

Part II

1945

Where everything is bad
it must be good
to know the worst.
– F.H. Bradley

51

Behind the mirror. First word of caution for authors: check every text, every fragment, and every line to see if the central motif presents itself clearly enough. Whoever wants to express something, is so carried away that they are driven along, without reflecting on such. One is too close to the intention, “in thought,” and forgets to say, what one wants to say.

No improvement is too small or piddling to be carried out. Out of a hundred changes, a single one may appear trifling and pedantic; together they can raise the text to a new level.

One should never stint on deletions. Length doesn't matter and the fear that there isn't enough there is childish. One shouldn't consider anything worth preserving, just because it's written down. If several sentences seem to vary the same thought, this usually indicates several variations of something the author has not yet mastered. In that case one should select the best formulation and work on it further. The toolkit [*Technik*] of an author should include the capacity to renounce productive thoughts, so long as the construction demands it. The wealth and energy of these latter ultimately come to benefit suppressed thoughts. Rather like the banquet-table, where one shouldn't eat every last crumb or drink to the dregs. Otherwise one might be accused of stinginess.

Whoever wants to avoid clichés, should not restrict themselves to words, lest one falls victim to vulgar coquetry. The great French prose of the 19th century was especially sensitive to this. Individual words are seldom banal: in music, too, the single tone never wears out. The worst clichés of them all are on the contrary word-grams [*Wortverbindungen*] of the sort which Karl Kraus skewered: totally and completely, for better or for worse, planned and implemented. For in them gurgles, as it were, the sluggish flow of stale language, precisely where the author should construct, through precision of expression, those resistances which are required wherever language emerges. This applies not just to word-grams but also to the construction of entire forms. If a dialectician always marked the dialectical recoil [*Umschlag*] of a thought which advances beyond itself by putting a “however” [*aber*: however, but] in front of the caesura, then the literary schemata would punish the unschematic intent of what is being discussed with untruth.

The jungle is no sacred grove. It is obligatory to resolve difficulties which derive solely from the comfort and ease of self-understanding. The distinction between the desire to write with a density appropriate to the depth of the object, and the temptation for the abstruse and pretentious sloppiness, is not automatic: a mistrustful insistence is always healthy. Precisely those who wish to make no concession to the stupidity of common sense must guard themselves against stylistically draping together thoughts which are themselves to be convicted of banality. Locke’s platitudes do not justify Hamann’s cryptology.

If one has even the slightest qualms about a completed work, regardless of its length, then one should take such with inordinate seriousness, out of all proportion to the level of relevance which it might register. The affective investment [*Besetzung*] in a text and vanity tend to minimize such misgivings. What is passed over with the tiniest doubt, may well indicate the objective worthlessness of the whole.

The Echternacher spring procession [German folk parade, where marchers move three steps forward and two back] is not the course of the World-Spirit [*Weltgeist*]; restriction and revocation are not the means of narration [*Darstellungsmittel*] for dialectics. On the contrary this latter moves by extremes and, instead of qualifying such, drives the thought through uttermost consequence to its dialectical recoil [*Umschlag*]. The prudence with which one forbids oneself to venture too far with a sentence, is mostly only an agent of social control and thus of dumbing down.

Skepticism against the oft-cited objection, that a text, a formulation would be “too beautiful.” The reverence for the matter [*Sache*: thing, philosophic matter], or even for suffering, can easily rationalize the resentment against those who find, in the reified shape of language, the traces of something unbearable, which befalls human beings: debasement. The dream of an existence [*Dasein*: existence, being] without shame, to which the passion for language clings, even though the latter is forbidden to depict the former as content, is to be maliciously strangled. The author should make no distinction between beautiful and factual [*sachlichem*: factual, objective, realistic] expression. One should neither entrust this distinction to concerned critics, nor tolerate it in oneself. If one succeeds in completely saying what one means, then it is beautiful. The beauty of expression for its own sake is by no means “too beautiful,” but ornamental, artsy, ugly. Yet whoever leaves off from the purity of the expression, under the pretext of unswervingly stating the facts, thereby betrays the matter [*Sache*] too.

Properly worked texts are like spider webs: hermetic, concentric, transparent, well-joined and fastened. They draw everything into themselves, whatever crawls and flies. Metaphors, which fleetingly dart through them, become their nourishing prey. Materials come flying to them. The binding stringency [*Stichhaltigkeit*] of a conception is to be

judged by whether its citations evoke other citations. Wherever the thought opens up a cell of reality, it must push into the next chamber, without an act of violence by the subject. It vouchsafes its relationship to the object, as soon as other objects crystallize around it. In the light that it sheds on its determinate object, others begin to gleam.

Authors settle into their texts like home-dwellers. Just as one creates disorder by lugging papers, books, pencils and documents from one room to another, so too does one comport oneself with thoughts. They become pieces of furniture, on which one sits down, feeling at ease or annoyed. One strokes them tenderly, scuffs them up, jumbles them up, moves them around, trashes them. To those who no longer have a homeland, writing becomes home. And therein one unavoidably generates, just like the family, all manner of household litter and junk. But one no longer has a shed, and it is not at all easy to separate oneself from cast-offs. So one pushes them to and fro, and in the end runs the risk of filling up the page with them. The necessity to harden oneself against pity for oneself includes the technical necessity, to counter the diminution of intellectual tension with the most extreme watchfulness, and to eliminate anything which forms on the work like a crust or runs on mechanically, which perhaps at an earlier stage produced, like gossip, the warm atmosphere which enabled it to grow, but which now remains fusty and stale. In the end, authors are not even allowed to be home in their writing.

52

Where the stork brings children from. – Every human being has an archetype out of a fairy-tale, one need only look long enough. Over there a beauty asks the mirror, if she is the fairest of them all, like the Queen in Snow White. She who bristles and is nitpicky to death, was modeled after the goat described in the verse, “I’m so stuffed / can’t eat any more, meeeh, meeeh.” A man who is sorrowful and yet unbowed resembles the

crinkled little old lady gathering wood, who meets the Good Lord without recognizing Him, and is blessed with bounty, because she helped Him. Another went out into the world as a fine young fellow to make his fortune, dispatched a number of giants, but had to die nonetheless in New York. One walks through the wilderness of the city like Little Red Riding Hood and brings the grandmother a slice of cake and a bottle of wine, yet another undresses during love-making as shamelessly childlike as the girl with the coins like silver stars. The clever one becomes aware of his strong animal soul, does not wish to perish along with his friends, forms a group of Bremen city musicians, leads them into the robbers' den, outwits the crooks there, but wants to go back home. The frog prince, an incorrigible snob, stares at the princess with eyes of longing and cannot stop hoping that she will rescue him.

