cult of worship involves a duty to them to which advantages attach, so the concepts of authority and lawgiver extend themselves to our ethical conceptions.

Natural religions stand at the beginning of human development, but in the further course of culture we see the emergence of religions in which a nation collects and concentrates the achievements of its ethical culture. The greatest of these are the teachings of Confucius, Buddha, Christianity, and Islam. They place an ethical ideal at the heart of religion and give it a dominating force in a wide cultural sphere.

### The Concept of an Ideal

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An ideal involves an expansion of the will that is not conditioned by obligation, but rather has the character of the free actualization of an image of higher perfection.

### Motivations

1. The human imagination and aesthetic powers manifest an idealizing tendency. Even masks and caricatures serve to intensify.
2. The idealization of the will originates in the volitional relations of parents and children, of leaders to a clan, and the veneration of parents and ancestors.
3. Insofar as these . . . <sup>6</sup> recede, rudiments of a notion of an ideal order emerge: Heroes become ideal shapes. The ideal acquires consistency only in an ideal ordering of things.

## SECTION 8: THE CONCEPT OF THE ETHICAL—GOOD AND EVIL

Initially the expressions “good,” “evil,” “bad,” and “virtue,” designate the presence of characteristics required for human tasks. This reference to the purposeful content of human life is preserved even when these concepts are spiritualized. According to the enduring and everywhere similar, albeit remote, effects of such characteristics, the form of the will attains an unconditional value independent from its particular and immediate consequences.

<sup>6</sup>The portion of this sentence indicated by ellipsis is illegible in the original manuscript. (H).

Society provides judicial laws and ethical norms, and designates certain characteristics as virtues, and value-judgments of “good” and “evil.” Ethical reflection about inner experience seems unable to determine universally valid marks that distinguish these concepts. What does “good” or “bad” mean? A good knife or a bad pair of boots have no merit or defect apart from the need that they serve. Thus, we also understand initially good human beings to be those who possesses the attributes requisite for fulfilling their functions, and we designate as virtues those attributes—truthfulness, integrity, etc.—that are unconditionally necessary for [executing] any human function. In good human beings they are connected to their ability to perform. Thus, the incisive viewpoint always regards as good, virtuous, or ethical those attributes that constantly and universally correspond to a functional task that life presents to the individual. This is also confirmed linguistically. The word “good” has the meaning of “appropriate.” The Greek word *agathos* denotes suitability—as well as heritage as a guarantee of such hereditary attributes. The substantive *arete* denotes any characteristic that gives a person or thing eminent worth. The German word for virtue (*Tugend*) is still associated with suitability (*Tauglichkeit*) for modern understanding. The Roman *virtus* stresses—as is typical of the Romans—masculinity. In the course of time, these words, then, acquire a deeper internalized meaning. We notice the same progression with more specialized terms of ethical nomenclature. The words “just” and “rightful” (*rectus*, *gerecht*) designate someone who proceeds on a straight path. The word “pious” (*fromm*) is related to the verb “to be of use” (*frommen*), referring again to what is useful.

This process of internalization finally detaches good, evil, and virtue from the relation to a purpose to be realized and uses them instead to designate a form of willing. We can readily find a basis for this in the natural progression of ethical consciousness. In the course of action, judgment increasingly takes into consideration, not only immediate effects, but also those that are mediate and spread to the wider spheres of society. Thus, evaluation becomes detached from the nature of the nearest consequences. Truthfulness is required of us, even where it results in a direct disadvantage for others, because the whole stability of a more noble form of society is based on trust. Saint Crispin<sup>7</sup> made shoes for the poor out of stolen leather. We do not evaluate this action primarily in terms of

<sup>7</sup> Saint Crispin was a third-century Roman martyr.

immediate consequences, according to which the damage to rich leather dealers was small compared with the usefulness to poor people. Although we recognize a disposition toward the well-being of others that risks the gallows, it is more important to condemn a type of action and way of thinking that is disadvantageous for the property relations of society. Thus, the valuation of a type of action is detached from consideration of its specific consequences but remains focused on an assessment of consequences at large. At the same time, the judgment that is formed in the social whole abstracts more and more from the particularity of the individual case and puts stress on the lasting effects of a type of action or character trait for all cases in general.

The method of social ethics confirms this. There are ways of acting and character traits that are well suited to holding society together: They insure the satisfaction of the individual; they promote the control of society over nature; they promote unity, harmony, and a close cooperation of individuals in society as a whole. We designate such character traits or ways of acting as virtuous, good, and ethical. These evaluations of conscience can always be tested in relation to the tasks of human life. This is strong evidence for the link between conscience and the factual tasks of human life. Thus, all morality ultimately searches for the motives that bring about the fulfillment of the functions of life in society, toward their sanctions, toward their development with the greatest possible energy. The concept of a life-task is concretely fulfilled in human ethical consciousness. Its scientific illumination establishes the whole foundation of healthy ethical reflection.

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However, before we dig a foundation underground, we need to draft a building plan. We must make clear what is supposed to stand above ground.

#### SECTION 9: THE UNIVERSAL AND THE CONSTANTLY EFFECTIVE INCENTIVES OF ETHICAL LIFE

There is also agreement that certain incentives have a uniform ethical effect in any state of a society, i.e., affect the fulfillment of the functions of life in society.

The shaping of life in society that corresponds to the functions of life is achieved by a series of incentives; these are consequently designated as ethical or moral. The German expression for "ethical" (*sittlich*) is a translation of *moralis*, for still in Middle High German the former is used like our word for "modest"

or “chaste” (*sittig*) to denote “conformity with custom” (*Sitte*). The Latin expression *moralis*, however, is expressly claimed by Cicero to simulate the Greek word *ethicos*.<sup>8</sup> But the latter term is introduced by Aristotle in order to distinguish the virtues of character as ethical rather than *dianoetic* or intellectual. Here for Aristotle, the leading idea, as he himself stresses, is the close relationship between *ethos* and ἦθος. Both expressions in fact hang together etymologically. Thus, the connection of *customary ethos* and *ethics* is basic in the nomenclatures of the three languages; however, it is not determined by a predominantly instinctive consciousness, but rather by disciplinary thought and the deliberate formation of language.

Instead of isolating one overarching abstract mark of ethical incentives, we will gather the incentives by means of the empirical and indubitable characteristics that have been used over the ages.

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1. Every striving for personal excellence and the satisfaction connected with it, as well as for outward recognition, is naturally viewed by average people as ethical or moral. The preservation, intensification, energetic, and powerful activation of life are always valued as constituents of an excellent life. The mere caricature and distortion of this motivation is contained in the ethical principle of pleasure. If one isolates this incentive, it immediately proves itself inadequate to account for what gives social life its cohesiveness. The Cyrenaics who focused on pleasure in life—both the striving for pleasure and the escape from displeasure—fall victim to Aristotle’s pertinent critique that pleasure is merely the sign of successful dealings in a healthy life. In a biological context, instinctive drives are there before the experience of pleasure, which their satisfaction brings about. Inner experience teaches that the poet writes his verse based on an inner drive, not because of the pleasure that ensues; the hunter and soldier would rather endure hunger and thirst, receive wounds, strive, and prevail than accumulate pleasurable sensations in an idle life. In short, better to be a dissatisfied human being than a satisfied pig.

2. *The Incentives of Sympathy, of Benevolence, of Love.* Just as we see animals living in herds, we humans are instinctively governed by a drive for sociability. That this is a moral incentive is already stated

<sup>8</sup> Cicero, *De Fato*.

in the following passage from Goethe's *Faust*: "The worst company will make you feel that you are a man among men."<sup>9</sup>

Cicero, and after him Grotius, demonstrate that the life of the state is grounded on the drive for sociability. This feeling of sociability is akin to fellow-feeling and sympathy. What their common root is we will not yet investigate here. In the feeling of fellowship someone else's condition evokes in me a distinctive but weaker reflex: It is as though I could feel myself inside another mind. The life-condition of another person can uplift me; similarly, that of a social sphere can elevate my whole existence. In other cases, they can weigh me down. This fact about feelings is basic—an immediate given. Never has a more ill-fated psychological comparison been made than in Spinoza's attempt, and similar attempts by others, to derive this fact from an inference or from a process of association. On the other hand, this feeling has long been viewed as an ethical mainspring of the first order, but resolute moralists like Kant have undermined this. It is true that the amount of pleasure in compassionate feeling can make it morally doubtful.

Women who read about accidents in newspapers lament together at coffee socials. Their strong feelings are not always sources of active involvement. Kindheartedness is often found precisely in carefree persons, playboys; according to Goethe, it is well developed in prostitutes, and indeed [it is] close to an uninhibited intent, even close to voluptuous cruelty. It is the dissipated weakness of feeling in a lack of character that allows such Kotzebuesque<sup>10</sup> tears to flow so frequently. Speculation about such feelings in poetry is the degeneracy of shallow, characterless poets. Therefore, Schopenhauer's theory that compassion is the only ethical incentive amounts to an animalization of ethics. On the other hand, sympathy is doubtless a strong ingredient in most forms of ethical feeling. Sympathy is an indigenous, basic element of veneration, thankfulness, and love. It is love that first achieves the expansion of existence beyond the sphere of one's own self, and consequently the abolition of egoism.

With love, then, the sympathetic instinct, which may temporarily flare up, becomes a lasting state of consciousness, a form of the will, and accordingly a constantly burning flame warming the entire

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<sup>9</sup> Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, trans. Abraham Hayward (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1908), 48.

<sup>10</sup> Reference to August von Kotzebue (1761–1819), German playwright known for his sentimental plays.

surroundings. From the moment that an egoistic, crude, and unkempt person has a child she can become completely engrossed in it as in a higher being. She lives for its sake, and thus motherly love can bring about a higher ethical development. But even this incentive, as all-powerful as it is, does not suffice to shape the life of society. The ethical significance of sympathy and love has been correctly recognized by Hutcheson, Hume, Adam Smith, and Schopenhauer, but no one can ever systematically derive the commitment to what is right and the sense of truthfulness from it.

*3. The Feeling of Duty and Justice, the Consciousness of the Commitment that Inheres in the Duty to Do What is Right or Just.* This felt duty has its correlate in respect for others as ends in themselves. The incentive [of commitment that comes with this felt duty] constitutes the authentic backbone of the overall shaping of social life. It operates, however, in various forms: in the commitment to what is right, in the lawfulness of action, in the binding force of the forms of justice independently of their external enforceability.

This incentive [of commitment] cannot be conceived as a mere reflex in consciousness of the legal order operating through external coercion. Here we do not propose a theory about evolution and historical development. Viewed empirically, the individual's fidelity to self or identity becomes an obligation as soon as it enters a relation with another person or group of persons having self-worth and likewise a fidelity to self. Thus, a consciousness of commitment emerges, which ultimately has its basis in the fidelity to oneself and respect for the self-worth of others. But this is also the basis on which every political order of law is supported by an inner moral incentive that exceeds external coercion. Therefore, lawfulness also extends beyond the positive legal order. This virtue [of lawfulness] applies to property relations and all similar relations that arise among persons having self-worth either from express obligation or according to the nature of the matter. But the sense of what is right or just applies to any kind of commitment as such.

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Consequently, natural law contains lasting truths. According to it, human beings possess a formative capacity for justice and right. This consists in the ability of a person to enter into and keep commitments on the basis of social relations with other persons possessing intrinsic worth and legal rights, each having a sphere at their disposal, even if only that of their own body. On this basis,

the formation of right in every age is guided by one natural law, whereas the relations among persons having intrinsic worth and their achievements are *historically* grounded in a network of functions.

*This incentive [of commitment] is the authentic mark of the tree of the social shaping of life.* One can become a virtuous person without love, but not without lawfulness, which represents the true relation of these two incentives [of duty and right]. The efforts for the emancipation of women will always be held back by the fact that this incentive [of commitment] is not strong enough in them to produce political life. Women are meant to be under the guidance of the practical reason and the legal sense of men.

Kant's formula—"act so that the maxim of your action can be conceived as universally valid"—conceals behind the form of logical universality the volitional relationship that each will possesses equal authority. I can only make demands and exert my will if I respect this same striving of the will in others. Just as I rely on the volitional commitments or promises of others, so I must observe them myself.

4. Supplementing these great incentives of all personal ethics that shape an ethical realm of persons, we find a more encompassing acknowledgment of self-sufficient values or goods produced by the work of history. These goods, and their specific effects, I refer to as cultural systems. This incentive of work and of personal devotion to the goods already and still to be produced by humanity emerges in consciousness as not dependent on the other incentives. Whatever genetic nexus exists, it is not part of our empirical considerations and classifications. According to the Platonic model, Schleiermacher and Hegel have laid down the principle of the realization of values inherent in practical reason, and in doing so they have provided an immortal service to social ethics. But it is not possible to use this principle, as they tried to do, to ground an ethical system that corresponds to life as a whole.

5. A further incentive lies in the interweaving of the individual into the associative bonds of the family, clan, state, and the feelings of dependence, dominance, fellowship, and submission conditioned by them. If ethical reflection is based on this, the ethics will be derived from a system of positive law and domination. This derivation will not succeed.



6. *Here, secondary, contributing factors emerge:* a) Values are combined in a purposive system and related to the meaning of life. In the rationalistic epoch of moral philosophy, these rational operations are often viewed as the primary ground of ethical determinations. [Samuel] Clarke's "fitness of things" or "*aplitudo rerum*" belongs to this tradition—the coordination of individual lives in a nexus of the values of things. Every being, every thing, should be regarded in relation to its position in the whole, just as one's own behavior must be adapted to the nature of things. Expressions such as "nature" and "position in the whole" already contain the assessments inherent in the immediate ethical incentives. b) The same is true for the aesthetic principle of joy in the ideal, of the complete shaping of existence.

#### SECTION 10: THE RELATION OF ETHICAL INCENTIVES IN CULTURE AND IN THE ETHOS OF PEOPLES AND AGES

1. The concept of culture and cultural history: The cooperation of ethical incentives at a given state of society we designate as the ethical culture or ethos of an era. It forms the vital core of culture.

Every societal whole provides a structure and scaffolding for the interaction of the human life-units that constitute it.

2. The structural nexus of individuals is formed on the basis of a general biological one. In its simplest form, this involves an instantaneous reaction to a stimulus by means of movement. At higher stages, differentiations, combinations, interpolations become more prevalent. [Sensory] impressions are assimilated by human life-units, but since human beings are at their core a bundle of drives, these impressions are related to a system of drives and feelings. Thus, interests are aroused; thought processes are stimulated, as it were, and impressions are worked up into cognitions. This happens, however, in service to interests that attach themselves to [such impressions]. Thus, every perception has, so to speak, an inner side—involving our drives, interests, and volitions—and can turn into a voluntary movement. This is also the case for every representation and every complex thought process. In psychic life, we find a definite progression from stimulus, drive, to voluntary movement in the individual parts as well as in the whole. A constant adaptation of life-units to their milieu occurs in this progression. Ideally, it produces a full life and the concomitant satisfaction through a system of drives and feelings.

We find this systematic unity on a larger social scale in what is called an epoch. We are used to designating the way an age thinks, lives, and acts, as its culture. Starting with these insights, we can now better define the concept of culture. It manifests the same inner coherence, the same concrete unity that is found in a person. This concrete unity that can emerge simultaneously in an individual and in a society, I call their culture. Accordingly, the distinctive feature of culture is to possess the vibrant unity of a person. The culture of a period can be regarded as the way that this structural system gives itself organs of enjoyment, productivity, and creativity.

The core of this structural nexus accordingly forms the focal point of the systems in which culture finds its vital coherence. Science is the world of perception and thought. Ethics, religion, and art shape the life of the drives and feeling in society; social and technical processes push this into the external world. Let us now consider the way that ethical incentives are unified as the concrete whole of the ethos of a nation in a historical age.

## SECTION 11: THE EPOCHS OF MORAL CULTURE

The course of moral culture in the three generations of cultural peoples always exhibits initially a natural ethos that holds a society together; this process is gradually accompanied by the establishment of moral ideals, norms, and, for the most part, principles as well. When the natural force of life in a national ethos is diminished and other natural aspirations are emancipated, then there arises in society an antagonism among the principles that claim to guide life. In ancient peoples we find the morality and natural law of the Sophists, the hedonism of the Cyrenaics and Epicureans, being resisted by conservative ethical systems. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, modern society established the natural system of morality, right, and religion. In our century, as animalistic conceptions of human life that avail themselves of a foundation in the mechanical conception of nature and the evolutionary method are accompanied by the practice of utilitarianism, we also find a gradually developing theory that takes its departure from the will, the functions of life in society, and the historical consideration of moral life.

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The moral culture of Eastern peoples, which is the first generation of cultural peoples accessible to us, was supported by a priestly hierarchy; consequently, religion provided the main motivating incentive for holding together the social unity of the despotic social order.

Nothing more from this culture is still active with us, with the exception of the gradually fading doctrine of a special relationship between the king and the deity. The divine right of kings and the hierarchic order of Catholicism are the last leftovers of this system.

The ethos of the Greeks that held their society together and the moral culture of the Romans during the early monarchical and aristocratic period, seemed to be very akin to each other. The ruling class develops an extraordinary feeling for the state; this forms the dominating incentive for ethical consciousness. In the aristocracies of Sparta, Athens, and Rome, war and politics were the means of amassing power, enjoyment, and possessions. One must also learn to make a sober assessment of this heroic and aristocratic period. The divvying up of land, looting, and slaves are the result of every successful war. The concentrated power of the clan was one with the satisfaction of the personal egoism of its members. Especially in Sparta, the war-minded aristocrats are the landowners who hold a large area in submission. In Rome, successful wars are connected with expansions of territorial possessions, [and] of tax revenues for the spheres of municipal government. Moreover, religious incentives emerge in ancient times to strengthen the feelings of political association: the *phyles*, *phratries*, [and] *gens*<sup>11</sup> give a religious aura to these modes of kinship.

But in Greece as in Rome, the ethos of the period of greatness was destroyed by the advancing inequality of possessions, religious skepticism, craving for pleasure, etc. Human associations gave way to the upcoming industrialists, to a population enriched by trade. The philosophers in Greece sought in vain to hold off the decline by a philosophically grounded monotheism; still more futile were the religious and political attempts at restoration. The governmental mechanism of imperialism in Rome contained no real ethical bond.

Among more recent peoples, the militaristic spirit predominated in the same way until the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries when cities became powerful.

<sup>11</sup> The *phyle* is the largest political subdivision of the Athenian state, with the *phratry* being a subdivision of this; *gens* refers to an ancient Roman kinship grouping based on a claim of kinship from a common male ancestor.

SECTION 12: THE PRINCIPLES OF ETHICS<sup>12</sup>

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Proceeding on the assumption of unconditional judgments, ethics produces a cohesive system of precepts with a rigor equal to that of unconditional laws. On the model of ethical laws and conscience, this whole is conceived as a unity. As part of this unity, the prohibition against theft and the injunction to cultivate oneself assert themselves with the same claim to establish an unconditional law. Indeed, in the most fully executed systems of this kind—above all, those of Fichte and Schleiermacher—the injunctions to respect property and of shaping one's individuality, being religious, and presenting oneself artistically appear side by side as distinct but parallel parts of a logically organized system. In short, the simplest commandments of conscience and the highest subtleties of moral culture appeal to our will with the same claim.

This fact of philosophic systems certainly does not confuse conscience, even though Herbartians tend to see this as a threat. This is because conscience as it has so far developed never labors under the difficulties of theory, although it constantly profits from theoretical discoveries. The reason for this is that conscience is first and foremost a sentiment. When it is clarified to the point of a general law, it comes to share its overall indeterminacy, but all the while it retains an immediate certainty that reflection cannot disturb, even as it elucidates it. Admittedly, however, these facts become confusing for theoretical inquiry. According to this philosophical ethical system, all possible refinements of the rational ideal should be regarded as absolutely obligatory. Otherwise, the simple injunctions of moral life will become mere ideals, losing their character of unconditional commitment. The quite different nature and power of moral judgment in dealing with ideals and commitments, hovers over this kind of ethics as an unresolved question. That logical subordination is used to explain this real difference reveals the problem at hand all the more clearly.

The same discrepancy between the actual states of affair and traditional ethics appears when one examines the exceedingly important relation of the unconditional nature of moral precepts that resides in their form, and the changeability that emerges in their content. Here, too, the kind of ethics that recognizes the unconditional nature of moral precepts lays down a logically arranged

<sup>12</sup> This section of the lectures incorporates some pages from his earlier essay, "Versuch einer Analyse des moralischen Bewußtseins," *GS* VI, 24–28.

system of moral consciousness as necessary, and consequently capable of no alteration, at most of a progressive clarification. Over against this ethics there emerges a skepticism offended by this phantasm of a total moral system, and with an eye toward history as suggesting the changeability of the moral judgments of man. Thus, it declares morality to be a historical result, to be the product of society, to be a power that surrounds us, whose right consists only in the fact that it is like the air that we need in order to breathe.

We find ourselves led to the same point again: A moral commitment to a comprehensive system of ethics can be neither affirmed nor denied. That is, we can neither completely do away with such a commitment nor unconditionally assert it. Its negation is contradicted by the moral feeling that is alive in us; its affirmation is contradicted by historical fact.

The contradictions of previous ethical systems insofar as they have promulgated unconditional moral judgments can only be resolved by taking a critical view of the assumption that an unconditional moral judgment or the ought of obligation involves a simple, uniform standard or measure. There is no simple, uniform ought capable of generating a system accompanied by the same simple and uniform obligation. On the contrary, great differences emerge in the nature of our obligations. This [differentiation] could be ascertained from a sustained observation of the varying colorings in the way moral judgments manifest themselves. [This coloring effect] as a necessary assumption for getting rid of contradictions is, of course, a pure hypothesis.

Is such an assumption at all conceivable? Moral judgment, as we have recognized ever since Kant, is unconditional; it approves the good will for its own sake. There are synthetic-practical judgments *a priori*. These judgments appear in us as sentiments until they are clarified by general laws. Accordingly, something synthetic lies at the root of our moral consciousness. This synthesis can be conceived either as a unity or as an unsurveyable multiplicity, but it can also be thought of as an articulated plurality consisting of different member parts. Consequently, our moral, like our logical organization, exhibits itself as determinately articulated. Given these possibilities, a diversity of syntheses also leads us to expect a diversity in their forms.

In order to find support within our own inner life for the assumption that solves the above difficulties, we go back into ourselves and attempt to survey the various forms of obligation as they result from these different syntheses.

1. The first form of obligation to consider is the sharply defined concept of commitment. It is not the moral ideal that sets the demand here, but rather a will on the basis of a grounding mutual obligation or an acknowledged interrelationship. Relations of justice and law are first and foremost of this nature. But with further moral development, the nature of this ground goes far beyond that fixed by justice. The normal relation of a person to this sphere we designate as *the commitment to what is right*. Consequently, we regard as unconditionally binding only that which is a duty for us based on this fundamental synthesis of the commitment to what is right. Like the other forms of obligation, commitment is capable of unlimited extension in empirical situations. For everything in the moral world can be regarded from the standpoint of our relationship to others as determined by mutual functions. Indeed, fidelity and consistency over against ourselves can have the character of obligation because our own will finds itself bound by claims established by earlier acts. There exist characters for whom, due to the nature of their finely developed feeling of duty, all of their moral behavior falls essentially under the heading of being committed to what is right. From the standpoint of the sense of what is right or just, motives are regarded as a form of absolute commitment rendering its actions as obligations. As such, the commitment to what is right involves a being indebted and bound by certain actions in advance.

2. Of a quite different nature is the form of the "ought" in which *benevolence* is manifested. It does not place us into that rigid chain of mutual obligation of the will's sense of what is right, but rather in a free reciprocal relation of human sentiments that, without a feeling of compulsion, pervades the whole moral world. Benevolence binds human beings with each other in a much more profound way than the commitment to what is right, since now the fate of another is experienced as our own. This synthesis, by its nature, produces no rigidly closed form of the "ought" as in the case of the commitment to what is right; consequently, there has also been no distinctive label coined for it in language. But it is a form of necessity rooted in sentiment, of not being able to act otherwise, of standing under the power of an advancing and intensifying sentiment that approaches an inner necessity. Indeed, the movement or emotion of this sentiment is imparted even to the disinterested spectator, so that the inner communion of human individuals that emerges in benevolence also resonates in the spectator, and is felt again by him in inclination,

empathy, and engagement with others. Compared to these manifestations of genuine benevolence, approval and disapproval are cool abstractions that do not express the universal and substantial nature of the moral judgment of benevolence.

3. Universal validity is the form in which we see all oughts that are not determined either by a mutual commitment or by empathy, but by a projected *ideal*. The synthesis that grounds its various forms is perfection, the striving for inner worth. It is distinctive of this perfection-oriented synthetic ground of our moral judgments that the value sought for on this basis as well as the meaning and perfection of our existence that hover before us are as a rule conceived by means of a theoretical presupposition. The urge toward perfection, like benevolence and fidelity to mutual justice, involves a creative synthesis of our moral organization; however, its conception and clarification in consciousness is obtained in combination with the theoretical content of the human spirit. Thus, there are as many different ways to understand the nature and basis of this urge for perfection and value as there are cultural stages. Sometimes perfection will be conceived from God's viewpoint, sometimes in light of the purpose of the formation of the world itself. For better or worse, the entire content of our moral consciousness can be derived from theories of perfection.

These different forms of "ought" as presented here give various determinate shapes to moral systems and life itself. Sometimes it appears in the shape of moral commitment and obligation with an inflexible binding rigidity, and with the harsh character of condemnation that accompanies their violation. Then again—often in the lives of women, yet not seldom in [social] systems—benevolence and empathy become the basis of all our actions. Finally, then, we catch sight of the ought in the universally valid ideal whereby we envision perfection. Here our existence stands before us like the image that an artist feels compelled to give shape in marble. These three forms of synthesis intersect: They support each other in life but combat each other in morality. When one of the creative syntheses constituting our organization—either justice and its distinct mutuality or benevolence or perfection—is made into the explanative ground of our moral world, then we find one theory pitted against another. But actually, these three synthetic elements that lie at the basis of all our moral judgments, supplement each other in the overall sense of our moral organization.

These forms consequently lead to content. Only in their content can they be completely elucidated. With content may we first hope to obtain an answer to Kant's question:

Everything flows by us like a river and the changing tastes and the different shapes of humanity make the whole game of life uncertain and illusory. Where do I find the fixed landmarks that humans can never displace and from where can I signal them which shoreline to rely on?<sup>13</sup>

III

Accordingly, if the synthetic elements that ground the moral world sought by us are to possess the power to motivate, then they must involve a striving that presses toward its actualization. But these synthetic elements that form the ground of the moral world must motivate without making pleasure the goal of this motivation. How is this—which has emerged as the result of our analysis in various ways—to be conceived without contradiction? The synthetic element that connects our will and its envisioned world of values may not lie merely in one's own pleasure, but rather in actions possessing a moral quality rooted in another synthesis connecting the will and the world of values. Two syntheses of this kind can be found in a self-reflective person. When the world of human values is conceived as connected to our will, but not through pleasure, this can happen through an envisioned inner worth to be realized by a person. Alternatively, the world of values can be connected with our will neither through our well-being nor through the inner worth of our person, but rather through the well-being and personal worth of others conceived as ranging from the nearest person to the most remote. Or finally, in negative terms, my will is, in relation to the world of values, bound by its own inner consistency; it is determined, limited.

These syntheses are by no means to be confused with motivations that contain this or that value. They are, rather, the practical attitudes of our will insofar as it is moral and by which it relates itself to the world of values. Thus, they could be designated as practical categories. They contain the synthetic element that connects the will and the world of values to the extent that their relation is of a moral nature.

<sup>13</sup> Kant, *Bemerkungen zu den Beobachtungen über das Gefühl des Schönen und Erhabenen*, AA: 20, 46.



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And here the horizon of ethics expands. It beholds human spirit as it shapes the main forms of its existence on the basis of a priori syntheses. Psychological laws are purely laws of form. They have to do, not with the contents of the human spirit, but with its formal conduct and demeanor. They provide the language, the syntax, and the meter of the poetic creation that we might for the moment regard as the human soul. Thus, it is the mistake of the psychology of peoples that it undertakes to explain history—and thereby the sum of human existence up to the present—simply on the basis of psychology, the science of the forms in accordance with which mental life runs its course. The synthetic content that must always be added to what has been cognized about the course of history in order to derive laws from this process, lies not only in the properties of the human soul, but also in the parallel properties of social and political development, in the nature of money, in the laws of national economies. But when one looks beyond this, human nature itself further contains, besides its lawful processes and the formal conduct of the soul, also fundamental elements of its contents. This is the great discovery of Kant, who recognized fundamental metaphysical presuppositions in the forms of judgment, namely, the categories. Parallel to these categories, syntheses appear within the moral world as fundamental to the connection between the will and values, and as constituting the practical relation between them. It is evident not only that at least the first two positive syntheses manifest themselves as feeling and strivings, but also that pleasure follows them. But active benevolence, for instance, is driven neither by pleasure nor displeasure, nor is any resulting pleasure its goal. The essence of benevolence is that our will enters into a relation with the world of values quite immediately and exclusively through the well-being of another.

Here we find a series of psychological difficulties, but careful, inner observation confirms an inherent relationship [to the world of values] that psychological investigation must attempt to do justice to.<sup>14</sup>

<An ideal provides the image of a course of action to motivate us: It leads persons to place a demand on themselves. The goal is perfection, a longing for the unfolding of our capabilities, for the greatest enhancement of what is best in us. The ideal contains a tremendously strong ethical power, but it is not coercive. The ideal of the hero in the *Iliad* is not binding for the reader, but it inspires: The ideal of renunciation in the Catholic Church stands beyond the

<sup>14</sup> Here ends the section that was taken from the earlier essay “Versuch einer Analyse des moralischen Bewußtseins.”

average human being. Commitment originates first through a vow. Apart from that, it floats above us.

The violation of duty excludes us from human associations; the violation of benevolence excludes us from the sphere of mutual devotion; the violation of an ideal excludes us from the intelligible world, from the spiritual world of idealistic existence.

That which determines the will, is, by its nature, differentiated into these three forms. An ethical system that derives the rules of being committed to what is right, the laws of benevolence, and the demands of an ideal from one [highest] principle in a simply uniform manner is a gigantic, singular fiction. Actually, we can only have an ethics that is built from the ground up, not one developed from above.>



# PART II

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## PRESENT-DAY CULTURE AND PHILOSOPHY (1898–1900)

*Translated by  
Patricia Van Tuyl and Rudolf A. Makkreel*



What I should like to offer is not a mere academic philosophy. I can convey an appropriate philosophy only on the basis of an understanding of the present age. Let us attempt then to grasp the basic features of the present that shape this generation and define its philosophical character.

VIII, 190

The most general characteristic of our age is its sense of actuality and the worldliness of its interests. We cite Goethe's words in *Faust*:

The earthly sphere I know sufficiently,  
But into the beyond we cannot see;  
A fool, that squints and tries to pierce those shrouds,  
And would invent his like above the clouds!  
Let him survey this life, be resolute,  
For to the able this world is not mute.<sup>1</sup>

Since Goethe wrote those words, scientific progress has continued to reinforce this sense of actuality. The planet on which we live seems to shrink beneath our feet. Each of its elements has been measured, weighed, and defined in accordance with its lawful behavior. Remarkable discoveries have brought distant regions of the earth right under our very eyes. Plants and animals from every continent have been collected in museums and gardens and catalogued in handbooks. The crania of all the races have been measured, their brains weighed, their beliefs and customs ascertained. Travelers study the psyche of primitive peoples, and excavations make the remains of extinct cultures accessible to us. The romanticism with which the previous generation still viewed the culture of Greece or Israel's religious development has disappeared, and we observe that events generally take place in a rather natural and human fashion. In politics, nations today consider the interests they have in every region of the globe, and they pursue

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This essay was originally published in *Gesammelte Schriften*, VIII, 190–205, to which the pagination in the margins refers. It was composed from various fragments, including a draft for the beginning of the lecture course on the “System of Philosophy” that Dilthey offered from 1898 on.

<sup>1</sup> Goethe's *Faust*, trans. Walter Kaufman, “The Second Part of the Tragedy,” lines 11221–11446 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Co., 1961), 459.

them relentlessly, to the extent permitted by a sober assessment of the power relations among nations.

One particularly characteristic consequence of this sense of actuality can be seen in poets and writers. The idealistic pathos has lost its efficacy. We perceive more clearly the limitations in what is historically great, and the impurities in the draught of life. We want to examine everything thoroughly and to fool ourselves no longer. In this respect, our feeling of life comes closer to that of Voltaire, Diderot, or Frederick the Great than to that of Goethe or Schiller. We are sensitive to what is problematic in life, and all the literature and art of the present day—the paintings of the great French realists, the realism in our novels and our theater—respond to this modern need. The mixed style of Schopenhauer, Mommsen,<sup>2</sup> and Nietzsche have a more powerful effect than the pathos of Fichte and Schiller.

A second main feature of our age shapes its philosophy. The methods of the natural sciences have established a sphere of universally valid knowledge and have given humans dominion over the earth. More and more, they are advancing Bacon's program that equates knowledge with power and prescribes causal cognition as the key to the progressive mastery over nature. It is the power of the natural sciences that has hastened progress on our planet in a most indisputable way. All the arts fostered by Louis XIV produced fewer significant lasting changes on earth than the mathematical calculus quietly conceived at the same time by Leibniz and Newton. Thus, with the founding of the mathematical natural sciences in the seventeenth century, a new stage of history began. And no century accomplished a more significant and difficult project than the seventeenth. 1) The development of mechanics connected mathematics with experimentation and gave science a firm foundation. Mathematics explored numerical ratios, while experimentation disclosed which of them obtained in the motions of things. Galileo's discoveries were the first and simplest examples of this method. He established experimentally the rate of continuous acceleration of a falling body, and among the simple ratios of increasing acceleration one proved to be actualized here. 2) To the extent that changes in nature could be represented by motions, the new science proved capable of cognizing the laws of nature's course. Light, sound, temperature, and electricity were all submitted to the methods of mathematical natural science. 3) The motions of heavenly bodies were also shown to be

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<sup>2</sup>Theodor Mommsen (1817–1903), German classical scholar, famous for his multivolume *History of Rome*.

subject to the same natural laws. 4) Increasingly, chemical processes proved to be amenable to quantitative determination. As a consequence, there arose in all these fields a reliable, universally valid natural science, which became the model for all sciences. And far beyond the sphere of mechanics—even in biology—human mastery over nature became possible on the basis of causal laws. Wherever in the vast system of nature, the causes of change become accessible to our will, we can intentionally bring about desired effects. In other cases, we can at least anticipate the effects. All this opened up an unlimited prospect for broadening our power over nature.

Now with this is linked a third characteristic of present-day culture. The belief in unchangeable social orders has disappeared, and we find ourselves in the midst of a transformation of these social orders according to rational principles. Several factors have contributed to this tendency over the past centuries. 1) Gradually, the influence of industry and commerce spread from country to country. As a result, a shift in economic forces took place, which then had as its consequence a change in the social placement of the classes. New claims to political power were asserted, initially in the rise of the bourgeoisie, and then in the demand of the working classes for better economic conditions and greater political influence. These are the claims that shape the domestic policy of states today. 2) Another phase was the immense growth in consciousness of the rights of the individual person. a) It made its first appearance in religious movements—in the spiritualistic sects that were influential during the German Peasants' War, in the religio-political movements in the Netherlands, and in English Puritanism. b) A firmer foundation for this right of the individual person was then sought in the philosophical movements of the modern period. Grotius, Voltaire, Rousseau, Kant, and Fichte represent stages in the advance of consciousness of this right; and this consciousness requires a corresponding social order. But where is the basis for this to be found? 3) Here another phase manifests itself in the effort to apply the scientific methods that had proven so fruitful in the study of nature to the problems of society. Independent human sciences were established. a) Under the influence of the natural sciences, political economy was developed as the theory of the laws of economic life starting with Quesnay.<sup>3</sup> It analyzes the complex formation of the socio-historical world in

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<sup>3</sup> François Quesnay (1694–1774): French economist and member of the Physiocratic school who served as court physician to King Louis XV and was most recognized for his *Tableau économique*.



terms of the natural laws of the specific purposive systems that co-operate within it. b) Thus a new ideal of transforming society on the basis of its own natural laws emerged. 4) Finally, those subjects that institute this transformation change too. After the French Revolution, the limited efforts of enlightened princes to make reforms increasingly gave way to the sovereign will of the people to provide themselves their own economic, political, and social orders. Freedom of association, increasing power of representative bodies, and the extension of direct, universal suffrage spelled the possibility of converting knowledge of the laws of social life into praxis.

## 2

Steep yourself fully in this sense of actuality, in the this-worldly nature of our interests, and in this mastery of science over life! These basic features have defined the spirit of the nineteenth century and will likewise characterize the spirit of the new one standing before us, no matter how dim its outlines. One day this earth shall become the scene of free activity governed by thought, and no form of repression can prevent it.

But now in asking what the ultimate end of activity is for the individual person and for the human race, the profound contradiction that permeates the present age stands revealed. This age is no wiser with respect to the great mystery of the origin of things, the value of our existence, or the ultimate worth of our activity than were the Greeks in the Ionian or Italian colonies or the Arabs during the age of Averroes.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, because we find ourselves surrounded by such rapid scientific progress, these problems are more perplexing today than in any previous age. First, the positive sciences have increasingly dismantled the presuppositions that served as the basis for the religious faith and philosophical convictions of earlier centuries. What is given as actual with its sensible qualities proved to be the appearance of something unknown. Secondly, the greatest achievements of

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<sup>1</sup> Averroes (1126–1198 A.D.), an influential and controversial Cordovan scholar who contributed to early philosophy, logic, medicine, music, and jurisprudence. Regarded by many as the most important Islamic philosopher, he is best known for his commentaries on Aristotle and his *Tahafut al-Tahafut* (*Incoherence of the Incoherence*).

philosophy in the last century, the analyses of consciousness and of conceptual cognition, have proven to be most complicit in this project of destruction. Space, time, causality, and even the reality of an external world, were subjected to doubt. Thirdly, historical comparison demonstrated the relativity of all historical beliefs. They are all conditioned by climate, race, and circumstance. Throughout history, there have been periods that questioned all established assumptions concerning the value of life and the goals of actions. Among them we can list the Greek enlightenment, the early Roman Empire, and the Renaissance. But if we compare these periods with our own, we see that in each successive age skepticism has become more radical. In our age, the anarchy of thought extends to ever more presuppositions of thought and activity. Our capacity to survey the whole earth reveals to us more clearly than to any previous age the relativity of solutions to the mystery of the world. Indeed, historical consciousness increasingly unveils the relativity of every metaphysical or religious doctrine that has been offered over the course of time. There seems to us to be something tragic in the human striving for conceptual cognition—a conflict between aspiration and ability.

Out of this dissonance between the sovereignty of scientific thought and the perplexity of the human spirit about itself and its significance in the universe arises the final and most characteristic feature of the spirit of the present age and its philosophy. The melancholy pride and the pessimism of a Byron, Leopardi, or Nietzsche have as their presupposition the sovereignty of the scientific spirit over earth. At the same time, the emptiness of consciousness asserts itself in these thinkers. Since all standards have been destroyed, and all that was stable has become precarious, an unfettered freedom from presuppositions and the play with illimitable possibilities allow the mind to enjoy its sovereignty, but, at the same time, cause it the pain of its lack of substance. This pain concerning the void, this awareness of the anarchy affecting all deeply-held convictions, this uncertainty concerning the values and the goals of life, has evoked the most diverse attempts in poetry and literature to answer the questions of the value and goal of our existence.

## What Then Should the Stance of Philosophy Be in the Culture of the Present Day?

a) Its first and clearest task derives from the importance of the positive sciences in our age. These sciences require a foundation, for each of them contains presuppositions whose validity must be examined. If natural forces are conceived as a system of motions, then space, time, and the actuality of an external world are presupposed, and the legitimacy of such presuppositions must be tested. If thought proceeds on the basis that it can cognize external reality in terms of its laws, this presupposition must also be scrutinized. On these and many other points, then, the positive sciences need a foundation. Together with the demise of the metaphysical systems, this need prompted a return to Kant. But exposure of the inadequacies of Kant's foundation gave rise to the movement that presently dominates philosophy in all the universities. It is necessary to pose the problem of knowledge as universally as possible and to prepare for the solution to this problem by means of sound, new methods. Indeed, wherever present-day philosophy seeks the reliability of knowledge, its task is the development of a universal theory of science. Today we view things in universal terms.

b) Another task given to philosophy by the special sciences is the establishment of their systematic interconnection. This interconnection was originally found in metaphysics. But now that metaphysics has been repudiated and experiential science alone is acknowledged, this task must be accomplished by means of an encyclopedia, a hierarchy of the sciences. Positive philosophy, whose first advocates were Comte and the two Mills, undertook this task. In Germany, positivism reached its peak in Mach<sup>1</sup> and Avenarius.<sup>2</sup>

The common doctrine of the positivists is that all human knowledge is based on experience. Concepts are merely means for

<sup>1</sup> Ernst Mach (1838–1916), Austrian physicist.

<sup>2</sup> Richard Avenarius (1843–1896) German-Swiss philosopher, who argued that scientific philosophy must be descriptive but not materialistic.

representing and connecting experiences. Science is a representation of experience that enables us to condense and make use of it. Philosophy is merely the compilation of the experiential sciences. Where the experiential sciences leave off, the inscrutable begins. Positivism is the philosophy of the natural scientists; all dispassionate, scientifically-trained minds embrace it. They have found in the expansion of knowledge a clearly circumscribed purpose for their existence, and so, for them, the question of the value and purpose of life is resolved personally. Dispassionately and with resignation, they simply accept the inscrutable.

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Now how can the unsatisfactoriness of this . . . <sup>3</sup>? Not through metaphysics. Once it was the queen of the sciences: Aristotle, Aquinas, Hegel.

c) Metaphysical academic philosophy is a philosophy of possibilities, wishful thinking, etc.

The same principle of an indemonstrable, spiritually-blind authority asserts itself within Protestant orthodoxy, and even extends itself into the theology of Ritschl.<sup>4</sup> Here the skeptical spirit of our age is used to justify a relapse into the particular positivity of Lutheran religion. But after the entire historical foundation of such a faith has crumbled, the belief in ecclesiastical truths that have no point of contact with human self-reflection about its ideals becomes completely suspended in the void.<sup>5</sup>

In our present situation, where skepticism infects everything and extends to the foundation of every vital tendency, metaphysical academic philosophy has achieved a shadowy existence. Instead, we need to raise to clear, well-founded consciousness what connects human strivings. Over against this the empty possibilities of metaphysical conceptions prove to be academic futilities by the unruly way in which they combat one another. These glittering fairy tales may delight young people. But I warn you that they will collapse before the seriousness and efforts of your later life. For what remains from the philosophical intoxication of your university years will be nothing but a philosophical hangover.

<sup>3</sup> The rest of this sentence is illegible (H).

<sup>4</sup> Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889), German Lutheran theologian, who accepted the reality of communal faith as a positive starting point. Also recognized for his attempts to relate Kantian ethical thought to Protestantism.

<sup>5</sup> In the margin: “But even philosophy tries to vindicate idealism.” (H).

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What a hollow din emanates from these metaphysical disputations! It is like the end of the Middle Ages, when scholasticism was taught from every lectern. But the humanists triumphantly conquered the world. Today, this is the effect of thinkers like Carlyle, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Richard Wagner, Tolstoy, Maeterlinck.<sup>6</sup> When the possibilities of metaphysics derivable from any given groundwork are exhausted, the solution to the mystery of life seems to get lost in hazy forms.