53

Tomfoolery. – The linguistic habitus of Schiller is reminiscent of youths who come from the bottom and, embarrassed, begin to shout in high society, in order to make themselves heard: power [in English in original] and insolence. The German tirade and sententiousness is modeled on the French version, but practiced at the bar table. In their infinite and implacable demands, the petit bourgeois hams it up, identifying with the power they do not have, outbidding it through arrogance all the way to absolute Spirit [*Geist*] and absolute horror. Between the universal-human grandiosity and sublimity – which all idealists have in common, and which continually wishes to inhumanly trample on what is small as mere existence – and the crude love of ostentation of bourgeois men of violence, exists the most intimate understanding. Spiritual giants are wont to laugh in a booming voice, to explode, to utterly demolish. When they say creation, then they mean the cramped will, with which they puff themselves up and hush questions: from the primacy of practical reason, it was always only a step to the hatred of theory. Such a dynamic dwells

within all idealistic thought-movements: even Hegel's immeasurable effort, to heal it by itself, became its victim. To wish to derive the world in words out of a principle, is the mode of conduct of those who would like to usurp power, instead of resisting such. Fittingly, Schiller dealt mostly with usurpers. In the classicistic explanation of sovereignty over nature, what is vulgar and lesser is mirrored via assiduous negation. Close behind the ideal stands life. The rose-scents of Elysium, far too voluble to be vouchsafed the experience of a single rose, smells like the tobacco in the functionaries' office, and the lyrical backdrop of the moon was modeled on the oil-light, in whose guttering light students slog for their exams. Weakness posing as strength has betrayed the thought of the presumably rising bourgeoisie to ideology, even in the days it fulminated against tyranny. In the innermost recess of humanism, as its selfsame soul, surreptitiously rages the brute who as a Fascist turns the world into a prison.

54

The Robbers. – The Kantian Schiller is both more non-sensuous as well as more sensuous than Goethe: both more abstract as well as more entangled in sexuality. This latter, as immediate desire, turns everything into an action-object and thereby the same. “Amalia for the band” – that is why Louise remains as flat as lemonade. Casanova's women, not for nothing identified with letters instead of names, are scarcely to be distinguished from each other and also not from the figurines, which form complicated pyramids in Sade's mechanical organ. Something of such sexual brutality, the incapacity to make distinctions, lives however in the great speculative systems of idealism, all imperatives to the contrary, and chains the German Spirit [*Geist*] and German barbarism to each other. What peasant greed, only held in check with difficulty by the warnings of the priests, advocates as autonomy in metaphysics, is the right to reduce everything in its path to its essence as brazenly as peasant conscripts *vis-à-vis* the

women of the conquered city. The pure factual treatment [*Tathandlung*] is the violation projected into the starry skies above. The long, contemplative glance, however, in which human beings and things really unfold, is always that in which the compulsion towards the object is broken, reflected. Non-violent reflection [*Betrachtung*], from which all happiness of the truth comes, has this condition, that those who reflect do not incorporate the object into themselves: nearness to distance. Only because Tasso, who the psychoanalysts would call a destructive character, is afraid in front of the princess and falls as a civilized victim to the impossibility of the immediate, do Adelheid, Klärchen and Gretchen speak the transparent, unforced language, which makes them into allegories of Ur-history. The appearance [*Schein*] of life in Goethe's women was paid for with withdrawal, evasion, and more is at stake here than mere resignation before the victory of the social order. The absolute opposite to this, the symbol of the unity of the sensuous and the abstract, is Don Juan. When Kierkegaard says, that sensuality is to be grasped in him as a principle, then he touches on the secret of sensuality itself. Its frozen glance contains, so long as its self-constitution [*Selbstbesinnung*] does not arise, precisely that anonymity, that unhappy generality, which catastrophically reproduces itself in its negative, the controlling sovereignty of thought.

55

If you'll permit me. – When the poet in Schnitzler's play *Merry-go-Round* tenderly approaches the coquette, portrayed as the friendly opposite of a Puritan, she says, "Step off, go play the piano already." She cannot be unaware of the purpose of the arrangement, nor does she actually resist. Her impulse goes deeper than conventional or psychological prohibitions. It evinces archaic frigidity, the fear of the female animal of reproduction, which inflicts nothing but pain. Pleasure is a late achievement, scarcely older than consciousness. If one observes how animals compulsively

copulate, as if under a spell, then one sees through the proverb “Bliss was given even to the worm” as a piece of idealistic lying, at least where females are concerned, who encounter love in unfreedom, and who are recognized only as objects of violence. Something of this has remained in women, especially those of the petty bourgeoisie, well into the late industrial era. The memory of the old injury still lives on, while the physical pain and the immediate fear have been removed by civilization. Society continually throws the devotedness of the female back to the situation of sacrifice, from which it emancipated women. No man, so long as he is not completely insensitive, who is lobbying a poor woman to come along with him, can mistake the undertone of justice in her resistance, the sole prerogative which patriarchal society accords to women, who, once persuaded, end up paying the bill after the brief triumph of the “no.” She knows that she, as the provider since time immemorial, is simultaneously the one who is betrayed. If for that reason she is out only for herself, then she will be betrayed that much more. This is apparent in the advice to the novice, which Wedekind puts into the words of the madame of a brothel: “There is only one way to be happy in this world, and that is to do everything to make others as happy as possible.” One’s own pleasure has as a prerequisite the boundless throwing of oneself away, which women, due to their archaic fear, are no more capable of than men in their puffed-up self-importance. Not merely the objective possibility – also the subjective capacity for happiness lies only in freedom.

56

Genealogical research. – The deepest affinity exists between Ibsen and the *Struwwelpeter* [of Heinrich Hoffman]. It is the same kind as the frozen similarity of the flashbulb snapshots of family members in 19th century albums. Isn’t Fidgety Philip truly what *Ghosts* say it is, a family drama? Doesn’t “and Mother gazed in silence rare / by the table, nose in air”

describe the manner of bank director Borkmann's wife? How else to explain Augustus' consumptive illness than as the sins of his father and the inherited memory of guilt? Furious Frederick is prescribed bitter but healing medicine by that enemy of the people, Doctor Stockmann, who in return donates his liver-sausage to the dog. Dancing little Harriet with the matches is a touched-up photograph of the small Hilda Wangel from the time that her step-mother, the woman of the sea, left her alone in the house, and Flying Robert high over the church steeple is her selfsame building contractor. And what else does Johnny Head-in-air want than the sun? Who else could have lured him into the water than Little Eyolf's Rat-Wife, cut out of the same cloth as the red-legged Scissor Man? The strict poet however behaves like tall Nicholas [also called Agrippa in some translations of Hoffman, a schoolmaster who dunks three misbehaving students into an ink-pot], who dunks the children's pictures of modernity into his great barrel of ink, blackening them with their prehistory, pulling them to and fro like quivering marionettes, and in such a manner holding a day of judgment over himself.

57

Excavation. – As soon as Ibsen's name is dropped, there is a cry that he and his objects are outmoded and obsolete. These are the same types who were enraged sixty years ago about what was modernistically alienating and unethically extravagant [*Verstiegene*] about Nora [in *Doll's House*] and *Ghosts*. Ibsen, the splenetic bourgeois [*Bürger*: bourgeois, citizen], vented his spleen at society, borrowing his implacability and ideals from the latter's own principle. He painted the portrait of those deputized as the solid majority, who shouted down the enemy of the people, as a pathetic but enduring monument, and to this day they are still not flattered. That is why they move on to the business of the day. Where reasonable people are united over the behavior of the unreasonable, one can always presume something displaced and not yet worked through, painful scars. Thus it is

with the woman question. In fact this is superficially no longer “acute,” due to the dissolution of the “masculine”-liberal competitive economy, the participation of women in salaried occupations where they are as independently dependent as men, the disenchantment of the family and the loosening of sexual taboos. At the same time, however, the continuation of traditional society has warped the emancipation of women. Few things are more symptomatic of the decay of the workers’ movement than its failure to notice this. The admission of women to all possible supervised activities hides the perpetuation of their dehumanization. They remain in large firms what they were in the family, objects. One must think not only about their impoverished daily grind at work and their life at home, which counter-intuitively preserves craft-era working conditions in the midst of industrial ones, but about women themselves. Willingly, without any contrary impulse, they reflect domination and identify with it. Instead of solving the woman question, masculine society has extended its own principle to the point that its victims are not even capable of raising the question anymore. No sooner are they granted a certain measure of wealth, than they enthusiastically affirm their fate, leave thinking to the men, defame every reflection as an affront to the feminine ideal propagated by the culture-industry and above all leave themselves in the unfreedom, which they hold to be the fulfillment of their gender. The defects by which they have to pay for this, above all neurotic stupidity, contribute to the perpetuation of the condition. Already in Ibsen’s time, most women with bourgeois pretensions were ready to tear into the hysterical sisters, who for their part took upon themselves the hopeless attempt to break out of the prison of society, which turned all four walls against them so unfeelingly. The grand-daughters however would tolerantly smile at the hysterical ones, without feeling themselves affected, and refer them to the proper authorities for friendly treatment. The female hysteric, who wished for the miraculous, is succeeded by the raging, industrious blockhead, who

cannot wait for the triumph of calamity. – Perhaps something similar is at work in everything which is outmoded. It is to be explained not by mere temporal distance, but as the judgment of history. Its expression in things is the shame welling up in those born later, when confronted with an earlier possibility which the latter failed to bring to life. What was achieved, may be forgotten and preserved in the present. Only what failed is always outmoded, the broken promise of something new. It is not for nothing that Ibsen's women are called "modern." The hatred of modernity and that of what is outmoded are immediately one and the same.

58

The truth about Hedda Gabler. – The aestheticism of the 19th century cannot be understood in the context of the history of philosophy, but solely in relation to primary reality, to social conflicts. The bad conscience rests on the grounds of amorality. Critique confronted bourgeois society economically as well as ethically with its own norms. Against this, there remained no recourse for the ruling class, to the extent they did not wish to fall back on apologetic lies and powerlessness like the court poets and novelists with state pensions, than to reject the principle by which society itself is measured, and thus its own ethics [*Moral*]. However, the new position which radical bourgeois thought assumed, under the pressure of its opponents, was not exhausted by the mere replacement of ideological appearance [*Schein*] by a truth which was proclaimed with the rage of self-destruction, defiantly rebellious and ready to capitulate. The uprising of the beautiful against bourgeois good [*Gut*] was an uprising against benevolence [*Güte*]. Benevolence is itself the deformation of the good. By severing the ethical principle from the social one and displacing it into a private sensibility [*Gesinnung*], the former restricted the latter in a double sense. Benevolence renounced the realization of a condition worthy of human beings, which was built into the ethical principle. Each one of its actions is inscribed with consoling

resignation: it aims at alleviation, not healing, and in the end the consciousness of incurability forms a pact with such. Benevolence thereby becomes restricted even in itself. Its guilt consists of trustfulness. It mirrors the immediate relations between human beings and leaps over the distance by which alone individuals can protect themselves against becoming touched by the generality. It is precisely in the most intimate contact that they experience the non-sublated difference most painfully. Only alienness [*Fremdheit*: foreignness] is the antidote to alienation [*Entfremdung*]. The ephemeral picture of harmony, in which benevolence delights, only exacerbates the suffering of irreconcilability, the more it idiotically denies the latter. The affront against taste and consideration, from which no good act is exempt, completes the leveling, which the powerless utopia of the beautiful opposes. From the beginnings of mature industrial society, the allegiance to evil was not only the precursor of barbarism, but also a mask of the good. Its dignity passed over to evil, by drawing all hatred and all resentment of the social order to itself, an order which drilled the good into its members, so that it could be evil without punishment. When Hedda Gabler mortally embarrassed Aunt Julle, who meant only the very best, when she intentionally declared that the dreadful hat which the aunt acquired to honor the general's daughter belonged to the maid, then the dissatisfied one did not merely sadistically vent her hate against the cloying bonds of marriage on a defenseless person. Rather she sins against what is the best, in what she has to do, because she recognizes in the best the shame of the good. She represents, against the old woman who adores the dim-witted nephew, unconsciously and absurdly, the absolute. Hedda is the victim and not Julle. The beautiful, whose fixed idea dominates Hedda, opposes ethics [*Moral*] even before scorning such. For it digs in its heels against every generality and posits the differential determination of mere existence absolutely, as the contingency which allows for one thing but not another. The opaque particularity maintains itself as the norm in the beautiful, as something solely general, because

the normal generality has become all too transparent. Thus it casts down its challenge to the latter, the equality of everything which is unfree. But it becomes thereby guilty itself, by once more severing, along with the generality, also the possibility of going beyond that mere existence, whose opacity merely mirrors the untruth of the bad generality. Thus the beautiful does injustice to justice and is nevertheless justified in doing so. In the beautiful, the frail future offers its sacrifice to the Moloch of the contemporary: because there can be nothing good in the latter's realm, the former makes itself bad, in order to convict the judge from the position of the vanquished. The objection of the beautiful against the good is the secularized, bourgeois form of the delusion of the hero in classical tragedy. In the immanence of society, the consciousness of its negative essence is locked away, and only the concrete negation stands in for the truth. Anti-ethics, by rejecting what is unethical in ethics, as repression, simultaneously makes the latter's innermost concern its own: that every form of violence ought to vanish, along with every restriction. That is why in fact the motives of uncompromising bourgeois self-critique converge with the materialist kind, which brings the former to consciousness of itself.