When we are at the winding down of metaphysical thought as traditionally conceived and even believe that we are at the end of philosophy as a science, life-philosophy emerges. With every new manifestation, it rids itself of more and more metaphysical elements and becomes more free and independent. In the last generation, it has again become the dominant power. One by one, Schopenhauer, Richard Wagner, Nietzsche, Tolstoy, Ruskin, and Maeterlinck exerted their influence on the young. The impact of life-philosophy has been strengthened by its natural connection with poetry; for the problems of poetry are also the problems of life. It has become a kind of methodical experience of life that fundamentally repudiates all systematic presuppositions. It is a methodical mode of induction that is directed toward the processes of human life and seeks to derive from them new essential characteristics of life.

It is the strength of this life-philosophy that its direct reference to life, free of metaphysical bias, reinforces whatever power of vision and of artistic depiction these thinkers possess. Their lives are a continual exercise in uncovering such characteristics. Just as scholastic thinkers developed the capacity to survey long series of syllogisms and inductive thinkers developed the power to see many instances alongside one another, these life-philosophers form a capacity to expose the secret paths by which the soul pursues happiness—not only the real relations among the inner longings that come to light from out of the darkness of our instinctive life and what presents itself from without as having productive value, but also the influence exerted upon these processes by the contents of memory, thought, and imagination. These writers thus occupy a space that professional philosophers always left unexplored.

<sup>6</sup> Maurice Maeterlinck (1862–1949). Belgian playwright and essayist, best known for his Symbolist drama *Pelléas et Mélisande*. His prose works blended mysticism, occultism, and nature studies and were a typical Symbolist reaction against materialism and mechanism. Maeterlinck won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1911.

It was from this point of view that I referred to the need for a content-oriented psychology<sup>7</sup> as a concern that precedes these developments of life philosophy. This kind of psychology has still not been classified among the technical undertakings of psychology, but belongs within descriptive psychology, somewhere between structural psychology and individual psychology.<sup>8</sup>

Content-oriented psychology focuses on particular relations among the occasional hidden processes operative within us and what affects us from without. It also attends to the particular possibilities for connecting the hidden processes operative within us to what appears from without as having efficacy in a life-course. By contrast, life-philosophy in the manner of Schopenhauer, etc., claims to express in a definitive way the highest value, the aim of life, the path to happiness itself. Whereas I have described the causal nexus in which the values of life are generated and the relations of our satisfaction-seeking selves to the external world in terms of "the meaning or sense of life," these writers presume to express this meaning or this sense definitively. But by doing so, they become companions of the metaphysicians. In their more limited sphere, they make the same claims as the metaphysicians. They too seek to grasp an ultimate unconditioned. And similarly their means to this end do not suffice. For the only sure test of the connections they seek lies in the rare moments that link what is hidden within us and what influences us. These links are merely observable at certain times in our lives—solitary bright points that shimmer on a vast dark sea whose depths are unfathomable. These life-philosophers speak only about themselves. What they see of life beyond themselves, they interpret in light of their own.

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This very intention, which resembles the aspiration of the metaphysicians, produces the peculiar shortcoming of this kind of life-philosophy. What it apprehends within the confines of its own individuality is correct within certain limits; but it becomes completely false when it takes its corner for the world in general. Those errors that Bacon derived from the idols of the cave rooted in individuality are destructive for these life-philosophers. They fail to recognize that they are bound by historical, geographical, and personal conditions. History is their refutation. Tortured by anxiety, Schopenhauer could

<sup>7</sup> *Realpsychologie*. Dilthey traced this content-oriented psychology back to Franz von Baader and Novalis. See *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* (13th ed. Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1957), 194–197.

<sup>8</sup> This whole paragraph was later crossed out in pencil (H).

only find relief from his unruly self in the contemplative attitude. Carlyle devotes himself to heroic striving as the highest value, in the manner of the great religious personalities. . . .<sup>9</sup> Tolstoy relives the leap from <barbarism> into abnegation. Maeterlinck's problem is life. He begins with Stoic life-philosophy and, like the Stoics, attempts to combine pantheism with a heightened self-awareness. He thinks that only through consciousness of our relationship to the infinite, to the invisible, can human personality emerge. According to Maeterlinck, personality is connected with all of life and can become certain of its value only by grasping itself as the manifestation of something inscrutably divine. In *The Treasure of the Humble*,<sup>10</sup> he derives his ideal of a new art from the calm and imperceptible relations of the simple soul to the invisible and from the consequent formation of personality. These are the center of his drama, in contrast to the grossly abnormal passions portrayed in Shakespeare's dramas. Similarly, he derives from this the ideal of a mental enlivenment that attunes the most subtle concerns of the soul to the invisible.

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In *Wisdom and Destiny*,<sup>11</sup> Maeterlinck develops a program for making every lived experience useful for cultivating personality. His guiding idea now becomes the Stoic insight that only through the correspondence of our essence to things as they are, through a harmony established between the world and ourselves, can we reconcile an increase of independence with the submission to the powers of life. As the inaccessible ground of our psychic life becomes more powerful and vital, and as truth and righteousness are allowed to develop within it, it enters into a harmonious relationship with its outer destiny. His last work, *Buried Temple*,<sup>12</sup> explicates how the practice of righteousness develops feelings of happiness within us, and therefore to a certain extent, make us independent of the external world. But then a decisive turn to paradoxical one-sidedness takes place, from which none of the life-philosophers of our age have been spared. We now hear of a timeless, invisible ego.

<sup>9</sup> A gap in Dilthey's manuscript.

<sup>10</sup> Maeterlinck, *The Treasure of the Humble*, trans. Alfred Sutro (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1911).

<sup>11</sup> Maeterlinck, *Wisdom and Destiny*, trans. Alfred Sutro (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1898, 1908).

<sup>12</sup> Maeterlinck, *Buried Temple*, trans. Alfred Sutro (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1905).

#### 4.

The ultimate conclusion to be drawn from the denial of conceptual cognition in its discursive, logical mode is found in Nietzsche. For him, the culture-creating human being is initially the artist, then the scientist, and finally, since Nietzsche despairs even of the scientific mission, the value-creating, value-positing philosopher. It is characteristic of an eccentric man of feeling and imagination, once he has transferred his entire vitality into one style of human existence, that when he experiences its inadequacy because no single life-image can be everything, he will just as vehemently reject it as he previously had affirmed it. The cultural mission of the artist manifested itself for Nietzsche in Richard Wagner. He did not project this mission onto Wagner, for Wagner already possessed this sense of himself. But the boundlessness and exclusivity with which Nietzsche now saw the unrivaled human being and creator in the artist, the blindness toward the limitations of this form of life, had to turn into its opposite. Thus, he retained nothing positive either from the lived experience of his first period or from the Socratic mood of his second period. It was precisely the setting of boundaries that made Kant loathsome to him. So then there is also the third standpoint: The value-creating philosopher is again an unconditional, unbounded being. The philosopher is to heighten the feeling of the positive value of life in human beings and in this way to have a reformatory effect upon them. But now surely Thrasymachus and Critias, Spinoza and Hobbes, Feuerbach and Stirner have expressed their affirmation of the will and its power strongly enough that history did not also need Nietzsche's—not to mention those who, as artists or men of action, have lived according to this ideal. Thus the only task for these value-creating and value-positing philosophers is to declare which among those motley forms urged upon us by the will to life are valuable. To this question, passages from Nietzsche give no answer. He says nothing about the method according to which this new *assayer*, who will leave Galileo's text with that title<sup>1</sup> behind him, should proceed.

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<sup>1</sup> Galileo published a work entitled *The Assayer*, which argued that the only way to methodically examine nature is through the language of mathematics.



[T]o begin with, the philosophic spirit always had to use as a mask and cocoon the *previously established* types of the contemplative man—priest, sorcerer, soothsayer, and in any case a religious type—in order to be able to *exist at all: the ascetic ideal* for a long time served the philosopher as a form in which to appear, as a precondition of existence—he had to *represent* it so as to be able to be a philosopher; he had to *believe* it in order to be able to represent it. The peculiar, withdrawn attitude of the philosopher, world-denying, hostile to life . . . is above all a result of the emergency conditions under which philosophy arose and survived at all. . . . [T]he *ascetic priest* provided until the most modern times the repulsive and gloomy caterpillar form in which alone the philosopher could live and creep about.<sup>2</sup>

*Genuine philosophers, however, are commanders and legislators: they say, “thus it shall be!”* They first determine the Whither and For What of man, and in so doing have at their disposal the preliminary labor of all philosophical laborers, all who have overcome the past. With a creative hand they reach for the future, and all that is and has been becomes a means for them, an instrument, a hammer. Their “knowing” is *creating*, their creating is a legislation, their will to truth is—*will to power*.<sup>3</sup>

Philosophers, these “Caesarian cultivator[s] and cultural dynamo[s]”<sup>4</sup> give us more than mere conceptual cognition; they are the “most sublime type of slave, but in [themselves] nothing.”<sup>5</sup> “Even the great Chinaman of Königsberg was merely a great critic.”<sup>6</sup> The creation of values thus becomes less and less determinate in

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<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufman and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), 115–16 (§10).

<sup>3</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage Books, 1966), 136 (§211).

<sup>4</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 128 (§207).

<sup>5</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 128 (§207).

<sup>6</sup> Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* 135 (§210). Dilthey also refers to *Human, All Too Human*, Part I, trans. Helen Zimmern (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), 18–19 (§6); Part II, trans. Paul V. Cohn (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1964), 26 (§31). See also *Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 41–42 (§41) and 61–62 (§62); *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), 151; *Beyond Good and Evil*, 12–13 (§5).

content, and the method by which the philosopher creates them is nothing but personal intuition, just as it was with the artists and the life-philosophers of the eighteenth century. No statement concerning the development of such a method is even given. The explanation for this is to be found in Nietzsche's attitude toward the actual sciences. Due to ignorance, he dismissed psychology as a science. What stands in the most curious contradiction to this is that he then proposed completely unverifiable psychological hypotheses concerning the origin of ethical norms and presented them as if they were scientific results. In the use of historical facts for understanding the purposive systems of culture, he remained an utter dilettante; but at the same time, on the strength of his initial starting point, namely, the cult of the genius and of great men, he isolated the individual. He severs the goals of the individual from the development of culture, since for Nietzsche, great men were not merely the motive forces, but also the true achievement of the historical process. Thus, for him, the individual is cut off from the purposive systems of culture, and thereby emptied of content; formally this means that individuals lose their connection with anything progressive and stable. And yet the transfer of interest to something progressive and stable is the most significant feature of the actual ethical theories of the modern period. Affirmation of life in this period is either about a personal involvement in the eternal aspects of knowledge and of artistic vision, or about cultural progress itself. So Nietzsche did not achieve what he had in mind, namely, to explicate the reformatory element in Socrates, Spinoza, and Bruno as characteristic of an aspect of philosophy that had not been understood until then.

Beyond Nietzsche, there is still a final, most extreme conception of philosophy. The values to be created by Nietzsche's philosopher had the ring of objectivity, though they were not determinable in a universally valid manner. They would at least have an intuitive credibility. But this too can be discarded. Then the mind, its philosophical products robbed of their universal validity and permanence, becomes a power of creating conceptual fictions. But such a project must be self-destructive in that the result is not worth the effort.

## The Historical Consciousness of the Nineteenth Century

According to the law of continuity, what the human spirit has been able to capture in philosophical generalizations as the ultimate expression of a particular phase of culture will be preserved. The unity of human reason in the cooperative efforts of the sciences, the character of universal validity, and the resulting general progress of the human spirit in dominating nature and society—these were the ultimate generalizations reached by the eighteenth century.

But this rationalization of the universe also meant an impoverishment of the human spirit. There is more to individuals in their living totality than is found in these abstract procedures for reaching methodical consciousness. We saw that the major world-perspectives of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the expressions of great personalities. The context within which they were classified into three major forms of human world-view and life-ideals was conditioned by the regularity with which these three forms, by a sort of selection from among the possible world-views, have consistently become typical expressions of human nature in its complexity. But they achieved expression by the method of intellectual abstraction and by presupposing the rationality of the universe. Even the value and immanent purposiveness of actual singularity was grasped by Leibniz in terms of the principle of sufficient reason.

Of course, even in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, before Rousseau came on the scene, skeptics and mystics had protested against these presuppositions and this method. The skeptical stance in particular was constantly in the background in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries—in Montaigne, Charron,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Pierre Charron (1541–1603). French philosopher who published several works including *De la sagesse*, a system of moral philosophy that was heavily indebted to Montaigne.

Sanches,<sup>2</sup> Pascal, and Pierre Bayle. And mysticism found in Pascal, even in Cartesianism, support for the most ingenious justification that had ever been devised. Finally, even in the lower stratum of culture, theological thought during this period was based chiefly on the inwardness of religious experience. In 1675, Spener's *Pia Desideria* (*Pious Desires*)<sup>3</sup> appeared. With this began the retreat from objective dogmatics to Christian self-experience. The epoch of basing religious dogma on rationality came to an end, since it could not compete with the philosophical system of rationality. But all these movements could not halt the culturally-entrenched advance of the rational system. It reached its scientific zenith at the beginning of the eighteenth century in Leibniz' *Theodicy* and Newton's *Principia*. In Voltaire, Wolff, Mendelssohn, and Lessing it found its fullest scientific expression; and it animated the reign of Frederick the Great. The limitations of every great philosophical generalization always reveal themselves first in an inner disintegration. Human minds wither and become impoverished; they become uncertain of the principle that animated them. Or, when this principle is inherited, its power becomes exhausted by transmission.

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This became most clear in the dullness of the Scottish School, etc. French positivism sank into a barren, colorless materialism. The German Enlightenment became vulgar in the likes of Nicolai<sup>4</sup> and Biester.<sup>5</sup> The principle of rationality had exhausted its power.

The movement that began with Rousseau and reached its conclusion in Romanticism contains an inner complex of new ideas that belong together. Rationalism had negated the past, and downgraded the epochs of imagination, the affects, and formless subjectivity to lower levels of human development. Rousseau came

<sup>2</sup> Francisco Sanches (1550–1623). Portuguese or Galician Jewish philosopher who fled to France to avoid the Inquisition. He is best known for his *Quod Nihil Scitur* (*That Nothing is Known*), in which he argued that ultimate knowledge is an impossibility, but that we should nevertheless pursue what imperfect knowledge we can.

<sup>3</sup> Philipp Jakob Spener (1635–1705). A German theologian often referred to as the "Father of Pietism."

<sup>4</sup> Christoph Friedrich Nicolai (1733–1811). A German writer who collaborated with Mendelssohn and Lessing on several periodicals that served as the mouthpiece for "popular philosophers."

<sup>5</sup> Johann Erich Biester (1749–1816). A German "popular philosopher," who was a friend to Kant and who frequently collaborated with Nicolai. He is perhaps most famous for his opposition to Fichte's philosophy.

along and even rejected this crowning period of human culture, thereby rejecting culture altogether. He did not, like the Pietists, look backward for more vital sources of human happiness. The mind of this powerful man was directed toward the future. In a milieu pervaded by absolutism, the courtly regulation of life, the abstractions of mathematical natural science, destruction and poverty, he sought a new beginning. Rousseau located this in the vital totality of human nature, in the human right to develop and to shape a world-view and ideal of life from its own resources. Such a stance of consciousness would have to inevitably lapse into empty passion or destructively incite the practical negation of society, if it failed to incorporate the content of the historical manifestations of the totality of human nature. Rousseau's human beings would have to recognize themselves in the great writers and thinkers whose creations issued from the wholeness of the person. They would have to seek a more determinate and positive ideal in national life, where free, formative forces still pulsed with vitality. If humanity wishes to take possession of its actual nature and power and the full range of living possibilities of human existence, it can do this only through historical consciousness. Humanity must bring to consciousness and understand the most significant manifestations of itself. From them, it must extract concrete ideals for a more free and beautiful future. The totality of human nature exists only in history. Individuals become aware of and benefit from this totality only when they gather the genius of the past within themselves. It was for this reason that Herder, Schiller, and Goethe could not stop with *Werther* and *The Robbers*. They had to proceed to a concrete ideal. At first they found it in the Greeks. Then the Romantics went back to the primeval life of the German spirit. Finally, the Orient came to life.

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Nevertheless, this power to reanimate past ages seems to have as its consequence an impotence of the human spirit to shape the future according to its own firm intentions. The Romantics submissively yielded to the past with their whole persons, and the great gains of the eighteenth century seemed to have been lost. However, everything historical is relative in the sense that if we gather it all in consciousness, it seems to surreptitiously breed dissolution, skepticism, and impotent subjectivity.

This exposes the problem posed by this epoch. What is relative must be brought into a more fundamental connection with what is universally valid. The sympathetic understanding of everything in the past must become a force for shaping the future. The

human spirit must connect the enhancement that has been acquired through true historical consciousness with the achievements of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The pioneers in this project were Hegel, Schleiermacher, Carlyle, and Niebuhr.<sup>6</sup>

But to proceed further, the consciousness of the relativity of all historical reality had to be pushed to its ultimate consequences. The study of all the conditions of human beings on earth, and contact with all nations, religions, and ideas, had to increase the chaos of relative historical facts. Not until we have appropriated all forms of human life, from primitive cultures up to the present age, into ourselves, can we complete the tasks of seeking what is universally valid in the relative, of locating a secure future on the basis of the past, and of raising the subject to the level of historical consciousness. Finally, we must link the acceptance of what is actual as the measure of our progress in the future with clear goals for the future. Surely, historical consciousness itself must contain the rules and the power for dedicating ourselves freely and with sovereignty, in the face of the past, to a unified goal of human culture. When the human race is able to combine universally valid thought with clear goals based on such thought and the commonality of our tasks with a sound measure for what is attainable, then it can arrive at a fuller ideal of life. All this receives from historical consciousness a foundation that is no longer abstract, no longer merely conceptual, and no longer lapses into unbounded ideality. The generalization that philosophy in the present age must strive for is hereby specified: It would be to express our entire culture's struggle to achieve a higher level than all previous cultures.

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<sup>6</sup> Barthold Georg Niebuhr (1776–1831), German historian. His influential work, *Römische Geschichte*, began a new era of historiography based on scientific historical scholarship.



# PART III

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DREAM

(1903)

*Translated by  
Ramon J. Betanzos and Rudolf A. Makkreel*





I wish to express my warmest thanks to the circle of well-wishers, friends, and students who have honored me with their congratulations and with the gift of my portrait—and by such a hand!—and, finally, have brought me joy with this beautiful celebration. I had forbidden myself an official celebration for this day; but your generous gift based on personal feeling fills me with the deepest gratitude.

When I look back on my life, I am thankful that I have much happiness to acknowledge. First of all, I have been allowed to experience what I longed for even in my youth: the unification of our beloved German nation and the more liberal shaping of its regulation of life. Moreover, I have been able to pursue my inclination to behold and meditate on the life of the world.<sup>1</sup>

We university professors certainly have a wonderful calling in being able to exert an independent influence in the widest of spheres. I was also blessed with a happy family life. My insatiable need for friendship has been reciprocated. I recall with sadness those who have passed on before me: my teacher Trendelenburg,<sup>2</sup> and then Bernhard Erdmannsdörffer<sup>3</sup> and Count Yorck.<sup>4</sup> They are constantly in my thoughts these days.

This is a talk that Dilthey gave at the celebration of his seventieth birthday and was originally published in *Gesammelte Schriften*, VIII, 220–226, to which the pagination in the margins refers.

<sup>1</sup> “Life of the world” was originally “human affairs” in the first draft (H).

<sup>2</sup> Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg (1802–1872), German philosopher whose critique of German Idealism was based on efforts to revive an Aristotle-inspired teleology. When Dilthey left Heidelberg for Berlin as a student, Trendelenburg became one of his teachers and supervised his dissertation.

<sup>3</sup> Bernhard Erdmannsdörffer (1833–1901) was one of Droysen’s students in “The Ranke School” of nineteenth-century German historiography. A professor at Heidelberg from 1847 until his death, who regarded history as the political teacher of the nation.

<sup>4</sup> Paul Yorck von Wartenburg (1835–1897) was Dilthey’s close philosopher-friend to whom he dedicated his *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften*.

With a thankful heart I see about me loyal friends from earlier as well as more recent times, and my thoughts go to Eduard Zeller<sup>5</sup> in his quiet study.

But among my friends I still have special thanks to express today to my friend Professor Goldscheider, who has nurtured my worn-out body up to this day through all sorts of dangers with his inventive skills.

I have always regarded my students as my friends. I feel a special need to thank them today for what they have meant to me, for their love and loyalty conveyed through countless letters to which I now give my heartfelt response.

I have tried to teach my students the methods of research—both the art of analyzing the actual world that defines the philosopher and the importance of historical thought. I do not have the solution to the riddle of life, but I have always wanted to share with them the *life-mood* that has come about in me by reflecting on the consequences of historical consciousness.

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May I speak to you about this today? After all, it is a philosophical symposium that brings us together today.

Systematic form is indispensable for the cognitive sphere, but at the same time it is a limitation. —What I want to share with you today is this feeling for life which arises from historical consciousness when it has been elevated by thought to a recognition of its import. This is what I also would have liked to give expression to-day. But every expression of theory is too ponderous and too cold. However, my friend Wildenbruch<sup>6</sup> has pointed out a way for me. I thank him for his words. It has always been a great fortune for men and women to be praised by a poet. Now, since he has summoned forth the poet in me, let him claim some credit for himself if the ash heap turns to glowing embers again as I attempt to express the life-attitude that has issued forth from the philosophical work of so many years, not in verse—fear not!—yet with a touch of the poetic.

<sup>5</sup> Eduard Zeller (1814–1908) was a well-known historian of philosophy (e.g. *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 3 vols., 1845–1852). Though his initial orientation was Hegelian, he was best known as a Neo-Kantian for most of his active career.

<sup>6</sup> Ernst von Wildenbruch (1845–1909) was the author of a variety of dramas, novels, stories, patriotic songs, and sentimental ballads. As a poet he tried to reconcile the older classic and romantic movements with contemporary realism and naturalism.

It was more than a decade ago. I had arrived at my friend's castle in Klein-Oels<sup>7</sup> on a calm summer evening. And, as was usually the case with him and me, our philosophical conversation lasted deep into the night. It was still echoing inside me as I undressed in the familiar old bedroom. I still stood for a long time, as I had often done, before the beautiful engraving of *The School of Athens* by Volpato<sup>8</sup> above my bed. This evening I especially enjoyed how the harmonious spirit of the divine Raphael tamed the strife of systems locked in a life and death struggle into a peaceful conversation. Over these gently interrelated figures hovered the atmosphere of peace which first sought to reconcile powerful differences between systems in the twilight of ancient culture and which was then also at work among the noblest spirits of the Renaissance. Tired and sleepy as I was, I lay down and went right to sleep. And immediately Raphael's picture and the conversations we had had were swallowed up in a busy dreamlife. In it the figures of the philosophers became real. From a vast distance I saw, from the left side, a long line of men in the varied garb of subsequent centuries approaching the temple of the philosophers. Whenever one passed by me and turned his face towards me, I strained to recognize him. I saw Bruno, Descartes, Leibniz, and many others as I had remembered them from their pictures. As they approached the steps of the temple to press closer, the walls gave way to a spacious field where they intermingled with the figures of the Greek philosophers. And then something happened which astonished me even in my dream. As though driven onwards by some inner compulsion, they pushed towards one another to form a single group. At first the movement pressed towards the right side where the mathematician Archimedes is drawing his circles and the astronomer Ptolemy could be recognized by the globe he is carrying. Then, those thinkers gathered together who ground their explanation of the world on a stable, all-encompassing physical nature. They proceeded upwards from below, searching for a uniform causal explanation of the universe from a system of mutually dependent natural laws and thus to subordinate spirit to nature—even to the point of being resigned to limit knowledge to what can be cognized by the natural-scientific method. Among the

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<sup>7</sup> Klein-Oels was the family home of the von Wartenburgs. It is located near Wroclaw, Poland, formerly Breslau, Germany, when Dilthey taught there. Dilthey's "dream" thus took place at his friend Paul Yorck von Wartenburg's castle.

<sup>8</sup> Giovanni Antonio Volpato (1733–1803) was a copperplate engraver whose best works were engravings based on the Raphael frescoes in the Vatican.

throng of these materialists and positivists I recognized d'Alembert by his fine features and his ironic smile, which seemed to mock the dreams of the metaphysicians. I also saw Comte there, the systematizer of positive philosophy, to whom a circle of thinkers from all nations listened with respect.

And now a new procession pushed towards the middle, where Socrates and the noble elderly figure of the divine Plato were, both of whom had undertaken to use human consciousness of God to ground knowledge of a supersensible world order. There I also saw Augustine, whose heart thirsted for God so passionately, around whom many philosopher-theologians had gathered. I listened to their conversation, in which they strove to link the idealism of personality, which is the soul of Christianity, with the teachings of those venerable ancients. And then Descartes moved away from the group of mathematical natural scientists—a tender, delicate figure who seemed to have been virtually worn out by the force of thinking and to have become attracted by a kind of inner compulsion to these idealists of freedom and of personality. But then the whole circle opened up as the slightly stooped, delicate-limbed figure of Kant approached with his three-cornered hat and walking stick, his features seemingly stiffened by the strain of thinking—the great man who elevated the idealism of freedom to critical consciousness and thus reconciled it with the empirical sciences. And walking up the steps with a still youthful gait towards Master Kant was a radiant figure with his noble head bowed in contemplation, in whose melancholy features deep thought and poetically idealistic vision blended with a presentiment of the fate which was to befall him—the poet of the idealism of freedom, our Schiller. Fichte and Carlyle had already drawn near. Ranke, Guizot, and other great historians seemed to me to be listening to these two. But I felt a strange shudder go through me when I saw at their side a friend from my youth, Heinrich von Treitschke.<sup>9</sup>

Scarcely had all these assembled when thinkers of all nations gathered together, again on the left, around Pythagoras and Heraclitus, who first intuited the divine harmony of the universe. Giordano Bruno, Spinoza, and Leibniz were also there. It was marvelous to see the two great Swabian thinkers of our nation, Schelling and

<sup>9</sup>Heinrich von Treitschke (1834–1896) was a famous historian and advocate of German *Realpolitik*, a champion of Prussian authority in a united Germany. His most famous work is the monumental *Deutsche Geschichte im 19. Jahrhundert* (5 vols., 1879–1894).

Hegel, hand in hand as in the days of their youth and with the vigor of youth. All of them were heralds of a ubiquitous, spiritual, divine force in the universe, a force that inhabits every thing and every person, producing its effects in accordance with natural laws, so that, apart from it, there is no transcendent order and no sphere of free choice. It seemed to me that all of these thinkers concealed poetic souls behind their furrowed countenances. Among them also there was a stormy, forward-pressing commotion until finally a majestic figure, erect and almost rigid, strode forward with measured step: I was struck with awe as I caught sight of the great eyes blazing like suns and the Apollonian head of Goethe. He was in his middle years, and all his creations—Faust and Wilhelm Meister, Iphigenia and Tasso—seemed to hover about him, and all his great thoughts about the formative laws extending from nature to human creativity.

Between these great figures, there were other individuals standing and moving about uneasily. They seemed, in vain, to want to mediate between positivism's harsh denial of all mysteries of life and metaphysics; between an all-encompassing determinism and personal freedom.

But the mediators shuffled busily back and forth between these groups to no avail. The distance separating them grew larger by the second; then even the ground between them itself vanished; a terribly hostile alienation seemed to divide them. A strange anxiety overcame me that there could be perhaps three or even more iterations of philosophy. The unity of my own being seemed to be torn asunder, since I was attracted now to this group and now to that one. Yet I strove to preserve this unity, and as I was struggling with these thoughts the cover of sleep became thinner and lighter, the figures in my dream faded away, and I woke up.

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The stars glistened through the large windows of my bedroom. The immeasurable and unfathomable nature of the universe overwhelmed me. As though liberated, I recalled the comforting thoughts I had expressed to my friend in our nocturnal conversation.

This immeasurable, incomprehensible, unfathomable universe is reflected variously in religious visionaries, in poets, and in philosophers. They are all affected by time and place. Every world-view is historically conditioned, hence limited, and relative. A horrendous anarchy of thought seems to follow from this. But the very historical consciousness which has produced this absolute doubt can also define its bounds. Firstly, the world-views have differentiated themselves in accordance with an inner law. Here my thoughts went

back to the great basic forms of world-view as they were sketched out for me in my dream in the image of three groups of philosophers. These world-view types have maintained themselves side by side over the centuries. And now the other or liberating aspect. World-views are grounded in the nature of the universe and in their relationship to finite, cognitive spirit. Thus each of them expresses, within the bounds of our thought, one side of the universe. Each world-view is to that extent true; but each is one-sided. It is impossible for us to see these sides simultaneously. We have access to the pure light of truth only in variously refracted rays.

Here we confront an old, problematic alliance. The philosopher seeks universally valid knowledge and thereby a resolution of the riddles of life. This linkage must be loosened.

Philosophy shows us two faces. The inextinguishable impulse for metaphysics wants to solve the riddle of the world and of life, and in this regard, philosophers are akin to religious thinkers and poets. But philosophers differ from them inasmuch as they want to solve this riddle through universally valid knowledge. This long-standing link must be dissolved by us today.

225 The primary and highest task of philosophy is to consider the objective mode of thought of the empirical sciences, which extracts an order based on laws from phenomena and raises it to a consciousness of itself with the intent of justifying it. There is a reality accessible through phenomena, namely, an order based on laws. This is the only truth given to us that has universal validity, albeit in the sign language of our senses and our cognitive capacity. This is the subject matter of the basic science of philosophy. This grounding of our knowledge is the great function of the basic science of philosophy. Every true philosopher since Socrates has worked to help build that science. Another task of philosophy is to organize the empirical sciences. The spirit of philosophy is always present where the foundations of a science are simplified, or where sciences are linked to one another, or where their relation to the idea of knowledge is established, or where methods are tested for their cognitive value. But it seems to me that the time is coming to an end for distinct philosophies of art and religion, of law or the state. The highest function of philosophy will therefore require grounding, legitimation, critical consciousness, and an organizing power that encompasses all objective thinking, value-determinations, and purposive ends. The mighty system that will emerge from this is destined to guide the human race. The natural sciences have transformed the

external world, and now the world epoch is upon us in which the sciences of society will gain a growing influence on society itself.

Beyond this universally valid knowledge lie the questions with which we must grapple ourselves as persons, since, in the last analysis, with respect to life and death, each of us stands alone. The answer to such questions exists only at the level of the world-views that express the many-sidedness of reality for our understanding in different forms while referring to one truth. This truth is not cognizable; every system is entangled in antinomies. Historical consciousness breaks the final chains that philosophy and natural science could not break. Human beings now stand entirely free. But at the same time, that historical consciousness preserves the unity of the human soul for us; it gives us a view into the nexus of things which is, to be sure, unfathomable but accessible to the vital core of our being. Let us find solace by honoring a part of the truth in each of these world-views. And if the course of our life brings only particular aspects of this unfathomable nexus to our attention—so long as the truth of the world-view that expresses this aspect takes energetic hold of us, then let us be satisfied with that: The truth is present in all of them.

These roughly were the thoughts that crossed my mind, as they would for someone who is lying awake between one dream and another—they were ideas that I reflected upon for a long time, with my gaze directed on the splendor of the stars in summer. Finally, a light morning slumber came over me, along with the dreams that usually accompany it. The starry vault seemed to me to glisten ever more brightly as the light of morning poured in. Ethereal and serene shapes moved across the sky. As I awoke, I tried in vain to recall these happy visions. But I felt the serenity of the highest freedom and human spontaneity that had expressed itself in them. I have recorded this dream for my friends so that something of the life-sentiment that emanates from it might communicate itself to them. More earnestly than ever before, our generation is seeking to read into the mysterious unfathomable countenance of life, with its laughing mouth and its eyes full of melancholy. Yes, my friends, let us strive towards the light, toward the freedom and the beauty of existence. But not by means of a new beginning that shakes off the past. We must take the old gods with us into every new homeland. Only he lives life to the full who gives himself to it. . . . In vain did Nietzsche search in lonely self-examination for an original nature, his ahistorical essence. He peeled off one skin after the other. And



what did he have left? Only something historically conditioned: the features of the Renaissance man of power. What man is, only his history can tell him. It is in vain that others cast the entire past behind them in order to start with life, as it were, anew and without prejudice. They cannot shake off what has been, and the gods of the past become ghosts to them. The melody of our life is conditioned by accompanying voices from the past. Human beings free themselves from the torment of the moment and from the fleeting character of every joy only by submitting themselves to the great objective forces that history has generated. Commitment to these forces, not the subjectivity of whim and of pleasure, is what reconciles sovereign personality with the course of the world.

# PART IV

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## THE ESSENCE OF PHILOSOPHY (1907)

*Translated By  
John Krois and Rudolf A. Makkreel*



# Introduction

We are accustomed to use the general heading of philosophy to designate a large number of intellectual products created in different nations over the course of history. When we express what is common to these specific products that are usually called philosophy or philosophical in an abstract formula, then we obtain a conception of philosophy. This conception would attain its highest perfection if it adequately explicated the essence of philosophy. Such a concept of the essence of philosophy would express the formative law that is operative in the development of each individual philosophical system and bring out the affinities among the particular facts that could be derived from it.

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A solution to this ideal task is possible only on the presupposition that what we designate as “philosophy” or call “philosophical” also really contains such a universal content and that a formative law is in fact operative in all these individual cases. This would ensure that there is an inner nexus unifying the entire domain to which this word is applied. And we assume this whenever we speak of the essence of philosophy. The term “philosophy” is then used to refer to a universal object. A spiritual affinity is assumed to underlie the particular facts to provide the uniform and necessary foundation of the empirical facts of philosophy, the rule governing its changes and the ordering principle that articulates its various forms.

Can we speak in this strict sense of an essence of philosophy? This is by no means self-evident. The terms “philosophy” and “philosophical” have so many different meanings, varying with time and place, and the intellectual products given this name by their creators are so varied that it might seem as though different eras had simply affixed this beautiful word coined by the Greeks, to quite diverse human products. Some conceive philosophy as the foundation of

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This essay was originally published in *Systematische Philosophie*, vol. I, 6 of the collection *Die Kultur der Gegenwart*, ed. Paul Hinneberg (Leipzig: Teubner Verlag, 1907, 1–7), and in 1924 it was republished with some changes in Dilthey’s *Gesammelte Schriften* vol. V. The pagination in the margins refers to the latter.

the particular sciences. Others extend this concept of philosophy by including the further task of deriving the system of the particular sciences from this foundation. Sometimes philosophy is even limited to this system of the sciences. Then, again, philosophy is defined as the science of spirit and inner experience. Finally, it is also understood as a coming to terms with the conduct of life or the science of universally valid values. Where is the inner link that connects such different conceptions of philosophy, such disparate forms of thought? Where is the unitary essence of philosophy? If such an essence of philosophy cannot be found, then we are dealing merely with different functions that emerged under various historical circumstances to meet cultural needs, and which bear a mere superficial common designation due to historical accidents of terminology. In that case there are philosophies, but no philosophy. Then the history of philosophy has no necessary, inner unity. It will attain a different content and a different scope at the hand of individual historians of philosophy according to the conception of it that they arrive at in the context of their own systems. Then one historian might present this history as a progression towards a deeper and ever more fundamental grounding of the individual sciences, another as the progressive reflection of spirit on itself, yet another as the increasing scientific understanding of life-experience and life-values. In order to decide the extent to which we may speak of an essence of philosophy we must turn from the conceptual definitions given by philosophers to the historical facts of philosophy itself. These provide us with the material for cognizing what philosophy is. The result of this inductive procedure can then be more deeply understood in accordance with its lawfulness.

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By what method can we solve the problem of determining the essence of philosophy on the basis of the historical facts? This is a general methodological problem of the human sciences. The subjects of all the assertions of these sciences are socially related, individual life-units. They are, to begin with, individual persons. They manifest themselves in expressive gestures, words, and actions. The task of the human sciences is to re-experience and grasp them in thought. The psychic nexus expressed in these manifestations makes it possible to point out something typical and recurrent in them, and to organize these particular life-moments in a system of life-phases and, finally, in the unity of a life. Individuals do not exist in isolation, but are related to one another in terms of families, more complex associations, nations, historical periods, and, finally, humankind itself. The purposiveness of these singular organizations makes possible the

typical perspectives provided by the human sciences. Yet there is no concept that can exhaust the content of these individual unities. Instead, the manifold nature of their intuitive content can only be captured through lived experience, understanding, and description. Moreover, the way they are interwoven in the course of history is singular and inexhaustible for thought. But the formations and combinations of such singularities are not arbitrary. None of them fail to express an experiential structural unity of individual and community life. Every narrative about even the simplest state of affairs seeks to make it understandable by subsuming it under general representations or concepts of psychic functions. These narratives complete what perception offers piecemeal by using available general representations or concepts to produce the kind of connectedness provided by one's own lived experience. Under the guidance of attainable experiences of life-values, instrumental values, and purposes—details are selected from this material and related into something meaningful and significant. In the method of the human sciences there is a perpetual reciprocity between lived experience and the concept. The concepts used in the human sciences find their fulfillment in the re-experiencing of individual and collective structural systems, while this immediate re-experiencing itself is raised to the level of scientific cognition by means of universal forms of thought. When these two functions of consciousness in the human sciences converge, then we grasp what is essential in human development. This consciousness should admit no concept in the human sciences that has not been formed from the full range of historical re-experiencing. It should contain nothing universal that does not express the essence of some historical reality. Nations, ages, and historical phases of development are not arbitrary formations. Rather, bound as we are to the necessity of re-experiencing, we use them to articulate what is essential about humanity and different peoples. Accordingly, we misunderstand the interest that thinking human beings bring to the historical world if we regard concept formation in this terrain merely as instrumental for depicting and exhibiting what is singular. Thought strives to surpass the mere depiction and stylization of facts and particulars in order to attain cognition of what is essential and necessary. It seeks to understand the structural coherence of individual and social life. We can only attain power over social life to the extent that we grasp and make use of its regularities and connectedness. The logical form that expresses such regularities are propositions whose subjects, like their predicates, are universal.

Among the various universal subject-concepts that serve this task of the human sciences are philosophy, art, religion, law, and economy. Their character is determined by the fact that they not only express a state of affairs found in many human subjects, namely, a recurring uniformity and universality, but also an inner nexus that connects these different persons by means of this state of affairs. So the term "religion" designates not only a universal state of affairs, such as a vital relationship of the psychic nexus to invisible forces; it also refers to a communal dimension in which individuals unite in religious acts and yet adopt differentiated attitudes toward these religious functions. Individuals involved in religion, philosophy, or art manifest a dual relationship. They stand as particulars under a universal, as instances of a rule, and at the same time they are united as parts in a whole according to this rule. The reason for this will become clear to us later from insight into the two-fold directedness exhibited in the psychological formation of concepts.

343 The function of these universal concepts is very important in the human sciences. For in them our grasp of the regularities just as in the natural sciences is possible only by separating out from the tangled web of the human socio-historical-world specific contexts within which uniformities, inner structures, and development can be discerned. Analysis of the complex, empirically given, actual world is the first step towards great discoveries in the human sciences as well. In this endeavor we first encounter general representations that characterize the common features of those contexts that have already been distinguished and separated from the complexity of the actual world—thus allowing us to coordinate these contexts. To the degree that differentiations are correctly made through such representations, the general subject-terms of the resulting propositions are capable of supporting a self-contained sphere of fruitful truths. Already at this stage, terms like "religion," "art," "philosophy," "science," "economy," "law" are formed for what is expressed in such general representations.

Scientific thought has as its basis the schematism that inheres in these general representations. But it must test the correctness of this schematism. It is dangerous for the human sciences to accept these general representations at face value since the discovery of uniformities and their articulation is dependent upon whether they really do express a uniform state of affairs. Accordingly, the goal of concept-formation in this area is to find the essence of the thing that was already at work in determining the general representation and in giving it a name. By means of this essence we should be able to correct

the indeterminate and perhaps deficient general representation and raise it to the level of univocal determinacy. This, therefore, is our task with regard to the concept and essence of philosophy.

But how are we to more precisely determine the procedure by which we can move reliably from a general representation and denomination to the concept of the thing? Concept-formation appears to involve a circle. The concept of philosophy, as well as that of art or of religiosity or of law, can only be found by deriving the complex of distinguishing marks that constitute the concept from the states of affairs that these things consist of. This presupposes a prior decision concerning which psychic states of affairs are to be designated as philosophical. But this decision could only be made if thought was already in possession of the distinguishing marks that are sufficient to establish the character of philosophy on the basis of the relevant states of affairs. Hence, it seems that we already must know what philosophy is when we begin to form its concept from the facts.

The methodological question would of course be immediately solved if these concepts could be deduced from more general [i.e., universal] truths. Then the inferences from particular states of affairs would only serve as a supplement. And this was the opinion of many philosophers, especially in the German speculative school. But as long as they could not come to an agreement about a universally valid derivation or gain universal recognition for an intuitive insight, it would be necessary to make do with inferences that proceed from the facts of the case and use empirical methods to seek the uniform states of affairs. This is the genetic lawfulness that is expressed in the phenomenon of philosophy. This procedure must presuppose that behind the designation that it finds in use there lies hidden a uniform state of affairs, so that thought does not wander fruitlessly when it turns its attention to the range of phenomena that are designated as philosophy or philosophical. The validity of this presupposition must be tested by the investigation itself. It derives the concept of the essence of philosophy from the different states of affairs that we designated with the names "philosophy" or "philosophical" and the concept of the essence must then make possible the explanation of the application of the name to these states of affairs. There are two points of departure in the sphere of such concepts as philosophy, religion, art, or science: the affinity among the particular states of affairs and the overall nexus or system to which they are connected. As the particular character of each of these universal disciplinary concepts becomes fruitful for



the differentiation of the method, we then have the further advantage that philosophy became self-conscious of its own activity from early on. There are a great many attempts to define the concept of philosophy in the procedural way that we are aiming at. They are an expression of how individual philosophers have been determined by a given cultural situation and guided by their own system in their view of philosophy. Hence, these definitions are abbreviations of what is characteristic of a particular historical form of philosophy. They give an insight into the inner dialectic whereby philosophy has considered the possible roles it can play in the context of culture. Each of these possibilities must have the potential to be made fruitful for the conceptual determination of philosophy.

345 The circle in the process of defining the concept of philosophy is unavoidable. There is in fact great uncertainty about the bounds within which a system is to be called philosophy or works are to be termed philosophical. This uncertainty can only be overcome if we first establish reliable, albeit insufficient, definitions of philosophy and go on from them by new procedures to further definitions that gradually exhaust the content of the concept of philosophy. Therefore, the method can only be to apply specific procedures, each of which taken by itself is not enough to insure a universally valid and complete solution to the task; yet gradually it can more carefully delimit the essential features of philosophy. In this way we can more firmly establish the scope of the states of affairs that fall within it and, finally, determine from the vital core of philosophy why border areas remain that do not permit a pure demarcation of their scope. We must first attempt to find a common state of affairs among those systems on the basis of which each of them forms a general representation of philosophy. Then the other aspect offered by the concept, the fact that the systems belong to some context, can be used to test the result and to supplement it with a deeper insight. With that we have the basis for examining the relationship of the essential characteristics of philosophy to the structural system of the individual and society, to grasp philosophy as a living function in the individual and in society, and so, to combine these features to create an essential concept. Using this concept we can understand the relationship of specific systems to the function of philosophy, situate the systematic conceptions of philosophy in their proper place and sharpen the blurred borders that outline it. This is the course that our investigation will take.