59

Since I saw him. – The female character and the ideal of femininity on which it is modeled are products of masculine society. The picture of undistorted nature originates first in distortion, as its opposite. There, where it claims to be humane, masculine society sovereignly breeds in women their own corrective and thereby shows itself through this restriction as the implacable master. The female character is the imprint of the positive one of domination. But for that reason just as bad as the latter. What generally passes for nature in the bourgeois context of delusion is merely the scar tissue of mutilation. If the psychoanalytic theory holds, that women perceive their physical constitution [*Beschaffenheit*] as the

consequence of castration, then in their neurosis they intuit the truth. Those who feel themselves to be wounds when they bleed, know more about themselves than those who style themselves as flowers, because that's what their husband likes. The lie is not merely that nature is affirmed, where it is merely tolerated and built in, but that what passes for nature in civilization is according to its substance the most removed from everything natural, the pure turning of oneself into an object. The kind of femininity which calls upon the instincts, is invariably the one to which every woman must compel herself with all manner of violence – with masculine violence: the little women are little men. One need only have experienced once, in the pangs of jealousy, how such female women access their femininity, deploying it where necessary, making their eyes flash, fueling their mood swings, in order to know what the sheltered unconscious, unscathed by the intellect, really amounts to. It is precisely its pristineness and purity which is the achievement of the ego, of censorship, of the intellect, and for that reason it adjusts itself without any conflict into the reality-principle of the rational social order. Without a single exception, female natures conform. That Nietzsche's insistence stopped at this point, by adopting an unexamined and unversed picture of feminine nature from the Christian civilization which he otherwise so thoroughly mistrusted, ultimately allowed bourgeois society to subjugate the effort of his thought. He fell prey to the fraud of saying "woman," [*Weib*: woman, wench] when he spoke of women [*Frau*: woman, wife, Mrs.]. Thus the perfidious advice to not forget the whip: the woman [*Weib*] is already the effect of the whip. It would be the emancipation of nature to abolish its self-positing. The glorification of the female character implies the degradation of all who bear it.

60

A word for ethics. [*Moral*: ethics, morality] – The amoralism, with which Nietzsche dressed down the old untruths, has fallen prey to the verdict of

history. With the dissolution of religion and its tangible philosophical secularizations, the restricting prohibitions have lost their certified essence, their substantiality. At one time however material production was still so underdeveloped, that there were grounds for announcing that there wasn't enough for everyone. Whoever did not criticize political economy as such, was forced to cling to the limiting principle subsequently expressed as unrationalized appropriation at the cost of the weak. The objective prerequisites for this have changed. In view of the immediate possibility of abundance, this limitation must seem superfluous not just to social non-conformists, but even to the limited minds of bourgeois citizens. The implicit sense of the ethics of the rulers, that whoever wants to live has to grab what they can, has meanwhile turned into even more of a wretched lie than when it was the pulpit wisdom of the 19th century. If in Germany the upstanding citizens [*Spiessbürger*] have proven themselves to be blond beasts, then this is not on account of national peculiarities, but due to the fact that in the face of open plenitude, the blond beast itself, social robbery, has taken on the aspect of something backwoods, of the deluded philistine, and even of the "short-end-of-the-stick" attitude, against which the ruling ethics was invented. If Cesare Borgia came back to life today, he would resemble David Friedrich Strauss and he would be named Adolf Hitler. The preaching of amorality has become the task of the same Darwinists who Nietzsche loathed, and who convulsively proclaimed the barbaric struggle for existence as a maxim, precisely because it is no longer needed. The virtue of gentility has long since ceased to mean the taking what is better from others, but means instead becoming satiated with taking and really practicing the virtue of giving, something which occurs in Nietzsche solely intellectually. The ascetic ideals comprise a greater degree of resistance against the madness of the profit economy today than lavish living did sixty years ago against liberal repression. Amoralists may finally permit themselves to be as benevolent, kind, unegoistic and open-minded as Nietzsche already was at

that time. As a guarantee of their unyielding resistance, they will still remain as lonely as in the days when he turned the mask of evil against the normal world, in order to teach the norm to fear its own wrongness.

61

Court of appeal. – Nietzsche expressed in *The Antichrist* the strongest argument not merely against theology, but also against metaphysics: that it confuses hope with truth; that the impossibility of thinking, living happily or living at all without something absolute, does not testify to the legitimacy of that thought. He rebuts the Christian “proof by efficacy,” that belief is truth, because it brings bliss. For “isn’t blessedness – technically expressed, pleasure – always a proof of efficacy? So little, that it almost proves the contrary, yielding in any case the highest suspicion against the ‘truth’, if feelings of pleasure have anything to say to the question of ‘what is true’. The proof of ‘pleasure’ is proof of ‘pleasure’ – nothing more; how in the world can it be established, that it is precisely true judgments which are more pleasurable than false ones and, according to a pre-established harmony, necessarily draw pleasant feelings after them?” (*The Antichrist*, Aphorism 50). But Nietzsche himself taught *amor fati* [Latin: love of fate], “you should love your destiny.” This latter, according to the epilogue of the *Twilight of the Gods*, is his innermost nature. And it is worth asking the question as to whether there is any more reason to love what one encounters, to extol that which exists, because it is, than for considering as true what one hopes for. Is it not the same faulty conclusion, which leads from the existence of “stubborn facts” [in English in original] to their installation as the highest value, which he reproaches in the transition from hope to truth? If he dispatches “blessedness through a fixed idea” to the insane asylum, then one could seek out the origin of *amor fati* [Latin: love of fate] in the prison. Those who no longer see or have anything else to love, fall victim to the love of stone walls and barred windows. Both instances are ruled by the same

ignominy of adaptation, which, in order to be able to endure the horror of the world, ascribes the wish to reality and meaning to nonsense of compulsion. No less than in *credo quia absurdum* [Latin: belief unto absurdity], renunciation crawls in *amor fati* [Latin: love of fate], the glorification of what is most absurd of them all, from domination to the cross. In the end, hope, which eludes reality by negating it, is the sole shape in which the truth appears. Without hope the idea of truth would scarcely be thinkable, and it is the cardinal untruth, to pass off the existence which is recognized as bad as the truth, if only because it was once recognized. Here, rather than the opposite, is where the crime of theology lies, which Nietzsche prosecuted without ever reaching the final court. In one of the most powerful moments of his critique he accused Christianity of mythology: “The sacrificial victim, and indeed in its most repulsive, barbaric form, the sacrifice of the innocent for the sins of the guilty! What ghastly paganism!” (*The Antichrist*, Aphorism 41). Yet the love of destiny is nothing other than the absolute sanctioning of the infinity of such sacrifice. Mythos separates Nietzsche’s critique of myth from the truth.

62

Shorter dispatches [*Ausführungen*: executions, accomplishments, orders].
– If one reads anew one of the meditative books of Anatole France, for instance the *Garden of Epicure*, then one cannot avoid, in the midst of all thankfulness for the proffered enlightenment, a feeling of embarrassment, which is to be adequately explained neither by that obsolescence, which renegade French irrationalists enthusiastically endorse, nor by personal vanity. By serving as a pretext for envy, because a vain moment necessarily appears in all Spirit [*Geist*] as soon as it portrays itself, the grounds for the embarrassment becomes clear. It is due to what is contemplative, the giving of time to oneself, the homily, however many times interrupted, the indulgently raised forefinger. The critical content of

the thought is denied by the gesture of bandying oneself about, familiar to professors sinecured by the state, and the irony, with which the stage actor of Voltaire confesses on his title page to his membership in the Académie Française [French Academy], recoils back onto the comedian. In his essay, something violent is concealed in all the freighted humanity: one can afford to speak so, because no-one interrupts the master. Something of the usurpation which dwells within all lecturing and indeed all reading aloud, has permeated the lucid construction of the periods, which reserve so much leisure for the most uncomfortable things. An unmistakable sign of latent contempt for human beings in the last advocate of human dignity is the dauntlessness with which he expresses platitudes, as if no-one dared to notice them: “*L'artiste doit aimer la vie et nous montrer qu'elle est belle. Sans lui, nous en douterions.*” [French: Artists should love life and show us that it is beautiful. Without them, we should doubt it.] What steps forwards in the archaically stylized meditations of France, already secretly marks every meditation, which claims the prerogative of withdrawing from the immediacy of purpose. Equanimity as such turns into the same lie, which the haste of immediacy falls victim to anyway. While thought, according to its content, strives against the irresistibly rising tide of horror, the nerves, the sense-organ of historical consciousness, are capable of detecting the trace of understanding with the world, even if it is only that it is permissible to be a thought, which one already concedes in the moment that one steps far enough back from it, in order to turn it into a philosophical object. The sovereignty, without which no thinking could be, hails the privilege which permits one to do so. The aversion against this has well-nigh become the most difficult obstacle to theory: if one follows up on it, then one would have to fall silent, and if one does not follow up on it, then one becomes obtuse and cretinous through trust in one's own culture. Even the horrid division of speaking into occupational conversations and strictly conventional ones yields an inkling of the impossibility of saying something thought without arrogance, without

violating the time of the other. It is the most urgent task of a mode of narration, which ought to hold true at a minimum, that it does not look away from such experiences, but brings them to expression through tempo, compactness, density, and yet also by being non-binding [*Unverbindlichkeit*].

63

Death of immortality. – Flaubert, who went on record saying he loathed the fame to which he dedicated his life, had it as good in the consciousness of such a contradiction as the sedate bourgeois who wrote *Madame Bovary*. In regards to corrupt public opinion, the press, to which he reacted like Kraus, he thought he could rely on posterity, a bourgeoisie emancipated from the baleful spell of stupidity, which would duly honor its authentic critic. But he underestimated stupidity: the society which he represented cannot name itself, and with its development into a totality, intelligence has developed absolutely along with stupidity. This eats away at the power-centers of intellectuals. He may not even hope for posterity without falling prey to conformism, be it merely the agreement with great minds [*Geistern*]. However as soon as he renounces such hope, an element of something delusional and pig-headed enters his work, bordering on a recoil into cynical capitulation. Fame, which had something accidental and stagey about it, and yet also a glimmer of justice and free choice, has been liquidated as the result of the objective processes of the market society. It has entirely become a function of paid propaganda-bureaus and is measured in terms of the investment being wagered by the name-bearer or interest-group which stands behind it. The paid flacks, who still appeared to Daumier as an excrescence, have meanwhile shed their disreputability and become official appointees of the cultural system. Authors who want a career speak as openly about their agents as their predecessors did about publishers, who also knew a thing or two about advertising. One takes control of the process of becoming

famous and thereby to a certain degree also their after-life – for what has a chance of being remembered in a thoroughly organized society, which is not already familiar – and purchases the expectation of immortality, only no longer from the church, but henceforth from the lackeys of trusts. But there is no blessing therein. Just as capricious memory and utter oblivion always went together, so too does the planned disposition of fame and memorialization lead irresistibly into nothingness, whose foretaste can already be discerned in the hectic essence of all celebrity. The famous are not happy. They turn themselves into brand-name articles, alien and incomprehensible to themselves; as living pictures of themselves, they are like the dead. In the pretentious concern for their aura they waste the substantive energy, which alone is capable of perpetuation. The inhuman indifference and contempt which is immediately meted out to the fallen giants of the culture-industry, reveals the truth about their fame, without giving those who partake in scorning that fame any better hope for posterity. Thus intellectuals discover the frailty of their secret motives, and the only help against such is to express this insight.

64

Ethics [Moral] and style. – Authors find that the more precisely, painstakingly, realistically and appropriately they express themselves, the more the literary result will be regarded as difficult to understand, while as soon as they formulate phrases in a lax and irresponsible manner, they are rewarded with a certain understanding. It does not help to ascetically avoid all elements of expert discourse, all references to no longer existing spheres of education. Rather, strictness and purity of linguistic arrangement, even in the most extreme simplicity, creates a vacuum. Shoddiness, moving along with the familiar currents of language, counts as a sign of belonging and contact: one knows what one wants, because one knows what the other wants. To focus on the thing in the expression rather than the communication, is considered suspicious: what is specific,

not already hidden away in automatism, appears inconsiderate, a symptom of eccentricity, almost of confusion. Contemporary logic, which puts so much store on its clarity, has naively absorbed such perversion in the category of colloquial speech. The vague expression permits those who employ it to imagine more or less whatever they wish and what they mean anyway. The strictly enforced unambiguousness [*Eindeutigkeit*: directness, decidedness] of the construction, the effort of the concept, from which human beings are consciously weaned, presumes the suspension of the prevailing judgment before all content, and thereby a radical separation of oneself, something which they react violently to. Only that which they do not need to know counts as understandable; only what is in truth alienated, the word molded by commerce, strikes them as trustworthy. There are few things which contribute more to the demoralization of intellectuals. Whoever wishes to escape this, must see through every piece of advice which tells one to focus on communication as a betrayal of what is being communicated.