# ONE

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## Historical Procedure for Determining the Essence of Philosophy

### 1. FIRST DETERMINATIONS CONCERNING PHILOSOPHY'S GENERAL SUBJECT MATTER.

There are philosophical systems that above all others have entered into the consciousness of mankind and that have constantly oriented us concerning what philosophy is. Democritus, Plato, Aristotle, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz, Locke, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Hegel, and Comte have all produced systems of this kind. They have features in common by means of which thought attains a standard for determining the extent to which other systems can be integrated into the domain of philosophy. Initially, we can discern features of a formal nature in these philosophies. Regardless of the subject-matter of the different systems or the method they follow, they distinguish themselves from particular sciences by being based on the entire scope of empirical consciousness—life, lived experience, and the sciences of experience—and seek to solve their task on that scale. They aim at universality, which is matched by a striving to connect diverse particulars, to produce systematic coherence, and to extend it without regard to the boundaries of the particular sciences. The other formal feature of philosophy lies in the demand for universally valid knowledge and, bound up with it, the attempt to go back to the ultimate foundation of philosophy. Whoever immerses himself in a comparative study of the classic systems of philosophy also comes to intuit, at first only vaguely, the way the contents of the systems belong together. The testimony of philosophers about their own creativity—testimony well worth gathering—reveals that from youth on all these thinkers were filled with struggles concerning the riddles of life and the world. This concern with the problem of the world asserts itself distinctively in each of the systems. Even the formal characteristics of the different philosophers reveal hidden connections to their inner development and shaping of personality, and to the attainment of spiritual sovereignty. Their intellectual disposition is to bring all activity to consciousness and to leave nothing in the obscurity of mere behavior that is ignorant of itself.

## 2. HISTORICAL DERIVATION OF THE ESSENTIAL FEATURES OF PHILOSOPHY FROM THE COHERENCE OF ITS SYSTEMS

Now a procedure presents itself to us that permits a deeper view into the inner connections between these features, explaining the differences in the definitions of philosophy, giving each of these formulas its historical position, and more exactly determining the scope of the concept.

The concept of philosophy contains not only a universal content, but also an inner linkage—a historical continuum. From the start philosophers directly face the riddle of the world and life, and the concepts of philosophy they form are derived from this concern. Every position staked out in the spiritual history of philosophy refers back to this kind of fundamental question. All vital philosophical efforts emerge from this continuum. The past of philosophy acts on individual thinkers so that even when they despair about it providing any solutions to this great riddle of life, they are conditioned by this past in the process of arriving at a new position. In this way all conscious philosophical attitudes, all conceptual definitions of philosophy in which these attitudes are expressed, form a historical nexus.

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### 1. The Origin of the Name in Greece and What It Meant There

The rich and profound interconnectedness of religion, art, and philosophy for the Orientals was split by the Greeks into the differentiated functions of these three forms of spiritual creativity. Their bright, self-confident spirit liberated philosophy from the bonds of religiosity and the visionary symbolism of philosophical and religious poetry. The plasticity of their visionary power contributed to the formation of distinct species of spiritual creation. Hence philosophy arose with the Greeks along with its concept and the expression *philosophia*. Herodotus calls everyone who excels in higher intellectual activity a *sophos*. He assigns the name *sophistes* to Socrates, Pythagoras, and other ancient philosophers, while Xenophon uses it for the nature-philosophers. In the language used during the time of Herodotus and Thucydides the compound word *philosophem* means first and foremost the love of and search for wisdom, as the new spiritual stance of the Greeks. They assigned to this word the idea of the search for truth for its own sake, the search

for a value independent of all practical applications. Thus Herodotus has Croesus say to Solon, in that typical image of the opposition between the oriental will for power and the new Greek ethos, that he has heard that Solon had wandered through many lands philosophizing (*philosophheōn*) for theory's sake (*theōriēs heineken*)—thereby explicating what it means to “philosophize.” Thucydides then uses the same word in the Periclean funeral oration in order to give expression to a basic characteristic of the contemporary Athenian spirit. The word “philosophy” is then elevated to the position of a technical term for a determinate sphere of intellectual activity in the Socratic school. The traditional attribution of this to Pythagoras may be transferring a Socratic-Platonic notion to an earlier period. The concept of philosophy in the Socratic-Platonic school, however, has a noteworthy duality.

For Socrates, philosophy is not wisdom but rather the love of and quest for wisdom because the gods have reserved wisdom for themselves. The critical consciousness that grounds knowledge for Socrates, and more profoundly for Plato, at the same time defines its bounds. Plato was the first to focus on the essence of philosophy along the lines of earlier indications, especially those of Heraclitus. Beginning with the experiences of his own philosophical genius, he characterizes the philosophical impulse and its unfolding into philosophical knowledge. All greatness in life derives from a spiritual enthusiasm that is grounded in the higher nature of human beings. As we are confined to the world of sense, this higher nature expresses itself in an endless longing. Philosophical *eros* ranges from the love of beautiful shapes through different stages to knowledge of the ideas. But our knowledge, even at this highest level, remains only a hypothesis. Although it has as its object the unchanging essences that are realized in the actual world, it never comprehends the causal nexus that stretches from the highest good to the singular things in which we intuit the eternal. In this great yearning that our knowledge is never able to satisfy lies the starting point for an inner relationship between philosophy and a religiosity that lives in the fullness of the divine.

The other aspect of philosophy contained in the Socratic-Platonic conception refers to its positive achievement. The inclusion of this aspect had an even greater influence. Philosophy stands for the movement toward knowledge—knowledge in its most rigorous form as science. Universal validity, determinateness, and a regress to the justificatory grounds of all assumptions were here put forth for

the first time as requirements for all knowledge. The point was to put an end to the restless and fanciful play of metaphysical hypotheses as well as to the skepticism of enlightenment. Both Socrates and Plato's first dialogues extended philosophical reflection to the overall scope of knowledge in conscious opposition to limiting it to cognizing what is actual. Such reflection about knowledge also encompasses the determination of values, rules, and purposes. This approach was astonishing in its profundity; philosophy is the contemplative activity that brings all human activity to consciousness by elevating it to universally valid knowledge. It is the self-reflection of spirit in the form of conceptual thought. The conduct of the warrior, the statesman, the poet, or the religious person can only be perfected if knowledge of this conduct guides praxis. And because all conduct needs to be defined by a purpose, the ultimate purpose being eudaemonia, knowledge of eudaemonia and the purposes grounded in it as well as the means required by them, are strongest in us. No dark instinct or passion has the power to prevail if knowledge shows that eudaemonia is hindered by these dark forces. Hence, only the sovereignty of knowledge can raise the individual to freedom and society to its own eudaemonia.

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Plato's Socratic dialogues undertook to resolve the problems of life on the basis of this Socratic conception of philosophy. But because life, with its striving for eudaemonia and the inherent power of the virtues in which it is actualized, could not be raised to universally valid knowledge, these dialogues had to end negatively. The conflicting tendencies of the Socratic school were insoluble. Plato's *Apology* acutely and correctly locates them in the person of Socrates: both the way he takes on the task of the universal validity of knowledge and how ignorance is nevertheless his final result. This concept of philosophy, which aspires to raise being, values, goods, purposes, and virtues to the level of knowledge, and so has as its object the true, the beautiful, and the good, is the result of philosophy's first reflection on itself. It had an immeasurable effect and the core of the true concept of the essence of philosophy was contained in it.

The Socratic-Platonic concept of philosophy continued to be effective in Aristotle's classification of philosophy. For him, philosophy is divided into theoretical, poietic, and practical science. It is theoretical when its principle and goal is cognition, poietic when its principle lies in the artistic capacity that aims to produce a work, and practical when its principle is the will and its goal is action as such. The poietic, to be sure, does not just comprise the theory of

art, but rather every kind of knowledge of the technical that does not have its goal in the energy of the person but in the production of an external work.

But Aristotle did not really structure his philosophy in terms of this division stemming from Plato. With Aristotle, a modified conception came to prevail. For him, philosophy is no longer the highest enhancement of personality and human society through knowledge. Philosophy seeks knowledge for its own sake. For Aristotle, the philosophical attitude is characterized by the theoretical perspective of consciousness. Just as the changing, but rationally ordered actual world is grounded in the unchanging and blessed thought of a God with no goal and no object outside itself, so finally the highest among these changing actualities, human reason, has its ultimate function in the purely theoretical attitude as the happiest and most perfect for human beings. This is now philosophy for him, for it grounds and encompasses all the sciences. It creates a theory of knowing as the foundation of every kind of scientific work. Its core is a universal science of being: a first philosophy, for which Aristotle's school formulated the expression "metaphysics." Finally, the system of the sciences, a system that proceeds from the cognition of nature to a theory of human beings in order to determine the final ends of individuals and society, is based on a teleological conception of the world formulated in this first philosophy. This new Aristotelian principle of final causality makes it possible to also subject the changing empirically given actual world to thought. Thus a new concept of philosophy emerges that represents the unity of the sciences conceptually as an objective system of what is actual that extends from the cognition of God to the cognition of the human capacity to set ends.

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The way the Greeks subordinated the specific sciences to philosophy corresponded to the organization of their philosophical schools. These schools were not only centers of discussion concerning principles, but also places where positive research was carried out. After a few generations numerous natural sciences and human sciences were formed in these schools. There is reason to believe that even before Plato there was some type of organization and constancy in the training and common work uniting not only the Pythagoreans, but also the students of other earlier thinkers with one another. In the clear light of accredited history, the Academy and the Peripatetic school stand out as legally organized associations in which the unity of their basic philosophical thought holds together the different sciences. In these the passion for pure cognition of the

truth imparted vitality to each positive effort and its relationship to the whole. They provide an unequalled example of the creative power that such an organization can have. Plato's school was for some time a center of mathematical and astronomical research. But the most enormous scientific effort ever undertaken in such a limited time and in one place was completed by the group around Aristotle. The basic ideas of teleological structure and of development, the method of description, analysis, and comparison led this school to establish descriptive and analytic natural sciences as well as politics and the theory of art.

351 The Greek concept of philosophy as the all-encompassing science found its highest expression in this organization of the philosophical schools. This resulted from that essential aspect of philosophy according to which a common task connects those engaged in philosophizing in a common endeavor. For wherever the same goal is found in a number of persons, they become interconnected. Philosophy adds to this a binding power that consists in its tendency towards universality and universal validity.

The uniform direction of scientific research that we found to be most highly developed in the school of Aristotle then disintegrated just like Alexander's empire. The individual sciences gained more independence as they matured. The bond that had united them broke. Alexander's successors founded institutions outside the philosophical schools which served the specific concerns of the sciences. This was the first factor to change the status of philosophy. The individual sciences gradually laid claim to the entire realm of the actual world in a turn of events that was renewed in modern times. This process still has not come to an end. Whenever philosophy has led some sphere of research to a state of maturity, this sphere has broken away on its own. This first happened to philosophy in relation to the natural sciences. In modern times the process of differentiation continued: After Grotius, general jurisprudence became an independent field of study and after Montesquieu, the comparative theory of the state. Today a desire for the emancipation of their science is widespread among psychologists, and to the extent that the general studies of religion, art, education, and social science are based on the study of historical facts and psychology, their relation to philosophy must also be called into question. This constantly growing realignment of power relations within the sphere of knowledge has imposed on philosophy from outside, as it were, the task of drawing anew the boundaries of its domain. But philosophy's own inner development contained even stronger forces to produce this effect.

As the result of the cooperation of these external factors and inner forces there arose a change in the position of philosophy that emerged with the Skeptics, Epicureans, and Stoics up to the writings of Cicero, Lucretius, Seneca, Epictetus, and Marcus Aurelius. With these new power relationships within the domain of knowledge, the failure of metaphysics, the spread of a skeptical spirit, and a turn to inwardness among the aging nations all made themselves felt, allowing the philosophy of life to emerge. In it we witness a new stance of the philosophical spirit that would be of the greatest importance for the future. The concern with great overall systems survived, yet the demand for a universally valid solution was treated with less and less stringency. The weighing of various [scientific] tasks was subordinated to another task. The problem of the value and purpose of life came to take precedence over that of a systematic world order. In the Roman-Stoic system, the most influential that the world has seen, the power of philosophy to form personal character came to the fore. The structure of philosophy, its order, and the relationships between its parts all changed. This change in the stance of philosophy was matched by new conceptual definitions. Cicero typifies this new turn of philosophy when he calls it the “teacher of life, inventor of laws, guide to every virtue,” and Seneca defines it as the theory and art of the proper conduct of life. With this, philosophy becomes a disposition towards life, not a mere theory, and so “wisdom” becomes a favored designation for it. But if we trace this new concept of philosophy back to the stance that is expressed in it, we see that it developed from within the great metaphysical systems. Their problem is merely subjected to new conditions.

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For many centuries this feature of philosophy that probes the unfathomable depths of the essence of things, led the aging world to turn to religion. This caused philosophy to lose its true essence for many centuries through the subjugation to religion. The stance that philosophy then adopted toward the task of universally valid cognition and the concepts that emerge from it did not belong to the true development of its essence. This will be discussed in the theory of the intermediaries that link philosophy and religion.

## 2. The Forms of Philosophy in Modern Times as Expressed in the Concepts of Philosophy

The Renaissance in which the secularization of art, literature, and a liberal philosophy of life were culturally dominant paved the way for the sciences of nature to constitute themselves in a definitive fashion. Similarly, the sciences of the social world for the first time



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gained a kind of a coherence guided by an idea of a natural system. As the empirical sciences were undertaking the task of attaining cognition by their methods, there arose in the seventeenth century a new relationship among the forces in intellectual culture. The courage to strive for strict, universally valid knowledge and the transfiguration of the world by means of this knowledge pervaded the leading nations. The individual sciences and philosophy were conjoined in this effort. They strongly opposed religion and left art, literature, and the philosophy of life behind. Hence, the goal of objective universally valid cognition of the world that had governed the great systems of antiquity was pursued more methodically and with a greater sense of purpose under these new conditions. Accordingly, the character and concept of metaphysics changed as well. It progressed from a naive attitude to the world to confront doubts and arrive at a conscious grasp of the relations between thought and the world. Accordingly, metaphysics severs itself from the individual sciences through its consciousness of its distinctive method. Now it finds its proper object in being as such, which is not given to us in any particular science. But the methodological demand for rigorous universal validity and the progressive self-reflection on the procedure of metaphysics point to a differentiating feature of its modern development. The demand for rigor links it with the mathematical natural sciences while the methodological character of universality and of unconditional grounding separates it. The task then is to determine the procedure that is appropriate to this new methodological consciousness.

#### a) The New Concept of Metaphysics.

After founding mechanics, Descartes immediately undertook to use his new constructive method to define the essence of philosophy. The first characteristic of this method, as opposed to that of the individual sciences, lay in the general approach to the problem and the attempt to derive the initial basic assumptions of the sciences from a highest principle. This brought out basic traits inherent in the essence of philosophy, bringing them to fuller expression than ever before by any earlier system. But its distinctive brilliance lay in the method of its execution. The mathematical natural sciences contain presuppositions that lie outside the special domains of mathematics, mechanics, and astronomy. If these are formulated in evident concepts and propositions and if we grasp the justification of their objective validity, then we can base a constructive procedure on

them. This provides the mechanical point of view with its reliability and the possibility of further expansion. Descartes maintained this over against Galileo and saw in this the superiority of the philosopher over the physicist. Hobbes and Spinoza then made use of the same constructive procedure. Spinoza's new pantheistic system of the identity of spirit and nature results from the application of this method to the actual world, whose given properties are naturally always presupposed. It is an interpretation of the actual world as it is given in experience, on the basis of simple evident truths. This metaphysics of identity provides the foundation for the doctrine of the causal nexus of psychic states, leading from our bondage to the passions to freedom. Leibniz, finally, carried this method further than anyone else. He occupied himself until his death with the Herculean effort of developing his new universal logic as the foundation of constructive procedure. Delineating philosophy by means of the criterion of method has survived in the systems of metaphysics since the seventeenth century.

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The constructive method of these thinkers succumbed to the cognitive critiques of Locke, Hume, and Kant, even though foundations for a theory of knowledge can be found in Leibniz that have been fully appreciated only in recent times. To infer objective validity from the evidence of simple concepts and propositions proved to be untenable. The categories of substance, causality, and purpose were [now] derived from the conditions of perceptual consciousness. Even though the reliability of mathematics had been used to guarantee this constructive philosophical method, Kant pointed out the distinctive foundation for mathematical evidence in intuition. The constructive method also proved to be insufficient in the human sciences. Jurisprudence and natural theology showed that it could not do justice to the fullness of the historical world, either in thought or in political action. As a result, if one did not want to discard every method proper to metaphysics, its procedure had to be restructured. And Kant himself, who overthrew the constructive method in philosophy, also discovered the means for such a restructuring. He regarded the method that he designated as transcendental as the most distinctive aspect of his life's work—and because he saw this as philosophy's main task, it was also most distinctive for philosophy itself. The edifice that he sought to build with it was supposed to have as its foundation the truths found by means of it. In this sense, he retained the term "metaphysics." He also grasped the content of the new principle upon which Schelling, Schleiermacher, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Fechner, and Lotze founded metaphysics.

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According to the great insight of modern philosophy founded upon the epistemology of Locke, Hume, and Kant, the external world is only there for us as a phenomenon. Reality is only given to us in the facts of consciousness (immediately according to the English thinkers; subject to the conditions of consciousness according to Kant). The decisive new feature of Kant's viewpoint is that this reality is a mental <spiritual> nexus, and all the connectedness of the external world derives from it. The simple concepts and propositions at the basis of constructive philosophy are therefore only elements of this nexus that have been isolated by the intellect and abstractly formulated. Modern German metaphysics started from this conception of Kant. German metaphysicians from Schelling to Schopenhauer were contemptuous of intellectual reflection for being content to use mere elements—substances, causal relations, and purposes—that had been abstracted from a living whole. With their new method proceeding from a holistic mental nexus, metaphysics could finally do justice to the human sciences, which had become superficial and trivial through the use of concepts of reflection. It was this assumption of a spiritual nexus that led from the concept of evolution as confirmed by the experience of the natural world to fruitful insights into development. It was the last and most perfect attempt to develop a specifically philosophical method. An attempt of gigantic proportions! But it too had to fail. It is true that consciousness provides the possibility to grasp the systematic order of the world. And at least the formal operations by means of which it provides this order possess the character of necessity. But even this metaphysical method could not find the bridge that leads from necessity as a fact of our consciousness to objective validity. It sought in vain for a path that led from the nexus of consciousness to the insight that in this we are given the inner link of what is actual.

So the possibilities of metaphysical method were probed in Germany, one after another, and always with the same negative result. Among these, two [groups] strove for supremacy during the nineteenth century. Schelling, Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Schopenhauer proceeded from the nexus of consciousness, and each discovered on this basis his principle of the universe. Relying on Herbart,<sup>1</sup> Lotze and Fechner began with the constellation of experiences given in consciousness and undertook to prove that non-contradictory conceptual

<sup>1</sup> Johann F. Herbart (1776–1841), German philosopher and early Neo-Kantian who attempted to reform epistemology in relation to psychology.

cognition of this given is only possible by reducing the given world of sense to spiritual facts and their relations. The first group began with the views of Kant and Fichte, who wanted to elevate philosophy to a universally valid science. The second went back to Leibniz, for whom the explanation of the world could only be a well-grounded hypothesis. The most powerful thinkers within the first group, Schelling and Hegel, took as their starting point Fichte's thesis that the universally valid systematic unity of consciousness manifested in the empirical ego brings forth the systematic coherence of the universe. This thesis was itself a false interpretation of the contents found in consciousness. By taking the nexus of consciousness, as the condition of how the world appears in consciousness and transforming it into that of the universe itself so as to make the pure ego the ground of the world, they transcended all possible experience. In the restless dialectic leading from Fichte's and Schelling's intellectual intuition to Hegel's dialectical method, they sought in vain for a procedure that could show the identity of the logical nexus with the nature of things, of the nexus of consciousness with that of the universe. The contradiction between the objective nexus of things in the world as they found it and the order of things according to laws as they were established by sciences of experience was to have a destructive effect. The other direction of thought, however, led by Lotze and Fechner, who based themselves on Herbart, wanted to show how the given could be consistently brought to conceptual cognition by means of the hypothesis of a spiritual nexus, fell nonetheless into an inner dialectic that was equally destructive. The way from the manifold of what is given in experience back to the origins of all things by means of concepts that cannot be verified by any intuition, led Lotze and Fechner into a night in which real things and monads, the temporal and the atemporal, a universal consciousness as well as an unconscious could all be found by efforts of speculative profundity. They heaped up hypotheses about what is inaccessible to experience and could find neither firm support nor opposition there: One complex of hypotheses was just as possible as another. How could this metaphysics have fulfilled its task of providing the life of individuals and society security and stability in the great crises of the century!

And so this last and most ambitious attempt of human spirit also failed to find a philosophical method that is distinct from the procedure of the sciences of experience and yet able to provide a basis for a metaphysics. It is not possible to take the understanding of

the world as it is given in experience and as it is cognized by means of the individual sciences and deepen it by using a metaphysical method that differs from their way of proceeding.

b) New Non-Metaphysical Definitions of the  
Essence of Philosophy.

357 The task of finding a concept of philosophy's essence able to assert its independent significance over against the individual sciences has produced an inner dialectic that drives thought to other possibilities. If no method can be found that insures metaphysics its right to exist along with the sciences of experience, then philosophy must find other ways to satisfy the spiritual need for universality, for foundations, and for grasping reality. The viewpoint of skepticism must also be overcome in this new state of research. Looking toward the future, philosophy seeks for a response of consciousness to the given that can do justice to the situation created by the newly established experiential sciences. And when a method cannot be found that creates for philosophy an object of its own, a being, such as substance, God, or soul, from which the results of the particular sciences could be derived, the possibility presents itself at first of proceeding from the objective cognitive results of the particular sciences to ground them in an epistemology or theory of cognition.

There is one domain that undeniably belongs to philosophy. If the individual sciences have divided up among themselves the realm of the given actual world so that each treats of a particular part, there then arises a new realm: *these sciences themselves*. Attention is shifted from what is actual to our knowledge of it, and here a domain is found that lies beyond the individual sciences. Ever since this awareness has appeared on the horizon of human thought, it has been recognized as the domain of philosophy: the theory of theories, logic, epistemology. If this domain is grasped in its entirety, then philosophy appropriates the whole theory of the grounding of knowledge in a domain that encompasses the cognition of what is actual, the determining of values, the setting of goals, and the generation of rules. In this way the whole scope of knowledge is philosophy's object and falling under this the relations of the individual sciences to one another, their inner order, according to which each new one presupposes earlier ones and builds on them with the facts from its own domain of inquiry. As a result of the epistemological point of view, the search for foundations and interconnectedness also grows within the individual sciences themselves. This is cultivated by the social character of scientific inquiry in the universities

and the academies. The task and significance of philosophy in these institutions is to keep this spirit alive.

The classical representative of this epistemological grounding of the [experiential] empirical sciences themselves is Helmholtz. He justified philosophy's right to exist along with the particular sciences by claiming that its subject matter is knowledge. Philosophy will always have as its necessary business "to investigate the sources of our knowledge and the measure of its justification."<sup>2</sup> "Philosophy has great significance for the sphere of the sciences as the doctrine of the sources of knowledge and the activities of knowing in the sense that Kant and, insofar as I have understood him, the elder Fichte conceived it."<sup>3</sup>

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Although the essential task of philosophy was transferred to epistemology or the theory of cognition, philosophy's relationship to its basic problem was still preserved. Epistemology arose from a critical analysis of claims to possess objective cognition of what it is that grounds the world and how it coheres as a total system, [what are its] highest value and ultimate purpose. From the futile efforts of metaphysics came the investigation of the bounds of human knowledge. Gradually, in the course of its development, epistemology encompassed the most universal stance of consciousness to what it is given, so that it also most perfectly expresses our relationship to the riddle of the world and of life. It is the stance that Plato had already adopted. Philosophy involves reflection about all the general attitudes that characterize the human spirit, and this reflection may not stop short of questioning their ultimate presuppositions. Kant gave philosophy the same status as Plato. The breadth of Kant's vision is shown in the fact that his critique and grounding of knowledge covers not only the cognition of what is actual, but also the judging of aesthetic values, the assessment of the teleological principle as a way of viewing the world, and the universally valid grounding of ethical rules. And just as every philosophical viewpoint for grasping the world strives to also establish rules of action, so too this epistemological approach, in its greatest representatives, developed philosophy's practical, reformatory influence, and its power to cultivate the ideal of the person. Kant had already explained that the

<sup>2</sup> Hermann von Helmholtz, *Über das Sehen des Menschen* (Leipzig: Leopold Voss, 1855), 5.

<sup>3</sup> Letter from Helmholtz to his father, cited in Friedrich Conrat, *Hermann von Helmholtz' psychologische Anschauungen* (Halle: Verlag von Max Niemeyer, 1904), 256.

concept of philosophy as seeking the goal of the logical perfection of cognition is only an academic concept; “but there is also a worldly concept (*conceptus cosmicus*) of philosophy . . . according to which it is the science of the relation of all cognition to the essential ends of human reason.”<sup>4</sup> The task now, to use Kant’s language, is to find the connection between the academic concept of philosophy and its worldly concept, and today’s Neo-Kantian school has done justice to this demand in some excellent studies.

359 Another non-metaphysical approach to philosophy arose among individual researchers themselves. They were satisfied with a conceptual description of the phenomenal world and with the verification of its lawful order by experimental testing and by confirming effects that had been previously calculated upon the basis of theory. If epistemology begins with the positivity of the results of the individual sciences, it is not able to add to them any new objective cognitive gains, nor is it able to find any new ways of grounding them. Yet it may still hold on to the positive character of the results of these sciences and find the stable point sought for by those recent philosophers who are practically satisfied with their conception of the given and renounce as fruitless all reflection on its universal validity. And if we follow the long chains of reasoning and the difficulties of forming concepts in epistemology, and the disputes among the factions in this field, we then have weighty motives for deciding in favor of this new attitude. Accordingly, philosophy shifts its attention to the logical system of the sciences. With this new standpoint, philosophy appears to have finally achieved an objective conception of the world free from metaphysical and epistemological investigations. While the experiential sciences investigate specific parts or aspects of the actual world, philosophy is left the task of discerning the inner connections among the individual sciences that allow us to cognize the totality of what is actual.

Hereby it becomes an encyclopedia of the sciences in a higher, philosophical sense. Ever since the sciences acquired their autonomy in later antiquity there have been encyclopedias. They were advanced by the activities of the schools, and there was a need for an inventory of the great works of the ancient world. What is important for us here is that since the invasion of the northern peoples and the end of the Western Roman Empire, the German and Roman states began to build on the basis of the ancient world’s culture by

<sup>4</sup> Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A838/B866–A839/B867.

means of encyclopedias. Beginning with Martianus Capella,<sup>5</sup> such encyclopedic works have kept alive, albeit in a crude fashion, ancient thinking about how to represent the world in the sciences. In the three great works of Vincent of Beauvais,<sup>6</sup> such a concept of the encyclopedia was most perfectly fulfilled. From this process of producing inventories of knowledge, which continued throughout the Middle Ages, came the modern philosophical encyclopedia. Its foundational work stems from Lord Chancellor Bacon. Beginning with him, the encyclopedia consciously strove to discover the principle of the interconnectedness of the sciences. Hobbes discovered it first in the natural order of the sciences according to which one science is the presupposition of others. D'Alembert and Turgot then methodically applied the concept of philosophy as a universal science in the French *Encyclopedia*. Finally, Comte presented positive philosophy as the system of the inner relations of the sciences according to their systematic and historical dependence on one another: a system culminating in sociology. A methodological analysis of the individual sciences was made on this basis. The structure of every science was examined, the presuppositions contained in each was identified, and from this the principle of the relationships among the sciences was determined. At the same time, it could be shown how new methods arose in the progression from one science to another. In this way, finally, sociology was furthered and methodologically defined as the true work of philosophy. This brought to completion the system of the sciences, developed from their natural tendency to distinguish themselves from one another, without bringing in a general epistemological foundation, resulting hence in a positive philosophy. It was a significant attempt to constitute philosophy as the immanent nexus of the objective cognition of things. This positivistic conception of philosophy proceeds from the rigorous conception of universally valid knowledge of the mathematical natural sciences, and its further significance for philosophical thought lies in its bringing to bear the demands arising from such a conception, purifying the sciences from every indemonstrable excess resulting from metaphysical conceptions. But because of its inner opposition to metaphysics, this new philosophical position is still historically tied to metaphysics. Moreover, by aiming for a

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<sup>5</sup> Martianus Capella, fifth-century writer, who was one of the first to formulate the system of the seven liberal arts.

<sup>6</sup> Vincent of Beauvais, Dominican friar of the thirteenth century, whose *Speculum Maius* (*The Greater Mirror*) summed up the knowledge of the Middle Ages.



universal, generally valid comprehension of the world, this branch of philosophy remains connected with its trunk.

361 But this second non-metaphysical attitude of philosophical thought extends far beyond the sphere of positivism. Because positivism subordinates the facts of human culture to the cognition of nature, it mixes in a world-view that makes it a specific doctrine within this new philosophical standpoint. We find the same standpoint to also be widespread without the world-view supplement of positivism; it is found among many of the outstanding researchers in the field of the human sciences. It is especially influential in political science and jurisprudence. The imperatives imposed upon the citizens of a state by legislation can be reduced to an interpretation of how the will is expressed in them and to logical analysis and historical explanation without any recourse to universal principles such as the idea of justice as the foundation of positive law and the assessment of its correctness. Such an attitude reveals a philosophical standpoint related to positivism.

This second anti-metaphysical philosophical attitude, as a positivistic conception of the actual world, finds the limits of its power—although it is still extensive, especially in present-day France—in the inability of its phenomenal mode of interpreting things to do justice to the reality of historical consciousness and collective life-values. By the same token, this philosophical standpoint, as a positive interpretation of the legal order, is incapable of providing a foundation for ideals that could act as guides in an age directed to the transformation of society.

The epistemological movement sought the distinctive feature of philosophy in its methodological attitude on which it based methodological self-reflection and a search for the ultimate presuppositions of philosophy's further advance. Positivistic thinking, on the other hand, sought the distinctive feature of philosophy in its function within the system of the sciences and carried on philosophy's search for universality within this context. This still left philosophy with the possibility of seeking its special subject matter in a way that could satisfy its effort to grasp what is real. Since all attempts to penetrate what is truly real by means of metaphysics have failed, the reality of consciousness as a fact emerged all the more strongly. The reality of consciousness is given to us in inner experience and, with it, the possibility of more deeply cognizing the source of the manifold products of the human spirit as they are grasped by the human sciences. Inner experience is the starting point for logic, epistemology, and every theory of the generation of a unitary

world-view; it also provides the basis for psychology, aesthetics, ethics, and related disciplines. This whole domain has always been designated as philosophical. This state of affairs provides the basis for the view that conceives the essence of philosophy as the science of inner experience or as a spiritual/human science.

This standpoint developed after the theory of association was elaborated in eighteenth-century psychology, providing it with an empirical basis and a wide range of applications in epistemology, aesthetics, and ethics. David Hume, in his main work on human nature locates true philosophy in the experientially grounded study of human beings. His repudiation of metaphysics, coupled with the founding of epistemology exclusively on the new [associationist] psychology, in which he at the same time finds the explanatory principles of the human sciences, gave rise to a new system of the human sciences founded upon inner experience. After the creation of the natural sciences, this system, with the theory of human beings as its focus, became the other and greater task for the human spirit. Among those who subsequently contributed to these efforts were Adam Smith, Jeremy Bentham, James Mill, John Stuart Mill, and Alexander Bain. Like Hume, John Stuart Mill wanted to conceive philosophy as the scientific cognizance of man as an intellectual, moral, and social creature. In Germany, Beneke<sup>7</sup> upheld the same standpoint. He adopted it from the English and Scottish school, and only in regard to its execution is he indebted to Herbart.<sup>8</sup> In this sense he declared in his *Foundation of the Physics of Morals*: “If my view becomes accepted, then philosophy as a whole will become the natural science of the human soul.”<sup>9</sup> He was guided by the great truth that inner experience exhibits to us something completely real in the life of the soul, whereas the external world given through the senses is only a phenomenon. And he shows in his *Pragmatic Psychology* how “everything that lies before us as an object for our cognition in logic, morality, aesthetics, the philosophy of religion, even in metaphysics itself,” can be clearly and deeply grasped only if “we conceive it according to the basic developmental laws of the

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<sup>7</sup> Friedrich Eduard Beneke (1798–1854), German philosopher and psychologist who argued that inductive psychology provided the foundation for all philosophical disciplines.

<sup>8</sup> Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841), German philosopher who focused on pedagogical guidelines.

<sup>9</sup> Beneke, *Grundlegung zur Physik der Sitten: ein Gegenstück zu Grundlegung zur Kants Metaphysik der Sitten* (Berlin: In Commision bei E. G Mittler, 1822), x.

human soul as they are set forth in their most systematic form by (theoretical) psychology.”<sup>10</sup> Among later thinkers, Theodor Lipps<sup>11</sup> has explicitly defined philosophy in his *Basic Facts of Psychic Life* as a “human science” or the science of inner experience.

363 The great service performed by these thinkers for the development of the human sciences cannot be doubted. Only after the foundational position of psychology in this area was recognized and psychological cognition applied to the particular human sciences, have they begun to meet the demand for universally valid knowledge. But philosophy’s new standpoint as the science of inner experience could not answer the question of the universal validity of scientific knowledge, and its limited horizon did not permit it to do justice to the questions rightfully posed by positivism. Hence, Theodor Lipps also went on to adopt a new version of his standpoint.

This conception of philosophy creates a very significant relation between this third non-metaphysical attitude of philosophy and its traditional metaphysical problems, a relationship confirmed by both nomenclature and the course of history. The natural sciences select only partial contents of lived experience that can serve to determine changes in the physical world that is independent of us. Thus natural science is only concerned with what are appearances for consciousness. The object of the human sciences, by contrast, is the reality of lived experiences themselves as given in inner experience. Here, therefore, we possess a reality that is lived—admittedly only as lived experience—and which it is philosophy’s unending yearning to grasp. We see here how even this attempt to delimit the concept of philosophy preserves the connection between its essence and its original basic problem.

### 3. Conclusion Concerning the Essence of Philosophy

On the one hand, the result our historical survey is negative. In each of the definitions of the concept of philosophy there appeared only one aspect of its essential concept. Each one of them was only the expression of a standpoint assumed by philosophy in the course of its development. It expressed what one or several thinkers thought was possible in a specific situation or demanded by philosophy as its task. Each of them defined a particular sphere of phenomena as

<sup>10</sup> Beneke, *Pragmatische Psychologie: über Seelenlehre in der Anwendung auf das Leben*, vol. 1 (Berlin: E. G. Mittler & Sohn, 1850), 17.

<sup>11</sup> Theodor Lipps (1851–1914), best known for his theory of empathy (*Einfühlung*) and its application to aesthetic experience.

philosophy and excluded other phenomena designated as philosophy. The great oppositions between these standpoints as they asserted themselves with equal force gain expression in the different concepts of philosophy. Each claims to be equally justified over against the others. And the conflict can only be settled by finding a standpoint above the parties.

The point of view from which these different conceptual determinations of philosophy were formulated was that of systematic philosophers who use their overall system to definitively express what seems to them to be a valuable and soluble task. They are thereby doubtless within their rights to define their own philosophy. They do not deny that philosophy in the course of its history has also posed other tasks for itself, but they declare those solutions to be either impossible or without value, so that philosophy's efforts in those directions seem to be enduring illusions. Insofar as a particular philosopher is clear about this sense of his definition there can be no doubt as to the justification of his limitation of philosophy to epistemology or to the sciences founded on inner experience or the systematic order of the sciences in which cognition is actually realized.

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The task of defining the essence of philosophy, which is to clarify how the term has been used and how individual philosophers have conceived of it, leads by necessity from the systematic to the historical point of view. The task is not to determine what counts here or now as philosophy, but what always and everywhere constitutes its subject matter. All the specific concepts of philosophy only point toward this universal content, which makes it possible to explain the manifold manifestations of philosophy and the differences in how it is conceived. The superiority of this historical standpoint is proven by the fact that it permits us to understand the necessity of the self-certainty with which these individual systems appear and make their pronouncements about philosophy. Viewed historically, each solution of a philosophical problem belongs to a particular time and a particular situation. Human beings as creatures of the time in which they work find their security by raising what they create above the flux of time as something enduring. While under this illusion, they create more joyfully and powerfully. Herein lies the eternal contradiction between creative minds and historical consciousness. It is natural for creative minds to forget what no longer is and to ignore what might be better in the future; but historical consciousness draws on the gathered presence of all times, and it perceives in all individual creations a co-given relativity and transience. This contradiction is the quietly endured burden most characteristic of contemporary philosophy. The contemporary philosopher's own

creativity merges with historical consciousness because without this his philosophy would only encompass a fragment of what is actual. He must know that his creative work is only a part of a historical nexus within which he brings about something that is limited. Then he will be able to resolve this contradiction, as we will see later. He can now give himself over to the power of historical consciousness, even viewing his daily efforts under the standpoint of the historical nexus in which the essence of philosophy unfolds in its various manifold forms.

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From this historical standpoint, each particular concept of philosophy becomes an instance that refers to the formative law governing the content of philosophy. No matter how untenable each of the definitions of the concept of philosophy attempted from the systematic standpoint may be, they are nonetheless all important for the resolution of the question of the essence of philosophy. For they are an essential part of the historical facts from which we now draw our conclusions.

To reach a conclusion, we gather all the empirical data that we have considered. The name "philosophy" proved to be applied to the most varied state of affairs. We saw that the essence of philosophy was exceedingly changeable, always setting itself new tasks and adjusting itself to the conditions of culture. It conceives certain problems as worthwhile and then discards them. At one cognitive level, questions seem soluble to it, and then it later drops them as insoluble. But we always saw in it the same tendency towards universality, towards grounding, the same direction of mind towards the whole of the given world. All the while, the metaphysical urge to penetrate the core of this whole vies with the positivistic demand for the universal validity of knowledge. These are the two sides of philosophy's essence that distinguish it from even the most closely related spheres of culture. In contrast to the particular sciences, it strives to solve the very riddle of the world and life. And in contrast to art and religion, it seeks to provide this solution in a way that is universally valid. For this is the main result of the historical facts we have been discussing: a consistent, self-contained historical nexus leads from the metaphysical cognition of the Greeks, which undertook to resolve the riddle of the world and life in a way that was universally valid, to the most radical positivists or skeptics in the present age; everything that takes place in philosophy is determined in some way by this starting point and its basic problem. Philosophy runs through all the ways that it is possible for the human spirit to respond to the riddle of the world and life.

In this historical nexus, the task and achievement of each particular philosophical position is to actualize one such possibility under given conditions. Each brought to expression an essential feature of philosophy, and at the same time its limitations pointed to the teleological nexus that conditions it as a part of a whole in which alone the complete truth is found. This complex historical state of affairs is explained by the fact that [in addition] to what philosophy contributes on its own, it performs a derivative function in the purposive system of society. The way that philosophy fulfills this function in its different phases is determined by its relationship to the whole as well as to the state of culture according to time and place, life-relationships, and personality. Hence, philosophy does not allow for a rigid definition on the basis of a specific subject matter or a specific method.

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This state of affairs that informs the essence of philosophy binds together all philosophical thinkers. Here we find the explanation for an essential feature that confronted us in the different manifestations of philosophy. We saw that the name "philosophy" designates something that recurs uniformly and is always there whenever this name is used. But at the same time, it involves the inner connectedness of those who participate in it. If philosophy is a function that fulfills a particular purpose in society, it places those in whom this purpose lives into an inner relationship. The leaders of philosophical schools are bound this way with their followers. In the academies that have emerged since the founding of the particular sciences, we find these sciences engaged in common efforts, reciprocally completing each other, led by the idea of the unity of knowledge. Consciousness of this connectedness is embodied in philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, and Leibniz. Finally, in the eighteenth century the universities became instruments for the organization of the joint effort of the sciences in which teachers were bound to one another and to their students. In the universities too, philosophy had the function of keeping alive a consciousness of the ground, overall coherence, and goal of knowledge. All these organizations are included in the inner purposive system in which, beginning with Thales and Pythagoras, one thinker transmits problems to others and truths are passed on. Possibilities for the solution of problems are thought through successively: World-views are advanced and refined. Great thinkers actively influence every subsequent age.

### 3. THE CONNECTING LINKS BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOSITY, LITERATURE, AND POETRY

367 The systems of the great thinkers by which philosophy manifests itself preeminently and indubitably, as well as the historical nexus of these systems, have led us to a seminal insight into the function of philosophy. But we cannot yet account for the use of the terms “philosophy” and “philosophical” on the basis of this function. These terms are also attached to phenomena that are not determined exclusively by this function of philosophy. We must enlarge our horizon in order to explain these facts.

The affinity of philosophy with religion, literature and poetry has always been noticed. An inner relationship to the riddle of the world and life is common to all three of them. And so the terms “philosophy” and “philosophical” or related ones are applied to intellectual constellations in the field of religiosity as well as to the experience and conduct of life, literary activity, and poetry.

The Greek apologists simply call Christianity philosophy. According to Justin,<sup>1</sup> Christ, as the human embodiment of divine reason, definitively solves the questions that the true philosophers have struggled with. And for Minucius Felix,<sup>2</sup> philosophy, which finds its fulfillment in Christianity, consists of eternal truths about God, human responsibility, and immortality, which are founded on reason and can be proved by means of reason. Christians, he says, are the (true) philosophers today, and philosophers of pagan times were in effect Christians. Another very significant Christian group designates the knowledge that fulfills faith as “gnosis.” Heretical *gnosis* has its roots in the experience of the moral power of Christianity to liberate the soul from the senses, and it gives a metaphysical interpretation of this experience in historical religious intuitions. Within the Church, Clement of Alexander conceives of an [ecclesiastical] gnosis that elevates Christian faith to the level of knowledge and can be granted the right to interpret the higher meaning of Holy Scripture. In the treatise *De Principiis*, an ecclesiastically elaborated system, Origen<sup>3</sup> defines gnosis as the procedure that can ground the truths contained in the tradition of the apostles. At the same time Greco-Roman speculation provided an analogous connecting link

<sup>1</sup> Justin Martyr (ca. 100—ca. 165), Greek theologian. One of the Church Fathers.

<sup>2</sup> Marcus Minucius Felix, one of the earliest of the Latin apologists for Christianity.

<sup>3</sup> Origen (c. 185—c. 253), a Christian exegete and theologian, who made copious use of the allegorical method in his commentaries.

in Neo-Platonism. Here the philosophical impulse finds its ultimate satisfaction in a mystical union with the divine, namely, in a religious experiential process. Therefore, Porphyry<sup>4</sup> views the motive and goal of philosophy as the salvation of the soul, and Proclus<sup>5</sup> prefers to use the term “theology” for his thought rather than “philosophy.” The intellectual means through which religion and philosophy are to be brought to an inner unity are the same in all these systems. The first is the doctrine of the *logos*. In the divine unity there is a power to impart itself so that philosophical and religious forms of communication are seen to proceed from it as essentially related. Another such means of thought is allegorical interpretation. By means of it, particular and historical aspects of religious belief and Holy Scripture are elevated to a universal world-view. In the systems themselves, philosophical impulse and religious belief, intellectual grounding and mystical union with the Godhead, are so intimately connected with each other that the religious and philosophical appear to be aspects of the same process. For in this period of struggle among the religions, the rise of significant personalities suggests the creative idea that there is a general type of developmental history for higher souls. The highest forms of medieval mysticism depend on this development so that here too these two spheres are not merely run together but form a profound inner nexus from the psychological point of view. These spiritual developments produced radical terminological changes allowing Jakob Böhme to call his life’s work a “holy philosophy.”

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While all these facts point to an inner relationship between religiosity and philosophy, this becomes even clearer as it becomes obvious that the history of philosophy cannot exclude such intermediate forms that fall between philosophy and religiosity. These have a place in the progression from life-experience to psychological consciousness of it as well as in the genesis and development of a view of life. Hence, this intermediate phase between religiosity and philosophy makes it necessary to go behind the essential features of philosophy established so far to discern contexts whose scope is both broader and deeper.

This same necessity arises when we consider the relations that exist to life-experience, literature, and poetry as they influence their

<sup>4</sup> Porphyry (c. 234—c. 305), a Neoplatonic philosopher who edited and published the *Enneads* of Plotinus.

<sup>5</sup> Proclus (412–485 C.E.), a philosopher of late antiquity who played a crucial role in the transmission of Platonic philosophy from antiquity to the Middle Ages.



historical context and how things are named and concepts defined. Literary figures who strive to move the public through an unsailable point of view join with those who proceed purely on the basis of philosophical research. Both are unconcerned with system-building and manifest a common desire to ground and express the knowledge of life in a way that is more free and humane.

369 Lessing can be seen as a representative of the first group of literary figures. He was a naturally born writer. As a young man he took notice of philosophical systems, but did not think of taking sides in the disputes between them. Yet each of the small and great tasks that he took upon himself required him to search for fixed concepts and truths. Whoever wants to lead the reading public must himself know where he is going. In this way Lessing was led from limited tasks to problems of an ever-greater kind. Without doing the systematic work of philosophers, he solved these problems through the power contained in his own essential being, as it had been shaped by the times. An ideal of life arose in him out of life itself. The doctrine of determinism came to him from the philosophy around him, and the people he knew so well confirmed it. On this basis, he came in his theological writings to a particular notion of divine power that grounds the necessary order of things. This and other considerations gave his ideas a kind of inner structure that is very different from the essential characteristics of philosophy as we have characterized them so far. And yet nobody hesitates to speak of Lessing's *philosophy*. He adopts a definite standpoint in the history of this sphere of life and claims it as his own. All the literary figures for whom he is representative point to an intermediate sphere that combines philosophy and literature.

This very same intermediate sphere also includes the other group that left systematic philosophy behind in order to solve the riddle of life and the world by means of a more subjective, less formal way of thinking. This group occupies a prominent place in the history of the human spirit. This is especially the case whenever an epoch of systematic thinking has ended and the values of life that had been validated by that epoch are no longer appropriate for the changed human state of affairs, and whenever carefully and subtly developed conceptual cognition of the world is no longer sufficient to deal with new facts revealed by experience. In situations of this kind, such thinkers come on the scene and proclaim a new day in the life of philosophy. We see this in the philosophers of the Roman Stoic school, who used their concern with the philosophy of action to throw off the weight of Greek systematic thought and make their goal a freer interpretation of life. Marcus Aurelius, who found the

most congenial style for this kind of thought in his *Meditations*, sees the essence of philosophy in a life-attitude that follows the God within us, raising us above the violence and squalor of the world. Yet these thinkers had a firm background for their perspective on life in the systematic doctrines of Stoic theory, and so they retained a direct and inner connection with the movement of philosophy that acknowledges the demand for universal validity. Indeed, they take their place in philosophy as a further development of a theory of personality based on pantheistic determinism. This is a movement that recurs in nineteenth-century German philosophy, and because of the nature of such a theory of personality it also shows a strong tendency towards more free modes of expressions. However, a series of modern thinkers broke away even more decisively from philosophy's demand for universal validity. The art of life-experience and life-conduct during the Renaissance had its fruition in the essays of Montaigne. Montaigne leaves behind him the medieval assessment of life and abandons the demand for foundations and universal validity even more decisively than Marcus Aurelius. Only in occasional and brief remarks does his work go beyond the study of human beings: He regards his essays as his philosophy. For him philosophy is about cultivating judgment and an ethos; firmness and honesty are the source of genuine or true philosophy. And by the way that Montaigne characterizes his work as philosophy, he assumes an indispensable role in the history of this sphere of life. Similarly, Carlyle, Emerson, Ruskin, Nietzsche, even Tolstoy and Maeterlinck, have just as little to do with systematic philosophy and they turn away from it more self-consciously and firmly than Montaigne and most consistently eliminate every connection with philosophy as science.

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These phenomena, like mysticism, are not dim mixtures of philosophy with some other sphere of life; rather, they express a development of the human psyche. Let us try to grasp the essence of this modern philosophy of life. It forms a side of philosophy that gradually relaxes the methodological demand for universal validity and unconditional grounding, and the procedure by which the interpretation of life is drawn from life-experience gradually assumes increasingly freer forms. Aperçus are combined to create an unmethodical but impressive interpretation of life. This genre of literary activity is related to the ancient art of the sophists and rhetoricians that was strictly excluded from the field of philosophy by Plato because they allowed persuasion to take the place of methodological proof. And yet a strong inner bond connects a few of these thinkers with the movement of philosophy itself. Their art of persuasion is

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oddly bound up with a terrible seriousness and a great sense of truthfulness. Their eyes remain fixed upon the riddle of life, but they are doubtful that this can be solved by means of a universally valid metaphysics or on the basis of a theory of the world-order. Life should be interpreted in terms of itself—that is the great thought that connects these philosophers of life with experience of the world and with poetry. From Schopenhauer on, such thinking has become ever more hostile to systematic philosophy. It is now the focus of philosophical interest for the younger generation and has produced works that express a literary trend of some magnitude and independent character. And as these thinkers claim the name of philosophy for themselves, they prepare the way today, the way the religious thinkers did at one time, for the future development of systematic philosophy. For after the complete destruction of the universally valid science of metaphysics, a new method must be found that is independent of it in order to determine and make decisions about the values, goals, and rules of life. On the basis of a descriptive and analytic psychology that proceeds from the overall structure of psychic life, we shall have to seek for a solution to this problem that contemporary philosophers of life have set for themselves within the bounds of methodological science, even though it will be a more modest and less dogmatic solution.

The complex relation between religion, philosophy, life-experience, and literature that we meet with at this level demands that we turn back to the relations that exist between the forces of culture in the individual and in society. Uncertainty about how to delimit philosophy, based upon the changing character of its defining marks, leads us to define philosophy as a function that can only be understood fully if we go back to the life-nexus that encompasses the individual and society to find philosophy's proper place in them. That requires the application of a new way of proceeding.

## TWO

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### The Essence of Philosophy Understood through Its Place in the World of Human Spirit

Thus far we have inductively derived the essential features of philosophy from the instances that bear the name of philosophy and the concepts formed of them in the history of philosophy. These led us back to a function of philosophy as a uniform state of affairs in society through which all philosophizing persons could be linked to the inner nexus of the history of philosophy. Philosophy also manifested itself in various intermediate forms in such contexts as religion, reflection on life, literature, and poetry. These inductive results from the historical facts will now be confirmed by a cognitive definition of the essence of philosophy by placing them in the context in which they fulfill their function. In this way, the concept of philosophy is completed by explicating its relation to concepts to which it is subordinate as well as to those with which it can be coordinated.

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#### 1. LOCATING THE FUNCTION OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE NEXUS OF PSYCHIC LIFE, SOCIETY, AND HISTORY

##### 1. Philosophy's Place in the Structure of Psychic Life

We understand historically given facts only through the inwardness of psychic life. The science that describes and analyzes this inwardness is descriptive psychology. Hence it also grasps from within, as it were, philosophy's function in the life of the mind and determines its relationship to the other spiritual activities that are most akin to it. In this way it brings to completion the conceptual essence of philosophy. For philosophy requires the kind of concept that encompasses a complex of defining marks that explicate a real nexus based on the reflexive awareness of lived experience as well as the re-understanding of others. By contrast, the theoretical natural sciences only register the commonalities given in phenomena to the senses.

All human productivity springs from psychic life and its relations to the external world. Since the sciences always seek to find regularities, the study of spiritual creations must proceed from regularities of mental life. These are of two kinds. We can observe changes in psychic life and establish uniformities about them. Our attitude towards these is like the one we have towards external nature. Science ascertains such changes by isolating particular processes from complex lived experiences and inductively deriving regularities from them. Thus we come to cognize processes of association, reproduction, or apperception. Here every change is an instance that is subsumable under uniformities. They constitute an aspect of psychology that finds the explanative grounds for human products. In this way, the distinctive formative processes through which perceptions are transformed into fantasy images act as a partial explanation of the origins of myth, saga, legend, and artistic creativity. However, the processes of psychic life are also connected by another kind of relationship. They are united as parts of the nexus of psychic life that I also call "psychic structure." It is a pattern according to which psychic facts of various kind become connected with one another by an inner experienceable relation as the life of the mind develops. The basic form of this psychic nexus is defined by the fact that all psychic life is conditioned by its milieu and in turn responds to this milieu purposively. Sensations are called forth and represent the manifold nature of external causes. Stimulated by the relation of these causes to our own life and how this is expressed in feeling, we turn our interest to these impressions: We apperceive, distinguish, relate, judge, and make inferences. Under the influence of objective apprehension, we then attain on the basis of a manifold of feelings ever more accurate assessments of the value of aspects of life and of the external causes affecting our own life and the system of our drives. Guided by these assessments, we change the organization of the milieu by means of purposive acts of the will, or we accommodate our own life-processes to our needs by purposive acts of will. That is the nature of human life. And within this human life-nexus, perception, memory, thought-processes, drives, feelings, desires, and acts of will are interwoven with one another in the most manifold ways. Each lived experience as a moment that fulfills our existence is a composite.

The structural psychic nexus has a teleological character. Whenever pleasure and pain provide the experience of what is valuable to us, we respond attentively by selecting and appropriating impressions,

by striving and acts of will, by prioritizing goals and seeking the means for attaining them.

Objective apprehension already manifests a purposiveness: The forms of representing what is actual constitute stages in a purposive system in which the objective world attains an ever more complete and conscious representation. This general attitude through which we apprehend what is given and how we experience it generates our world-picture, our concepts of the actual world, and the particular sciences among which our cognition of it is distributed. This, then, is the purposive system of our cognition of what is actual. At every stage of this process our drives and feelings play a part. They form the core of our psychic structure; from there all the depths of our being are stirred. We seek to attain the kind of feeling of life that can somehow silence our wishes. Life constantly is engaged in approaching this goal, but as soon as we seem to have grasped it, the goal recedes. Only the progression of experience teaches individuals what is of enduring value for them. The main work of life, from this perspective is to overcome illusions and to come to recognize what is truly of value for us. The nexus of processes by which we test the values of life and of things I call "life-experience." It presupposes cognizance of what is, that is, our objective grasp of things. And our acts of will, whose immediate purpose is directed at changes outside or within ourselves, are at the same time means to finding the value of different aspects of life as well as of external things—should our interest be directed there. Through familiarity with human beings, history, and poetry, the means to life-experience become enlarged, and so does its horizon. And in this respect our life can attain a certain assurance only if it is elevated to the level of universally valid knowledge. Can such knowledge, however, ever answer the question of what is unconditionally valuable?

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Consciousness of life's values is the basis for a third and final nexus in which we seek to guide and order things, human beings, society, and ourselves by means of our own acts of will. This nexus includes goals, goods, duties, rules of life, and the whole great effort of our practical activity in the fields of law, economics, social regulation, and the control of nature. Also within this general attitude, consciousness proceeds to ever higher forms. The final, highest form sought by us is that of action on the basis of universally valid knowledge, and once more the question arises to what extent this goal can be achieved.

Goal-oriented beings who are directed to the values of life posited by their drives will develop themselves while differentiating

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among their capacities and their reciprocal relations to this goal. Their development arises from the structure of psychic life. Each moment, each epoch of our life, has an independent value in itself insofar as its particular conditions make possible a particular kind of satisfaction and fulfillment of our existence. At the same time, however, all the stages of life are linked as a developmental history by which we aspire with the advance of time to achieve an ever richer development of the values of life and an ever more stable and higher articulation of the life of the soul. And here too we meet the same basic relationship between life and knowledge; in the elevation of our consciousness and the raising our activity to the level of valid, well-founded knowledge lies an essential condition for the articulation of our inner life.

This inner nexus shows how the empirically established function of philosophy follows inherently from the basic characteristics of psychic life. If we imagine an individual who is completely isolated and also free from the temporal limitations of finite existence, this person will still apprehend what is actual, experience values, and actualize goods according to the rules of life. A reflective attitude towards his activity must arise in him, and it will reach completion only with universally valid knowledge about this activity. And, just as objective apprehension, the inwardly felt experience of values, and the realization of the goals of life are interconnected in the depths of this structure, this individual will seek to grasp this inner nexus in the form of universally valid knowledge. The world-cognition, the life-experience, and principles of action that cohere in this structure must also somehow be unified in conscious thought, and this leads the individual to philosophize. Philosophy is embedded in the structure of human beings. Each of us, no matter what our position, is engaged in an approximation to it, and each human endeavor tends towards philosophical reflection.

## 2. THE STRUCTURE OF SOCIETY AND THE PLACE OF RELIGION, ART, AND PHILOSOPHY IN IT

The individual human being as an isolated being is a mere abstraction. Family relations, local communal life, cooperation in the division of labor <competition and communal work, the manifold associations that arise from the common pursuit of purposes>, and the power relations of dominance and submission make the individual a member of society. Since this society consists of structured individuals, the same structural regularities are at work there. The

subjective and immanent purposiveness of individuals manifests itself in history as development. Regularities in the singular psyche are transformed into those of social life. The differentiation of the capacities of the individual and their higher-level interrelations assume more stable and productive forms in the social division of labor. The chain of successive generations allows for unlimited development because the products of each kind of work persist as the basis for ever new generations to build on. Intellectual activity continually spreads to other regions, led by a consciousness of solidarity and progress. This is how continuity comes about in social endeavors, how the intellectual energies expended on it grow, and the resulting contributions gain increasing articulation. These rational moments at work in social life that have been recognized by social psychology are subject to conditions that underlie the very essence of historical existence. Race, climate, life-circumstances, social class, and political development, as well as the personal peculiarities of individuals and groups give to every spiritual product its particular character. But despite all this variety, the same purposive systems, which I designate as cultural systems, are generated by the ever-constant structure of life, only with different historical modifications.

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Philosophy can now be defined as one of these cultural systems of human society. For through the coexistence of persons and the sequence of the generations, those who assume the function of grappling with the riddle of the world and of life through universally valid concepts are united in a purposive system. It is now the task to determine the place of this cultural system in the social household.

We cognize what is the case based on how the experiences of successive generations are linked together by the uniformity of our thinking and the identity of a world that is independent of us. As conceptual cognition is constantly expanding, it becomes differentiated into an ever-increasing number of particular sciences; yet it remains a unity by virtue of their shared relation to the oneness of what is actual and their common requirement to provide universally valid knowledge. This provides the culture of our generation the stable, unifying, progressive, and guiding basis for approaching the particular sciences.

Human culture extends from this great [cognitive] system to all those of its systems in which volitional actions are integrated and differentiated. For even the voluntary acts of individuals can form a nexus that endures throughout changing generations. The regularities within specific spheres of conduct, the selfsameness of the actual



world at which they are directed, and the demand for the coordination of actions in order to realize certain ends, all bring about the cultural systems of economic life, law, and technology. All of this conduct is filled with life values; joy and the enhancement of our existence inhere in such activities themselves and are derived from them.

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and effect and from the limits of place and time if it were not for the fact that human beings always have available to them the realm of religion, poetry, and philosophy that can liberate them from such narrowness. The intuitive insights that guide our life here and now must always somehow encompass the relatedness of what is actual, of values and ideals, and finally of purposes and rules. The creative aspect of the religious intuition always lies in a conception of the overall efficacy of things that directs the individual. Poetry is always the presentation of some occurrence, grasped in its significance. As far as philosophy is concerned, it is obvious that its conceptual, systematic procedure is a function of the objective attitude. Poetry remains in the sphere of feeling and intuitive insight because it not only excludes every limited, determinate purpose, but the volitional attitude itself. By contrast, the formidable seriousness of religion and philosophy lies in the fact that they grasp in the structure of our souls the inner nexus that proceeds from the apprehension of what is actual to the setting of goals and, by fathoming this in its depths, they seek to give shape to life. In this way they are brought to a responsible consideration of life, which is this totality. In the full awareness of their truthfulness they become active forces in the shaping of life. Closely related as they are, they must—precisely because they have the same intention of shaping life—breed contention to the point of struggle for their existence. Here the profundity of mind and the universal validity of conceptual thought compete with each other.

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Religion, art, and philosophy are incorporated in this way into the unyielding and fixed purposive systems of the particular sciences and the institutional order of social action. Akin to one another and yet foreign in their intellectual approaches, they stand in the strangest of relationships. We must now try to make sense of this, which leads us back to the human disposition to form a world-view and how philosophy strives to ground this as universally valid. This will expose us to the other side of philosophy, namely, how from the concepts and sciences developed in life, the philosophical function of generalization and unification is generated.

## 2. THE THEORY OF WORLD-VIEWS: RELIGION AND POETRY IN THEIR RELATIONS TO PHILOSOPHY

Religion, art, and philosophy have a common basic form that is rooted in the structure of psychic life. Each moment of our existence refers our own life to the world that surrounds us as an envisioned

whole. We feel ourselves and the inherent life value of the particular moment; we also feel how the instrumental value of things for us relates to the objective world. In the course of reflection, the experience of life and the development of a world-picture come together. The evaluation of life presupposes acquaintance with what is, and the actual world acquires different kinds of illumination from our inner life. Nothing is more fleeting, fragile, or changeable than the mood of human beings over against the overall nexus of things. This is documented in those lovely poems that conjoin an image of nature with an expression of inner life. Our apprehension of the world and evaluation of life are in constant flux like the shadows of clouds that move over a landscape. The religious person, the artist, and the philosopher are differentiated from run-of-the mill human beings as well as from geniuses in other realms by the fact that they retain in memory such moments of life and raise their content to consciousness and combine these individual experiences so as to create a general experience of life itself. In doing so they fulfill an important function, not only for themselves, but also for society.

Everywhere interpretations of reality called world-views arise in this way. Just as a sentence has a sense or meaning and brings it to expression, these interpretations aim to express the sense and meaning of the world. But these interpretations are quite variable even in the same individual! They change under the influence of experiences, either gradually or suddenly. The epochs of human life, as Goethe saw, run through a typical development of world-views. Time and place condition their variety. Life-outlooks, artistic expressions of world-understanding, religious dogmas, and philosophical formulas cover the earth like a vegetation of countless forms. And like the plants on the ground, they seem to struggle for existence and space. Only a few, aided by the greatness of personality, gain power over the people. Saints seek to imitate the life and death of Christ, a long series of artists see human beings with the eyes of Raphael, while Kant's idealism of freedom pulls along Schiller, Fichte, and most of the important figures of the following generation. The shifting currents of psychic life, the contingency and particularity of the content of life's different moments, the uncertainty and changing character of our interpretations, evaluations, and goals, this inner misery of naive consciousness, so wrongly extolled by Rousseau or Nietzsche, are now overcome. The mere form of religious, artistic, or philosophical attitudes provides stability and calm and produces a nexus binding the religious genius and the faithful, the master artist

and his students, a philosophical personality and those who stand under his influence.

So now we have clarified what is to be understood by the riddle of the world and of life as the common object of religion, philosophy, and poetry. The structure of a world-view always holds the experience of life and a world-picture in an inner relation from which it is always possible to derive an ideal of life. Analysis of the higher formations in these three spheres of creation as well as the relation of what is actual to values and determinations of will in the structure of psychic life lead to this insight. Accordingly, the structure of a world-view consists of a nexus in which constituents of different origin and character are united. The basic difference between these constituents goes back to the differentiation of psychic life that we have designated as its structure. The application of the name "world-view" to a spiritual formation that encompasses cognition of the world, ideals, the giving of rules, and the determination of a highest end is justified by the fact that this never assumes an intention to engage in particular actions, and accordingly never includes a determinate practical attitude.

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The problem of the relationship between philosophy and religion and poetry can now be reduced to the question of the relationships between different structures of world-views in these three of its forms. For they are closely related only insofar as they each prepare for or contain a world-view. Just as the botanist orders plants into classes and investigates the law of their growth, so too whoever makes differentiations within philosophy must seek out the types of world-views and recognize the lawfulness in their formation. Such a comparative point of view elevates the human mind to a position above the limited conviction that it has grasped the truth itself in one of these world-views. Just as the objectivity of great historians restrains them from passing judgment on the ideals of particular periods, so too the philosopher must understand through historical comparisons that the observing consciousness which limits itself to registering objects must be understood historically and comparatively. He must then assume a position above all of them. With that he exemplifies the historicity of consciousness.

The religious world-view is structurally different from the poetic, and both are different from the philosophical. This accords with the different configurations of the types of world-views within each of these cultural systems. And these basic differences between the philosophical, religious, and poetic world-views produce the possibility that a transition of a world-view from the religious or artistic form

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to the philosophical form will occur and vice versa. The transition to a philosophical form occurs chiefly due to the mental tendency to give fixity and coherence to its activity, which can ultimately be attained only by universally valid thought. In this way the questions arise: What is distinctive about the structure of these different forms? According to what laws are the religious or artistic transformed into the philosophical? At the limits of this investigation, we come to the general problem, which we have no room to consider here: The question of the lawful relationships that determine the variability in the structure and the variety of types of world-view. Here too the method must be to first consult historical experience and then to articulate the psychic lawfulness exhibited in the results.

### 1. The Religious World-View and Its Relations to the Philosophical World-View

The concept of religion resembles that of philosophy. To begin with, it refers to something that recurs as an aspect of the life of socially-related individuals. And because it places the individuals involved in inner relations to one another and binds them together as part of a nexus, the concept of religion refers at the same time to a system that binds religious individuals as members of a whole. Defining the concept of religion is subject to the same difficulty that we saw with regard to philosophy. The scope of religious facts would have to be established according to the usage of the term and what is associated with it so that then the concept of its essence can be derived from the broad range of facts that fall under it. This is not the place to discuss the methodological procedure that solves these difficulties. Here only its results will be used for the purpose of differentiating between religious world-views.

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A world-view is religious insofar as it has its origin in a particular type of experience that is rooted in a religious occurrence or process. Wherever the name "religion" appears, its characteristic feature is communion with the invisible. For this is the case even at its most primitive levels as well as in the last stages of its development when this communion consists only in the inner relation of actions to something that transcends everything empirical. Religion can involve such an ideal that makes possible a religious attitude or a relation to the divine order of things. By means of this communion, religion develops its forms throughout history to become an ever more comprehensive and perfectly differentiated structural nexus. Religious experience is the process whereby this takes place

and must contain the productive basis of all religious views and the cognitive basis for every religious truth. This is a form of life-experience, whose specific character lies in the reflection that accompanies communion with the invisible. Life-experience considers the progression of our lived experiences to reflect on the values of life, the productive values of things, and the resulting highest purposes and rules of action. What is distinctive about religious life-experience is that wherever religiosity rises to full consciousness, it places the highest and unconditionally valid value of life in the communion with the invisible and finds in the invisible object of this communion the unconditionally valid and ultimate productive value from which all happiness and blessedness flow. Accordingly, the invisible becomes the starting point for all determinations of the goals and rules of action. This is decisive for the distinctive nature of the religious world-view. Its focal point is the religious experience in which the totality of psychic life is in play. The religious experience based on this totality defines every aspect of this world-view. All insights concerning the unity of the world, insofar as they are considered in isolation, arise from this communion. This unity must therefore be grasped as a force that stands in relation to our life, viz. as a spiritual force, for only that can make such a communion possible. The ideal of life, i.e., the inner order of its values, must be defined through the religious relationship. From it, finally, must derive the highest rule for relations among human beings.

The various ways in which this religious communion can occur and the consciousness of religious experience can develop make it possible to distinguish the historical stages and forms in which the religious world-view takes shape.

In the earliest instances of religiosity still accessible to us we always find belief and practice joined together. They presuppose one another. For no matter how the belief that there are living, productive, and will-like forces that surround human life may have arisen, we find the further development of this belief, as far as we can trace it through ethnology and history, to be determined by the way in which religious objects are shaped by the practices directed at them. Belief in turn determines religious cult since its practices only achieve their goal by cultivating belief. For primitive peoples religion is the technique of influencing what cannot be grasped and what is inaccessible to mere mechanical change, of assimilating its powers, of uniting with it, and of entering into a desired relationship with it. Such religious practices are perfected by select individuals, whether a chieftain or a magician-priest. To carry out these

practices a kind of occupational class is developed. Everywhere at the beginning of the differentiation of male vocations we see the emergence of the uncanny profession of the magician, traditional healer, or priest—not particularly respected, yet regarded with a sometimes fearful, sometimes expectant, awe. From this there gradually forms an organized social class that carries out all religious activities: the technique of magical actions, atonement, and purification. This class is the proprietor of knowledge until an independent science arises and breaks away from it. This professional class frees itself for the divine through asceticism; it must preserve its relation to the invisible through renunciations that separate it from all other persons in holiness and dignity. This is the first limited way in which the religious ideal is prepared for.

From this communion with the invisible, as mediated by special persons and directed at attaining goods and averting evils, primitive religious ideas are formed at this level of religiosity. These ideas stem from the mythic level of representation and its inner lawfulness. Part of the original vitality and wholeness of humanity is that in its concerns with the external world, it experiences manifestations of something living, and this is the universal presupposition for religious communion. The technique of religious practices necessarily reinforced this form of apprehension. As subjective, variable, and manifold as these experiences were, each nomadic horde or tribe gave them a uniformity by making the religious experience communal, which gained these experiences an acceptance based on their own logic of analogy. Where no comparison with scientific evidence was yet available, it was much easier to establish a shared firmness of belief. When dreams, visions, and abnormal nervous conditions of all kinds entered into life as miraculous, the logic of religion gained experiential material that was especially suited to serve as verification of the influence of the invisible. The suggestive power of the contents of belief and their mutual justification, following the same religious logic as did their initial establishment, is then augmented by a would-be experimental confirmation that derives from the efficacy of fetishes in their magical manipulation. And today we still see the power of a devotional image being put to the test by people who are sick and testified to by pictures and reports from pilgrimage shrines; then there are the actions of magicians, oracle priests, monks, vehement movements, and extraordinary states accompanied by apparitions and revelations, called forth by fasting, loud music, and some kind of intoxication—all that strengthens the religious form of certainty. But the essential fact is that in the

earliest stages of culture accessible to us, according to the nature of the people at that time and their conditions of life, primitive religious belief developed everywhere from the same powerful experiences of birth, death, sickness, dream, and madness. In every living, animated body there dwells a second ego, the soul (sometimes also conceived as a plurality), that leaves it temporarily in life and separates from it permanently in death, becoming capable of different activities in its existence as a shade. All of nature is animated by spirit-like creatures that affect human beings and which they can in turn strive to influence by magic, sacrifice, cult, and prayer to make them positively inclined towards them. The sky, sun, and stars contain divine forces. Finally, we find among peoples of earlier levels of development, another set of ideas concerning the origin of human life and the world, which we will not elaborate here.

All the above primitive ideas form the foundation for the religious world-view. They undergo transformations, they grow together, and every advancing stage of culture works towards this development. Within this gradual transformation of religiosity lies the decisive moment for progress towards a world-view encompassing changing forms of communion with the invisible. Beyond the official cult, with its temples, sacrifices, and ceremonies, there emerges a freer, esoteric relation between the soul and the divine. A more cultivated religious stratum enters into a special relationship with the divine, secluding itself but also allowing others to join. This new religiosity comes to full expression in certain mysteries, a hermetic life, and prophecy. The mysterious power of personality is revealed in the religious genius who encompasses in his essence comprehension of the world, evaluation of life, and the organization of its affairs. Religious experiences and their resulting notions enter into another aggregate state, as it were. The relation of religious persons to those that they influence takes on another inner form. Specific effects are no longer experienced or sought, rather the whole of the soul enters into this inner communion. These great personalities cease to be subject to the power of unknown, dark forces, and no longer take pleasure in or suffer from a secret consciousness of the misuse and corruption of these forces. The hidden danger in this new, purer relation is of a different kind—the enhancement of consciousness of self that stems from the effects on the believers and acquires the character of a special relation to the invisible from communing with it. Among the consequences of this new relationship, one of the strongest is that it prepares a unified world-view by means of an inner relationship in which all moments of religious communion



and all aspects of its object relate to each other. Wherever dispositions and circumstances allowed a normal development, a religious world-view was formed, no matter how much time it took for this change in communion with the invisible to get started at different places, what stages were gone through, and whether or not the names of the religious personalities have been forgotten.

The structure and meaning content of the religious world-view, as it evolves in this way, are determined by religious communion and the experience shaped by it. This is why primitive religious ideas maintain their strength with an unusual tenacity despite their continual transformation. Thus our grasp of the world, the values we attribute to things, and our ideal of life acquire a distinctive form and coloration in the religious sphere.

In experiences of religious communion human beings find themselves defined by a dynamic that is inscrutable and uncontrollable within the sensory causal nexus. It is a willful and mental dynamic. This is how the basic form of religious thought arises, how it is brought to bear through myth, cult ceremonies, worship of sensory objects, the symbolism of the liturgy, and allegorical interpretations of Holy Scriptures. The method of establishing religious insight based upon belief in souls, the worship of stars, and primitive communion with the invisible attains here an inner coherence that corresponds to the level of world-view formation. The intellect cannot grasp the assumptions contained in this way of seeing; it can only decompose them. Here what is particular and visible means more than what meets the eye. This relationship is different from the meaning of signs and from what is meant in a judgment, as well as from the symbolic in art, yet it is akin to all of them. It contains a unique type of representation: In accordance with the relation of everything phenomenal or visible to the invisible, the former only signifies the latter, yet it is one with it. <This is the relation in which the world-picture stands to the divine: It encompasses the efficacy of the invisible.> Consequently, even at this representational level of inner communion with the invisible, the efficacy of the latter can be bestowed on visible individuals. Even at this general level the divine continues to disclose itself in persons and in religious acts. Only a small number of peoples and religions have been able to permanently overcome the personification of deities associated with this stage of religious thought.

From early times divine powers have been brought together in various ways into one that is supreme. By 600 B.C. this had taken place by and large among the most important of the oriental peoples. The

unity of the names of a god, the supremacy of the victorious strongest god, the uniqueness of the holy, the resolution of all differences in a mystical religious object, insight into the harmonious order of the stars—this and numerous other different starting points lead to the doctrine of a single invisible power. Since in the centuries during which this great movement took place among the Eastern peoples, there was an active exchange between them, there can be no doubt that this was also a contributing factor to the spread of the main ideas of those times. But all these views of the unity conditioning the world carry the mark of their religious origin in their concern with goodness, providential insight, and relevance to human needs. In most of them the basic category of religious thought conceives the divine to be surrounded by forces found in the visible world, or it must appear as a god on earth, struggling with demonic powers, disclosing itself in holy places, in miracles, or in the practices of a cult. The language in which religious communication about the divine is manifested must always be simultaneously sensory and spiritual. Symbols such as light, purity, elevation are all expressions for the experienced feelings of value adhering to the divine essence. The most universal and definitive scheme for really interpreting things in terms of a divine coherence is a world that is teleologically constituted. Behind the nexus of external objects, in it and beyond it, there is a spiritual order in which the power of the divine is manifested as purposive. At this point the religious world-view passes over into the philosophical. For metaphysical thought from Anaxagoras to Thomas Aquinas and Duns Scotus is determined by the concept of a teleological world-system.

Through its inward communion with the invisible, naive human consciousness of life undergoes a transformation. The more the gaze of the religious genius is directed at the invisible and his feelings are absorbed in this relationship, the more his yearning consumes all worldly values insofar as they do not serve this communion with God. This is how the ideal of the saint and the technique of asceticism directed at the elimination of the transitory and sensual desires in the individual arise. Conceptual thought is not in a position to give expression to this turning away from the sensory to the divine. In the symbolic language common to quite different religions, it is called a rebirth, its goal being a loving communion between the human soul and a divine being.

In the sphere of the will-directed action and life-institutions we also see religious communion generate a new moment that contributes to the consecration of worldly relations. All those who commune

with the divine are thereby united into a community that is superior to all others to the degree that the value of the religious relation outweighs that of all other life-institutions. The inner depth and strength of relations in this community have found an appropriate expression in religious symbolic language. Those bound together in the community are called brothers, and their relationship to God is designated as that of children of God.

Using this feature of the religious world-view, we can understand its main types and their relations to one another. The evolution of the universe; the immanence of reason in the world—both in the social order and in the course of nature; an overall spiritual unity behind all the divisions to which the soul subjects itself; the dualism of the good, pure, divine order and the demonic; an ethical monotheism of freedom: All these basic types of the religious world-view serve to grasp the divine through value-relations established by religious interaction between the human and the divine, the sensual and the ethical, unity and plurality, secular norms and the religious good. Here we can discern the early stages of the philosophical world-view into which the religious world-view passes over. Religion and mysticism precede philosophy among all peoples that progress partly or fully to philosophy.

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This change is connected to another, more general one that takes place in the religious world-view. Religious imagery recurs in a new aggregate state. Religion and the religious world-view gradually—for this change is slow—take on the form of conceptual thought, but without eliminating the imagistic form. The lower forms of religious communion continue to exist besides the higher forms. They remain in every form of developed religion as its lower strata. The magical aspects of religious ritual, the submission to priests presumed to have magical power, and the crudest sensory belief in the efficacy of religious places and images survive in the same religion and creed from which a deeply felt mysticism develops based on a highly refined inward form of religious communion. In the same way the iconography of religious symbolism still retains its force alongside theological concept-formation. Although the stages of religious communion are related to one another as higher and lower, such a relation does not hold between the various modifications in the form of the religious world-view. For it is part of the nature of all religious experiences to assure their objective validity, and this goal can only be achieved by conceptual thought. Yet this very conceptual effort serves to show religion's total inadequacy for such an undertaking.

These processes can be studied most thoroughly in Indian and Christian religiosity. In Vedanta philosophy and in the philosophy of Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas such a transition is actualized. Yet both cases show the impossibility of overcoming the internal limits rooted in the particular nature of religious attitudes. This specific attitude of religious persons—which has its source in older kinds of dogmatic thinking—gave rise in Vedanta philosophy to the vision of liberation from the chain of birth, effort, retribution, and migration by means of a knowing in which the soul grasps its identity with the unchanging reality of Brahman.<sup>1</sup> Thus a contradiction arose between a fearful reality—which dogma conceived as the inescapable circle of doer, deed, and suffering—and the metaphysical doctrine demanding that all divisions be regarded as illusory. Christianity was first developed by means of dogmas of an elementary or first order: creation, the fall, God's revelation, Christ's union with God, salvation, sacrifice, and atonement. These religious symbols and their relations to each other belong to a region wholly different from that of the intellect. But there was also an inner need that led to the clarification of the meaning content of those dogmas and brought out how things human and divine were intuited. It would be an injustice to the history of Christianity to regard its adoption of ideas from Greek and Roman philosophy as merely an external fate, imposed upon it from without; it was at the same time an inner necessity called for by the formative laws of religiosity itself. As these original dogmas were integrated into cosmological categories, dogmas of a second order arose: The doctrine of the attributes of God, the nature of Christ, the process of a Christian human life. Here the inward nature of the Christian religion suffered a tragic fate. These concepts isolate the particular moments of life and oppose them to one another. In this way an insoluble conflict arose between God's infinity and his attributes, between his different attributes, between the divine and the human in Christ, between freedom of the will and predestination, between the atonement made by the sacrifice of Christ and our ethical nature. Scholasticism wore itself out in vain trying to solve these conflicts; rationalism used this failure to attack dogma; mysticism returned to a doctrine of primary religious certainty. Even though scholasticism from Albertus Magnus on was led to transform a religious world-view into a philosophical one and to liberate it from the alien sphere of positive dogmas, it could not in this way overcome the

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<sup>1</sup> The supreme God force in all things.

limits imposed by Christian communion with God. The attributes of God that it posits remain incompatible with God's infinitude, and divine determination remains inconsistent with human freedom. This same impossibility of changing the religious world-view into a philosophical one occurs wherever the attempt is made.

Philosophy arose in Greece, where wholly independent persons directly turned their cognitive acquaintance with the world into universally valid knowledge. It has been re-established more recently by researchers who have set themselves the same problem of cognizing the world, independently of ecclesiastical orders. Both times philosophy arose in connection with the sciences and based the constitution of world-cognition on a stable framework of causal connections, in contrast to an evaluative religious conception of the world. In philosophy a change in inner attitude takes place.

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This analysis shows the respects in which religious and philosophical world-views have the same form and the respects in which they differ. The structure of each is the same in its basic features. The same inner relationships regarding the interpretation of reality, evaluation, the setting of goals, and regulation exist in both. They also show the same inner coherence whereby personality is self-organized and stabilized. Similarly, objective apprehension contains the power to shape personal life and social organization. These two kinds of world-view are so close to each other, so related to one another, so in agreement about the sphere that they aim to control, that they must collide everywhere. This is because in the end each confronts the riddle of the world and life completely differently—as different as religious communion and an expansive relation to all kinds of reality, as different as a self-assured religious experience, steadfast in its purpose, and the life-experience that calmly and serenely reflects upon every inner act and attitude. In religion the determining factor is an experience of an unconditioned, infinite, objective value to which everything finite is subordinated. Thus the experience of the infinite value for life of communion with the invisible conditions all objective apprehension and the setting of all goals. The transcendent consciousness of something spiritual is itself only the projection of the greatest religious experience in which human beings grasp the independence of their will from the whole sphere of nature. The origin of this religious world-view lends its hue to everything else; the basic form of seeing and confirmation imposed by it governs every religious formation in a mysterious, dangerous, and irresistible way. Opposed to this, philosophy offers a calm equilibrium of mental attitudes, a recognition of what each

of these attitudes can bring about, namely, the use of the different sciences, and the enjoyment of secular institutions. But it entails a never-ending effort to find a universally-valid coherence in all this, an ever-growing experience of the bounds of cognition, and of the impossibility of objectively connecting what is given in these different ways of considering things, and so, finally, resignation.

In this way historical relations arise between these two kinds of world-view that can be discerned in their nomenclature, concepts, and historical content. Religiosity is subjective and determined by particular lived experiences, and has an inscrutable, highly personal character that must seem like "foolishness" to anybody who has not shared these experiences. The religious attitude remains bound by the limits of its origin, in a one-sided, historically, and personally conditioned religious experience and the inner form of religious vision with its direction towards the transcendent. But now that its cultural context confronts religion with scientific results, conceptual thought, and secular education, it experiences its vulnerability despite all its inner power and recognizes its limitations despite all its claims to have a message and a broader significance. The religious person who is sensitive enough to feel these limitations and to suffer from them must aspire to overcome them. The inner law according to which general ideas can only receive final formulation in conceptual thought, pushes in the same direction. The religious world-view attempts to transform itself into a philosophical world-view.

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But the other side of this historical relationship is that the religious world-view has provided an extensive preparation for the philosophical world-view in terms of conceptual explication and grounding. At first the attempts to provide a foundation for religious knowledge were very fruitful for philosophy. No matter what the facts are about Augustine's original contribution regarding the propositions that were passed on to Descartes, Augustine was instrumental in the rise of the new procedures of epistemology. Premises of another kind came from mysticism to Nicholas of Cusa and then to Bruno. Descartes and Leibniz were also influenced by Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas in respect to their distinctions between eternal truths and the teleologically conceived factual order of things. More and more we are coming to see how greatly Descartes, Spinoza, and Leibniz were still affected by the logical and metaphysical concepts of the scholastics. Similarly, the types of religious world-view stand in a variety of relations to the philosophical. The realism of good and evil realms upheld by the religion of Zarathustra and passed on to Judaism and Christianity entered into

the way formative power and matter are distinguished in what is actual, thereby lending Platonism its distinctive color. The theory of evolution from lower to higher divine beings as found in the Babylonians and Greeks paved the way for the theory of the evolution of the world. The Chinese doctrine of a spiritual coherence in natural orders and the Indian teaching of the illusions and suffering inherent in the sensory manifold as opposed to the truth and blessedness of unity prepared for both of the directions in which objective idealism was to unfold. Finally, the Judaic and Christian doctrine of the transcendence of a holy creator prepared the way for that type of philosophical world-view that has become most widespread in the world of Christians and Muslims. Thus all types of the religious world-view have had an influence on philosophical world-views, but most of all they provide the foundation for the types known as objective idealism and the idealism of freedom. Gnosticism created the scheme employed in the most influential pantheistic works—the emanation of a multifarious world, its beauty and power as well as the suffering produced by finitude and separateness, the return to divine unity. The Neo-Platonists, Spinoza, and Schopenhauer developed all this into a philosophy. And Christianity's world-view, the idealism of freedom, developed theological problems and solutions that later influenced Descartes and Kant. So it gradually becomes evident why and where religious writers must have a place in the historical nexus of philosophy and that some among them could also have been called philosophers. Yet we also see how no work truly shaped by religiosity may claim to have a place in philosophy, where the possibilities of universally valid solutions to philosophical problems have advanced in accordance with an internal logical dialectic.

## 2. The View of Life of the Poets and Philosophy

Every art turns to single and limited events or situations to make visible relations that go far beyond them and thereby lend them a more general meaning. The impression of sublimity called forth by the sculptural shapes of Michelangelo or the tonal sequences of Beethoven stems from the characteristic meaning embodied in these works, which presupposes a state of mind that is firm, strong, persistent, and coherent enough to be able to subordinate to itself anything it comes across. But only one art has the capacity and means at its disposal to express more than such a state of mind. All the other arts are bound to the presentation of some sensory given, which

is their strength and their limitation. Poetry alone is able to move through all of what is actual as well as the realm of ideas. For in language it possesses a means of expression for everything that can appear to the human psyche—external objects, inner states, values, decisions of the will. Its means of expression through speech already contains a grasp of the given through thought. Thus if a world-view is expressed anywhere in the arts it will be in poetry or literature.

I will attempt to address the relevant questions here in such a way that the differences between the aesthetic and psychological standpoints will not need to be considered. All poetic works, from the most fleeting folksong to the *Oresteia* by Aeschylus or Goethe's *Faust*, agree in this, that they represent an occurrence. An occurrence can encompass either what is or what can be experienced, either our own experiences or those of others, either something from the past or in the present. The representation of an occurrence in literature is a *non-actual semblance of a reality* that is re-experienced and offered for us to re-experience. The representation has been removed from the framework of the actual world and the relations of our will and our interests in it. Thus it evokes no actual reaction: Processes that would otherwise arouse us to act, no longer disturb the disinterested attitude of the observer: There is no restraint on the will, and it exerts no pressure. As long as we linger in the region of art all the pressures of the actual world are removed from us. Once a lived experience is raised into this world of illusion, the processes evoked in the reader or listener are no longer the same as they were in the persons who lived through them. In order to more clearly grasp this, we separate the processes of re-experiencing from the accompanying effects of observing another life. The sequence of apprehending the feelings and trials of Cordelia differs from the admiration and the sympathy that arise from this re-experiencing. The mere understanding of the plot of *King Lear* includes processes that surpass those taking place in the characters involved. Readers of the literary plot must perform the acts of relating subjects and predicates, one sentence to another, outer to inner, motives to deeds and their consequences, in order to transform narration into the imagery of a process and that into an inner nexus. To be able to understand the factual content they must subordinate it to the general representations and relations contained in the words. The more that readers become absorbed in this process, the more their powers of memory, apperception, and establishing relations go beyond what Shakespeare expressed in his narrative but may have wished to evoke by what he said. This evocation may have concerned the



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poet more than what was said. Readers grasp universal features of a life-relationship in the plot through which its significance is understood. Similarly, the spectators of a drama complete what they see and hear on the stage to form a more inclusive whole. An aspect of life is disclosed by the way that human actions are subjected to the judgment of fate by the dramatic plot. Spectators respond to what happens in the plot as they do to life itself: They interpret, relate the particular to its context or regard it as exemplifying a general situation. And without them needing to notice it, the poet guides them and lets them draw from the represented occurrence something that surpasses it. Thus it turns out that epic as well as dramatic literature represent an occurrence for its reader or audience in a way that its significance will be grasped. An occurrence or event is grasped as significant to the extent that it reveals to us something about the nature of life. Poetry is the organ for understanding life and the poet a seer who perceives the sense of life. Here the understanding of the audience and the creativity of the poet meet. This convergence involves a mysterious process of applying heat to the hard, jagged ore of a lived experience and recasting it into a form that allows the audience to find it significant. Shakespeare reads the biographies of Caesar and Brutus in his copy of Plutarch; when he connects them in his vision of what occurred, the characters of Caesar, Brutus, Cassius, and Antony come to illuminate each other. There is a necessity in their attitudes to each other, and when we also see these great personalities interact with those who represent the greedy, thoughtless, servile masses, it becomes clear what the outcome of the conflict among the principals must be. Shakespeare knows about Queen Elizabeth, the royal character of Henry the Fifth and other kings of many kinds. He recognizes an essential feature of human affairs that gives all the facts of Plutarch a coherence and to which the historical process can be subsumed as an instance: the triumph of unscrupulous sovereign types who aim to master reality over republican ideals that no longer find adherents. This life-relationship is grasped, felt, and generalized to become the motif of a tragedy. A motif is a life-relationship that is probed poetically for its significance. In such a motif there resides an inner motive power to adapt characters, events, and actions to each other so that each general feature of the nature of things will be seen without the poet needing to express it, even if that were possible. For in each general trait of life there is a relation to the meaning of life as such that is wholly unfathomable.