65

Famished. [*Kohldampf*: slang for being famished or ravenous] – To play off the dialects of workers against written speech is reactionary. Leisure, even pride and arrogance, endowed the speech of the upper crust with something of independence and self-discipline. It is thereby brought into opposition to its own social realm. It turns against the masters, who misuse it to command, by wishing to command them, and refuses to serve their interest. In the speech of the subjugated, however, there is only the mark of domination, robbing them even of the justice which the un mutilated, autonomous word means to all those who are free enough to say it without resentment. Proletarian speech is dictated by hunger. The poor chew words, in order to feel full. From their objective Spirit [*Geist*] they expect the powerful nourishment, which society has denied them; they fill up their mouths because they have nothing to bite on. Thus they

take revenge on language. They despoil the body of a language, which does not let them love it, and repeat with powerless strength the shame which was done to them. Even what is best in the dialects of northern Berlin or the [London] Cockneys, the street smarts and mother-wit, ails from the circumstance that in order to withstand desperate situations without despairing, one must laugh at oneself as well as the enemy and thus justify the course of the world. If written speech codifies the alienation of the classes, then this latter is not to be repealed by regression to the spoken kind, but only in the consequentiality [*Konsequenz*: consequence, ramification] of strictest linguistic objectivity. Only the speech which sublates writing into itself, would emancipate human speech from the lie that it is already human.

66

Melange. – The usual argument of tolerance, that all human beings, all races are equal, is a boomerang. It opens itself up to easy rebuttal by the senses, and even the most compelling anthropological evidence for the fact that Jews are not a race at all, will in the case of a pogrom hardly change anything at all, since the totalitarians know very well who they want to kill and who not. If one wished to proclaim the equality of all those who bear human features as an ideal, instead of establishing it as a fact, this would be of little help. The abstract utopia would be all too easily reconcilable with the most devious tendencies of society. That all human beings would resemble each other, is exactly what suits this latter. It regards factual or imagined differences as marks of shame, which reveal, that one has not brought things far enough; that something somewhere has been left free of the machine, is not totally determined by the totality. The technics of the concentration camps was designed to turn prisoners into guards, the murdered into murderers. Racial difference was absolutely sublated, so that one could abolish it absolutely, if only in the sense that nothing different survived anymore. An emancipated society

however would be no unitary state, but the realization of the generality in the reconciliation of differences. A politics which took this seriously should therefore not propagate even the idea of the abstract equality of human beings. They should rather point to the bad equality of today, the identity of film interests with weapons interests, and think of the better condition as the one in which one could be different without fear. If one attested to blacks [*Neger*], that they are exactly like whites, while they are nevertheless not so, then one would secretly wrong them all over again. This humiliates them in a benevolent manner by a standard which, under the pressure of the system, they cannot attain, and moreover whose attainment would be a dubious achievement. The spokespersons of unitary tolerance are always prepared to turn intolerantly against any group which does not fit in: the obstinate enthusiasm for blacks meshes seamlessly with the outrage over obnoxious Jews. The “melting pot” [in English in original] was an institution of free-wheeling industrial capitalism. The thought of landing in it conjures up martyrdom, not democracy.

67

Unmeasure for unmeasure. – What the Germans have committed beyond comprehension, even the psychological kind, given that the horror seems to have been perpetrated more as blindly planned and alienated measures of terror than as spontaneous gratification. According to the reports of eyewitnesses, the torture and murder were carried out without enthusiasm, and perhaps for that reason went so far beyond all bounds. Nevertheless the consciousness which would like to withstand the unspeakable sees itself thrown back again and again to the attempt to understand, so that it does not subjectively fall prey to the madness which objectively rules. The thought irresistibly obtrudes that the German horror was something like a revenge taken in advance. The credit system in which everything, even world conquest, can be advanced, determines also the actions which prepared its end and the end of the entire market society, all the way to the

suicide of the dictatorship. In the concentration camps and gas chambers the downfall of Germany is, as it were, being discounted. No-one who observed the first months of Nazi rule in 1933 could overlook the moment of deathly sorrow, of the half-knowing entrusting of oneself to something calamitous, which accompanied the whipped-up euphoria, the torchlight parades and fanfares. How hopeless was the sound of the German favorite song of those months, "People [Volk] to Arms," in the street of Unter den Linden. The salvation of the fatherland arranged from one day to the next bore the expression of catastrophe from the first moment, and this catastrophe was practiced in the concentration camps, while its premonition was drowned out by the triumph in the streets. Such premonition need not be explained by the collective unconscious, which to be sure clearly enough played a role. The German position in the imperialist competition was, according to the measure of available raw materials and industrial potential, desperate in war and peace. Everyone and yet no-one was too dumb to recognize this. To deliver oneself to the final battle of the competition, meant springing into the abyss, and the others were pushed into it, in the belief that it could still be warded off. The chance of the Nazi enterprise compensating for the disadvantage of the total volume of production through record terror and temporal priority was tiny. The others had sooner believed in this than the Germans, who were not happy even with the fall of Paris. While they won everything, they already raged like those who have nothing left to lose. At the beginning of German imperialism stands Wagner's *Twilight of the Gods*, the rapturous prophecy of their own doom, whose composition was undertaken simultaneously with the victorious war of 1870 [the Franco-Prussian War, which sealed the unification of Germany]. In the same spirit, two years before WW II the German public saw a film of the downfall of their zeppelin in Lakehurst. Calm, poised, the ship went on its way, only to suddenly plummet straight down. If there remains no way out, then the destructive drive becomes completely indifferent as to what

it never firmly established: as to whether it is directed against others or against its own subject.

68

Human beings look at you. – The outrage over atrocities decreases, the more that the ones affected are unlike normal readers, the more brunette, “dirty,” dago-like. This says just as much about the atrocity as about the observers. Perhaps the social schematism of perception in anti-Semites is so altered, that they cannot even see Jews as human beings. The ceaselessly recurrent expression that savages, blacks, Japanese resemble animals, or something like apes, already contains the key to the pogrom. The possibility of this latter is contained in the moment that a mortally wounded animal looks at a human being in the eye. The defiance with which they push away this gaze – “it’s after all only an animal” – is repeated irresistibly in atrocities to human beings, in which the perpetrators must constantly reconfirm this “only an animal,” because they never entirely believed it even with animals. The concept of human beings in repressive society is the parody of the notion that human beings were created in the image of God. The mechanism of “pathic projection” functions in such a manner that the power-brokers perceive only their own mirror image as human beings, instead of reflecting back what is human as precisely what is different. Murder is thus the attempt to displace, again and again, the madness of such false perception into reason, through greater madness: what is not seen as a human being and yet is a human being, is turned into a thing, so that it can no longer rebut the manic gaze through any sort of impulse.