Here is an answer to the question how far a poet expresses a life-outlook or even a world-view. Each lyrical, epic, or dramatic

poem lifts a singular lived experience to the level of reflection on its significance. In this they distinguish themselves from recreational verse making. Poetry has all the means to show this significance without stating it. And the demand that the meaning of events be expressed in the inner form of poetry must be fulfilled in every case. As a rule, a poetic work somehow goes on to also give a general expression to the significance of what occurs. Often some of the most beautiful lyric poems and folksongs simply express the feeling of the situation, but the most profound effect arises when the feeling of a life-moment is expanded in a lawlike manner and culminates in the consciousness of its significance. In Dante and Goethe this expansion borders on meditative or philosophical poetry. In plots of this kind what takes place is suddenly put on hold, and the light of thought descends on it, or a conversation illuminates what happens, as in the wise words of Don Quixote, Wilhelm Meister, and Lothario. In the middle of the stormy course of a drama, characters reflect on themselves and on what is happening so that the spectator can feel a sense of release or liberation. Indeed, many great literary works go a step further. They gather ideas about life as they emerge from the plot and connect them into a conversation, monologue, or chorus that forms a coherent and universal interpretation of life. Greek tragedy, Schiller's *Bride of Messina*, and Hölderlin's *Death of Empedocles* are excellent examples of this.

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On the other hand, poetry leaves its proper realm when it attempts to make pronouncements about the nature of things that are not rooted in lived experience. Then an intermediate form of describing nature that falls between poetry and philosophy arises whose effect is quite different from proper poetic works. *The Gods of Greece* by Schiller is a truly deep lyrical poem in which ideals generate inner experiences that run their course with the lawfulness of feeling. By contrast, other famous literary works by Lucretius, Haller, and Schiller belong to the intermediate class in that they endow what is thought with feeling and dress it up with imagery. This intermediate form has justified itself by its great effects, but it is not pure poetry.

All authentic poetry is by the nature of its object—an individual lived experience—bound to what poets learn about themselves, others, and everything preserved by the human tradition. The living source of poetic knowledge of the significance of human events is life-experience. This significance attributed to events has more than a cognitive value. For according to the structure of psychic life its causal nexus coincides with its teleological character. It has a

tendency to generate life-values and is vitally related to productive values of all kinds. Hence poets create by drawing on life-experience and expand its accumulated content whenever they more clearly than ever discern signs that point to something inner. The same expansion occurs when poets find a new way of perceiving the mix of traits in a character or first observe a special relation that derives from the interaction of two characters, namely, whenever they can make a nuance of life visible. An inner world is formed from such elements. Poets trace the history of the passions and the development of people of the most diverse kind. They articulate the world of human characters according to affinities, differences, and types. And all this attains a higher complex form, when they discern comprehensive universal traits in individual or socio-historical life. And this is not yet the highest point of understanding life. Poetic works will be all the more mature, the more the motif that constitutes such a life-concern is brought into relation to the overall nexus of life. Then it will be seen in its bounds and yet at the same time in the highest ideal relations. Every great poet must make such an inner breakthrough just as Schiller advanced from the one-sided power of *Intrigue and Love* to *Wallenstein* and Goethe from the first *Faust* fragment to his later life-work.

This reflection on the meaning of life can only find a full grounding through an acquaintance with things human and divine, and it first finds its fruition in an ideal of the conduct of life. Thus it contains a tendency to form a world-view. This inner trait of poets finds reinforcement from the life-teachings, philosophy, and sciences of their time and place. But whatever poets assimilate from them, the lived source of their world-view gives it a distinctive structure. In contrast to the religious world-view, it is impartial, comprehensive, and insatiable in coming to terms with all that is actual. In objectively apprehending nature and the overall coherence of things, the poetic world-view is always oriented by the concern with the significance of life. This concern gives freedom and vitality to its ideals. Philosophers become more scientific the more purely they separate our attitudes and analyze what is intuited, whereas poets create from the totality of their powers.

When aptitude and circumstances lead a poet to form a world-view, it still can only be read off from individual works to a limited extent. A poetic world-view asserts itself most effectively, not in direct assertions, which are never exhaustive, but through the energy with which a manifold content is united and its parts are articulated

to form a whole. The inner form of each true poetic work, including the melody of its verses and the rhythmic flow of feeling, is determined by the conscious attitudes of poets and their times. The types of technique of each literary genre must be conceived as the expression of individual and historical variations of grasping life. But technique as a way of forming a body whose soul is the life-concern stemming from some occurrence can only manifest a world-view one-sidedly: Its fullness exists only in the poet as such. Therefore, the supreme effect of a truly great poet only comes about once one is able to discern the continuum within which the life-concerns of specific works are presented. When *Torquato Tasso* and *Iphigenia* followed Goethe's first stormy works, they had only a moderate effect on a limited number of persons. But then when the Schlegels and their Romantic companions showed the inner linkage of these works to a life-attitude and illustrated how their style contributed to this, Goethe's influence was enhanced. This refutes the trite prejudice that the efficacy of works of art is harmed by aesthetic, literary, and historical understanding.

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The forms of poetic world-views are infinitely manifold and flexible. What poets draw from their own life-experience and what their times contribute converge to form external constraints and limits on their thought. But the inner tendency to interpret life on the basis of our experience of it constantly presses against these limits. Even when poets receive the systematic frame of their thought from without, as Dante, Calderon, and Schiller did, the power to transform it never ceases. But the more freely they draw from the experience of life, the more they are subject to the power of life itself, which exposes them to ever new aspects. Thus the history of literature reveals the infinite possibilities to feel and observe life that are contained in human nature and its relations to the world. Both the religious relation that forms congregations and creates tradition, and the character of philosophic thought that manifests itself in a continuum of stable concept formation, serve to circumscribe world-view to fixed types. Poets are the true human beings in freely allowing life to affect them. In ordinary people, reflection on life is too weak for them to reach a firm position in the modern anarchy of views on life. In poets the effect of the various aspects of life is too strong, their sensibility for its nuances too great, for one delimited type of world-view to always do justice to how life speaks to them.

The history of poetry and literature shows an increase in the efforts and power to understand life out of itself. The influence of the

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religious world-view on poets is steadily declining, not only in specific nations but also for humanity as a whole. The effect of scientific thought is ever more on the rise. The rivalry among world-views serves to reduce their power to convince the public. The intensity of the imagination is constantly being eroded in highly cultivated peoples by the discipline of thought. So it is becoming almost a rule of method for poets to interpret the actuality of things without prejudice. And every contemporary poetic tendency attempts to solve this task in its own way.

These characteristics of the poetic outlook on life and world-view produce the historical relation of poetry to philosophy. The structure of poetic life-outlooks is quite different from the conceptual articulation of the philosophical world-view. No regular progression from the poetic to the philosophical world-view can take place. The poetic world-view offers no concepts that can be assimilated and elaborated. Nevertheless, poetry affects philosophical thought. Poetry prepared for the rise of philosophy in Greece and its renewal in the Renaissance. It exerts a regular and enduring influence on philosophers. Poetry was first in providing an objective consideration of the world order entirely apart from interests and utility, thereby preparing for the philosophical attitude. The effect of Homer in this regard must have been immeasurable; it was exemplary for freely surveying the overall scope of world-life. Homeric intuitions about human beings became a resource that psychological analysis has never fully exhausted. These intuitions expressed the ideal of a higher humanity more freely, serenely, and humanely than philosophy ever could. The Homeric life-outlook and world-view determined the life-attitude of great philosophers. The new joy in life of Renaissance artists turned into the theory of immanent world-values in philosophy starting with Bruno. Goethe's *Faust* contained a new concept of the comprehensive power of human beings to savor and intuit the whole of things in productive ways. This work in conjunction with the ideal of the transcendental school moved philosophy toward the elevation of human existence. And Schiller's historical dramas provided a strong impetus for the development of historical consciousness. The poetic pantheism of Goethe prepared for its more complete philosophical form. Conversely, the influence of philosophy permeates the poetry of the time. It penetrates the innermost poetic concern to shape a life-outlook. Philosophy offers literature ready-made concepts and closed types of world-outlook. It ensnares poetry in dangerous but indispensable ways. Euripides studied the sophists; Dante studied medieval thinkers and Aristotle;

Racine comes from Port-Royal; Diderot and Lessing draw from Enlightenment philosophy; Goethe absorbs himself in Spinoza; Schiller becomes a student of Kant. And even though Shakespeare, Cervantes, and Molière were never captives of any philosophy, countless subtle influences of philosophical doctrines nevertheless penetrate their works as the indispensable means to hold fast to the various aspects of life.

### 3. THE PHILOSOPHICAL WORLD-VIEW: THE ENDEAVOR TO ATTAIN A UNIVERSALLY VALID WORLD-VIEW

The tendency to develop a life-outlook and a world-view is shared by religion, poetry, and philosophy. These are the historical circumstances in which philosophy arose. The endeavor to attain a universally valid life- and world-view was operative from the beginning. Wherever in various regions of Eastern culture the religious world-view was developed in the direction of philosophy, this endeavor remained predominant and made all other philosophical activity subordinate to it. And when philosophy appeared in Greece in its full import, the same tendency to comprehend all of existence in a world-view manifested itself in the old Pythagorean School and Heraclitus. All further development of philosophy was dominated by this same striving for more than two thousand years up to the epoch initiated at the end of the seventeenth century by Locke, the *New Essays* of Leibniz, and Berkeley. To be sure, this was a time in which they had to compete with crude empiricists, gentlemen philosophers, and individuals doing observational research. But this was an opposition that asserted itself from outside the philosophical endeavor. And the skepticism that stemmed from within philosophy itself, from reflection about the procedures and scope of cognition referred its central concern to the same indestructible need of the human spirit. The negativity of the skeptical attitude relative to this need demonstrated the unrealistic nature of this attitude. We have seen how even in the two centuries that carried forward the work of Locke, Leibniz, and Berkeley, an inner relation to the problem of a universal world-view was maintained. Precisely the greatest thinker of these two centuries, Kant, is most strongly determined by this relation.

This central role of world-views in philosophy can also be confirmed through its relation to the other two historical forces. It explains why religiosity has lived in ceaseless battles with philosophy and why poetry, which has given so much to philosophy and received

so much from it, could only assert itself through a constant warfare against the claims of sovereignty of abstract life-conceptions. Was Hegel perhaps right to assert that religiosity and art are subordinate forms of the unfolding of the essence of philosophy? Are they destined to increasingly transmute themselves into the higher mode of consciousness of the philosophical world-view? The resolution of these questions depends primarily on whether the goal of a scientifically grounded world-view can be actualized.

### 1. The Structure of the Philosophical World-View

Because the philosophical world-view is developed with the aim of universal validity, its structure must be essentially different from the religious and poetic world-views. It differs from the religious world-view in being universal in scope and universally valid. It differs from the poetic in aiming to reform life. The philosophical world-view establishes itself on the broadest foundation based on empirical consciousness, experience, and the empirical sciences, in accordance with formative laws grounded in the objectification of lived experiences in conceptual thought. When the power of discursive thought, whose judgments always relate an assertion to an object, is able to penetrate the depths of lived experiences, the entire world of feeling and volition comes to be objectified as concepts of values and their relations and as rules that express constraints on the will. The kinds of objects that correspond to these general attitudes are separated out. Each sphere that is determined by a basic attitude forms a systematic nexus. The relations of entailment that exist among assertions demand a stable standard of evidence for cognizing what is actual. In the region of values this leads thought to advance to assumptions about objective values, indeed to the demand for unconditional values. Similarly, in the domain of human action thought comes to rest only when it has reached a highest good or a supreme principle. The moments that constitute life are laid out and differentiated into systems by universalizing concepts and generalizing propositions. Logical grounding as the form of systematic thought links the conceptual constituents ever more clearly and completely. And the highest concepts reached by these systems—universal being, ultimate ground, unconditional value, and highest good—are comprehended in the concept of a teleological world-order in which philosophy converges with religiosity and artistic thought. The basic features of the teleological schema were established in accordance with inner formative laws. The durability of

this schema was also considered to be rooted in the nature of things through the end of the Middle Ages and its natural power still persists today. On this basis or in opposition to it, the main forms of philosophical world-view have differentiated themselves.

When a world-view is grasped conceptually, grounded, and thus raised to universal validity, we call it metaphysics. It is then articulated into manifold configurations. Individuality, circumstances, nationality, and period evoke a countless number of nuances in world-perspective not only in poets, but also in philosophers. This is because the possible ways in which the structure of our psychic life can be affected by the world are infinite. Likewise, the means of thought change constantly in accordance with scientific standards. But the continuity that connects thought processes and the consciousness that characterizes philosophy have as a consequence that an inner nexus links certain groups of systems. Some thinkers feel an affinity, which produces the consciousness of opposition to other groups. Thus classical philosophy brought out the opposition between the teleological metaphysics that was its natural system, as it were, and the world-view that limits the apprehension of what is actual to relations between causes and effects. And when the meaning of the problem of freedom came to the fore starting with the Stoics, the systems of objective idealism according to which the ground of things determines the world-nexus began to differentiate themselves ever more clearly from the idealism of freedom in which the lived experience of the free will is upheld and projected into the world-ground itself. Thus the *basic types of metaphysics* were articulated on the basis of the decisive differences of human world-views. There are a great many such world-views and systematic forms.

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## 2. Types of Philosophical World-View

The historical induction whereby these types must be established cannot be elaborated here. The empirical marks from which this kind of induction proceeds derive from the inner affinity among metaphysical systems, from the transformative process whereby one system conditions another, and from the consciousness that thinkers have of their agreements and differences. But above all we derive these marks from the inner historical continuum in which such a type is ever more clearly articulated and grounded, and from the productive influence that proceeds from such typical systems as can be found in Spinoza, Leibniz or Hegel, in Kant or Fichte, in d'Alembert, Hobbes or Comte. Between these types there are also forms in



which these world-views are not yet fully differentiated. Other forms, defying logical consistency, aim to hold on to the whole complex of metaphysical motifs; they always prove to be unfruitful for the further development of world-views and unproductive in life and literature, however strong they may be due to their complicated ground plan or technical advantages. From the rich manifold of such nuances of world-views the consistent, pure, and most productive types stand out as important. From Democritus, Lucretius, and Epicurus to Hobbes, and from him to the Encyclopedists to modern materialism as well as Comte and Avenarius, we can discern a link despite great differences in their systems. This group of systems displays a unified type whose initial form can be designated as *materialistic or naturalistic* and whose further development under the conditions of critical consciousness leads to Comtean *positivism*. Heraclitus, strict Stoicism, Spinoza, Leibniz, Shaftesbury, Goethe, Schelling, Schleiermacher, and Hegel mark the stages of *objective idealism*. Plato, the Hellenistic-Roman philosophy of the life concepts that Cicero represents, Christian speculation, Kant, Fichte, Maine de Biran and other French thinkers like him, and Carlyle form the developmental stages of the *idealism of freedom*. This differentiation of metaphysics into these [three types of] systematic order derives from the inner lawfulness that has been shown to be operative in the formation of metaphysical systems. And this development and the modifications it brings with it are mainly affected by the process whereby our relation to the actual world passes through determinate positions. Thus earlier we saw positivism as the most prominent instance of a non-metaphysical method that seeks a stable ground for cognition while now our overall assessment is to see it as an epistemologically grounded transformation of a [metaphysical] world-view. Beyond that, the development and the more finely nuanced discernment of types is conditioned by the process whereby the ideal concepts of humanity have unfolded on the basis of relations among values, purposes, and constraints on the will.

The cognition of what is actual is rooted in the study of nature, for this alone can extract a lawful order from the facts. The concept of causality is dominant in the context of this kind of world-cognition. When it determines experience unilaterally, no room is left over for the concepts of value and purpose. Since in the perception of what is actual the physical world is predominant in scope and force, life-units of a spiritual nature appear as mere interpolations in the text of the physical world. Furthermore, only the physical

world can be cognized with the aid of mathematics and experimentation to reach its intellectual goal. Accordingly, this way of explaining the world adopts the form of interpreting what is spiritual on the basis of what is physical. And when on the basis of the critical standpoint the phenomenal character of the physical world is recognized, then naturalism and materialism are converted into a positivism determined by the natural sciences.

A world-view can also be determined by the attitude of the life of feeling. It is governed by the perspective of the value of things, life-values, the meaning and sense of the world. Then the whole of the actual world becomes the expression of something inner and is regarded as the unfolding of an unconsciously or consciously active psychic nexus. This standpoint discerns an immanent divine force in what appear to be many, partial, and restricted individual agents. It is a force that determines phenomena in accordance with the teleological causality that we find in consciousness. This is how objective idealism, panentheism, and pantheism arise.

When the volitional attitude determines our conception of the world, then the schema of spirit's independence of nature or its transcendence results. The projection of this onto the universe leads to the concepts of divine personality, creation, and the sovereignty of personality over against the course of nature.

Each of these world-views finds a way of connecting world-cognition, the evaluation of life, and principles of action in the sphere of objective apprehension. Its power lies in being able to give an inner unity to the various functions of personality. And each of them derives its appeal and the possibility of consistent development from its capacity to lawfully derive our multifaceted life from one of our attitudes.

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### 3. The Insolubility of the Task: The Decline of the Power of Metaphysics

Metaphysics has generated an immeasurable wealth of life-forms. It proceeds restlessly from possibility to possibility. Because no form satisfies metaphysics, each one is transformed into another. A hidden inner contradiction that inheres in the very essence of metaphysics manifests itself anew in each of its creations and forces it to shed its given form and seek another. Metaphysics is characterized by a peculiar duality. It strives to solve the riddle of the world and life, but its form is universal validity. One face is turned to religion

and poetry, the other to the particular sciences. But metaphysics itself is neither a science like the other particular sciences nor is it art or religion. The presupposition that gives rise to it is that there is a point from which the secret of life is accessible to rigorous thought. If there is such a point, as Aristotle, Spinoza, Hegel, and Schopenhauer assumed, then philosophy is more than any religion and any art and also more than all the particular sciences. Where shall we find this point at which conceptual cognition and its concern with the world-riddle, come together to disclose in this singular world-order not only particular regularities about the course of things, but also the essence of things? The answer must lie beyond the domain of the particular sciences and beyond their methods. Metaphysics must raise itself above the reflections of the intellect in order to find its own object and its own method. We have surveyed the attempts at this in the sphere of metaphysics and demonstrated their inadequacy. All the reasons that have been elaborated ever since Voltaire, Hume, and Kant to explain the constant change of metaphysical systems and their inability to satisfy the demands of science need not be repeated here. I will only focus on those reasons that are relevant to the way metaphysics and world-views are related.

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The cognition of what is actual according to causal relations, the lived experience of value, meaning and sense, and the volitional attitude that encompasses a goal of an act of will and the rule that binds it—all these are different attitudes that are connected in our psychic structure. Their psychic relation is there for us in lived experience; it belongs to the ultimate accessible facts of consciousness. The subject responds to objects in these distinct ways; it is impossible to regress behind this fact and find a common ground for this. Thus the categories of being, cause, value, and purpose that have their source in these attitudes cannot be derived from one another or from a higher principle. We can apprehend the world only by one of the basic categories. It is, so to speak, only possible to perceive the world through one aspect of our relation to it—never the overall relation as it would be determined by the systematic unity of these categories. This is the primary reason for the impossibility of metaphysics: To prevail it would have to argue fallaciously for an inner unity of these categories or distort the content of our living attitude. A further bound of conceptual thought manifests itself within each of these attitudes. First, our thinking cannot combine the causal nexus of conditioned processes with an unconditioned ultimate cause: The very idea of a manifold whose elements are uniformly related is already a riddle, and from an unchangeable

oneness neither change nor multiplicity can be comprehended. Second, we can never overcome the subjective and relative character of evaluations that have their origin in feeling: An unconditional value is a postulate rather than a concept that can be fulfilled. Third, we cannot demonstrate a highest or unconditional purpose, for it presupposes the establishment of an unconditional value. Moreover, the rule of action that follows with universal validity from the mutual obligation of wills does not suffice to derive the purposes of individuals or of society.

Although no metaphysics is able to satisfy the demands of scientific demonstration, the relation of the subject to the world nevertheless remains a reliable starting point for philosophy on the basis of which each of its general attitudes can express one aspect of the world. Philosophy cannot grasp the essence of the world through a metaphysical system, but it can, like a serious poetic work, disclose a trait of life as it has never been seen before and reveal to us the various aspects of life in ever new works. Just as an overall perspective cannot be found in any given artwork, but only approximated by all of them, so we confront a world in the typical world-views of philosophy as it appears when a powerful philosophical personality makes one of the general attitudes dominant over the others and its categories over theirs. What can be distilled from the enormous work expended by metaphysicians is the historical consciousness that they have repeatedly experienced the unfathomable profundity of the world. The last word of the spirit that permeates all these metaphysical efforts is not the relativity of each world-view, but the sovereignty of the human spirit over against each single one of them and at the same time the positive consciousness that in our various spiritual attitudes one and the same reality of the world is there for us.

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It is the task of a theory of world-views to analyze the historical development of religiosity, poetry, and metaphysics and to methodically explicate the relation of the human spirit to the riddle of the world and life while resisting relativism.

#### 4. PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE

The conceptual efforts to ground metaphysics constantly engender reflection about the nature of thought, its forms, and its laws. The conditions that govern our cognition are investigated. These include the assumption that there is an actual world that is independent of us but accessible to our thinking, the belief that other persons exist

and can be understood by us, and finally, the presupposition that the course of our inner states in time are real and that lived experiences as they present themselves in inner experience can be validly represented in thought. Reflection about the processes that produce a world-view and about the grounds that justify its presuppositions, accompanies the formation of world-views and grows steadily in the conflict of metaphysical systems.

407 At the same time, the innermost nature of philosophical world-views brings out their relation to human culture and its purposive systems. We have analyzed culture according to the inner relatedness of world-cognition, life and affective experiences, and the practical arrangements in which the ideals of our actions are realized. All this manifests the psychic structural nexus, which also determines the philosophical world-view as it affects all aspects of culture. Because the philosophical world-view aims at universal validity and looks for justification and coherence everywhere, it must assert itself in all spheres of culture and bring to consciousness what occurs there, search for grounds, judge critically, and make connections. But in doing so it comes up against the reflection that emerges from the purposive systems of culture themselves.

### 1. The Functions of Philosophy That Arise from the Conceptual Techniques of Cultural Life

Reflection by human beings about their conduct and the search for universal knowledge did not emerge solely from world-views. Before philosophers came on the scene, we find the separation of the functions of the state and classifications of constitutions that result from political activity. Similarly, the praxis of law and legal procedures produced the basic concepts of civil and criminal law; religions formulated dogmas that are distinct from each other yet interrelated; artistic practices differentiated themselves. And every progression of human purposive systems to more complex forms occurs under the guidance of conceptual thought.

Accordingly, functions of philosophy arise that serve to advance the thinking that stems from the specific domains of culture. Just as no fixed boundary separates the religious world-view from the philosophical, so technical thought gradually goes over into philosophical thought. Everywhere the spirit of philosophy is characterized by universal self-reflection and the person-shaping and reformative power rooted in it and simultaneously by the strong tendency of philosophical minds to seek the grounds and coherence of things.

These functions of philosophy are not inherently bound up with the formation of a world-view, and they exist even when metaphysics is not sought or not recognized.

## 2. The Universal Theory of Knowledge and the Theory of the Specific Cultural Domains

The characterization of philosophy as the self-reflection of spirit provides the basis for its always coexisting other aspect, which is the striving for a universally valid world-view. In a world-view, the experience that is grounded in general attitudes is held together in an objective unity. However, when these general attitudes themselves and their content-relatedness are raised to consciousness and the experiences they produce are investigated and their justification is tested, then the other side of self-reflection comes to the fore. From this perspective, philosophy proves to be the *foundational science* that has as its object, the form, rule, and connectedness of all thought processes that are guided by the aim of producing valid knowledge. As logic it investigates the standards of evidence that pertain to all correctly completed operations and this in every domain in which thought processes are involved. As epistemology it goes back from the consciousness of the reality of lived experience and the objective givenness of outer perception to the justifications of these presuppositions of our cognition. As such a *theory of knowledge*, philosophy becomes a science.

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Based on this its most important function, philosophy comes to stand in relation to the various spheres of culture and assumes special tasks in each of them.

In the sphere concerned with representing and cognizing the world, philosophy relates itself to the particular sciences that produce the individual parts of world-cognition. This function comes closest to logic and epistemology as the foundational work of philosophy. It elucidates the methods of the particular sciences by means of general logic. It uses logic to systematize the methodical concepts developed in the sciences. It investigates the presuppositions, the goals, and the bounds of the cognition of the particular sciences. Then it applies the results thus attained to the problem of the inner structure and the connectedness within the two great scientific groups: the natural and the human sciences. None of philosophy's relations to a system of culture is as clear and distinct as this one to the sciences, and none has been developed with as much systematic consequence. Thus among the one-sided conceptual definitions of

philosophy, none has been as illuminating as the one that claims that it is the *theory of theories*, the grounding and comprehension of the particular sciences that cognize what is actual.

409 Less transparent is the relation of philosophy to *life-experience*. Life is the inner relation of psychic functions as framed by the person. Life-experience is the accumulated reflection and meditation about life. It serves to raise what is relative, subjective, contingent, and scattered in the elementary forms of purposive action to the level of insight into what is worthwhile and purposive. What do the passions mean in the overall economy of our life? In a life that is understood to be natural, what value do sacrifice, fame, and external recognition have? The solution to such questions is sought not only by the life-experience of individuals; it can also be extended to the life-experience acquired by society. Society is the comprehensive regulator of the life of human feelings and drives. Through custom and law, it establishes bounds on the unruly passions for the sake of communal life. Through the division of labor, marriage, and property, society creates the conditions for the orderly satisfaction of the drives, thus freeing us from their dreadful tyranny. Life gains space for the higher, spiritual feelings and aspirations, so that these can attain predominance. The life-experience that society accumulates through such work produces ever more appropriate determinations of life-values and gives them a stable orderly standing through public opinion. Hereby society generates a value hierarchy out of itself that then influences individuals. On this social basis, the life-experiences of individuals are brought to bear. They arise in manifold ways. Personal lived experiences form their matrix insofar as values come into play. Other lessons are learned as we observe how the passions of human beings can lead to their self-destruction and as we trace how they inevitably affect others: all the suffering that results. And we complete these life-experiences through history, which shows human destiny in bold strokes, as well as through literature. The latter especially discloses the painful but sweet tensions of the passions, the illusions involved, and their dissolution. All this works together to make a human being more free and open for resignation and the joy of submitting to the great objectivities of life.

This life-experience is initially unmethodical. But once both the import and bounds of its procedure are recognized, it must raise itself to the level of methodical reflection that aspires to overcome the subjective nature of evaluation. Thus it transitions into philosophy. All the stages on this road are marked by writings on life-values, character, temperament, and the conduct of life. And

as poetry is an important factor in the development of the theory of temperaments, characters, and life-conduct, what it reads into the souls of human beings to arrive at its distinctive appraisal of the values of things, prepares for an insatiable will to understand and a more self-conscious grasp of the meaning of life. Homer is the teacher of reflective authors, and Euripides is their student. The distinctive religiosity acquired by each of us is developed from the same background. Experiences about life and frightfully penetrating insights into the illusion that attaches to all this-worldly goods produce a devotion to a transcendent world in every religious genius. The religious experience would be empty and vacuous without the background of the lived misery, meanness, or at least the pettiness of human affairs, the separations and the sufferings involved, that causes the elevation to holiness as an escape from this corruptible sphere. This path into solitude was chosen by Buddha, Lao Tse, and, as some passages in the gospels reveal, by Christ; Augustine and Pascal also travelled this path. And together with the sciences and the social institutions of history, life-experiences form the real foundation of philosophy. The personal contribution of the greatest philosophers is rooted in such life-experiences, which makes their clarification and grounding an essential, indeed the most productive part of philosophical systems. This is especially evident in Plato, the Stoics, Spinoza, and to a lesser extent also in Kant for anyone who relates his *Anthropology* to his early writings. Thus both a system of immanent life-values and a system of objective instrumental values are generated in philosophy; the former system pertains to a state of mind, the latter to something external that has the capacity to produce life-values.

Finally, philosophy as part of the context of cultural history attains a relation to the *practical world*, its ideals, and its social institutions. This is because philosophy involves reflection on the will, its rules, purposes, and goods. It finds expression in ethical practices and in the social institutions of economics, law, and the state, as well in how nature is controlled. The essential nature of the volitional attitude can only be elucidated in relation to these contexts. What pervades them all is the setting of goals, obligations, and rules. The most profound philosophical problem in this domain is whether all ethical rules are derivable from purposes. The insight that Kant arrived at in his categorical imperative can be refined into the realization that there is only one unconditional absolute in the ethical world, namely, that the mutual obligation of wills, whether based on an explicit contract or on an implicit



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assumption of a long-standing reciprocity, possesses an unconditional validity for every consciousness. Therefore, lawfulness, the commitment to what is right, loyalty, and truthfulness form the stable framework of the moral world. All purposes and all rules of life, even the highest goods and the striving for perfection, are incorporated in this framework. They establish a hierarchy of oughts that proceeds from the obligatory to the moral expectation of goodness and devotion to others and from there to personal perfection. When philosophical analysis of moral consciousness establishes the legitimacy of ethical ideals and separates the obligatory aspect of duty from the shifting nature of purposes, then it determines the conditions under which the purposive systems of society develop. Philosophy also helps us to understand the actual social institutions as described and analyzed by the human sciences on the basis of the structures of the individual and of society. And when philosophy appeals to the teleological character of these structures to derive the development and formative laws of these social institutions, while subordinating all these necessities to the that highest law of obligation, it becomes an inner force that works toward the improvement of human beings and the advance of their social institutions. At the same time, it provides stable standards for them in ethical rules and the realities of life.

Let us look back once more at the philosophical world-view. Now for the first time we can survey the overall scope of what it is based on. The import of life-experience for the development of a world-perspective becomes apparent. And finally, we see how the great [cultural] spheres that are conditioned by the different mental attitudes<sup>2</sup> contain problems of independent importance that can be treated wholly apart from their place in a world-view.

Thus the relations of philosophy to the various spheres of human life give it the right not only to ground and connect what is known about them and the particular sciences in which this knowledge has been consolidated, but also to treat these same domains in special philosophical disciplines such as philosophy of law, philosophy of religion, and philosophy of art. There is no disputing that each of these theories must be created from the historical and social states of affairs that make up the domains of art or religion, of law or government, and insofar the work of philosophy overlaps with that of the particular sciences. It is also clear that any such philosophical theory, which instead of creatively drawing from the material itself,

<sup>2</sup> Presumably cognition, feeling, and willing.

merely relies on the results of the particular sciences and checks them here and there, has no right to exist. But given the limitedness of human power, the special investigator will only seldom master logic, epistemology, and psychology so fully as to preclude a philosophical theory from adding something new. To be sure, such distinct philosophical theories are justified only as provisional responses to the insufficiencies of the present situation. On the other hand, the task of investigating the inner relations of the sciences to each other, on which the logical constitution of each depends, will always remain an important part of the function of philosophy.

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### 3. Extending the Spirit of Philosophy to the Sciences and Literature

The influence of metaphysics is constantly declining, but philosophy is steadily becoming more important in its function of grounding and connecting the thinking that has arisen in the special cultural domains. The significance of the positivistic philosophy of d'Alembert, Comte, Mill, and Mach derives from its close preoccupation with the particular sciences and its efforts to advance its methods and to everywhere apply its standard of universally valid knowledge. And in another domain the philosophical thought of Carlyle or Nietzsche is positive insofar as it strives to generalize and ground a general attitude implicit in life-experience and explicated by poets and writers. It is only natural that in this informal way philosophy is able to increasingly influence the overall spiritual life of modernity. The methodical and generalizing spirit that served to connect the sciences and defined the way Galileo, Kepler, and Newton studied nature was then extended on the basis of the positivism of d'Alembert and Lagrange<sup>3</sup> to the natural sciences in France. And on the basis of the philosophy of nature and Kantian critical philosophy, it influenced Ernst von Baer,<sup>4</sup> Robert Mayer,<sup>5</sup> Helmholtz, and Hertz.<sup>6</sup> And this generalizing philosophical spirit has asserted itself

<sup>3</sup> Joseph-Louis Lagrange (1736–1813), his 1788 treatise on analytical mechanics offered the most comprehensive treatment of classical mechanics since Newton.

<sup>4</sup> Karl Ernst von Baer (1792–1876), a Baltic German biologist, geologist, and a founding father of embryology.

<sup>5</sup> Julius Robert von Mayer (1814–1878), one of the founders of thermodynamics.

<sup>6</sup> Heinrich Hertz (1857–1894), German physicist who showed that Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell's theory of electromagnetism was correct and that light and heat are electromagnetic radiations.

especially since the great socialistic theorists offered their perspective on the sciences of society and history. So it is characteristic for the present situation of philosophy that its strongest effects proceed not from its systems, but from this free philosophical thinking that permeates the sciences and all literature. Even in literature, authors such as Tolstoy and Maeterlinck exert an important philosophical influence. Dramas, novels, and lyrical poetry have become carriers of strong philosophical impulses.

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The spirit of philosophy can be found wherever a thinker has moved beyond the systematic form of philosophy to examine what is peculiar or obscure in human life such as instinct, authority, or faith. It exists wherever researchers use methodological consciousness to lead their scientific discipline back to its ultimate justificatory grounds or forward to generalizations that connect it to several other sciences and ground them. This spirit is also present wherever life-values and ideals are subjected to reexamination. Whatever manifests itself as disorderly or conflicted in a particular time period or troubles the heart of a human being is to be reconciled through thought; what is obscure is to be clarified; and what is immediately given, standing side by side, is to be mediated and placed in context. The philosophical spirit is not content to accept any feeling of value and isolated striving in its immediacy, nor any precept or knowledge claim by itself: It demands the justification for every claim to validity. In this sense, the eighteenth century rightly designated itself as the philosophical century due to its thoroughgoing efforts to give reason control over what is obscure, instinctive, and unconsciously creative in us, and to derive every historical product from its sources and its justification.

##### 5. THE CONCEPT OF THE ESSENCE OF PHILOSOPHY: PERSPECTIVE ON ITS HISTORY AND SYSTEMATICITY

Philosophy has proved to be a complex of very different functions that have become integrated through insight into their lawful connection to the essence of philosophy. Such a function always refers to a teleological nexus and designates a complex of related capacities that are fulfilled within this holistic nexus. The concept of a teleological nexus of philosophy is not derived from an analogy with organic life, nor does it betoken a disposition or an original capacity. The functions of philosophy refer to the teleological structures of the philosophizing subject and of society. They involve capacities by which persons turn within themselves and simultaneously

produce outward effects. In this they resemble persons concerned with religiosity and poetry. Thus philosophy is a capacity that is rooted in the spiritual need of individuals to reflect on what they do, to achieve an inner balance and firmness in action, and to attain a stable relation to the whole of society. At the same time, philosophy is a function that is rooted in the structure of society and necessary for the completeness of its life. Accordingly, philosophy is a function that uniformly takes place in many minds and connects them as part of a social and historical continuum that counts as a cultural system. For the marks of a cultural system are uniformity in the activities of the individuals that belong to it and a solidarity among those affected. When this solidarity takes on fixed forms, cultural systems produce organizations. Among all the purposive systems, art and philosophy are least able to link individuals. This is because the functions performed by an artist or a philosopher are not conditioned by any institutional form of life. Their region is that of the highest freedom of spirit. And when philosophers become members of such organizations as universities and academies to increase their contribution to society, it is vital that their freedom of thought be preserved. This freedom may never be infringed, for not only does the philosophical character depend on it, but also the trust in its unconditional truthfulness and therefore its efficacy.

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The most general property that belongs to all philosophical functions is rooted in the nature of objective apprehension and conceptual thought. In this regard, philosophy seems to be merely the most consistent, powerful, and comprehensive mode of thinking: There is no hard and fast line between it and empirical consciousness. It follows from the form of conceptual thought that the power of judgment should advance to the highest generalizations, and that the formation and classifications of concepts advance to an architectonic highest peak; similarly, what is related by thought must be referred to an all-inclusive context and what is grounded to an ultimate principle. As it proceeds, thought refers to the common objects of all the acts of thinking of different persons, and to the continuum of sense perception within which the multiplicity of things in space and the manifoldness of their changes and movements are ordered, namely, the world. All feelings and volitional acts are related to this world through the spatial location of the bodies to which they belong and the perceptual constituents with which they are interwoven. All the values, purposes, and goods posited in these feelings and volitional acts are incorporated into it so as to encompass human life. And when thought seeks to express

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and unite the overall content of perception, lived experience, values, and purposes as lived and then given in empirical consciousness, experience, and the experiential sciences, it moves from the concatenation of things and their changes in the world to a world-concept. Such a world-concept goes back to a grounding world-principle, a world-cause. It also attempts to determine the value, sense, and meaning of the world and asks for a world-purpose. And whenever the procedures of generalization, overall integration, and grounding are characterized by the aim of knowing, which is to be emancipated from particular needs and restricted interests, they become philosophical. And wherever subjects who refer their activities to the world at large reflect on them in the same way, we can call this reflection philosophical. Accordingly, the basic feature of all philosophical functions is the spiritual trait of transcending the attachment to determinate, finite, and restricted interests and thereby striving to incorporate theories that were developed on the basis of a restricted need into a more inclusive and conclusive idea. This trait of thought derives from its own lawfulness and corresponds to the broader needs of human nature that barely admit of reliable analysis: the joy of attaining knowledge, the need for an ultimate firmness in one's stance to the world, and the striving to overcome the attachment of one's life to restricted conditions. Every psychic attitude strives for a stable point that is removed from relativity.

This universal function of philosophy manifests itself under the various conditions of historical life in all the philosophical activities that we have surveyed. Special functions of great import arise from these manifold conditions of life: the refinement of a world-view to give it universal validity; the reflection of knowing on itself; relating the theories that are formed in particular purposive systems to the system of all knowledge; a critique that probes all of culture in order to comprehend it universally and ground it. They all turn out to be particular contributions that are grounded in the unitary essence of philosophy. For philosophy adapts itself to every situation in the development of culture and to all conditions of its historical circumstances. This explains the continual differentiation of its activities, the suppleness and flexibility with which it at one time unfolds into a full system and at another expends its whole energy on a single problem and is always shifting its efforts to new tasks.

The boundary point has been reached from which the explication of the essence of philosophy can retrospectively illuminate its history and prospectively clarify its systematic coherence. Its history would be understood 1) if we could on the basis of the various

functions of philosophy grasp the order in which its problems, as they aggregate and succeed each other, are generated under the conditions of culture and then survey the possibilities of their solution; 2) if we could describe the main stages in the progression of reflection of knowledge on itself; 3) if we could trace historically how the theories that emerged in the purposive systems of culture have been raised to the cognitive plane by philosophical efforts at comprehension and thereby advanced, as when philosophy creates new disciplines in the human sciences and then assigns them to special sciences; 4) and if history could be used to show how from the state of awareness of an epoch and the character of nations insight could be had about the particular forms adopted by philosophical world-views while also recognizing that there is a constant advance of the great types of world-view. In this way the history of philosophy leaves systematic philosophical inquiry with the three problems of grounding, justifying, and interconnecting the particular sciences as well as the task of confronting the never-ending need for ultimate reflection about being, ground, value, purpose, and how they are linked in a world-view, whatever form and direction this confrontation takes.



# PART V

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## THE TYPES OF WORLD-VIEW AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN METAPHYSICAL SYSTEMS (1911)

*Translated by  
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## ON THE CONFLICT OF SYSTEMS

## 1.

One of the main reasons for the persistence of skepticism is the anarchy of philosophical systems. There is a contradiction between the historical awareness of the boundless variety of such systems and the claim of each system to universal validity; this contradiction supports the spirit of skepticism more strongly than any systematic argument. The multiplicity of philosophical systems stretches endlessly and chaotically behind us and is still expanding around us. Whenever such systems have emerged, they have excluded and fought against each other. And there seems to be no hope of reaching a decision among them.

The history of philosophy confirms that the antagonism among philosophical systems, religious views, and ethical principles has had the effect of increasing skepticism. The conflict among the older Greek explanations of the world led to the philosophy of doubt in the Greek age of enlightenment. When the campaigns of Alexander and the unification of various peoples into larger empires brought the diversities of customs, religions, life- and world-perspectives to the attention of the Greeks, skeptical schools came into being; these schools also extended their destructive operations to the problems of theology—evil and theodicy, the conflict between the personalities of deities, their infinity and perfection—and to the assumptions concerning the ethical goal of human beings. The universal validity of the belief-system of more recent European peoples and associated forms of philosophical dogmatism began to be seriously undermined when Muslims and Christians compared their convictions with each other at the court of the Hohenstaufen Frederick II, and the philosophy of Averroes and Aristotle became known to scholastic thinkers. And after antiquity was reborn, the actual motives of Greek and Roman writers were understood, and the age of discoveries increasingly revealed the diversity of climates, peoples,

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and ways of thinking that exist on our planet, human certainty concerning hitherto narrowly delimited convictions disappeared completely. Today, travelers inquire carefully about the most diverse kinds of beliefs; we register and analyze the powerful great phenomena of religious and metaphysical convictions in the priest-hoods of the Orient, in the Greek city-states, or in the culture of Arabia. We look back upon an immeasurable field of the rubble left behind by religious traditions, metaphysical assertions, and demonstrated systems. Through many centuries the human spirit has tested and explored possibilities of every kind in attempting to scientifically ground, to poetically exhibit, or to religiously proclaim the interconnectedness of things. Now methodical, critical historical research investigates every fragment, every relic, of this long effort by our race. One of these systems excludes the other, they refute each other, and none is able to prove itself. The archives of history do not confirm the peaceful conversations depicted in Raphael's "School of Athens," which was the expression of the eclectic tendency of those days. Thus, the contradiction between increasing historical awareness and the claim of the various philosophies to universal validity has become more and more severe, and an attitude of amused curiosity about new philosophical systems has become more and more widespread, no matter what sort of following such a system can attract, and no matter how long it is able to hold on to that following.

## 2.

But the doubts that have arisen due to progress in the development of historical consciousness reach much deeper than the skeptical conclusions from the conflict of human opinions. The predominant presupposition of the historical thought of the Greeks and Romans was that there was just one closed type of human being, endowed with a determinate content. The same idea of man formed the foundation of the Christian doctrine of the first and second Adam, of the Son of Man. The natural system of the sixteenth century was still based on the same presupposition. This system discovered in Christianity an abstract, enduring paradigm of religion: natural theology. It abstracted the doctrine of natural law from Roman jurisprudence, and a model of taste from the creations of Greek art. According to this natural system, constant and universal basic forms of social and legal orders, religious belief, and morality pervade all historical diversities. Its method of deriving a common denominator from the comparison of historical life forms and of abstracting a natural law, a natural

theology, and a rational morality from the multiplicity of customs, legal maxims, and theologies—a procedure that evolved from Hippias on through the Stoics and all through Roman law—still dominated the century of constructive philosophy.<sup>1</sup> The analytic spirit of the eighteenth century prepared the way for the dissolution of this natural system.<sup>2</sup> This analytic spirit arose in England, where the most liberal surveys of barbarian and alien life-forms, customs, and modes of thought merged with the most empirical theories and the application of the analytical method to epistemology, ethics, and aesthetics. This spirit was brought to France by Voltaire and Montesquieu. Hume and d'Alembert, Condillac and Destut de Tracy took man to be a bundle of drives and associations, and saw in that bundle boundless possibilities for producing the most manifold forms amidst differences of climate, customs, and education. The classical expression of this mode of historical thinking is found in Hume's works *Natural History of Religion* and *Dialogue on Natural Religion*. These eighteenth-century efforts led to the developmental thought that was to dominate the nineteenth century. From Buffon to Kant and Lamarck, we see the acquisition of cognition about the development of the earth and the succession of its various life-forms. At the same time, the study of cultural peoples generated epoch-making works and starting with Winckelmann, Lessing, and Herder these works made use of developmental ideas. Finally, the study of natural peoples provided the intermediary link between the scientific doctrine of evolution and the insights of developmental history based on the political life, religion, law, customs, language, poetry, and literature of the peoples studied. Thus, the developmental-historical point of view could be applied to the study of the overall natural and historical development of human beings, and the type "man" disintegrated in this process of development.

The theory of development that arose in this way is necessarily bound up with the recognition of the relativity of every historical life-form. The absolute validity of any single form of life, any system of government, religion, or philosophy, vanishes when seen from

<sup>1</sup> Here Dilthey refers to seventeenth-century thinkers such as Descartes and Spinoza.

<sup>2</sup> This "natural system" that began to break down in the eighteenth century is not to be equated with the world-view of "naturalism" that would continue to thrive. The natural system of the human sciences is associated with the theory of natural law and rooted in general philosophical and legal concepts going back to the Stoics.

Many of Dilthey's historical writings stress the influence of the Stoics on modern philosophers such as Descartes and Spinoza.

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the perspective that encompasses the whole earth and all past eras. Thus, the growth of historical consciousness is more thoroughly destructive of the belief in universal validity than surveying the conflicts among the philosophies that have tried to convincingly express the coherence of the world by means of a system of concepts. Philosophy must seek the inner coherence of what is cognizable, not in the world, but in human beings. To understand life as lived by human beings is our aspiration today. The manifold systems that strove to grasp the coherence of the world can now be clearly related to life. These manifold systems are among the most important and revealing creations of life. Thus, the same growth of historical consciousness that had such a destructive effect on the great systems, must help us remove the hard contradiction between the claim to universal validity in every philosophical system and the historical anarchy of these systems.

## 1. LIFE AND WORLD-VIEW

### 1. Life

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Life is the ultimate root of a world-view. Life is scattered over the earth in innumerable singular lives, and it is experienced anew in each individual. Because as a mere moment of the present, life eludes direct observation, it is retained in echoing memory. Yet as it has objectified itself in its manifestations, the very depths of life are more completely graspable in understanding and interpretation than in any reflexive awareness or apprehension through our own lived experience. Life, as we know it, is present to us in innumerable forms, and yet shows everywhere the same common features. I will focus on *one* of its various forms. At this point, I will not explain, and I will not classify. I will simply describe a state of affairs that we can all observe about ourselves. Each act of thinking, each inner or outer action, emerges like an arrowhead pressing forward. But I can also [suspend this] in the lived experience of a state of inner repose, be it in a dream, in play, diversion, or a mere looking on. In the calm alertness of a state of repose directed at the baseline of life, I regard other people and things, not merely as actual beings that stand in causal relationships with me and with each other. Instead, life-concerns go out from me in all directions; I respond to people and things, I take positions with respect to them, I fulfill their expectations of me and I expect something from them. Some make me happy, expand my existence, and increase my strength, while

others exert pressure on me and limit me. And whenever the determinateness of a specific forward-moving directedness leaves room for this responsiveness, human beings notice and feel these relations of concern. They regard a friend as a force that increases their own existence; every member of their family has a definite place in their life; and everything that surrounds them is understood as an objectification of life and spirit. The bench in front of their home and the tree that provides shade in their garden derive their essence and their meaning from this kind of objectification. Thus, the life of each individual creates its own world out of itself.

## 2. Life-Experience

Life-experience arises from reflection on life. The specific occurrences evoked when the drives and feelings within us encounter the surrounding world and fate are consolidated as objective and general knowledge. Just as human nature is always the same, so the basic features of life-experience are also common to all. They include the transience of things human, and our ability in the midst of it, to still enjoy the moment. There is also the tendency in strong as well as in more limited human beings to overcome this transitoriness by building a firm framework for their existence. In weaker or melancholy natures dissatisfaction with this transience produces the longing for something truly permanent in an invisible world. Then there is the driving power of the passions, which, like dreams, create fantasies until they dissolve as illusory. This life-experience can structure itself differently in each individual, but its common substratum is formed by insights into the power of chance, of the corruptibility of everything that we possess or love, hate, or fear, and of the constant presence of death, which is all-powerful in determining for each of us the meaning and sense of life.

General life-experience results from the interconnectedness of individuals. From the regular repetition of individual experiences as human beings cooperate and succeed each other, a tradition of expressions for this general life-experience is formed, and these expressions achieve greater and greater precision and reliability over the course of time. Their reliability rests on the ever-increasing number of cases from which we draw conclusions, on the classification of these cases under already-available generalizations, and on constant testing. Furthermore, the principles of life-experience affect us even in those cases in which they are not expressly brought to consciousness. Everything that governs us as custom, usage, or

tradition is based on such life-experiences. Nevertheless, for both individual and general life-experience, the mode of certainty and the character of its formulation are always completely different from scientific universal validity. Scientific thought can verify the procedure on which its reliability rests, and it can formulate its principles precisely, and justify them; the origin of our knowledge of life cannot be verified in this way, and it is impossible to draw up definite formulas for it.

Among these life-experiences is the fixed system of relationships in which the identity or selfsameness of the ego is connected with other persons and external objects. The reality of this self, of other persons, of the things around us, and of the regular relationships among them, form the framework of life-experience and of the empirical consciousness that is formed in life-experience. The ego, as well as the persons and things around us, can be characterized as the constituent factors of empirical consciousness; and its stability lies in the relationships of these factors to each other. And no matter what procedures philosophical thought may use in abstracting from these individual factors or their relationships, they remain the determining presuppositions of life itself. These factors are as indestructible as life itself and as incapable of being changed by any thought, since they are founded in the life-experiences of innumerable generations. Among the characteristics of these life-experiences that form the foundation for the reality of the external world and for my relations to it, some of the most important are that they limit my existence, exert a pressure on it that I cannot escape, and that they restrain my intentions in a way that was unexpected and that cannot be changed. Both the results of my inductions and the sum of my knowledge are based on these presuppositions grounded in empirical consciousness.

### 3. The Riddle of Life

Viewing the whole of things on the basis of changing life-experiences, the countenance of life shows itself to be full of contradictions: It is both spontaneous and lawful, reasonable and capricious. Life presents ever-new aspects, and while perhaps clear in detail, it is completely enigmatic as a whole. Human individuals who seek to bring their life-concerns and the experiences based on them together into one whole are unable to do so. Conception, birth, development, and death are at the heart of all those things that cannot be understood. As living beings, we know about death, but cannot understand

it. From our first glance at a dead person, death remains the incomprehensible counterpart to life; and our attitude to the world as something other, alien, and fearsome, is based primarily on this. Thus there inheres in the fact of death a compulsion to imaginary fantasies that are supposed to make this fact understandable: belief in the afterlife, ancestor-worship, and the cult of the departed generate the basic ideas of religious faith and of metaphysics. And the alienness of life increases as human beings experience, both in society and in nature, permanent struggle, constant annihilation of one creature by another, and the cruelty of everything that rules in nature. Strange contradictions manifest themselves and enter ever more strongly into consciousness in our life-experience and are never resolved: a general transitoriness versus our desire for something permanent; the power of nature versus the independence of our will; the finitude of all that exists in time and space versus our ability to exceed every limit. These riddles have occupied Egyptian and Babylonian priests as much as the sermons of today's Christian clergy, Heraclitus as much as Hegel, Aeschylus' Prometheus as much as Goethe's Faust.

#### 4. The Formative Laws of World-Views

Every great impression shows a human being a new side of life; the world is seen in a new light. When such experiences repeat themselves and coalesce, our moods or attitudes toward life are formed. Life as a whole receives from each life-concern a coloring and an interpretation in affective or melancholy souls—universal moods or modes of attunement arise. These change as life reveals new aspects to us; but certain life-moods will prevail in different individuals in accordance with their own nature. Some are attached to tangible, material things, and live to enjoy the present; others pursue, through chance and fate, great goals that give permanence to their existence; there are also solemn natures, who cannot abide the transience of what they love and possess, and for whom, therefore, life appears worthless, a tissue of vanities and dreams, or who seek something permanent beyond this world. Among the great life-moods, the most comprehensive are optimism and pessimism; but they take on various nuances. Thus, for someone who looks upon the world as a spectator, the world appears strange, a colorful, volatile drama. On the other hand, for those who direct their life according to a well-ordered plan, the same world is familiar and like a home; they stand firmly in the world and belong there.



These life-moods involve innumerable nuances of attitude to the world that form the foundation for the development of world-views. On the basis of life-experiences in which the manifold life-concerns of individuals about their world are operative, these life-moods initiate attempts to solve the riddle of life. The higher forms of life-mood have established the especially effective procedure of attempting to understand an incomprehensible given by means of something that is more evident. What is evident becomes a means of understanding, a basis for explaining what is incomprehensible. Science analyzes, and having thus isolated homogeneous facts, develops universal relations from them; but religion, literature, and primitive metaphysics express the meaning and sense of the whole. The former cognizes, the latter understand. This sort of interpretation of the world that clarifies its complex nature by means of something simpler begins in language. It is developed either by means of metaphor, which represents one viewpoint by means of another kindred viewpoint that somehow makes it more illuminating, or by means of personification, which brings a thing closer and makes it understandable by humanizing it, or by means of analogies, which determine a less familiar thing on the basis of its affinity with something familiar, and thereby approximates scientific thought. Wherever religion, myth, literature, or primitive metaphysics try to make things understandable and impressive, this is the procedure used.

### 5. The Structure of a World-View

All world-views that undertake to give a complete solution to the riddle of life regularly contain the same structure. This structure is always a complex nexus in which on the basis of a world-picture questions about the meaning and sense of the world are decided, and ideals, the highest good, and the governing principles for the conduct of life are derived. This structure is determined by the laws of the psyche; according to these laws, our conception of what is actual in the course of life underlies the evaluation of whether conditions and objects are pleasurable or displeasurable, satisfying or dissatisfying, worthy of approval or disapproval. This evaluation of life then becomes in turn a supporting level for determinations of the will. Our attitude regularly goes through these three phases of consciousness, and in this process the most characteristic aspect of psychic life is validated: It is a productive system in which the underlying level remains active and endures. The relationships that inhere in the behavioral patterns according to which I judge objects,

take pleasure in them, and direct myself to something in them to be further actualized, serve to define how the various layers are stratified. They constitute the structure of a configuration in which the overall productive nexus of psychic life finds its expression. Lyric poetry shows this nexus in its simplest form: a situation, a series of feelings, and often resulting from them a desire, a striving, an action. Every life-relationship develops into a framework in which the same kinds of attitude are structurally connected. And thus world-views are also regular configurations in which this structure of psychic life is expressed. Their substrate is always a world-picture that arises from our conceptual attitude as it proceeds according to the lawful stages of cognition. Having observed inner processes and external objects, we clarify the resulting perceptions by means of elementary operations of thought in order to articulate the basic structures of actual reality. Once the perceptions pass, they are represented and ordered in a conceptual world that raises us above the fortuitousness of perceptions. With these steps we achieve an increasing [cognitive] stability and a spiritual freedom; this dominion over actual reality is completed in a region of judgments and concepts in which the coherence and essence of what is actual are grasped as universally valid.

When a world-view attains full development, it usually happens first in these stages of cognizing what is actual. And then another typical attitude is built on this, in an analogous lawful series of steps. In feeling ourselves, we enjoy the value of our existence; we attribute a productive value to the objects and persons around us because they raise and expand our existence. We determine these values according to the potential of the objects to aid or harm us. In evaluating them we seek an absolute standard of assessment. Thus conditions, persons, and things receive a meaning in relation to the actual world as a whole, and this whole itself receives a sense. When these stages of feeling-relationships are run through, a second layer is formed in the structure of the world-view; a world-picture becomes the basis for evaluating life and understanding the world. And in accordance with the same laws of psychic life there emerges from the evaluation of life and the understanding of the world a highest level of consciousness. Here we see the ideals, the highest good, and the supreme principles through which a world-view obtains, for the first time, its practical energy. With this the world-view reaches the tipping point whereby it bores its way into human life, into the external world, and into the depths of the soul itself. The world-view now becomes formative, creative, and reformatory! And this highest level of the

world-view also develops through various stages. From intention, striving, and inclination, enduring ends are posited that are directed at realizing representations, means-end relations, choosing among ends, the selection of the means, and finally the bringing together of the purposes in the highest order of our practical attitude in a comprehensive life-plan, a highest good, the supreme norms of action, an ideal of shaping both personal life and society.

That is the structure of the world-view. What the riddle of life presents as confused, as a bundle of problems to be solved, is now raised to a conscious and necessary system of problems and solutions. This progression occurs in accordance with a lawfully self-determining sequence. From this it follows that every world-view has a development, and that in this development it achieves an explication of what was implicit in it. Thus gradually and in the course of time it obtains permanence, stability, and strength. It is a product of history.

## 6. The Diversity of World-Views

World-views develop under various conditions such as climate and race. The way nations are influenced by history and their political organization, and the temporally conditioned limitations that epochs and eras impose on how nations cooperate also provide special conditions that affect the emergence of a diversity among world-views. The life that arises under such specialized conditions is very different, as are the human beings that grasp that life. And in addition to these typical differences, there are also those of individual persons, of their milieu, and of their life-experience. Just as the earth is populated by innumerable forms of living beings, among whom there is a constant struggle for existence and for room to expand, so in the human world we see world-views assume different shapes that struggle with each other to claim power over us.

85 Now a lawful relation asserts itself according to which human souls, distressed by the restless alternation of impressions and the fateful consequences of the power of the external world, must strive for inner stability in order to withstand all this. Away from change and instability, from the inconstancy and flux of their own disposition and views of life, human beings are led toward enduring evaluations of life and toward firm goals. World-views that further the understanding of life and lead to useful life-goals endure and drive out lesser world-views. Thus a selection is made among them. And in the course of generations, the viable ones among these world-views

assume an ever more complete shape. Just as the same structure is efficacious in many different living organisms, so world-views are formed according to the same schema.

The deepest mystery of the specification of world-views lies in the uniformity impressed on their particular structures by the teleological nexus of psychic life. Amidst the apparent contingency of these configurations, there exists in each of them a purposive system that arises from the interdependence of the questions contained in the riddle of life, and especially from the constant relationship among a world-picture, the evaluation of life, and the goals of the will. A common human nature and an ordering of individuation stand in stable life-relations to what is actual; they involve life-concerns that are always and everywhere the same; thus, life always shows the same aspects.

To the structural regularity of world-views and their differentiation into singular forms, we must add an incalculable moment due to the variations of life, the succession of eras, changes in the scientific situation, the genius of nations and individuals. These factors bring out a continual shift of interest in the problems that grow out of historical life and of the power of certain ideas that come to dominate it. Ever new combinations of life-experience, moods, and thoughts are always affecting world-view configurations relative to the place they occupy in history. These combinations are irregular, not only in terms of their constituents, but also in terms of their significance and importance within the whole. But due to the lawfulness of their underlying structure and their logical order, they are not aggregates, but integral configurations.

Moreover, it becomes clear that when these configurations are compared they fall into groups that have a certain relationship to each other. Just as languages, religions, and states, when analyzed by the comparative method, reveal certain types, lines of development, and rules of transformation, the same can be shown to be true of world-views. These types pass through a historically conditioned pattern of singular constellations. They are everywhere conditioned by what is distinctive about the region in which they arise. But to claim that this fully determines them was a serious error of the constructive method. Only the comparative historical method is capable of coming close to setting up such types—their variations, their development, and their cross-fertilization. Hence scholarship in this area must always view its results with a mind open to the possibility of further refinement. Every tabulation is only provisional and remains merely a means of achieving deeper historical insight.

And always associated with the comparative historical method is the preparation for this procedure by systematic considerations and the interpretation of historical content based on them. This kind of historical-systematic and psychological interpretation of the content of history is also prone to make the mistake of constructive thinking, [as when it is assumed] that in each region a simple formative drive could account for the configuration [of a world-view.]

I summarize all that is known so far in one main thesis that is confirmed by comparative historical considerations in every particular: World-views are not products of thought. They do not arise from the mere will to cognize. Conceiving what is actual is an important moment in their formation, but it is only *one* moment. World-views are rooted in life-conduct, life-experience, and the overall structure of our psychic life. Elevating life to consciousness in cognizing what is actual, evaluating it, and exercising the will is a difficult task that humanity has slowly achieved in the development of life-views.

This main thesis of the theory of world-views is confirmed when we consider the course of history as a whole; at the same time, the course of history confirms an important consequence of our thesis. This consequence leads us back to the beginning of this essay, where it was maintained that the formation of world-views is determined by the will to achieve stability in the world-picture, evaluation of life, and guidance of the will that emerge from the stages of psychological development. Religion and philosophy seek stability, efficacy, control, universal validity. But humanity has not advanced a single step on this path. The struggle among world-views has not been resolved on any core issue. History serves to select among them, but its great types uphold themselves alongside each other as autocratic, indemonstrable and indestructible. They cannot owe their origin to any demonstration, since they cannot be refuted by any demonstration. Specific stages and special formulations of a type may be refuted, but its rootedness in life endures and continues to be active and is always producing new configurations.

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## 2. THE TYPES OF WORLD-VIEW IN RELIGION, POETRY, AND METAPHYSICS

I begin with a difference in world-views that is conditioned by the cultural domains in which they arise. The domains of economy, social life, law, and government form the foundation of culture. In all these domains there is a division of labor according to which each specific person performs a defined task in a specific sphere of

operation. Here the will is restricted to given, limited tasks that are assigned to it by the purposive system of a domain. Science uses cognition to rationally regulate work in this practical life-nexus; hence it is very closely connected with praxis. And since it too is subject to the law of the division of labor, every researcher sets for himself a limited task within a definite domain, and at a definite place in the work of cognition. Even philosophy itself is subject to this division of labor in part of its functions. However, a religious, literary, or metaphysical genius lives in a region that is removed from social bonds, from working on limited tasks, from subordinating oneself to that which is achievable within the limits of one's time and historical situation. Any consideration on their part of such a restriction adulterates an understanding of life that should be able to face the "given" with an unfettered and sovereign attitude. Their understanding of life becomes untrue if their view is too limited, their temporal frame too restrictive, and their attitude too tendentious. Worthwhile and powerful world-views arise and develop in such a region of freedom.

Religious, artistic, and metaphysical world-views do however differ from each other in terms of their law of formation, their structure, and their types.

### 1. The Religious World-View

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Religious world-views arise from a distinctive life-concern of human beings. Beyond what primitive man could control, whether as warrior, hunter, or worker of the soil, to bring about changes in the external world by physical exertions with a rational purpose, there extends a sphere in which things cannot be affected by such exertions and which our cognition cannot reach. And yet it seems that forces proceed from this sphere that give men luck in hunting, success in war, or a good harvest, just as with sickness, madness, old age, death, the loss of wives, children, or herds, they find themselves dependent on something unfamiliar. From this arises the technique of trying to influence this incomprehensible force, which could not be controlled by any physical activity, by means of prayers, offerings, or submission. These people would like to absorb into themselves the powers of higher beings, to achieve a good relation to them, to unite with them. The actions directed to this end constitute the original cult and lead to the vocation of the sorcerer, the traditional healer, or the priest. As their profession becomes better organized, it gathers certain artifices, experiences, and knowledge, and

89 a particular life-style arises that separates it from the other members of society. Thus in the small closed communities of the horde and the tribe there arises a tradition of religious life-experience developed in communication with higher beings, and of a spiritual ordering of life; and from magical cult-actions there is a gradual development of this superstitious religiosity into a religious process in which the mind and will of human beings, by means of an internal discipline, are made subject to the divine will. The decisive moment occurs when primitive religious ideas develop on the terrain of universally recurring experiences such as birth, death, sickness, dreams, madness, harmful and beneficial incursions of the demonic into the course of life. Some religious ideas draw on strange mixtures of order in nature that are always taken to entail a teleological relation of the spectator to nature, and others draw on chance, destructive force, and conflict. The *alter ego* in each person, the divine powers in the heavens, the sun and the stars, the demonic aspects of forests, swamps, and rivers: These root images influenced by life-concerns are the source of an emotionally conditioned fantasy life, which is then nourished by ever new religious experiences. The efficacy of the invisible is the fundamental category of elementary religious life. Analogical thinking combines religious ideas with teachings about the origin of the world and human life, and about the origin of the human soul.

An efficacy in things and people stemming from the supernatural gives them their religious meaning. These things and people are natural, visible, destructible, limited; and yet they are the seat of divine or demonic effects. The world is filled with a religious relationship between, on the one hand, concrete finite things and specific people, and on the other hand, the invisible. In accordance with this relationship, the religious meaning of these things and people resides in the efficacy of the invisible, which is hidden in them. Holy sites, holy persons, divine images or idols, symbols and sacraments are all examples of this relationship; its significance in religion is the same as that of the symbolic in art and the conceptual in metaphysics. And because of the obscurity of its origin, tradition becomes an extraordinarily powerful force within the religious relationship.

This is the basis for all further religious development. While a common spirit is the primary force in the earlier stages, the progression to higher stages is brought about by the religious genius in mysteries, hermetic existence, and prophecy. Beyond specific interactions between humans and higher beings, there is in the religious genius an inner relationship of the whole person to these beings.

This concentrated religious experience brings the elementary religious ideas together into religious world-views, whose essence is to derive the meaning of what is actual, the value of life, and the practical ideal from a relationship to the invisible. They are contained in figurative language and in dogmas of faith. They are based on a life-attitude, and they develop in prayer and meditation.

All typical configurations of these religious world-views have in themselves from the very beginning the opposition between beneficent and evil beings, between material existence and the higher world.

The main types of the manifold religious world-views [posit either an] an immanence of world-reason in the order of life and the course of nature, or a spiritual All-One that provides the connectedness, truth, and value of all that has been dispersed into particular existing beings and to which they must return, or a creative divine will that brings forth the world and creates man in its own image or stands in opposition to a realm of evil and enlists the pious into its service for this struggle. And just as, from the very beginning, communion with the invisible is separated from being engaged in and enjoying the institutions of earthly social existence, so these religious world-views are always in conflict with the worldly view of life. An elementary naturalism frequently asserts itself in the worldly view of life because of this conflict; it gets its energy and power precisely from the contrast with the religious world-views.

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Thus in religious times we see the struggle between types that show a definite kinship with those of metaphysics. Judeo-Christian monotheism, the Chinese and Indian form of panentheism, and, in contrast with these, the naturalistic position in life and the naturalistic way of thinking, are the preliminary stages and the point of departure for the further development of metaphysics. But religious rites with their magic, religious powers, holy persons, and shrines as well as the imagery of religious symbolism always form the background of the religious world-views, just as the common people provide the broad base of ecclesiastical communal life. Inherent in these world-views there is an obscure, specifically religious nucleus that the conceptual work of the theologians can never elucidate or ground. It is impossible to overcome the one-sidedness of an experience arising from an interaction with higher beings that is characterized by pleading, requesting, and sacrificing one's ownness, and which derives the attributes of these beings from how the life-concerns of the soul relate to them.



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From this there develops a relationship, according to which the religious world-view is the preparation for but can never simply go over into the metaphysical world-view. To be sure, the Judeo-Christian doctrine of a purely spiritual, freely creating God, and of the soul fashioned in the image of that God, was transformed into the monotheistic idealism of freedom; the various forms of the religious All-One doctrine prepared the way for the panentheism of metaphysics; the schema of a manifold world proceeding from the One and returning to it, which originated in Indian speculations, in the mysteries, and in Gnosticism, was then developed by the Neo-Platonists, Bruno, Spinoza, and Schopenhauer. And the continuum that leads from monotheism to the scholastic philosophy of Jewish, Arab, and Christian thinkers, and from them to Descartes, Wolff, and Kant, and then the philosophers of the reactionary period in the nineteenth century, is equally clear. But no matter how closely theological conceptual work on the religious world-views may approximate that of metaphysics, nevertheless its formative law and its structure always distinguish it from metaphysical thought. The one-sided point of view of the religious life-attitude is its limitation. The religious mind always thinks it is in the right concerning its experiences. A more progressive spirit acknowledges that the soul's fixation on the supernatural world (this historical product of priestly technique) once strongly supported idealism, but by means of an artificial transference; it also brought about the disciplining of life, but with ascetic severity. The advance of spirit in history requires more open positions with respect to life and to the world, positions that are not tied to traditions arising from obscure, questionable origins.

## 2. The Positions of World-Views in Literature

In religion, things and people received their significance through faith in the presence of a supernatural efficacy in them. The significance of a work of art lies in the fact that something singular, something given in the senses, is extracted from the nexus of what has been produced and what is still productive and raised to become the ideal expression of life-concerns as they speak to us on the basis of color and form, symmetry and proportion, tonal harmony and rhythm, psychic process and event. Does this tend to generate a world-view? Artistic creation as such has nothing in common with such a tendency; but the relation between the artist's life-attitude and his work nevertheless introduces a secondary relation between

a work of art and a world-view. Art first flowers under the influence of religion. Its first subject matters are religious; the aims of the religious community are expressed in architecture and music. In this connection, art has raised the content of religiosity to the realm of eternity, in which transitory dogmas disappear. The inner form of sublime art proceeds from this content, as is shown by Giotto's religious epic paintings, by great church architecture, and by the music of Bach and Handel. And the historical progression of the relationship of art to world-views shows that after the religious deepening of art, the life-attitude of the artist could come to free expression in it. This life-attitude is not to be regarded as imposed on the work of art, but as rooted in the inner form of an artistic configuration. A remarkable attempt has been made to prove this in the area of painting, and to demonstrate the effect upon the form of paintings of the typical life-attitudes, from which the naturalistic, heroic, and panentheistic world-view arise.<sup>3</sup> A similar relation could also be demonstrated in musical creation. And when spiritually powerful artists like Michelangelo, Beethoven or Richard Wagner proceed to develop a world-view on the basis of an inner drive, this will serve to reinforce the expression of their life-attitude in artistic form.

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But among the arts, poetry has a special relation to a world-view, for the medium of language in which it operates, makes possible a lyrical, epic, or dramatic presentation of everything that can be seen, heard, or experienced. I will not attempt here to define the essence and function of poetry. By removing an event from the nexus of volitional concerns and transforming its representation in this world of appearances into an expression of the nature of life, poetry frees the soul from the burden of actual existence, and at the same time reveals its meaning. By fate and their own life-decisions, human beings are enclosed within the limits of the determinateness of life; but by satisfying their secret longing to imaginatively explore life-possibilities that they cannot otherwise realize, poetry expands their selves and the horizon of their lived experiences. It opens a view into a higher and stronger world. With this we come to the fundamental relation on which poetry is based: Life is its point of departure, and life-concerns about people, things, and nature are made central. Thus universal life-moods come into being from the need to bring together the experiences that derive from life-concerns, and the overall essence of what is experienced in individual life-concerns is the poetic consciousness of the meaning

<sup>3</sup> See Herman Nohl, *Die Weltanschauungen der Malerei* (Jena, 1908).

of life. Such universal life-moods feed into the book of Job and the Psalms, the choruses of Attic tragedy, the sonnets of Dante and Shakespeare, the grandiose ending of the *Divine Comedy*, the great lyric poetry of Goethe, Schiller, and the Romantics, Goethe's *Faust*, Wagner's *Nibelungen*, and Hölderlin's *Empedocles*. Thus poetry, unlike science, does not try to cognize what is actual, but rather to let us see the significance of events, people, and things from the perspective of life-concerns. The riddle of life is concentrated in an inner nexus of life-concerns that interweaves human beings, their fates, and life-environment. In every great epoch of literature there occurs anew, in regular stages, a progression from local beliefs and customs that develop from the general life-experience of communities to the task of once again making life understandable from itself. That was the path from Homer to the Attic tragedians, from a submissive Catholic faith to the chivalrous lyric and epic, and from modern life to Schiller, Balzac, and Ibsen. Corresponding to this progression is the order in which literary forms develop: the epic appears first, then drama brings about the highest degree of concentration by bringing the concerns created by life through plot, character, and fate together into one view of life; finally, the novel reveals the infinite fullness of life and expresses a consciousness of the meaning of life.

Let us draw some conclusions! The emergence of poetry from life leads it to directly express a life-view in presenting an event. This life-view arises in poets from the nature of life itself, grasped on the basis of their own life-attitude. This is developed in the history of poetry and literature as it gradually approaches its goal of understanding life from itself when poets let the great impressions of life act on them with full freedom. Thus life is always revealing new aspects of itself in poetry: it reveals infinite possibilities for seeing, evaluating, and creatively advancing life. An event becomes a symbol, not for thought, but for seeing the coherence of life through the life-experience of the poet. Thus Stendhal and Balzac see in life a web of illusions, passions, beauty, and decay created by dark impulses rooted in a nature without purpose; a web in which the strong will is victorious. Goethe sees in life a creative force that unites organic formations, human development, and the orders of society into one worthwhile coherent whole. Corneille and Schiller see life as the stage for heroic deeds. And for each of these life-attitudes there is a corresponding inner form of literature. From there it is only one step to the great types of world-view, and the

connection between literature and philosophical movements leads people like Balzac, Goethe, or Schiller to this highest point in the understanding of life. Thus the types of poetic world-view prepare the way for those of metaphysics. Conversely, they can make metaphysical world-views accessible to society at large.

### 3. The Types of World-View in Metaphysics

All the threads now come together in the theory of the structure, types, and development of world-views in metaphysics. I will summarize the relations that are decisive here.

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1. The whole process of the genesis and consolidation of world-views leads to the demand of raising them to the status of universally-valid knowledge. Already in those poets who have the greatest ability as thinkers, great impressions seem again and again to impart a new illumination to life, but the drive toward consolidation leads beyond them. At the core of all world-religions there remains something bizarre and extreme that stems from heightened religious experiences and from the fixation of the soul on the invisible, a fixation that is rooted in priestcraft and is not accessible to reason. Orthodoxy insists on this; mysticism and spiritualism seek to retrieve it in lived experience; rationalism wants to conceive it and must decompose it; thus the will-to-power of the world-religions, which had been based upon the inner experience of the faithful and tradition and authority, is replaced by the demand that world-views be reshaped in accordance with a rationally based validity. When world-views are elevated to a conceptual coherence, when they are scientifically grounded and claim to be universally valid, metaphysics comes into being. History shows that wherever metaphysics appears, religious development prepares the way for it, and that it is influenced by poetry or literature and affected by national life-attitudes and their evaluation of life and ideals. The will to universally-valid knowledge gives this new form of world-view its distinctive structure.

Who could say at what point the will to cognize that affects all purposive systems of society becomes "science?" It was in the Ionian colonies that the mathematical and astronomical knowledge of the Babylonians and Egyptians was first separated from practical applications and from its connection with the priesthood. With this new independence, inquiry made the totality of the world its object and allowed philosophy and science, both in their beginning stages,

to enter into a very close relation with each other. Mathematics, astronomy, and geography became the means of cognizing the world. The old problem of the solution to the riddle of life occupied the Pythagoreans and Heraclitus just as it had occupied the priests of the East. And when, in the Ionian colonies, the advancing power of the natural sciences had made the problem of explaining nature the central concern of philosophy, the result was that as philosophy developed further, all the great questions contained in the "riddle of the world" were discussed in the various schools. All of them turned their attention to the inner connectedness, for both individual and society, of the cognition of what is actual, the direction of life, and guidance of the will. In short, they were all aiming at the formulation of a world-view.

The structure of world-views in metaphysics was determined at first by their connection with science. The simple world-picture based on the senses was transformed into an astronomical world-picture; the world of feeling and acts of will was objectified into concepts of values, goods, purposes, and rules; the demand for conceptual form and grounding led those who thought about the "riddle of the world" to logic and epistemology as fundamental. Work on the riddle itself led from conditioned and finite givens to a universal being, a first cause, a highest good, and an ultimate purpose; metaphysics became a system that worked on the insufficient representations and concepts that were developed in both life and science in order to fashion auxiliary concepts that exceeded all experience.

In addition to the relation of metaphysics to science, there is also its relation to worldly culture. By immersing itself in the spirit of every purposive system of a culture, philosophy gains new powers from it and at the same time imparts it with the energy of its basic thought. Philosophy defines the procedural methods and the cognitive value of the sciences. Unmethodical life-experiences and the literature about them are developed into a general assessment of life. The basic concepts of law that emerged from the practice of law are raised by philosophy to a unified system; maxims about the functions of the state, and about the constitutional forms they assume over time as a result of the techniques of political life, are related by philosophy to the most exalted tasks of human society. Philosophy also undertakes to test dogmas to see whether they are capable of proof, but when the obscure core of a dogma is not accessible to conceptual thought, philosophy fulfills its historically destructive work. Philosophy rationalizes the forms and rules of artistic

practices by assigning a purpose to art. Everywhere philosophy tries to guide society by means of thought.

And now a final concern. Each of these metaphysical systems is conditioned by the place that it occupies in the history of philosophy; it relies on one perspective on the problems and is determined by the concepts that proceed from it.

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Therefore, these metaphysical systems possess a [dual] structure that discloses their logical coherence and at the same time their variously conditioned irregularities. These systems are representative by expressing a definite position of scientific thought in determinate systems, but they are also singular in nature. Hence any great metaphysical system becomes a multifaceted whole that illuminates every part of the life to which it belongs.

A single universally-valid system of metaphysics is the goal of this great movement. The differentiation of metaphysics that arises from the depths of life seems to these thinkers to be merely a contingent and subjective accretion that must be eliminated. The enormous amount of work that goes into the creation of an unambiguously demonstrable conceptual system in which the riddle of life could then be methodically solved takes on a significance of its own; each system takes its place in the advance toward this goal in terms of how it contributed to the conceptual work. And this work occurs in the cultured nations of Europe—first in the Mediterranean states, and then, since the Renaissance, in the Germanic and Romance states—and it is carried out by an upper class that is only occasionally influenced in this work by the prevailing religiosity and that strives to remove itself increasingly from such influence.

2. In this context, differences occur in the systems that are based on the rational character of metaphysical work. Some of them indicate stages in the development of metaphysics, such as those of dogmatism and criticism. Other differences pervade the whole course of its development; they arise from the attempt of metaphysics to present in a systematic way all that is contained in the apprehension of actual reality, the assessment of life, and the setting of purposes, and they have as their object the possibilities of solving these main problems. If we consider the ways in which metaphysics is grounded, we encounter the opposition of empiricism and rationalism, realism and idealism. What is actual can be approached from the point of view of the opposed concepts of the one and the many, being and becoming, causality and teleology, and these differences find their match in the systems. The various vantage points from which the

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relations of the world to its foundation and of body and soul are conceived, are expressed in the positions of deism and pantheism, materialism and spiritualism. The problems of practical philosophy lead to the formulation of further distinctions, of which I will mention eudaemonism and its further development in utilitarianism, and the doctrine of an unconditional rule of the moral world. All these distinctions have their place in the special domains of metaphysics, and they designate possibilities of subjecting these domains to rational thought on the basis of opposing concepts. They can all be seen in the context of such systematic work as hypotheses by means of which the spirit of metaphysics approaches a universally-valid system.

And thus, finally, attempts were made to classify metaphysical systems from this point of view. A two-fold division of these systems, opposing the realistic and idealistic point of view, or something similar, accords best with the conceptual oppositions prevailing in the reflection that is grounded in the nature of formulating metaphysical concepts.

Who could ignore the importance of what this conceptual philosophical work has accomplished in the various domains? It prepares the way for the independent sciences, and it also gathers them together. I have spoken of this in detail elsewhere. But what separates these accomplishments of metaphysics from the work of the positive sciences is the will to subject the totality of the universe, and life itself, to the scientific methods that have been developed for the special domains of knowledge. Metaphysical inferences about the unconditioned exceed the bounds of the procedural methods of the special sciences.

98 3. At this point it is possible to make clear the basic idea from which my attempt at a theory of world-views has proceeded and which also defines this work. It is *historical consciousness* that leads us back behind the striving of the metaphysicians toward a universally-valid system, behind the resulting distinctions that separate thinkers, and, finally, behind comprehending these distinctions in terms of classifications. Historical consciousness places the actually-existing conflict of the systems in their overall context. It examines the overall structures of these systems in relation to the developmental course of religion and literature. It shows that all metaphysical conceptual work has made not a single step forward toward a uniform system. Thus we see that the conflict of metaphysical systems is, in

the long run, grounded in life itself, in life-experience, in responses to the problem of life. The multiplicity of systems, and the possibility of distinguishing certain types among them, are based on these responses. Each of these types encompasses *cognition of what is actual, an evaluation of life, and the setting of ends*. They are independent of the form of the antithesis in which the basic problems are solved from opposite points of view.

The essence of these types is clearly evident when we look at the great metaphysical geniuses, who have expressed their personal concepts of life in conceptual systems that claim validity. Their typical life-attitude is one with their character, and it is expressed in the way they order their life. It animates all their actions and manifests itself in their style. And although their systems are obviously conditioned by the level of the concepts in which they are expressed, from the historical point of view these concepts are only means for constructing and justifying their world-view.

Spinoza begins his *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* with the life-experience of the futility of the sorrow and joy, the fear and hope, of everyday life. He resolves to seek the true good that would grant eternal joy, and in his *Ethics* he accomplishes this task by eliminating our bondage to the passions by cognizing God, who is the immanent worldly source of the multitude of transitory things. By means of this intellectual, infinite love for God that results from this cognition, God, the infinite, loves himself in finite human spirit. Fichte's whole development is the expression of a typical psychic attitude: The moral independence of the person with respect to nature and the overall course of the world. Hence the last pronouncement with which the great act of will that constitutes Fichte's stormy life breaks off, concerns the ideal of the heroic human being. In such a person the highest achievements of human nature manifested in history as the arena of moral life are linked with the supernatural order of things. And the immeasurable historical effect of Epicurus, who was intellectually far inferior to the greatest thinkers, lies in the pure clarity with which he expressed a typical psychic attitude. It lies in a serene subordination of human beings to the lawful order of nature and a joyous yet thoughtful enjoyment of nature's gifts.

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Understood in this way, every genuine world-view offers an intuitive insight that arises from being-immersed-in-life itself. Hegel's early notes, which arose from the interaction between his religious-metaphysical experiences and the interpretation of early Christian documents, exemplify such intuitive insights. This



being-immersed-in-life finds its completion in taking a stance on life and in life-concerns. That is also the deeper meaning of the audacious saying that the poet is the true human being. By taking a stance on life, certain facets of the world are disclosed. I will not presume to go any further here. We do not know the formative law by which the differentiation of metaphysical systems proceeds from life. If we wish to come to a proper conception of the types of world-view, we must turn to history. And the essential thing that history has to teach us is to grasp the connection between life and metaphysics, to transpose ourselves into life as the core of these systems, to be aware of the great connections among systems, connections that pervade history; there is a typical attitude in all the systems, no matter how they are differentiated or classified. The important thing is to see more deeply on the basis of life, to follow up on the great intentions of metaphysics.

This is also the sense in which I propose a distinction among three main types. There is no other tool for such a classification other than *historical comparison*. The point of departure is the fact that every metaphysical thinker, faced with the riddle of life, unwinds its tangle from a definite point of view. This point of view is conditioned by the thinker's attitude to life from which the particular structure of his system is formed. We can classify the systems into groups according to their relations of dependence, affinity, reciprocal attraction, or repulsion. But here we encounter a difficulty that underlies all historical comparison. Such comparison must establish an anticipatory standard for the selection of features to be compared, and this standard then determines the rest of the process. Hence what I propose here is only provisional. The core of my proposal is only an intuition that comes from long study of metaphysical systems. The very way in which it is given a historical formulation makes it subjective in character. Whether a different logical arrangement results if both forms of idealism are taken together or objective idealism is united with naturalism—this and other possibilities I leave open to question. This distinction of types is only intended to allow a deeper view into history from the point of view of life.

### 3. NATURALISM

#### 1.

Human beings find themselves determined by nature. Nature includes our own bodies as well as the external world. And it is precisely the state of our own bodies and the powerful animal drives dominating it that determine our attitude toward life. The view of life and mode of behavior according to which our life-course consists in satisfying animal drives and remains subject to the external world from which we draw sustenance is as old as the human race. In hunger, in the sexual drive, in aging and in dying, we see ourselves as subject to the daemonic powers of nature. We are nature. Heraclitus and the apostle Paul use similar contemptuous language to call this the life-view of the sensual masses. It is enduring; there has never been a time in which it did not dominate some part of humanity. Even in the times of the sternest rule of the oriental priesthood, this life-philosophy of the sensual man existed; and when Catholicism was suppressing any theoretical expression of this point of view, there was much talk of "Epicureans." What could not be expressed in philosophical treatises found expression in the songs of Provençal troubadours, in German courtly poetry, and in the Tristan epics of both France and Germany. And just as Plato described the life of pleasure of the nobles and rich men of his time, and their doctrine of pleasure, we encounter the same thing again as the philosophy of life of worldly people in the eighteenth century. In satisfying his animal nature, there is one situation in which man is most dependent on his environment: This is enjoyment of rank and honor. This view of the world is based everywhere on the same behavior: subordination of the will to the instinctual animal life that dominates the body and its relations to the external world. Thought, and the purposeful activity based on it, are in the service of this animal nature; they are entirely devoted to seeking its satisfaction.

This life-attitude finds its first expression in a considerable part of the literature of all peoples—sometimes as the unbroken power of animal nature, more often in the struggle with the religious world-view. Its battle cry is the emancipation of the flesh. The historical, relative legitimacy of this reaction, a continuously-renewing and self-activating affirmation of the natural life, lies in this opposition to the necessary but frightful disciplining of mankind by religion. When this life-attitude becomes a philosophy, the result is

naturalism. It asserts in theory how life is to be conceived, namely, that only the processes of nature are actual; that apart from nature nothing exists; that spiritual life is only formally distinct from physical nature in terms of our consciousness of its properties, and that this empty determinacy of consciousness proceeds from what is physically actual in accordance with natural causality. The structure of naturalism is the same from Democritus to Hobbes, and from Hobbes to *The System of Nature* [of Baron d'Holbach], its epistemology is sensualism, its metaphysics is materialism, and its practical attitude is two-fold—a will for pleasure and a reconciliation with the overwhelming and alien course of the world by submitting to it in one's way of thinking.

The philosophical justification of naturalism lies in two basic properties of the physical world, namely, the overwhelming extent and force of the physical contents that are actually given in our experience. Like something immeasurable and continuously expanding, these contents encompass the meager spiritual phenomena that from this point of view seem to be mere interpolations in the great text of the physical order. Hence natural types, when they give theoretical consideration to such relationships, must find themselves entirely subject to this physical order. And nature is also the original locus of all cognition of uniformities. The experiences of daily life teach us to establish these uniformities and to reckon with them; and the positive sciences of the physical world, by studying these uniformities, acquire the cognition of the lawful system of nature. In this way they actualize an ideal of cognition that is unattainable by the human sciences, which are based on lived experience and understanding.

102 But the difficulties inherent in this point of view impel naturalism, in an endless dialectic, to constantly reconsider its position with respect to the world and to life. Matter, which is the starting point of naturalism, is a phenomenon of consciousness; thus naturalism falls into a vicious circle if it tries to derive consciousness itself from what exists only as a phenomenon for consciousness. Furthermore, it is impossible to derive sensation, feeling, and thought from movement, which is given to consciousness only as a phenomenon. The incommensurability of these two basic facts (in the most various attempts from ancient materialism to the *Systema Naturae*,<sup>4</sup> the problem has proved to be insoluble) has now led to the positivistic correlation of the physical and the spiritual. But this too is subject

<sup>4</sup> Carolus Linnaeus, *Systema Naturae*, first edition published in 1735.

to grave misgivings. And finally, the morality of original naturalism is insufficient to make the development of society comprehensible.