69

Little people. – Those who deny objective historical forces find it all too easy to argue that the course of the war could have been different.

Actually the Germans should have won: that they failed was the fault of the Führer's [Leader's] stupidity. But the decisive "stupidities" of Hitler, his refusal in the middle of the conflict to wage war on England, his attack on Russia and America, have their precise social meaning, which developed irresistibly from each seemingly reasonable step to the next until the catastrophe. Even if it were, strictly speaking, stupidity, this remains historically determinable: stupidity is above all no natural quality, but something socially produced and socially amplified. The ruling German cliques rushed towards war, because they were excluded from the leading imperialist positions of power. In this exclusion however lay also the reason for that provincialism, rusticity and self-deception, which made the politics of Hitler and Ribbentrop uncompetitive and their war a gamble. That they were so badly informed about the balance between the general economic and specifically British interests of the Tories and the strength of the Red Army as their own masses behind the cordon of the Third Reich, is not to be separated from the historical constitution of National Socialism, indeed from its power. The window of opportunity for a cunning first strike consisted solely of the fact that they themselves knew no better, and that was precisely the reason for its failure. Germany's industrial backwardness forced the politicians, who wanted to catch up at a single bound and for that very reason were qualified as have-nots, back on their own narrow experience, that of the political façade. They saw nothing in front of them except cheering crowds and frightened negotiators; this obscured their insight into the objective power of the greater mass of capital facing them. It is the immanent revenge on Hitler that he, the executioner of liberal capitalist society, was according to its own index of consciousness too "liberal" to recognize that under the shell of liberalism abroad an irresistible dominion of industrial potential had formed. He, who saw through the untruth of liberalism like no other bourgeois, nevertheless did not see through the power behind him, precisely that social tendency, the drumbeat to which even Hitler

marched. His consciousness regressed back to the standpoint of the inferior and short-sighted competitor, from which he started, in order to render a concern profitable in the shortest time possible. The hour of the Germans necessarily fell prey to such stupidity. For only those who were as inexperienced in the world economy as they were narrow-minded in world cultural and social trends could mobilize these for war, and their stubbornness for the sake of sheer activity devoid of any reflection. Hitler's stupidity was a ruse of reason.

70

Opinion of the dilettante. – The Third Reich did not succeed in creating a single work of art, a single conceptual structure, which could have satisfied even the threadbare liberalistic demand of “niveau” [French: artistic level]. The demolition of humanity and the conservation of spiritual goods were as little compatible as air raid shelters and stork's nests, and the culture renewed by battle looked from the very first day like the cities on the very last day: a heap of rubble. At least the population countered it with passive resistance. By no means however were presumably liberated cultural energies soaked up in the technical, political and military realms. The whole thing is truly barbarism and continues to triumph over its own Spirit [*Geist*]. One can observe this in strategy. The Fascist era did not cause it to blossom, but abolished it. The great military conceptions were inseparable from cunning, imagination: almost from private cleverness and initiative. They belonged to a discipline which was relatively independent from the production-process. What counted were specialized innovations, like using the diagonal battle formation or the accuracy of the artillery, to decide the issue. Something of bourgeois, free-standing, entrepreneurial virtue was in all that. Hannibal came from a line of merchants, not heroes, and Napoleon from the democratic revolution. The moment of bourgeois competition in the waging of war has been derailed in Fascism. It raised the foundational idea of strategy to an

absolute, the utilization of the temporary disproportion between the elite of a nation organized for murder, and the total potential of the other. Yet having invented total war as a consequence of this idea, and abolishing the difference between the army and industry, they liquidated strategy. It is as outmoded as the sound of military bands and pictures of battleships. Hitler sought world conquest through concentrated terror. However the means he used were already unstrategic, the massing of overpowering material in specific places, the crude frontal breakthrough, the mechanical encirclement of opponents left behind the gaps in the front. This principle, totally and completely quantitative, positivistic, with no surprises, and thus everywhere “public” and fused with advertising, no longer sufficed. The Allies, infinitely wealthier in economic resources, needed only to trump German tactics to defeat Hitler. The stupor and listlessness of the war, the general defeatism, which extended the duration of the calamity, were conditioned by the decay of strategy. When all actions are mathematically calculated, they simultaneously take on the aspect of something stupid. As if in mockery of the thought that anyone at random ought to be able to run the state, the war was conducted, with the help of radar and artificial harbors, rather like how a schoolboy sticking flags in a map might have imagined it. Spengler hoped that the golden age of the engineers would succeed the downfall of the West. In the perspective of the latter, however, the downfall of technics [*Technik*] itself is becoming visible.

71

Pseudomenos [Greek: *liar*]. – The magnetic power which ideologies exert over human beings, while they have become entirely threadbare, is to be explained beyond psychology, in the objectively determined decay of logical evidence as such. It has come to the point that lies sound like truth, and truth like lies. Every statement, every news report, every thought is preformed by the centers of the culture-industry. What does not bear the

trusted mark of such preformation lacks credibility in advance, all the more so that the institutions of public opinion garnish what they send out with a thousand factual proofs and all the power of conviction which the total apparatus can bring to bear. The truth which would like to do something against this, bears not merely the character of something improbable, but is moreover too poor to break through in direct competition with the highly concentrated apparatus of dissemination. The German extreme sheds light on the entire mechanism. When the Nazis began to torture, they did not merely terrorize people both inside and outside the country, but were at the same time the more secure against exposure, the more savage the atrocities became. Its sheer unbelievability made it easy to disbelieve what, for the sake of peace, no-one wanted to believe, while simultaneously capitulating before it. Those who trembled in fear told themselves that things were much exaggerated: well into the war, the details of the concentration camps were unwelcome in the English press. Every horror in the enlightened world turns necessarily into a horror story [*Greuelmärchen*]. For the untruth of the truth has a kernel, to which the unconscious eagerly [*begierig anspricht*] turns. It does not only wish for horror. Rather Fascism is in fact less “ideological,” to the extent it immediately proclaimed the principle of domination, which was elsewhere hidden. Whatever humane principles the democracies marshaled to oppose it, were effortlessly rebutted by pointing out that these do not concern all of humanity, but merely its false image, which Fascism is man enough to divest itself of. So desperate however have human beings become in their culture, that they are ready to cast off the frail signs of a better state of affairs, if only the world does their worse side the favor of confessing how evil it is. The political forces of opposition however are compelled to make use of the lie, if they do not wish to be completely extinguished as completely destructive. The deeper their difference from the existent, which nevertheless grants them shelter from a still worse future, the easier it is for the Fascists to nail them down

as untruths. Only the absolute lie still has the freedom to say anything of the truth. The confusion of truth with lies, which makes it nearly impossible to maintain the difference between the two, and which makes holding on to the simplest cognition a labor of Sisyphus, announces the victory of the principle in logical organization, even though its military basis has been crushed. Lies have long legs: they are ahead of their time. The reconfiguration of all questions of truth into those of power, which truth itself cannot evade, if it does not wish to be annihilated by power, does not merely suppress the truth, as in earlier despotisms, but has reached into the innermost core of the disjunction of true and false, whose abolition the hired mercenaries of logic are anyway feverishly working towards. Thus Hitler, who no-one can say if he died or escaped, lives on.