## 2.

I will begin with the epistemology of naturalism and its basis in sensualism. By sensualism, I mean the derivation of both the cognitive process and its achievements from external sense-experience, and the reduction of evaluative and purposive determinations to the standards of sensual pleasure and displeasure. Thus sensualism is the direct philosophical expression of the naturalistic psychic attitude. Hence we encounter here the genesis of the psychogenetic problem of naturalism, which is to derive the unity of the psychic life as a *unitas compositionis*<sup>5</sup> from particular impressions. Sensualists do not deny the fact of inner experience or the ability of thought to connect what is given, but they find in the physical order the foundation for our cognition of the lawful connectedness of what is actual. The properties of thought are considered to be either self-evident or can be theoretically reduced to an aspect of sense-experience.

The first theory of sensualism was formulated by Protagoras. The universal power of reason at work in human thought had not yet been separated in earlier metaphysics from the physical properties of human beings—from the process of breathing and from sense-images that impinge on the body. Protagoras taught that perception arises in the cooperation of two kinds of motion, one that is external and one that is organic and occurs within us. And since for him perception and thought are not separate, he derived all of psychic life from the perceptions that arise in this way. He also explained pleasure, displeasure, and impulses by means of the cooperation of these two motions. Hence he was certainly a sensualist, and he was already aware of the phenomenalist and relativistic consequences of this point of view. Protagoras' theory of relativity considers all cognitive and value assessments and the setting of purposes to be determined solely by what is empirical in the human organism; hence it excludes any possibility of comparing these functions with the external processes to which they relate. Thus cognition, value, and purpose have only relative validity, insofar as they correlate with this human organism. The subject is no longer linked with its object by the supposition of a universally identical reason, which

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<sup>5</sup> A compositional or compound unity is not an inherent unity.

is at work in the universe and recognizes what is identical as identical. Sensory organization shows the most various forms in the animal realm as it reaches up to human life; the world must be quite different for each of these forms. The merely empirical facticity of [our] sensory organization, the dependence of all thought on this empirical facticity and on how this organization is integrated into the physical order form the foundation of all doctrines of relativity in the ancient world.

Given such presuppositions, how are experience, or a science of experience, possible? That was the next problem. Mathematics, astronomy, geography, and biology were growing steadily, and sensualistic skepticism had to make their possibility comprehensible. Carneades<sup>6</sup> doctrine of probability contained in itself the tendency to set up a positivistic equilibrium between sensualistic presuppositions and the empirical sciences. In his type of skepticism, the validity of cognition is based not on the Greek conception of an imitative relation between representations and external objects, but on the inner agreement of perceptions both among themselves and with concepts, forming a coherent whole free of contradictions. In the ideal of a "highest attainable probability," and in distinguishing the steps leading to this ideal, a standpoint was gained from which metaphysics could be attacked and empirical knowledge could be assured a modest measure of validity.

But only when the great epoch of the foundation of the mathematical natural sciences in the seventeenth century recognized an order in nature that was based on laws, did sensualism enter its last decisive period. Natural science had established itself as unsailable empirical knowledge, and sensualism had to recognize this fact, take a position with respect to it, and somehow overcome its skeptical conclusions of former times. This was the great accomplishment of David Hume. He himself saw his philosophy as the continuation of the Skepticism of the Academy; and in fact, the main features of this skepticism do recur in his philosophy. [These include] the mere facticity of our sensory organization and of the thought associated with it. Consequently, any imitative relationship between the perceiving mind and the objective world is eliminated, which means that our cognition of the world is deflected into a merely internal agreement of perceptions among themselves and with concepts. Through his analysis, these theses attain the most

<sup>6</sup> Carneades (214/3–129/8 BC), Greek philosopher and Academic Skeptic.

fruitful development. Regular sequences of events make us accustomed to determinate associations. This inherent associative power is the only basis for the concepts of substance and causality. The resulting conclusions were to become the foundation of positivism. The empirical coherence of the world brought about by the relations of substance and causality, becomes a secondary effect of the animal facts of custom and association. Empirical science is limited to uniformities of coexistence and the succession of phenomena so that any knowledge of inner relations, essence, substance, and causality is excluded. And these uniformities constitute the object of our knowledge of spiritual as well as physical facts. All parts of the world are brought together in one kind of lawfulness.

At its core David Hume's system is still sensualistic, but these important results came to be freed from their metaphysical presuppositions starting with d'Alembert's positivistic epistemology. Positivism became a method, and in opposition to the phenomenalist standpoint, the naturalism of Feuerbach, Moleschott,<sup>7</sup> and Büchner<sup>8</sup> affirmed the "crystal clarity of the sensible." And Comte's naturalism already validated the systematic coherence of physical facts among themselves and the dependence of psychical facts on them as taught by the new physiology of the brain.

### 3.

The metaphysics of naturalism received its mechanistic foundation in the era after Protagoras. Mechanistic explanation is in and for itself a positive-scientific procedure and is accordingly compatible with various world-views. Mechanistic metaphysics comes into being only when what is actual is treated as nothing but a mechanism, when concepts that are only procedural aids are treated as entities. The causes of motion are found in the particular material elements of the universe, and spiritual facts are, by some method or other, attributed to these elements. All the inwardness that religion, myth, and poetry had ascribed to nature is removed; nature has now lost its soul, and no uniform coherence sets bounds on its technical interpretation. It is this standpoint that first gives naturalism a strictly scientific form. Its problem now is to give a lawful derivation of

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<sup>7</sup> Jacob Moleschott (1822–1893), Dutch physiologist and materialist.

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich Karl Christian Ludwig Büchner (1824–1899), German philosopher, physiologist and leading exponent of scientific materialism.

the spiritual world from the mechanical arrangement of physical constituents.

An immense literature resulted from attempts to solve this problem. Its high points include the Epicurean system and its brilliant presentation by Lucretius as well as the melancholy, powerful system of Hobbes that consistently conceived the entire spiritual world from the point of view of the urge to live as it becomes the source of the struggle for power in individuals, classes, and states. Then in eighteenth-century France, we take note of the *Systema Naturae*, which expresses in its lifeless formulas the secret of the most unbelieving and pleasure-seeking era of all time, and more recently the fanatical materialistic doctrine of Feuerbach, Büchner, Moleschott, and their like.

The power of these theories lay in the fact that they were built on the foundation of an external, spatial, palpable reality that is accessible to exact natural-scientific thought. Not the slightest trace of incomprehensible forces remained in them. Nowhere was there a corner where anything independently spiritual or transcendent could hide. Everything was rational and natural. The impetus of this materialistic metaphysics was the struggle against the obscure forces of religion and spiritualistic metaphysics. Its historical justification was to abolish the alliance that existed in society between the Church and despotic powers.

In this order of things, there is no room for consideration of the world from the standpoint of value or purpose. Value and purpose are blindly generated products of the course of nature; they are of special interest to us only because our inner life makes us the center of the world and measures everything according to our own feelings, aspirations, and goals.

#### 4.

Because naturalism has a twofold relation to the course of nature, its ideal of life also had to be twofold. Through passion, humans are slaves of the course of nature—cunning, calculating slaves; and yet through the power of thought, they stand above it.

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Even in antiquity, both sides of the naturalistic ideal were developed. The sensualism of Protagoras contained the conditions for the hedonism of Aristippus.<sup>9</sup> For according to him, not only

<sup>9</sup> Aristippus of Cyrene (c. 435—c. 356 BCE), a pupil of Socrates, who adopted the quite different outlook that the goal of life was to seek pleasure.

sense-perceptions, but also sensible feelings and desires have their origin in the contacts between our sensible organization and the external world; and these cannot express the objective values that are contained in what is actual, but only the relation of the life of the feelings of the subject to these objective values. Aristippus concluded from this that the standard and goal of right action could be found exclusively in the pleasure that matches the optimal motion occurring in our sensory organism. The content-based standard and goal of the art of living is to be sought in the physical connection between our animality and external nature, as revealed in sensible motions. The Socratic reflective attitude now becomes a sovereign play of formal thought that calculates pleasure values and flouts conventions and the objective orders of life. But in visual perception and aesthetic enjoyment, which played such a great role in ancient Greece, there was another ideal, and this too lay within the range of the sort of naturalistic metaphysics represented by Democritus, Epicurus, and Lucretius. The experiences stemming from the urge to live well led toward an ideal of tranquility that is achieved by one who identifies with the steadfast, lasting coherence of the universe. This psychic attitude found its expression in the didactic poem of Lucretius. He experienced in himself the liberating power of the great cosmic, astronomical, and geographical world-perspective that Greek science had created. His conception of an immeasurable universe with eternal laws [that govern] the genesis of world-systems, the history of the earth as it becomes covered with plants and animals, and finally brings forth human beings, allowed him to consider himself far superior to the political intrigues and the wretched puppet deities of his people. Indeed, from this cosmic perspective, individual life, with its thirst for enjoyment and power, and the struggle of individuals in the Roman world theater, shrank to insignificance. ["Lucretius was the first to express the peace of mind that derives from the consciousness of being a fleeting manifestation of the immeasurable cosmos.]"<sup>10</sup>

Already in antiquity the experience of those who demanded sensual happiness in this world had loosened the grip of the doctrine that sense-pleasure was the goal of life. Enduring spiritual pleasure came to be considered as important as sensuous pleasure, and the Epicurean school undertook to solve the problem of deriving culture, in its richness and greatness, from the elements of sensuous

<sup>10</sup> Dilthey, "Der Grundriss der allgemeinen Geschichte der Philosophie," *Gesammelte Schriften*, XXIII, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000, 59.



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feelings of pleasure and displeasure, by assuming progress in human development. But it was not until modern times that scientifically valid means for the naturalistic explanation of spiritual development became available. These means included the understanding of our spiritual life on the basis of our milieu, the derivation of economic life from the interests of the individual, and of higher culture from economic progress. Moreover, the theory of evolution tried to account for the intellectual and moral properties of human beings as the result of minimal changes over immeasurable stretches of time. The naturalistic ideal of the free man, who recognizes that God, immortality, and the invisible order of things are only phantoms of his own wishful thinking, was proclaimed by Ludwig Feuerbach on the basis of a long cultural development. This ideal had a powerful influence on political ideas, literature, and poetry.

#### 4. THE IDEALISM OF FREEDOM

Again, I proceed from the fact that there are a great many systems that are based on a life-attitude or stance on the world that resolves the problems involved in the riddle of life in a definite direction. These systems, taken together, constitute a second type of world-view.

##### 1.

The idealism of freedom is the creation of the Athenian spirit. In Anaxagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the sovereign, formative, and shaping energy of this idealism becomes the principle by which the world is understood. Cicero expressly stated his agreement and feeling of kinship with Socrates and everything Socratic in later Greek philosophy. And prominent Christian apologists and Church fathers find themselves in conscious agreement with both the Socratic spirit and Roman philosophy. The Scottish School, furthermore, rests entirely upon Cicero's way of thinking, and is at the same time aware of how much it has in common with those older Christian writers. And the same consciousness of affinity relates Kant and Jacobi, as well as Maine de Biran and related French philosophers up to Bergson, back to these earlier writers.

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This awareness of a kinship among the representatives of this way of thinking is accompanied by sharp polemics against the naturalistic system. All of these thinkers, but especially the most profound ones, are permeated through and through with the awareness

of being totally different from the naturalists in their conception of life, world-view, and ideal. But also the opposition to pantheism was made increasingly evident by the representatives of this idealism of personality. When the pantheism of ancient Greece split off from the religious personification of, and personal communion with, the gods, Socrates declared himself against this pantheism as well, and the prevailing tendency of Roman philosophy was to emphasize its kinship with Socrates. Early Christian philosophy was in conscious agreement with the representatives of the idealism of freedom and of personality, in opposition to both naturalism and pantheism. And the same position was taken in the struggle of later Christian philosophy against the objective idealism of Averroes. This opposition again asserts itself in the Renaissance in the struggle of Giordano Bruno against any kind of Christian philosophy, and the battle of Christian philosophy against the new pantheism of Bruno. From that time on, this position continues in the opposition between Spinoza and any doctrine of personality or freedom, between Leibniz and many defenders of freedom, and finally in the disputes between Kant, Fichte, Jacobi, Fries<sup>11</sup> and Herbart<sup>12</sup> on the one hand, and Schelling, Hegel, and Schleiermacher on the other. All the great philosophical battles of recent centuries have derived their passionate character from how the various world-views stand over against the oppositions radiating from this problem. Bayle's struggle against Spinoza had as its root the need for more freedom from determinism. Voltaire's battle against Leibniz pitted a practical, humane attitude position that sought to uphold freedom against a contemplative metaphysics based on an intuition of the universe. Then Rousseau, with enormous success, proposed a philosophy of personality and freedom, in opposition to any form of naturalism or monism. The discussion between Jacobi and Schelling is concerned with the main problems that exist between objective idealism and the philosophy of personality, and no more passionate controversy than this had ever occurred before. In the same way, Herbart's polemic against monistic philosophy derived its vehemence from his feeling that the great truths of the theistic system were called into question by this monism, which at the same time claimed to be defending the Christian world-perspective, which is

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<sup>11</sup> Jakob Friedrich Fries (1773–1843), a German philosopher in the Kantian tradition, who argued that we can have a presentiment of the divine.

<sup>12</sup> Johann Friedrich Herbart (1776–1841), a German philosopher and founder of pedagogy.

theistic at root bottom. And the bitterness with which Fries and Apelt<sup>13</sup> attacked monistic speculation is likewise attributable to the hatred directed both against Schelling's and Hegel's distortion of the empirical natural sciences and against the dissolution of Christian theism under the cover of defending Christianity.

## 2.

This consciousness of belonging together and of opposition that links the representatives of the idealism of freedom among each other and separates them from objective idealism and from naturalism, corresponds to the actual relations among the various systems of this type. Specifically, the bond that links the world-view, method, and metaphysics of the systems [of the idealism of freedom] is an attitude that confronts all givens with sovereign self-sufficiency and contains within itself the independence of the spiritual from all these givens. Here spirit knows its essence to be distinct from all physical causality. With a deep ethical insight, Fichte saw the connection between the personal character of a group of thinkers and the idealism of freedom in opposition to every natural system. This free autonomy then finds that it is also bound in a relationship to other persons, not physically, but by means of an ethical norm and duty. This generates the concept of a realm of persons, in which individuals are bound in accordance with norms, but are nevertheless internally free. A further consequence of these premises is that the relation between free, responsible individuals, bound internally by law, and a realm of persons is linked to an absolute personal and free cause. The life-attitude of the idealism of freedom regards its spontaneous and free vitality as a force that determines other persons in their freedom, and at the same time it experiences that other persons can become a force by which its own spontaneity is correspondingly determined. Thus this vital volitional way of determining and being-determined becomes not only a schema for world-order in general, but is also projected into the world-nexus itself; it is then rediscovered in every relationship, even the most comprehensive, in which the subject of systematic thought finds itself. And thus the divine is removed from the nexus of physical causality and is comprehended as governing it from without—a projection of purpose-giving reason that is sovereign and independent of all givens. This concept of divinity was philosophically determined and precisely expressed by Anaxagoras and

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<sup>13</sup> Ernst Friedrich Apelt (1812–1859), a student of Fries.

Aristotle in terms of the relation between divinity and matter. The idea of a personal God finds its most radical metaphysical expression in the Christian idea of creation *ex nihilo*, from the nonexistent. It expresses God's transcendence over against the law of causality that governs the natural world according to the rule that "*ex nihilo nihil fit*." And in Kant, God's transcendence is critically justified in that our cognition of the world connects its truths according to the principle of sufficient reason: God is only there for the will who demands his existence by force of its freedom.

## 3.

Thus arises the structure that is common to all systems in this type of world-view. As soon as this type [of the idealism of freedom] becomes aware of its presuppositions concerning philosophical method, it will base its epistemology on facts of consciousness. In metaphysics this world-view manifests various forms. It first occurs in Attic philosophy as a conception of formative reason that shapes matter into a world. The great discovery of conceptual thought and moral will and their connection with a spiritual order that is independent of the natural order of things derives from Plato and remains fundamental in Aristotle. The Roman concept of the will and the Roman view of an authoritative relation of God to the world prepared the way for replacing the conception [of a formative reason] with the creation theory of Christianity. It was to erect a transcendent world on the basis of relations experienced in the volitional attitude. The concepts about God that are distinctive of Christian consciousness include that of the relation of a father to his children, communion with God, providence as the symbol of an authoritative power over the world that is just and merciful. It was a long way from there to the highest purification of this consciousness of the divine in German transcendental philosophy. The austere heroic grandeur of the idealism of freedom, seen at its most perfect in Schiller, forms a supersensible world that exists for the will only because it is posited from the point of view of the will's ideal of endless striving.

## 4.

III

This world-view possesses its universally valid foundation in the facts of consciousness. As the metaphysical consciousness of heroic humanity, it is indestructible; it renews itself in everyone who performs great deeds.

But it is unable to define or ground its principle with the universal validity expected of the sciences. Thus a restless dialectic starts to work again here, moving forward from possibility to possibility, yet incapable of reaching a solution to its problem. The productive will that functions purposively in family, law, and state, was developed by Roman thought into life-concepts that were then attributed to innate natural predispositions for the conduct of life. Hence the reliability of its mode of life-conduct was based on something inaccessible and unprovable. In a circular argument, the regularity of norms of life was based on nativistic presuppositions that in turn could be justified only on the basis of norms agreed to by the people of many nations. That was how the Roman philosophy of life established its idealism of personality. Then Christian consciousness developed this into the principle of the transcendence of spirit and its independence of all natural orders. But this is only a symbolic expression for the experiences of the will in sacrificing itself as it surpasses the natural nexus of motivation by renouncing life for the power to bring about a supersensible order. The ideal of holiness finds its own confirmation, but it cannot be elevated into any formula of logical consciousness. Kant and transcendental philosophy then undertook to define this ideal will and to establish it as universally valid. Something unconditional was validated as the highest norm and value, set apart from the course of the world. The attempt ended in failure. But it was renewed in the French idealism of personality from Maine de Biran to Bergson, in the idealistic form of pragmatism manifested in James and related thinkers, and in later German currents of transcendental philosophy. Its power is indestructible; only its forms and demonstrations change. This power is rooted in a life-attitude that proceeds from human agency and demands a reliable norm for establishing goals.

Schiller is the poet of this idealism of freedom, as Carlyle is its prophet and historian:

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Great Alcides erst in endless strife  
 Trod the weary path of life,  
 Humbled e'en the coward's slave to be—  
 Hugged the lion, and the hydra fought;  
 Into Charon's bark, he dreading nought,  
 Plunged alive, that he his friend might free.  
 All the heavy loads that earth brings forth,  
 On the shoulders of the hated one,  
 By the Goddess are heap'd up in wrath,

Till at length his race is run.  
 Till the god soars hence like some bright flame,  
 Casting off his earthly frame,  
 And the aether's balmy incense drinks.  
 In his new unwonted pinions glad,  
 Upward flies he, and the vision sad  
 Life has fashion'd, sinks, and sinks, and sinks.<sup>14</sup>

## 5. OBJECTIVE IDEALISM

Beyond the systems of the two types described above there is another coherent and broad set that forms the bulk of all metaphysics and extends throughout the whole history of philosophy. Their close connection with similar great phenomena of faith and art point to a world-view that permeates religions, artistic visions, and metaphysical thought.

### 1.

I will first determine the extent to which this type appears within metaphysics. The majority of philosophical systems cannot be classed with either naturalism or the idealism of freedom. We find these systems in Xenophon, Heraclitus, and Parmenides, and everything associated with them, in Stoicism, in Giordano Bruno, Spinoza, Shaftesbury, Herder, Goethe, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Schleiermacher. All these systems show pronounced traits of a common type, and this type is entirely different from the two others we have presented.

They are bound together by relations of dependence and by the most definite consciousness of kinship. The Stoics were quite aware of their dependence on Heraclitus; Giordano Bruno made extensive use of basic Stoic ideas; Spinoza is influenced by them and by the philosophical thinkers inspired by Giordano Bruno. But in contrast to the austere monism of Spinoza, Leibniz was able to give the great Renaissance view of consciousness its most perfect expression. After the dissolution of substantial forms in the Renaissance, there is no longer any reality standing between divine order and individual things. The world is simply the explication of God, who has unfolded Himself in the world in a boundless manifoldness. Every individual

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<sup>14</sup> From "The Ideal and Life," in *The Poems of Schiller*, trans. Edgar Alfred Bowring (Charleston, SC: BiblioBazaar, 2009), 199.

thing mirrors the entire universe from its own place, which is also Leibniz's perspective. Although his dependence on the conceptual stock of his time led him to conceive of God as an individual and although he placed theology too much in the foreground, panentheism remains his fundamental insight. To conceive the universe as a single whole in which each part is determined by the ideal meaning nexus of the whole: That is the great new thought of Leibniz's system. It is wholly defined by the question of the sense and meaning of the world. His closest spiritual ally is Shaftesbury, who was influenced by both the Stoics and Giordano Bruno. Moreover, the great objective idealists of Germany live in Leibniz's sphere of influence, and they are influenced by Shaftesbury by means of the German poetic movement, especially through Goethe and Herder. The dependence of the objective idealists on Spinoza, partly direct and partly through the preceding literary movement, has been demonstrated, and can be shown to be even more extensive. Thus, these systems constitute an historical complex that is just as closely interconnected as that of naturalism or the idealism of freedom.

Furthermore, they have always declared most decisively their opposition to the two other types of world-view. How harshly Heraclitus condemns the materialism of the common people! How sharply the Stoics contrast themselves to Epicurean sensualism! Yet at the same time, by renewing hylozoism, objective idealists are conscious of their separation from Plato and Aristotle. Giordano Bruno carried on the struggle against any form of Christian world-view or Christian life-ideal with unprecedented passion. The same passion erupts in the free-style addenda that are an outpouring of Spinoza's life-mood, probably originally composed separately and then inserted into his chains of argument. Schelling and Hegel directed manifestos and pamphlets against the idealism of freedom, especially against Kant, Fichte, and Jacobi as philosophers of reflection. And despite Schopenhauer's criticisms of it, Schleiermacher's *Kritik der Sittenlehre* is basically nothing but one great polemic against the ethics of sensualism and against the dualistic, delimiting form of ethics of Kant and Fichte, on behalf of objective idealism.

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If we follow up these indications using a comparative procedure, we recognize the kinship among the members of this group. We see also a structure common to all of them, by virtue of which they are united into one type of world-view. The system of principles that defines the structure of this type comprises an epistemological and

methodological perspective, a metaphysical formula that encompasses various possibilities for the formation of metaphysical systems, as well as a principle for the shaping of life.

## 2.

In the first of the three world-views, the epistemological and methodological position of consciousness with respect to the riddle of the world was the advance from the cognition of uniformities in the physical world to generalizations that made it possible to also subordinate spiritual facts to this external mechanistic lawfulness. The idealism of freedom, on the other hand, discovered the firm basis for a universally-valid solution to the riddle of the world in the facts of consciousness. It demanded the existence and possibility of establishing irreducible universal determinations of consciousness that can spontaneously shape life and produce the structure of a world-view from the material of external reality. The epistemological and methodological approach of the third type is entirely different from both of them. This can be seen just as clearly in Heraclitus as in the Stoics, in Giordano Bruno as in Spinoza, and in Shaftesbury, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Schleiermacher, for it is based on the life-attitude of these thinkers. We call an attitude contemplative, meditative, aesthetic, or artistic when its subject suspends the work of scientific cognition and practical action concerning our needs, the purposes arising from those needs, and the external actualization of those purposes. In this contemplative attitude, the life of our feelings, whereby we personally experience the richness of life and the value and joy of existence, expands to a sort of universal sympathy. By means of this expansion we enliven the entire actual world with the values that we feel, and the highest ideas of beauty, goodness, and truth are related to the way we act and live. The moods evoked in us by what is actual, we rediscover out there. And as we expand our own life-feeling into a feeling of kinship with the whole world and experience our affinity with all the phenomena of what is actual, we find a similar increase in our enjoyment of life and the consciousness of our own power. That is the psychic disposition by which individuals feel themselves at one with the divine coherence of things and akin to every other member of it. No one has expressed this disposition more beautifully than Goethe. He praises the spiritual bliss of "feeling and enjoying" nature: "Not cold amazement of a mere visit you granted me, but penetrating into nature's heart, as into a close friend's. You lead the hosts



of all that is alive before my eyes, teach me to know my brothers in quiet bushes and in air and water.”<sup>15</sup>

This state of mind finds that all the dissonances of life are resolved in a universal harmony of all things. The tragic feeling of the contradictions of existence, the mood of pessimism, and the humor that realistically grasps the limiting and confining narrowness of appearances are only steps that lead upward to the awareness of a universal existential and normative nexus. At bottom, it finds ideality to be victorious in what is actual.

The form of apprehension is everywhere the same in this objective idealism: not a collation of individual cases to reveal similarity or uniformity, but rather a simultaneous viewing of all the parts to perceive the whole. It expands the coherence of our life to that of the entire world.

Heraclitus was, as far as we know, the first thinker of this type to reflect about his philosophical procedure. His profundity lay in raising contemplative behavior to consciousness and expressing its opposition to the personifying thought of faith and of sense perception, whose isolating manner he considered of little value, as well as to the mere scientific observation of the world. The philosopher reflects on what surrounds him closely, continually, from day to day, and on what he finds to be everywhere the same. To witness what happens to us, this describes quite ingeniously the deep reflective circumspection by which the phenomena of the everyday world, self-evident to most people, become for the true philosopher objects of wonder and worth pondering. By means of this contemplative attitude, Heraclitus grasped that the course of the world was everywhere the same: a constant flux and corruptibility of all things, and yet at every point an intelligible order. Thus the tragic feeling of time's restless advance, in which the present always is at hand and no longer, resolves itself in the consciousness of the permanent regularity of the universe in the midst of time's flight.

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In the Stoics the same view prevails of the universe as a whole, to which individual things relate as parts, and in which they are held together by a uniform force. They gave up subordinating facts to the abstract conceptual unities of Plato and Aristotle, and in place of the logical relation of the particular to the universal, their system established the organic relation of a whole to its members. This is the form of contemplation that Kant conceived of as the immanent

<sup>15</sup> Goethe, *Faust*, Part I, lines 3221–27, trans. Walter Kaufmann (Garden City, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1961), 311.

teleology of the organic, and which, with deep insight, he related closely to the aesthetic form of contemplation.

And after the waning of the scholastic syllogistic world system that had used substantial forms to ground a transcendent world in the service of Christian theology, the same categories of world-view arose in the time of transition from medieval to modern times: the whole and its parts, the individuality of these parts down to the smallest detail. Already in Nicholas of Cusa we see the most refined aesthetic conception of the universe, according to which the individual thing, as a contraction of the whole, mirrors the entire universe from its place. Spinoza is the main proponent of the doctrine of the One universe. Leibniz's world-view also proceeded from this way of thinking, despite the way his concept of God is rooted in his monadology and in his theological tendency. The full epistemological self-awareness of this contemplative attitude comes about in Schelling, Schopenhauer, and Schleiermacher. The intellectual intuition of Schelling expresses one aspect of the attitude of objective idealism. The will-less, contemplative aesthetic attitude of Schopenhauer, in which the subject no longer investigates the relations of things to each other as guided by the principle of sufficient reason, but instead highlights what is essential in phenomena, expresses another aspect. And finally, the religion of Schleiermacher's *Speeches*<sup>16</sup> as a form of intuiting and feeling the universe, shows a further aspect of this world-view type.

### 3.

From this attitude there results a metaphysical formula common to this whole class of systems: namely, that all phenomena of the universe are two-sided. Seen from the side of outer perception, they are given as sensible objects, and as such they stand in physical connection. But as apprehended from within, they bear within themselves a life-nexus that can be experienced in our own interior life. Thus this principle can also be expressed as the kinship of all parts of the universe with both a divine ground and with each other. It corresponds to the psychic disposition of a universal sympathy that experiences the presence of God everywhere in the spatial phenomena of what is actual. This consciousness of affinity is the basic metaphysical feature common to the religions of the Indians, the Greeks, and the Germans; and from this common feature there

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<sup>16</sup> Schleiermacher, *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers* (1799).

arises, in metaphysics, the immanence of all things as parts of a whole in a unified world-ground, and the immanence of all values in a meaning-context that constitutes the sense of the world. The contemplation and intuition of those who in their own life re-experience the life of the whole (no matter how they interpret their life), experience in the externally given phenomena an inner, vital, and divine coherence. As a rule this contemplative attitude of objective idealism produces a deterministic perspective. For here the particular finds itself determined by the whole and the nexus of phenomena is conceived as subject to inner determination, whatever other determinations may apply.

## 4.

Whatever else this formula of objective idealism might contain about the inherent disposition of the world-nexus is expressed merely symbolically in religion, poetry, and metaphysics. It is simply not cognizable. Metaphysics only singles out specific aspects from the life of the subject—the life-nexus of the person—and projects these aspects into the realm of the immeasurable as a world-coherence. This generates an ever-new restless dialectic that struggles forward from system to system until, after all possibilities have been exhausted, the insolubility of the problem is recognized.

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Is this world-foundation reason or will? If we define it as thought, then it needs a will in order for anything to happen. If we grasp it as will, it presupposes purpose-determining thought. Will and thought cannot be reduced to each other. The logical thought of the world-foundation ends here, and what remains of life can merely be mirrored in mysticism. If we conceive the world-foundation metaphorically as a person, then we are confined by the limitations of concrete determinations. If one ascribes the idea of the infinite to it, then all determinations vanish, and here too all that remains is the unfathomable, the incomprehensible, the obscurity of mysticism. If the world-ground is conscious, then it falls under the opposition of subject and object. We cannot possibly conceive of an unconscious being as able to produce consciousness out of itself, since consciousness is something higher. Again, we stand before something incomprehensible. We cannot figure out how plurality can come into being from a world-unity, nor how the mutable can arise from the eternal; it is logically inconceivable. The relations of being and thinking, extension and thought, are not made more comprehensible by the magical word “identity.” Thus all these metaphysical systems leave

us with only a general attitude or dispositional world-view that was given its supreme expression by Goethe:

What kind of god would give the world a thrust from  
without  
and make everything spin around his finger?  
More fitting would be to move the world from within  
and imbue himself in nature and nature in himself.  
So that what lives and weaves and exists in him  
will never miss his power and his spirit.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Goethe, "Prooemion," third strophe, *Gedicht-Zyklus "Gott und Welt."*  
Translated by James McMahon and Rudolf A. Makkreel for this volume.



# PART VI

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## THE PROBLEM OF RELIGION

(1911)

*Translated by Stephen W. Ball and Rudolf A. Makkreel*



As far as we can see back into the history of humanity, life is permeated with streams of religious life. At countless points we see them burst forth—they merge; they flow irresistibly on through the ages, from the beginning of recorded history up to the way it envelops human beings today. No visual metaphor is capable of expressing the essence of this incessantly advancing stream of the enormous multiplicity of religious life. For only spirit retains what transpires in the course of centuries for our memory. It is preserved for spirit as a presence in remembrance while no longer actual in the present. This is how the results of life, the creations of human spirit, and the objectifications of history are summarized. The results of the religious past surround us—the buried temples and holy places of the most diverse nations, tombs, sacrificial symbols, images of gods, and all the tools of worship, religious music and painting, its literature and hymns, writings of prayers and edification. Religions have possessed great powers by virtue of which an immeasurable wealth of monuments has been left behind up to the present! And all these remains point us to development in the religious life of humanity. For what we call the development of religion in history derives from the fact that as religious life constantly changes in its flow from past to present, the past is nevertheless held fast in the midst of new creations. Religious development is a form of change that draws its law from the essence of spirit and its determinacy from its history.

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This, then, is the material for religious research.

The power and idiosyncrasy of religion also had a [more general] impact with a longstanding history. Thus, the life of the senses and the sensuous conception of life were at all times in conflict with religion. Religion also became the object of reflection and was attacked as the natural enemy of the intellect. But one begins to fully understand the fate of religion only from the conflict between the aspiration of the great religions of revelation and reconciliation to

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dominate the whole psyche, and the simultaneous advance of culture toward an articulation of independent domains of life: secular projects, art, poetry, science, philosophy. This is the gigantic conflict that forced religion to limit its control over our minds and aroused all of the independent powers in human beings and in society as weapons against it. This conflict demanded that opponents of religion as well as its adherents make religion the object of reflection. It became necessary to recapture and defend that unassailable inner power of religion—the soul, so to speak, that inhabits the religious body of worship, organization, and dogma.

I will explicate this in more detail. In a variety of disputes, religion had to come to terms with secular life, its expression in poetry and literature, and with the growth of science. The great forms of the life of human spirit stand in shifting relationships with each other. To a large extent art and poetry grow out of religion. But when they reach maturity, they follow their own law, and each attempts independently to express the essence of things for itself. Likewise, philosophy is in its origins variously connected with religious life. However, just as the sciences of nature emerge and find their law in the intellect as separated from the other powers of the psyche and as directed to the practice of life, so philosophy too enters a new aggregative state, as it were. It appropriates the claim of universally valid knowledge from the natural sciences; the sensory world-image makes way for that of astronomy; the inner world of feeling and of the will is objectified in values, goods, purposes, and norms. This striving toward a firm foundation for solutions to the riddle of the world, however, [which is] intensified by the battle between philosophies, first finds its satisfaction in logic, epistemology, and rational metaphysical systems. This launches a thoroughgoing and disciplined battle between secular life, art, literature, poetry, science, and philosophy, on the one hand, over against religion and its organization in religious communities, on the other. As these secular disciplines develop and mature, they assert themselves as independent historical forces and demand their own place in the life of nations. Their demand for recognition made it inevitable that they would fall into conflict with religion.

290 The joyful affirmation of the world based on the fullness of sensuous life, and this-worldly efforts to improve human existence, as well as the intellectual power of science and philosophy also contained motives that negate the religious frame of mind insofar as it originated from a restrictive, dogmatic faith and the pressures exerted by a powerful clergy. And this negation uses the weapon of reason to dissolve the irrational and transcendent aspects of faith.

It defends worldly joy, justifies the purposes of life in secular work, and turns against fear of God, against fear of punishments in the next world, as well as against the counter-purposive atonements of sacrifice, ceremonies, and sacraments. This conflict must appear whenever a nation advances to a differentiated culture with many spiritual accomplishments, and whenever this culture is supposed to coexist with a clergy belonging to powerful organizations. This is a common and general tension. Just as common is the victory of culture through the progress of science.

The full realization of enlightenment in the pre-Christian world was achieved only by the Greeks and Romans as far as we can tell. It was not until after early Christendom—first in the Muslim world and then in occidental Christianity from the seventeenth century on—that a broad, cohesive and consistently developing period of enlightenment occurred. During such a period, the forces of culture respond negatively to undermine religion. Thus, when intellect is at its strongest, there exists no objective, impartial religious research. An abstract, rational religion is placed over against positive religion. This abstract religion is a part of that natural system that the scientific intellect pits against tradition. This was the case in Greece, then in Rome, and again in Arabic culture. The very irrational profundity of religiosity, from which its powerful effects emerge, is excluded as illusory, as superstition, as a remnant of darker times.

The ancient world never got beyond this standpoint of an abstract contrast, and thus it also did not attain more than profound presentiments of the true nature of religion. The more recent European peoples were the first to turn to a coherent, methodic, universal inquiry into religiosity. And this study of religiosity and of Christianity was at first most closely connected with a developing religious spiritual concern with freedom.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The German editor notes that initially the text continued here with the following sentences:

I will attempt to describe this [developmental] context.

So far the conception of this history of Christianity has been consistently based on the fundamental assumption that the standard for the value and goal of Christian development lies in the original form of Christianity. The Catholic Church attempted to relocate the principles of its system back into early Christianity; Protestantism conceived the accomplishment of the Reformation as a return to early Christianity; and even modern scientific theologians, from Lessing and Semler on, conceived their faith to be the culmination of a Reformationist tendency to represent an archetypal Christianity. Objective

291 The modern Enlightenment ran its course in the seventeenth and  
eighteenth centuries. In the various cultural nations, it had assumed  
a varied relation to Christian religiosity. Everywhere, however, it is  
based on the idea of the solidarity of nations, and on the progress  
that had been generated by the joint work of the natural sciences  
and their application. Everywhere scholars and the cultivated live  
with a consciousness of the sovereignty of the human spirit based  
on the power of the intellect to subject everything to inquiry, includ-  
ing every societal condition and every tradition. And everywhere  
292 the standard for evaluating religiosity becomes its agreement with  
scientifically acquired truth and its effect on the conduct of life.  
Since Lessing and Kant, we have become accustomed to appraising  
religion according to the moral effects that it brings about. And  
despite its one-sidedness, this standard nevertheless contains a sig-  
nificant core of lasting value.

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research that penetrates the inner structure of the periods of Christianity and  
their coherence with the course of European culture, is ever more. . . .

The religion of Jesus set itself apart from the Jewish mode of worship in  
terms of an inner relation of love, trust, and blissfulness in contemplating the  
Heavenly Father, and flowing from this, a community of love—independent  
from the state, from the synagogue, and from the vocational structures—  
which bound together the children of God as brothers. Therein lay the eternal  
religious posture toward the invisible. But the consciousness of his religious  
mission, which Jesus took so seriously, found its expression in the belief that  
he was the Messiah predicted by the prophets. As such, he expected that the  
messianic kingdom would descend from heaven. Confident of this, he moved  
to Jerusalem, suffered, and died. And the faith of his disciples developed in  
the suspense which the expectation of his second coming evoked. It was just  
this suspense that intensified the unworldly intimacy of the love in which they  
turned away from any relations to their compatriots, to the state or to the or-  
ders of the world. There existed in Jesus a frame of mind, developed further in  
his community, which was totally different from the religious emotional life  
of a Francis of Assisi, of a Luther, Zwingli, Cromwell, Gustavus Adolphus, of  
the Quakers, the Pietists, the Unitarians, of Carlyle or Schleiermacher. The re-  
ligious frame of mind of Jesus could neither endure at that time, nor recur in  
any of the great religions, despite their will to renew it. Thus, the great forces  
that had to contend with the disappearance of the expectation of the second  
coming, have merely been the means for transforming this frame of mind into  
a new one, which required frustration of the first. When the Catholic Church  
emerged, it produced, as its highest religious accomplishment, the new monk-  
ish religiosity which, despite this striving to relive the life of Christ, had a new  
religious form. Obedience to the divine order to the point of renouncing the  
will, and asceticism, especially celibacy—these are new aspects. All of these  
are intense efforts to surrender personal autonomy. Also, the opposition of  
implicit faith and religious life. The Church as an organization. The religiosity  
of the Reformers, which . . . <Here these crossed-out sentences break off.>

In Protestant countries, yet another element is added. Here, one went back to the religion of Christ. Locke, Lessing, and Kant were leaders in this direction. They discovered in the religion of Christ an idealism of freedom and moral dignity that proceeded from the ethical autonomy of persons and envisioned religion as their relation to a highest moral being. It could be regarded as the abstract and rational schema of the living relation of Jesus to God.

How could this standpoint of Enlightenment have understood the mysticism that lies at the heart of the religious relationship and penetrated its dark, irrational depth? Some kind of lived experience of oneness with God is always the basis of the universal religions that spring from the depths of the creative, religious person. Because the Enlightenment excluded or combated precisely this element, it inevitably proved itself unsuitable for religious research. It has destroyed much in those who have absorbed the results of science, which can never again be restored. For this work of dissolution, the Enlightenment has created methods of critique and interpretation that have become the foundation for the study of religions. Only by these methods do we penetrate the fog of legend to reach historical reality. With its causal historical explanations, it has created a not yet fully adequate procedure for finding the connectedness of historical phenomena. It was incapable of grasping the meaning of religions and their prodigious course of development.

From the inner development of Christian religiosity, a movement emerged during the same seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that could first lead the research project of Enlightenment to its goal. Individual forms of this movement are the Catholic mysticism of Port-Royal,<sup>2</sup> the English and then the American sects, [and] German-Protestant Pietism. There is a commonality to these forms: an urge to personally experience the inner life of religion. This movement thus accomplished a shift in the relative value between religious experience and the effects that the church, the sacraments, and traditions have on the psyche. This shift corresponds to the enhanced consciousness of one's personal worth. The final authority for religious truth is found not in the testimony of a text, but rather in lived experience; texts can merely direct us to such experiences. <This movement> was made necessary by the efforts of the Enlightenment to replace tradition and dogma. And the power of this process was intensified by the generally advancing method of experience. The great power of the church to induce faith through its creed, the

<sup>2</sup> Monastery near Versailles founded in 1204.

sacraments, the sermon—and not least, through the influence of the clergy—recedes behind a solitary psychic process and an unorganized exchange of religious experiences. Intellectual cognition of religion is replaced by a process that occurs in the totality of psychic life and arises out of life itself.

The localities where these experiences arise and are exchanged are sects, pietistic circles, and Catholic lay communities.

Increasing reflection of humans about themselves, psychological observation, the urge for experience, the growing independence of individuals who sought the law of their life in themselves—this was the environment that unremittingly influenced this religious movement. And this effect of cultural advancement also pressed to make the products of the religious movement the object of reflection and research. Pascal, Arnauld,<sup>3</sup> Fénelon,<sup>4</sup> Lavater,<sup>5</sup> Hamann,<sup>6</sup> and Herder are the representatives of this direction, which proceeds from religious experience to research into religious spirit. The most consequential development of this kind of research founded on religious experience took place in England and America, where an immeasurable quantity of material in the life of the sects accumulated. Here, the psychology of religion found its classical realization. The most important work in this kind is *The Varieties of Religious Experience* by the prominent American psychologist William James.<sup>7</sup>

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It was *Pietism* that shaped the early development of Johann Salomo Semler, the great founder of biblical criticism in Germany, and of Kant, the profound interpreter of Christianity. And the small sect

<sup>3</sup> Antoine Arnauld (1612–1694), French Jansenist theologian, associated with Port-Royal, and known for his critique of Descartes.

<sup>4</sup> François de Salignac Fénelon (1651–1715), French bishop.

<sup>5</sup> Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741–1801), German-Swiss poet, physiognomist, theologian.

<sup>6</sup> Johann Georg Hamann (1730–1788), German Protestant critic of the Enlightenment.

<sup>7</sup> I would like emphatically to call attention here to this work; the material accumulated there will be frequently referred to in what follows. It is presented in an excellent translation by Georg Wobbermin (Leipzig 1907). Admittedly, it was possible only because the entire modern literature in the history of religion—indeed, the progress of the religious movement itself—had preceded it. It is chiefly occupied, to be sure, with the experiences of the religious sects of England and America. German readers will have much occasion to shake their heads when they find here an explanation of the religious process that stands in close relation to the spiritualism so popular in America. But much more frequently they will find their understanding of religious experience expanded by the psychological genius of James (D).

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of *Herrnhuter* (Moravians)<sup>8</sup> influenced by Pietism, gave us Fries,<sup>9</sup> Novalis, and Schleiermacher, who greatly advanced the understanding of religiosity in the new sense of a retreat from dogma and organization, to religious experience itself. But these men left the Moravian religiosity of their youth behind them; only its aftereffect on their frame of mind, an orientation toward the experience of the invisible, stayed with them. Again, it was the combination of this orientation with the new culture and philosophy, as it had developed near the end of the eighteenth century, which evoked in them a new level of religiosity.

The most important element from the general culture that shaped them was German *transcendental philosophy*, as Kant, Fichte, and the young Schelling developed it. Fries did not go beyond Kant, while Novalis and Schleiermacher are primarily influenced by Fichte. Schleiermacher's religious genius found its decisive expression in his *Speeches on Religion*.<sup>10</sup> Then, as has recently come to light, he had considerable influence on Hegel in the religiosity and religious research of his youth. Also, the religious Restoration [in Prussia] was shaped by the Romanticism of Friedrich Schlegel,<sup>11</sup> and by Novalis and Schleiermacher. Thus, a mighty stream of new religious life emerges from the linkage between the religiosity of Christian lived experience and transcendental philosophy. Carlyle and Emerson also link the religion of lived experience—to be sure, as it had developed in their native countries—with German transcendental philosophy.

I will attempt to expand on this new understanding of religiosity that emerges from this linkage.

Transcendental philosophy was the great philosophical movement that developed in German culture from Leibniz on by attending to the profundity of human spirit. This tendency unfolded with us, because we were cut off from participating in the great economic and political developments of the time; all our powers were turned inward. The active energy of the state of Frederick the Great had waned. Instead, poetry, science, and speculation occupied its most gifted men. They were led to go back from the visible

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<sup>8</sup> Herrnhut is a town in Saxony, Germany, where the Moravian religious sect was founded in 1722.

<sup>9</sup> Jakob Friedrich Fries (1773–1843), Pietistic Moravian follower of Kant.

<sup>10</sup> This is how Dilthey refers to *On Religion: Speeches to Its Cultured Despisers*, trans. Richard Crouter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). The work is also commonly referred to simply as *Speeches*.

<sup>11</sup> Karl Wilhelm Friedrich von Schlegel (1772–1829).

manifestations of the spiritual world to conditions not directly given in consciousness. In literature, this tendency asserted itself as the will to grasp universal human traits in each event. Whereas Shakespeare celebrated the individuality of phenomena, Goethe's *Faust* and Schiller's *Wallenstein* attempted to capture in their heroes the power of what is universally human. Transcendental philosophy developed on the basis of such attitudes. It proceeded from the problems of knowledge and of moral willing and discovered a universality that pervades all individuals. This universality is productive in every single human being. It is manifested in the fact of the universal validity of our thinking and in the fact that the moral law is binding on us all. And both facts are inwardly connected in the I according to Fichte by means of a nexus of actions that constitutes its unconscious profundity and determines its development. And no matter how this universally valid nexus may be conceived to manifest itself in all individuals—as expression of the world order, or as universal spirit whose objectification is nature—this transcendental philosophy of Fichte and the younger Schelling opens up a connection to the divine coherence of things in the unconsciously lawful and ethically shaping energy of the I. The separation of the human soul from God, their merely conceptual relation in the Enlightenment, is overcome. A new freedom of religiosity is achieved, and the path to an understanding of religiosity is opened up. Thus, the later Fichte, Schelling, Hülsen,<sup>12</sup> Berger,<sup>13</sup> and Hölderlin arrive at an infinite that reveals itself in everything finite and makes the intuitions of religion understandable. The lived experience of the I that feels itself as one with the infinite coherence of things, with universal spirit, with the soul of nature, emerged in the religious life of the period and its religious research. The mysticism that secretly guided Spinoza's philosophical construction became understandable again.

This mysticism as expounded in Schleiermacher's *Speeches on Religion* is quite different from that of Saint Francis or of Eckhart! Theirs was most closely tied to the Christian tradition and discipline—a mysticism based on the rare experience of union with God. Schleiermacher's mysticism is free and based on a higher and constant consciousness supported by a relation to the invisible context of things—a consciousness that arises from the recurring effects

<sup>12</sup> August Ludwig Hülsen (1765–1810), German philosopher, initially a follower of Fichte, later connected with Romanticism.

<sup>13</sup> Johann Erich von Berger (1772–1833), German astronomer and philosopher, influenced by German Idealism.

of this context on the psyche. Their mysticism deprecated earthly existence relative to the supersensible; Schleiermacher's affirms and sanctifies life through this relation. A joyful affirmation of the world order, a holy joy, is therefore its basic feeling; it gives free reign to art, science, philosophy, and the ethical by acknowledging their distinctive worth. Each of these spiritual stances toward the world is recognized as an independent and self-contained spiritual whole. Each is independent of religion, as it is from them. Morality as such knows nothing of the moral world order; epistemology oversteps its bounds when it moves beyond finite individual subjects and their search for universal validity to a supra-individual subject. And natural science becomes impure and uncritical whenever it would infer the sense of the world from the totality of nature and its lawfulness, or project a world soul. Religion must have its own standpoint on the world, with its own legitimate source; otherwise it is an impure mixture, an uncritical overstepping of boundaries by ethical or scientific consciousness. There is a religious kind of lived experience that possesses a legitimate, independent, original, and ineradicable efficacy in psychic life, and this experience is the origin of all dogmas, ceremonies, and organizations of communal religious life. That was the great discovery of Schleiermacher's in the *Speeches on Religion*.

Probably the most profound insight of Schleiermacher's universal intuition is that the religious lived experience contains in itself the basis for explaining the multiplicity of religions and the basis for justifying their legitimacy. Religion involves intuition and feeling evoked by the effects of the universe on the individual subject. Just as our psyche is alerted by the senses to the impressions of particular things, so we experience the universe in the intuitions and feelings that emanate from its unity. Indeed, each such influence evokes the experience of a fusion of our individual existence with it. In this mystical unity of a finite human being with the infinite, we become aware of the reality of the latter. Because these influences are also infinite in their number and variety as are the attitudes of the individuals who receive these influences, religious lived experiences reveal ever new features of the universe. It is impossible to unify them in one system. There is no universal religion, and there is no valid, objective system of religious theses or principles. Yet religious geniuses are able to feel an inner relation or connectedness of these religiously conceived features of the universe. It is this connectedness in its overall individuality and in the free interrelation of its constituents that constitutes religion. Dogmatism is only a secondary product. And wherever religion appears, there is lived



experience of the reality of the infinite, and each feature of the latter that is so experienced is religious truth.

Thus, the Schleiermacher of the *Speeches* is not a researcher of religion; he is not even to be classified as a theologian; he is the harbinger of a new religiosity.

In Schleiermacher's *Speeches*, however, the energy of this new religiosity is linked with a tendency to reflect on the general essence of religion. These reflections are limited by the fact that [he allowed the religious] lived experience to be defined by the culture of his time and place and <in accordance with his> individual situation. Schleiermacher experiences religion as it emerged in his genius relative to the impulses of his times, and as it was accessible to the highest existing cultural stratum. His work is a unique combination of prophetic experience and the power to make religion the object of disciplinary inquiry. For that reason, his study of religion did not stem from an objective understanding of objectified religions, but rather from religious productivity itself. Thus, it leads to depths of self-reflection on religious creation that have never been disclosed in that way to anyone. But the productivity of this self-reflection must also be historically, humanly, and individually delimited. And since it carries within itself the entire past of European piety to arrive at something distinctively new, it also embodies the power to gain a deeper understanding of what remains foreign to it, and to anticipate future forms of religious life. Its prophetic stature stands at a height of religious development from which one can survey the long path that has been traversed.

Schleiermacher came from the Moravian community of brothers, and as a boy in this sect that grew from Pietism, he experienced the personal religiosity and illuminations of his companions through an exchange of religious experiences. When he also lived through rationalism, its link to the invisible became a redeeming power for him, not a mere doctrine. He looked for this link in lived experience, not in conclusions or postulates, as did the Kantian school of his youth. But then he, too, was seized by the moral idealism of Kant and reshaped it with the idea that moral idealism works itself out in terms of an infinite evaluative manifold of individualities. And precisely herein lies what is most distinctive about his world-affirming, world-rejoicing, pantheistic mysticism, namely, that from the idea of humanity he found his way to a conception of the divine world-order. Humanity, with its abundance of individual configurations, as these are experienced in action and understood in both conflict and love was for him the key to world spirit, the infinite, and divinity. Thus arose a new kind of faith that we then see at work in Novalis, in Carlyle, in Emerson, and in the Unitarians. It is a belief in a spiritual system operative

in the universe: a radiant spiritual power that disperses itself into many modes of individual activity, a pantheism of world-affirmation that experiences the realization of an ideal as the divine in the world.

But this religiosity of Schleiermacher was for him only a single individual configuration in the moving stream of religious life. The more this religiosity was the expression of the formative history of his life, the less he claimed a universal validity for it. He saw another new form of religion emerging from the intuition of nature of Novalis and the young Schelling. Like Lessing, he anticipated new revelations of religious spirituality. For him, religion is by its nature individual in form. Having started with his own lived experience, he looked there for the characteristics of the general nature of religion. In doing so, he proceeded intuitively rather than methodically. His demarcations are not always clear in the *Speeches*, but he probed religious life to discover new depths there. He assimilated new forms of religion which have expanded the concept of religion and the horizon of religious research.

Schleiermacher's position in the history of religious research is unique because here is a genius who manifests the depths of religious lived experience through conscious, scientific self-reflection. This profundity also made possible a new understanding of the various objective religions. The central significance of Schleiermacher's [lived sense of religiosity] is not as apparent as that of the scholarly interpreters of objective religion, because it invisibly pervades his religious research. But one need only recall that Hegel—the other thinker who along with Schleiermacher, went back to the depths of religious experience—received extraordinary stimulation from Schleiermacher's *Speeches*. So did Novalis and Schlegel. Bauer,<sup>14</sup> Strauss,<sup>15</sup> and Zeller,<sup>16</sup> the founders of Biblical criticism and of the history of Christianity, were influenced by him just as they were by Hegel. This whole current of interpretations of religion then also flows on to the study of the other religions.

And Schleiermacher himself, as professor of theology, had begun to work on Christianity systematically. He scrutinized the legends that surround the beginning and end of Christ's life story. He

<sup>14</sup> Ferdinand Christian Bauer (1792–1860), founder of the Tübingen school of biblical criticism and church historian.

<sup>15</sup> David Friedrich Strauss (1808–1874), liberal German theologian, whose *Life of Jesus Critically Examined* questioned his divinity.

<sup>16</sup> Eduard Zeller (1814–1908), German philosopher and theologian. His correspondence with Dilthey can be found in Dilthey's *Briefwechsel*, vols. 1 & 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011, 2015).

299 developed a theory of the methods of exegesis and critique and of their utilization for biblical writings. From him originated the conception—fundamental to the history of Christianity—of the inner structural link of religious lived experience to the rituals of worship and to the religious imagination that is operative in legends and myths as well as in dogma formation and church organization. The *Speeches* developed this structural nexus in its overall inner vitality, although still subjectively conditioned by his own lived experience; his subsequent theological period raised this kind of insight to an ever-increasing objective level. He gave prominence to the mystical nature of the original religious lived experience. And then in the central work of his theological period, in his published *Christian Faith*<sup>17</sup> and in the posthumously published theory of Christian ethics<sup>18</sup>—two studies that must be understood as an inner unity according to Schleiermacher—he employed the classification of religions to exhibit for the first time the inner structure of the overall Christian life-nexus for contemporary culture. It was he who first divined that the basic essence of Christianity lies in its affirmative, active character in supporting cultural life. Ritschl's historical appraisal of Protestantism is fully dependent on him in this regard.<sup>19</sup> This essence of Christianity was subsequently connected with the relation of Christians to the person of Christ as embodying the ideal of humanity and to his lived experience of the kingdom of God. Of the two perspectives of modern theology—the one that conceives of Christianity in terms of an historically conditioned relation to the person of Christ, the other that sees in Christ the symbol of eternal truth, of religious unity with God—Schleiermacher has fostered the acceptance of the former perspective in more recent theology. His youthful sense of a mystical relation to Christ attained an increasing power over Schleiermacher in his later period as preacher and <teacher> of theology. His *Christian Faith* is merely the dogmatic expression of this second, central experience of his.<sup>20</sup> Its power

<sup>17</sup> Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith* (1821–1822), trans. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (Edinburgh 1948; New York 1963).

<sup>18</sup> See Schleiermacher's lectures entitled *Christliche Sittenlehre: Vorlesungen im Wintersemester 1826/27*, ed. Hermann Peiter, Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2011. [und *Das christliche Leben: nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt.*]

<sup>19</sup> Albrecht Ritschl (1822–1889), German Lutheran theologian recognized for his attempts to relate Kantian ethical thought to Protestantism.

<sup>20</sup> The first mystical relation was with the infinite universe.

superseded the reflective attitude expected of inquiry. Also influential here was the impulse in the first decade of the nineteenth century to defend the religious life of Protestantism over against the Enlightenment. At the same time, in order to make clear the true limits of his formulations in the *Christian Faith*, one must consider that this work claims to be a representation of the communal consciousness of Protestantism.

On all of these points, Schleiermacher's theological period was a further development of the *Speeches* and *Soliloquies*<sup>21</sup> of his youth. The changes in his viewpoint were also in large part influenced by deficiencies in the viewpoint of the *Speeches*. He had to overcome the way in which the ideals of religion in his time had been confused with the universal defining marks of religion. The universal nature of religion had to be worked out in a purer form. The temporally conditioned, complicated stance of religion toward morality had to give way to a simpler, more objective relation. The same was true for the way that Fichte had influenced his thinking about the relation of religion and philosophy. Schleiermacher also had to make room for his views on the person and role of Christ. But all of this did not occur without loss. He allowed contemporary advances of philosophy to carry him along. Accordingly, he thought he had found a way out of the difficulty of the *Speeches* in a metaphysics and ethics based on the identity of the real and the ideal. By correlating the *Speeches* with this system of identity, the feeling of the absoluteness of this identity was made foundational as an unfruitful abstraction of religion. Each particular form of religion, as an individual variation of the feeling of dependence, became a life-form that must accommodate itself to this metaphysical system. This created an indissoluble dualism between a metaphysical system as a rational whole whose character is to strive for universal validity and individual religious systems founded on the feeling of dependency. The accommodation of religious systems to one metaphysical system was their historical fate. Their forms were derived from a generic classification rather than from understanding and analysis. The profound idea of understanding Christianity by going back behind its dogmas to probe the determinacy of religious states of mind did not lead Schleiermacher to also see these states of mind as vital processes inherently rooted in life. Indeed, in his [systematic mode of] thinking everything became a timeless schematism.

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<sup>21</sup> *Soliloquies*, trans. and ed. Horace Friess (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Co., 1926).

301 *Ritschl* and his school started to think more historically, and his historical insight into the course of religious processes was more profoundly captured in concrete forms of Christian religiosity. He endeavored to understand the value of religious formations on the basis of actual historical conditions, and he cleared a wider path for theology along Neo-Kantian lines by rejecting any kind of rational metaphysical system. Although Ritschl gave the irrational character of religion more free rein, this remarkable intellect was nevertheless so narrowly confined that each of his fundamental conceptions, despite its genesis in history, could not do justice to history. The universal-historical perspective of Schleiermacher's *Speeches*, which contained the germ of the coming general science of religion—was given up by Ritschl. Schleiermacher's recognition of the importance of mysticism in religion was suppressed by Ritschl's ahistorical hatred of it. The importance of religious lived experience in the history of religious creativity was unintelligible for this sober mind. Even in focusing his studies on Christianity, he did not appreciate the role that lived experience played in the emergence of Christianity. The immediate conviction of Jesus that God is working within him is only conceivable as a mystical lived experience. Nor did Ritschl understand how the mysticism inherent in Christ's lived experience, as in Paul's visionary experience and the ecstasies of hermits, converged with Neoplatonic asceticism and its visions and ecstasy. In pantheistic mysticism, in the religiosity of sects and in Pietism, he saw only a falsification of Christianity.

The religious lived experience includes a horizon beyond the sensory nexus of things grasped by the intellect; the contents of this lived experience is inaccessible to the intellect and not representable in any concepts. In a state of passive devout acceptance a real effect on our present, conscious state of mind is experienced; and qua religious lived experience, this effect is interpreted as stemming from that invisible horizon.

The religious lived experience distinguishes itself from all similar states—from the effect of poisons [and drugs], from trances, from states that mark spiritualism—by two coexisting moments. The religious experience results from an inner sequence of psychic states that have their peak and culmination in a calmness that satisfies a soul suffering under the weight of the world. Secondly, the experience evokes a lasting transformation of psychic life. The coherence of these two moments manifests itself in the fact that the dissatisfaction deriving from the above-mentioned inner succession of states already evokes in many cases the ease of giving up the values of worldly life, and a constancy of persisting in this task. Connected

with this are a profusion of experiences about the worthlessness of worldly values, including the most refined reflection about them, as well as a fixation on the invisible world and a technique for cultivating this fixation that endows the religious experience with a fullness, duration, and efficacy.

The concatenation of these moments of the religious experience provides the starting point for the phenomenology of religion, as well as for the way Matthew Arnold, Schleiermacher, and Neander<sup>22</sup> understood church history. Neander had to extract the moments of autobiography, religious retrospection, and meditation from the external course of church history—the same is true for the effects of religion on worship and custom. But he did not grasp what is specific about the forms of these practices, and he had just as little sense of the inner relation of religion to its organization. This was the state of historical theology that Ritschl inherited; his cool, clearheaded mind, his genius for retrospective understanding could have led us far from here if the aforementioned narrowness of his personal religious experience and of his historical horizon had not hindered him.

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Everything pressed toward a universal conception of the problem of religious history. Here the general history of religion sets in, which was grounded in the study of Eastern languages and their literature. It developed from two sides: constructively in Hegel, Bauer, Strauss, Zeller, and from an understanding of singular great phenomena <and their local spheres> in Jakob Grimm, Müllenhof,<sup>23</sup> etc., in Max Müller,<sup>24</sup> Deussen,<sup>25</sup> Oldenberg<sup>26</sup>, etc., in Usener<sup>27</sup> and Dietrich.<sup>28</sup>

Against this background, there emerged from psychology a new attempt to grasp the essence of religion. It was initiated by William

<sup>22</sup> Johann August Wilhelm Neander (1789–1850), German theologian and church historian.

<sup>23</sup> Karl Muellenhoff (1818–1884), German philologist with interests in religion and myth.

<sup>24</sup> Friedrich Max Müller (1823–1900), German born philologist and Orientalist, who lived and taught in England most of his life.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Deussen (1845–1919), German Indologist and philosopher, influenced by Schopenhauer.

<sup>26</sup> Hermann Oldenberg (1854–1920), German Indologist.

<sup>27</sup> Hermann Usener (1823–1905), German scholar of philology and comparative religion. He married Dilthey's sister and his correspondence with Dilthey can be found in Dilthey's *Briefwechsel*, vols. 1 and 2 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2011, 2015).

<sup>28</sup> Franz Dietrich (1810–1883), German theologian and Orientalist.

James, who was endowed with an astonishing gift for seeing the realities of psychic life. Uninfluenced by previous psychological system building, he possessed the resources that came with the acceptance of possible effects stemming from unconscious psychic life. In America, he found himself surrounded by sects in which religious lived experience asserted itself with great force, independent of tradition. The strength of the American spirit lies in the fact that people who came from the social stratification, political structure, and traditions of religious faith in Europe, emancipated themselves from these historical foundations and began a new life on a new terrain. In America, the state came to be dominated by economic life. But the large role played by the sects that emigrated from England generated a counteracting force: the power of religious lived experience and a Christian ethos. This experience exhibited itself in countless confessions of faith and autobiographies. And profound minds, who connected this religious lived experience with the results of German culture—Emerson above all others—further refined this kind of Christianity. This is how a psychology of religion developed on an empirical foundation in America.

# I.

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The [human] science of religion can solve its specific problem only in conjunction with that of philosophy. Qua history of religion and comparative religion, it finds itself led back to the concepts of life, life-experience, fantasy, etc. It requires an answer to the question whether it is possible to attain higher principles of psychology for the analysis of what is historically given. To the extent that the analysis of religion considers the relations of religion to art, metaphysics, and science, as well as to general conceptions about world-views, ideals, the shaping of life, ethics, and duty, its problems must be solved by the general theory of the formation of the human sciences. And finally, insofar as the problems of the value of religion as such and of the comparative worth of specific religions, of the truth of their assertions and of the future of religious development, must be seen as the ultimate challenge for the inquiry into religion, they cannot be relinquished to theology or to speculative philosophies of religion and of history. Religious inquiry would thereby voluntarily abdicate its responsibility; it would renounce the natural sphere of

knowledge<sup>1</sup> which also enables the human sciences to guide our life, and thereby surrender the field to pseudo-sciences.

This important problem has been made urgent by the apparent results of historical research. They show contradictions among the religious assertions of different religions and among the accounts of their sources—all of which render their truth quite problematic. The human science of religion must finally heal the wounds that historical research has inflicted.

This yields the following result: The problems of religious history are soluble only as part of a universal scientific system that is dependent on philosophical investigations. This system must provide objectively valid cognition that stands above all unprovable world-views—consequently, it may not be metaphysical in the old sense. And like any foundation in the human sciences, it needs only to comprise those propositions requisite for such cognition.

# 1

All knowledge, including the human science of religion, requires an initial logical clarification that provides a consciousness of the universal valid judgmental relations that constitute the structure of thought. Beyond the evidence that arises from this, there is the feeling of conviction contained in the objectivity of judgments. It is based on locating the structure of thought within the structure of perception and experience in accordance with the laws and forms of logic.

The fact that in the structure of thought, knowledge is constituted by universally valid judgments—does not contain an *a priori* as its condition. The analysis of this fact in logic (analytical logic) is completely different from epistemology. The latter devoted itself to the analysis of the sciences by directing them to their presuppositions. It began with the natural sciences, and thereby established the phenomenality of their object. This analysis, however, proved incapable of overcoming skepticism, as can be seen in the controversies

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<sup>1</sup> The idea of a natural sphere (*Zusammenhang*) of knowledge is broader than the idea of a natural system (*System*) of the human sciences that dominated from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century according to Dilthey (see GS 76–77 = above). Neither idea is to be equated with the world-view of naturalism. Only when what is natural is doctrinally expanded into an “ism” does Dilthey begin to worry that the richness of life is being truncated.



surrounding Kant in [Schulze's] *Aenesidemus*, Maimon,<sup>2</sup> Fichte, etc. It goes without saying that these investigations referred back to the I. [The need] to overcome conceiving this I as [a merely] thinking subject. Totality, life, etc.

## 2

Above all, it should be clear that all the assertions that are made in religion, art, world-views, and metaphysics are entirely distinct from those that universally valid science formulates about them as human science configurations. The human sciences take cognizance of all that prevails at any time, and of the relations among productive systems; they assess worth, means, and ends; they then apply it by means of chronology, critique, interpretation, etc.

## 3

Life is the productive nexus that mediates between the self and its milieu. This productive life-nexus dynamically frames the totality of psychic life as expressed in a series of mental states.

Another [part-whole] aspect of this relation [to the milieu] offers itself when one conceives the whole of life in its relation to nature and in its inner relations. For however closely one conceives the connections of this whole to individuals: a part [of that whole] is always in individuals, etc. To grasp these connections, individually or socially, is consequential.

## II.

Religion is a psycho-spiritual nexus, which, like philosophy, science, and art, partially reiterates itself in individuals and objectifies itself most diversely in the practices it generates. Thus, it appears in two ways: in the religious lived experience and in its objectifications. Lived experience always remains subjective. It is the understanding of the creations of religion, based on re-experiencing, that first makes possible an objective knowledge of religion. Therefore, the methodological procedure of determining the essence of religion

<sup>2</sup> Salomon Maimon (c. 1752–1800), was recognized by Kant as his best critic.

must focus there. And certainly, religion exists in a variety of configurations, each of which constitutes a particular concrete nexus. Each of these religions has a history, and these historically unfolding formations can all be subjected to the comparative procedure in order to grasp the essence of religion common to them.

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But here a circle manifests itself. . . .<sup>3</sup>

### III.

## Anthropology<sup>4</sup>

Psychic life can be clarified and analyzed by various methods. In each of them, lived experience and understanding go hand in hand, for only understanding can encompass the overall horizon of psychic life, and only lived experience can illuminate its depths. The depths of psychic life are accessible to understanding only on the basis of lived experience. Life itself is most accessible to the method that describes and analyzes the succession and coexistence of the concrete psychic states. Consciousness exhibits the changes that occur at the core of psychic life and spread throughout consciousness. The anthropological method describes and analyzes the succession of concrete mental states. It finds them to be determined by an inner forward impetus and by external influences. The internally determined movement may be compared to a forward surge of energy. As sources of this energy <we> recognize the [overall] structural nexus and moments of dissatisfaction, dissonance, and suffering contained in every state of consciousness. In the absence of dissatisfaction, etc., feelings can remain in a state of rest, so that only their summation induces changes. We leave it undecided whether

<sup>3</sup> This is the circle discussed in "The Essence of Philosophy," namely, that one must already be acquainted with some initial marks that are common to a subject matter before one can do the proper research that can provide the basis for conceptually defining its essence. And because religiosity is so rooted in personal lived experience, locating an adequate set of initial marks is all the more difficult, etc. <Here Dilthey's manuscript breaks off.>

<sup>4</sup> This fragment was added by the editor Georg Misch and suggests that for Dilthey the problem of religion is ultimately an anthropological problem for the human sciences.

yet other assumptions are necessary to account for the energy of conscious life. Less noticeable states that are <more> independent of the overall state of mind can also contribute to this sequence.

Anthropological research has some affinity with the poetic impulse. It imaginatively completes lived experience in accordance with the meaning that inhabits it, and thus it exhibits in its concrete reality the relation of the course of consciousness to the life surrounding it.

## GLOSSARY

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### GERMAN EXPRESSIONS

- Anlage*: disposition  
*Anordnung*: constellation  
*Anschauung*: insight, intuition  
*Ansicht*: perspective  
*Anstand*: propriety  
*Antrieb*: incentive, impulse  
*Antlitz*: countenance  
*auffassen*: apprehend, conceive, grasp  
*aufklären*: clarify  
*Aufnahme*: consumption  
*aufnehmen*: assimilate  
*aufrechterhalten*: to legitimate  
*Aufrichtigkeit*: honesty  
*aufschließen*: disclose  
*Aufwand*: exertion  
*Äußerung*: manifestation  
*Ausbildung*: completion
- Band*: bond  
*Befriedigung*: satisfaction  
*Begierde*: desire  
*begreifen*: comprehend  
*Begriff*: concept, conception  
*Beharrlichkeit*: perseverance  
*Beifall*: approval  
*beschaulich*: contemplative  
*Beschaffenheit*: inherent disposition  
*Besonnenheit*: reflective attitude, reflective circumspection  
*Bestandteil*: constituent  
*Beweggrund*: motivation  
*Bewegungstrieb*: impulse to move  
*Bindung*: commitment, obligation  
*Boden*: territory
- darstellen*: explicate  
*Diesseitigkeit*: secular meaning, secularism

*eigentlich*: distinctive  
*einheitlich*: uniform  
*einschränken*: to limit  
*Einverständnis*: reconciliation  
*einzel*: individual, singular, specific  
*Empfindung*: sensation, sense, sentiment  
*Entstehung*: emergence  
*Erfahrung*: experience  
*Erfahrungswissenschaften*: empirical sciences  
*Ergebnis*: result  
*Erkenntnis*: cognition  
*Erlebnis*: lived experience  
*erwirken*: produce  
*Erzeugnis*: product, consequence  
*ethisch*: ethical

*fest*: stable, fixed  
*Festigkeit*: firmness  
*Fortrücken*: advance  
*Fremdgefühl*: feeling for others  
*Führung*: conduct

*Gebiet*: domain, sphere  
*Gebilde*: formation, configuration  
*gebunden*: committed  
*Gedächtnis*: memory  
*Gedankenmäßigkeit*: intelligibility  
*Gefüge*: framework  
*Gegebenheit*: givenness  
*gegenseitig*: mutual  
*Gemeinsamkeit*: commonality  
*Gemeinschaft*: community  
*Gemeinwohl*: public well-being  
*Genossenschaft*: fellowship  
*Gerechtigkeit*: justice  
*Gestalt*: configuration, shape  
*Gewißheit*: certainty  
*Gewöhnung*: habituation  
*Gleichförmigkeit*: uniformity  
*Gleichheit*: identity  
*Grenze*: bound  
*Grundsatz*: principle  
*Grundzüge*: basic features

*Handlung*: action  
*Hauptsatz*: main thesis

*Hemmung*: restriction  
*Hingabe*: submission, devotion

*Inbegriff*: complex, constellation, scope  
*ineinandergehen*: converge  
*Innehaben*: reflexive awareness  
*Innerlichkeit*: inwardness, inner life  
*Innewerden*: reflexive awareness

*Kenntnis*: cognizance, familiarity  
*Konsequenz*: consistency, persistence  
*Kraft*: force, power  
*krampfhaft*: constrictive  
*Kreis*: sphere  
*Kühnheit*: boldness  
*Kultus*: worship

*Lage*: situation  
*Lauterkeit*: integrity  
*Lebendigkeit*: spontaneity  
*Lebensanschauung*: view of life  
*Lebensansicht*: life-outlook  
*Lebensbetrachtung*: perspective on life  
*Lebensbezug*: life-concern  
*Lebensdeutung*: interpretation of life  
*Lebenserfahrung*: life-experience  
*Lebensführung*: life-conduct  
*Lebensgefühl*: life-sentiment  
*Lebensstimmung*: life-mood, mode of attunement  
*Lebensverfassung*: life-attitude  
*Lebensverhalten*: life-conduct  
*Lebensverhältnis*: life-relationship  
*Lebewesen*: living being  
*Lebenswürdigung*: life-assessment  
*Leiden*: undergoing  
*Leidenschaft*: passion  
*Leistung*: accomplishment, contribution, function

*Macht*: power  
*Mannigfaltiges*: a manifold  
*Mannigfaltigkeit*: diversity  
*männlich*: resolute, with resolve  
*Maßregel*: standard  
*Mehrheit*: plurality  
*Mitbewegung*: conjoint movement, being stirred by feeling, being engaged with others

*Miteinanderfühlen*: felt engagement among human beings

*Mitempfindung*: empathy

*Miterzittern*: being stirred

*Mitfreude*: shared joy

*Mitgefühl*: fellow-feeling, feeling of kinship

*Mitleid*: compassion, pity

*moralisch*: moral

*Mut*: courage

*Nachbildung*: imaginative re-creation, emulation

*Nacheiferung*: emulation

*Neigung*: inclination

*Pflicht*: duty

*Rache*: vengeance, revenge

*Rätsel*: riddle

*rätselhaft*: enigmatic

*Realität*: reality

*Recht*: justice and right

*Rechtschaffenheit*: sense of what is right or just, commitment to what is right

*Reflex*: counterpart, reflex

*Regelgebung*: regulation

*Regung*: motivating impulse

*Reich*: realm, empire

*Richtung*: tendency

*Sachverhalt*: state of affairs

*Satz*: thesis, principle

*Schein*: illusion

*Schranken*: limits

*Selbigkeit*: selfsameness, identity

*selbständig*: independent

*Selbstzweck*: end in itself

*Seligkeit*: serenity

*Sicherheit*: reliability, security

*sinnlich*: sensuous, sensory

*Sittlichkeit*: ethical life

*Sitte*: custom

*sittlich*: ethical

*Solidarität*: solidarity

*Sollen*: ought

*Stellung*: attitude, standpoint

*Stimmung*: mood, attunement

*streng*: rigorous  
*Sühne*: reconciliation  
*Sympathie*: sympathy

*Tatbestand*: state of affairs, facts of the case, instance  
*Tatkraft*: active force  
*Tatsächlichkeit*: factuality  
*Teilnahme*: participation  
*teilnehmen*: take an interest in  
*Trieb*: drive, impulse, instinct, instinctive drive  
*Triebbegierde*: desire  
*Triebfeder*: incentive  
*Tüchtigkeit*: excellence  
*Tun*: conduct

*Übel*: misfortune  
*Umkreis*: sphere  
*unauslöschlich*: inextinguishable  
*unerforschlich*: inscrutable  
*unergründlich*: unfathomable  
*unsichtbar*: invisible  
*Unsicherheit*: uncertainty  
*Untergrund*: baseline, substratum

*Verband*: association  
*Verbindlichkeit*: commitment  
*Verbundensein*: being obligated  
*Verfahren*: procedure, approach  
*Verfassung*: disposition  
*Vergänglichkeit*: transience  
*Verhalten*: attitude  
*Verhaltensweise*: general attitude  
*Verkehr*: communication, communion  
*Verkettung*: linkage  
*Verpflichtung*: obligation  
*Verstand*: intellect  
*Verstandesansicht*: cognitive perspective  
*verstandesmäßig*: cognitive, intellectual  
*Verständnis*: sympathetic understanding  
*Verstehen*: understanding  
*Verwandtschaft*: affinity, kinship  
*Verwirklichung*: activation, actualization  
*Vielheit*: multiplicity  
*Voraussetzung*: presupposition  
*Vorgang*: process



- Wahrhaftigkeit*: truthfulness  
*Wahrheit*: truth  
*Wechselverhältnis*: reciprocal relation  
*Weltauffassung*: conception of the world  
*Weltanschauung*: world-view  
*Weltansicht*: world-perspective  
*Weltbild*: world-picture  
*Weltvernunft*: cosmic reason  
*Weltzusammenhang*: world system, world-order  
*Wesen*: essence  
*Willensäußerung*: manifestation of will  
*Willensbeschaffenheit*: volitional disposition  
*Wirken*: efficacy, doing  
*Wirklichkeit*: what is actual, actual world  
*Wirklichkeitserkenntnis*: cognition of what is the case  
*wirksam*: operative, influential  
*Wirkung*: influence  
*Wirkungszusammenhang*: productive nexus, productive system  
*Wissen*: knowledge  
*wissenschaftlich*: *scientific, disciplinary*  
*Wohl*: well-being  
*Wohl und Wehe*: well-being and suffering  
*Wohlwollen*: benevolence  
  
*Zeitalter*: age  
*Zeitgeist*: spirit of an age  
*Zielstrebigkeit*: goal-directedness  
*Zufriedenheit*: contentment  
*Zugehörigkeit*: belonging  
*Zusammenfassung*: comprehension  
*zusammengesetzt*: composite  
*Zusammenhang*: context, nexus, coherence, connectedness, continuum, system  
*Zusammenwirken*: cooperation  
*Zusammenwirkung*: interaction  
*Zustand*: state  
*Zweck*: purpose  
*Zweckmäßigkeit*: purposiveness  
*Zweckzusammenhang*: purposive nexus, purposive system

## ENGLISH EXPRESSIONS

- accomplishment: *Leistung*  
 action: *Handlung*  
 activation: *Verwirklichung*

- active force: *Tatkraft*  
 actual world: *Wirklichkeit*  
 actualization: *Verwirklichung*  
 advance: *Fortrücken*  
 affinity: *Verwandschaft*  
 age: *Zeitalter*  
 apprehend: *auffassen*  
 approach: *Verfahren*  
 approval: *Beifall*  
 assimilate: *aufnehmen*  
 association: *Verband*  
 attitude: *Stellung, Verhalten*  
 attunement: *Stimmung*
- baseline: *Untergrund*  
 basic features: *Grundzüge*  
 being engaged with others: *Mitbewegung*  
 being obligated: *Verbundensein*  
 being stirred: *miterzittern*  
 being stirred by feeling: *Mitbewegung*  
 belonging: *Zugehörigkeit*  
 benevolence: *Wohlwollen*  
 boldness: *Kühnheit*  
 bond: *Band*  
 bound: *Grenze*
- certainty: *Gewißheit*  
 clarify: *aufklären*  
 cognition: *Erkenntnis*  
 cognitive: *verstandesmäßig*  
 cognitive perspective: *Verstandesansicht*  
 cognizance: *Kenntnis*  
 cognizing what is the case: *Wirklichkeitserkenntnis*  
 committed: *gebunden*  
 commitment: *Bindung, Verbindlichkeit*  
 commitment to what is right: *Rechtschaffenheit*  
 commonality: *Gemeinsamkeit*  
 communication: *Verkehr*  
 communion: *Verkehr*  
 community: *Gemeinschaft*  
 compassion: *Mitleid*  
 completion: *Ausbildung*  
 complex: *Inbegriff*  
 composite: *zusammengesetzt*  
 comprehend: *begreifen, zusammenfassen*  
 conceive: *auffassen*

- concept: *Begriff*  
 conception of the world: *Weltauffassung*  
 conduct: *Führung, Tun*  
 configuration: *Gebilde, Gestalt*  
 conjoint movement: *Mitbewegung*  
 connectedness: *Zusammenhang*  
 consequence: *Ergebnis*  
 considerateness: *Besonnenheit*  
 consistency: *Konsequenz*  
 constellation: *Anordnung, Inbegriff*  
 constituent: *Bestandteil*  
 constrictive: *krampfhaft*  
 consumption: *Aufnahme*  
 contemplative: *beschaulich*  
 contentment: *Zufriedenheit*  
 contribution: *Leistung*  
 converge: *ineinandergehen*  
 cooperation: *Zusammenwirken*  
 cosmic reason: *Weltvernunft*  
 countenance: *Antlitz*  
 counterpart: *Reflex*  
 custom: *Sitte*
- desire: *Befriedigung, Triebbegierde*  
 devotion: *Hingabe*  
 disclose: *aufschließen*  
 disposition: *Anlage, Beschaffenheit, Verfassung*  
 distinctive: *eigentümlich*  
 diversity: *Mannigfaltigkeit*  
 domain: *Gebiet*  
 drive: *Trieb*  
 duty: *Pflicht*
- emergence: *Entstehung*  
 empathy: *Mitempfindung*  
 empirical sciences: *Erfahrungswissenschaften*  
 emulation: *Nacheiferung, Nachbildung*  
 end in itself: *Selbstzweck*  
 enigmatic: *rätselhaft*  
 essence: *Wesen*  
 ethical: *sittlich*  
 ethical life: *Sittlichkeit*  
 excellence: *Tüchtigkeit*  
 exertion: *Aufwand*  
 experience: *Erfahrung*  
 explicate: *darstellen*

- factuality: *Tatsächlichkeit*  
 familiarity: *Kenntnis*  
 feeling for others: *Fremdgefühl*  
 feeling of kinship: *Mitgefühl*  
 fellow-feeling: *Mitgefühl*  
 fellowship: *Genossenschaft*  
 felt engagement among human beings: *miteinanderfühlen*  
 firmness: *Festigkeit*  
 fixed: *fest*  
 force: *Kraft*  
 formation: *Gebilde*  
 framework: *Gefüge*  
 function: *Funktion, Leistung*  
  
 general attitude: *Verhaltensweise*  
 givenness: *Gegebenheit*  
 goal-directedness: *Zielstrebigkeit*  
 grasp: *auffassen*  
  
 habituation: *Gewöhnung*  
 honesty: *Aufrichtigkeit*  
  
 identity: *Gleichheit, Selbigkeit*  
 illusion: *Schein*  
 imaginative re-creation: *Nachbildung*  
 impulse: *Antrieb, Trieb*  
 impulse to move: *Bewegungstrieb*  
 incentive: *Antrieb, Triebfeder*  
 inclination: *Neigung*  
 independent: *selbständig*  
 individual: *einzel*  
 inextinguishable: *unauslöschlich*  
 influence: *Wirkung*  
 influential: *wirksam*  
 inner life: *Innerlichkeit*  
 inscrutable: *unerforschlich*  
 insight: *Anschauung*  
 instinct: *Trieb*  
 integrity: *Lauterkeit*  
 intellect: *Verstand*  
 intellectual: *verstandesmäßig*  
 intelligibility: *Gedankenmäßigkeit*  
 interaction: *Zusammenwirkung*  
 interpretation of life: *Lebensdeutung*  
 intuition: *Anschauung*  
 invisible: *unsichtbar*  
 inwardness: *Innerlichkeit*

justice: *Gerechtigkeit*  
justice and right: *Recht*

kinship: *Verwandschaft*  
knowledge: *Wissen*

legitimate: *aufrechterhalten*  
life-assessment: *Lebenswürdigung*  
life-attitude: *Lebensverfassung*  
life-concern: *Lebensbezug*  
life-conduct: *Lebensführung, Lebensverhalten*  
life-experience: *Lebenserfahrung*  
life-mood: *Lebensstimmung*  
life-outlook: *Lebensansicht*  
life-relationship: *Lebensverhältnis*  
life-sentiment: *Lebensgefühl*  
limit: *einschränken*  
limits: *Schranken*  
linkage: *Verkettung*  
lived experience: *Erlebnis*  
living being: *Lebewesen*

main thesis: *Hauptsatz*  
manifestation: *Äußerung*  
manifestation of will: *Willensäußerung*  
manifold: *Mannigfaltiges*  
memory: *Gedächtnis*  
misfortune: *Übel*  
mode of attunement: *Stimmung*  
mood: *Stimmung*  
moral: *moralisch*  
motivating impulse: *Regung*  
motivation: *Beweggrund*  
multiplicity: *Vielheit*  
mutual: *gegenseitig*

nexus: *Zusammenhang*

obligation: *Bindung, Verpflichtung*  
operative: *wirksam*  
ought: *Sollen*

participation: *Teilnahme*  
particular: *einzel*  
perseverance: *Beharrlichkeit*

persistence: *Konsequenz*  
 perspective: *Ansicht*  
 perspective on life: *Lebensbetrachtung*  
 pity: *Mitleid*  
 plurality: *Mehrheit*  
 power: *Macht, Kraft*  
 presupposition: *Voraussetzung*  
 principle: *Grundsatz, Satz*  
 procedure: *Verfahren*  
 process: *Vorgang*  
 produce: *erwirken*  
 product: *Erzeugnis*  
 productive nexus: *Wirkungszusammenhang*  
 propriety: *Anstand*  
 public well-being: *Gemeinwohl*  
 purposive nexus: *Zweckzusammenhang*

realm: *Reich*  
 reciprocal relation: *Wechselverhältnis*  
 reconciliation: *Einverständnis, Sühne*  
 reflective attitude: *Besonnenheit*  
 reflective circumspection: *Besonnenheit*  
 reflexive awareness: *Innehaben, Innewerden*  
 reliability: *Sicherheit*  
 restriction: *Hemmung*  
 result: *Ergebnis*  
 revenge: *Rache*  
 riddle: *Rätsel*  
 rigorous: *streng*

satisfaction: *Befriedigung*  
 security: *Sicherheit*  
 self-sameness: *Selbigkeit*  
 sensation: *Empfindung*  
 sense: *Empfindung*  
 sense of what is right or just: *Rechtschaffenheit*  
 sensory: *sinnlich*  
 sensuous: *sinnlich*  
 sentiment: *Empfindung*  
 serenity: *Seligkeit*  
 shape: *Gestalt*  
 shared joy: *Mitfreude*  
 singular: *einzel*  
 situation: *Lage*  
 solidarity: *Solidarität*

- specific: *einzel*  
 sphere: *Gebiet, Kreis, Umkreis*  
 spirit of an age: *Zeitgeist*  
 spontaneity: *Lebendigkeit*  
 stable: *fest*  
 standard: *Maßregel*  
 standpoint: *Stellung*  
 state or condition: *Zustand*  
 state of affairs: *Sachverhalt, Tatbestand*  
 submission: *Hingabe*  
 substratum: *Untergrund*  
 sympathetic understanding: *Verständnis*  
 sympathy: *Sympathie*  
 system: *System, Zusammenhang*
- take an interest in: *teilnehmen*  
 tendency: *Richtung*  
 territory: *Boden*  
 thesis: *Satz*  
 transience: *Vergänglichkeit*  
 truth: *Wahrheit*  
 truthfulness: *Wahrhaftigkeit*
- uncertainty: *Unsicherheit*  
 understanding: *Verstehen*  
 unfathomable: *unergründlich*  
 uniform: *einheitlich*  
 uniformity: *Gleichförmigkeit*
- vengeance: *Rache*  
 view of life: *Lebensanschauung*  
 volitional disposition: *Willensbeschaffenheit*
- well-being and suffering: *Wohl und Wehe*  
 what is actual: *Wirklichkeit*  
 world-order: *Weltsystem*  
 world-perspective: *Weltansicht*  
 world-picture: *Weltbild*  
 world-system: *Weltsystem*  
 world-view: *Weltanschauung*  
 worship: *Kultus*

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