72

Second harvest. – Talent is above all perhaps nothing other than serendipitously [*glücklich*] sublimated rage, the capacity to transpose the incalculable energies once raised for the destruction of intractable objects into the concentration of patient meditation, and refusing to let the secret of objects slip away, very much as one refused to be swayed until the squeaking voice was torn from the mishandled toy. Who has failed to observe on the face of someone sunk in thought, dissociated from practical objects, the same aggression which is otherwise activated in practice? Don't those engaged in production feel brutish, "working up a storm" in the midst of their frenzied ardor? Indeed isn't such rage required in order to emancipate oneself from the feeling of being prejudiced and from the rage of being prejudiced? Isn't what is reconciling precisely something wrested from what is destructive?

Today most people kick against the pricks [i.e. have running battles with the authorities].

How so many things are inscribed with gestures, and thereby with modes of conduct. Clogs – “floppies,” slippers [in English] – are made so that one can slip them on one’s feet without using the hands. They are monuments to the hatred of bending over.

The carefree gestures of adolescents testify to the fact that in repressive society freedom and insolence are the same thing, the attitude of “it doesn’t cost me a dime,” so long as they do not have to sell their labor. To show that they don’t rely on anyone else and for that reason don’t have to show any respect, they stick their hands into their pockets. The elbows however, which they turn outwards, are already prepared to strike anyone who crosses their path.

Germans are human beings who can’t tell a lie without believing it themselves.

The phrase, “That’s completely out of the question,” which may have arisen in Berlin in the 1920s, is potentially already the [Nazi] seizure of power. For it pretends that the private will, founded at times on actual administrative rights, but mostly on sheer impudence, would immediately represent the objective necessity, which admits of no appeal. Fundamentally it is the refusal of the bankrupt negotiating partner to pay the other a penny, with the proud consciousness that there’s nothing to be gotten from them, anyway. The legal trick of the shady lawyer harangues itself into heroic fortitude: the linguistic formula of usurpation. Such a bluff defines in equal measure the success and the fall of Nazism.

That the prayer for our daily bread has, in view of the existence of bread factories, become a mere metaphor and simultaneously lucid despair, says more against the possibility of Christianity than all the enlightened critiques of the life of Jesus.

Anti-Semitism is the rumor about the Jews.

Foreign loan-words are the Jews of language.

During an evening of bottomless sadness, I caught myself using a ridiculously wrong conjunctive of a not quite correct High German verb, which belonged to the dialect of my home town. I had not even perceived, let alone used, this endearingly wrong term since the first school-years. Melancholy, irresistibly pulling me into the abyss of childhood, awakened the old, powerlessly demanding sound out of the deep. Language threw back to me, like an echo, the humiliation which unhappiness had inflicted on me, by forgetting what I am.

The second part of [Goethe's] *Faust*, decried as abstruse and allegorical, overflows with common citations, to a degree matched only by [Schiller's] *William Tell*. The transparency and simplicity of a text has no direct relationship to the question of whether it becomes part of the cultural tradition. It may precisely be what is hidden away, continually stimulating renewed interpretation, which certifies that a passage or a work is destined for posterity.

Every work of art is an unexecuted [*abgedungene*] crime.

The tragedies which keep themselves the furthest away from mere existence through "style," are simultaneously those which most accurately preserve the memory of the demonology of savages, through collective processions, masks and sacrifices.

The poverty of the sunrise of Richard Strauss' *Alpine Symphony* is caused not merely by banal sequences, but by its very splendor. For no sunrise, not even the one in the high mountains, is pompous, triumphal, stately, but each occurs faintly and diffidently, like the hope that everything may yet turn out well, and precisely in the inconspicuousness of the mightiest of all lights lies that which is so poignantly overwhelming.

The voice of every woman on the telephone signals whether the speaker is pretty or not. The tone reflects all the glances of admiration and desire she ever received back as confidence, independence, self-attentiveness. It expresses the Latinate double meaning of grace, gratitude and mercy. The ear perceives what is meant for the eye, because both live from the experience of the one beauty. It is instantly familiar from the very first: the familiar citation of what has never been seen.

If one wakes up in the middle of a dream, even the most troubling, one is disappointed and feels as if one had been cheated of what is best. Yet there are as few happy, fulfilled dreams as, in Schubert's words, happy music. Even the most beautiful ones retain the blemish of their difference from reality, the consciousness of the mere appearance [*Schein*] of what they grant. That is why even the most beautiful dreams are somehow damaged. This experience is unsurpassable in the description of the nature theater of Oklahoma in Kafka's *America*.

It is no different with happiness than with truth: one does not have it, but is in it. Indeed, happiness is nothing other than being encompassed, an after-image of the warm security of the mother. That is why no-one can know that they are happy. In order to see happiness, they would have to step out of it: they would be like a newborn. Whoever says, they are happy, lies, by evoking it and thus sinning against happiness. Only those who say: I was happy, are true to it. The only relationship of consciousness to happiness is that of gratitude: this constitutes its incomparable dignity.

To children returning from vacation, the home is new, fresh, festive. But nothing has changed in it, since they left. Only because the duties were forgotten, of which every piece of furniture, every window, every lamp is otherwise a reminder, does the Sabbath peace once more repose, and for minutes one is at home in the multiplication table of rooms,

chambers and corridors, as it will appear for the rest of one's life only in lies. Not otherwise will the world appear, nearly unchanged, in the steady light of its day of celebration, when it no longer stands under the law of labor, and the duties of those returning home are as light as vacation play.

Since one can no longer pick flowers to adorn one's beloved, as a sacrifice which is reconciled, by freely taking on itself the injustice to all in the ardor for the one, there is something malign about picking flowers. It suffices only to eternalize what is transient, by making it thinglike. Nothing however is more pernicious: the scentless bouquet, the official memorial kills what remains, precisely by conserving it. The fleeting moment is capable of living in the murmur of forgetting, on which one day the ray of light falls, which makes it flash up; to want to possess the moment is already to have lost it. The profuse bouquet, which the child lugs home at the behest of the mother, could stand behind the mirror like the artificial ones sixty years ago, and in the end it is turned into the greedily snapped photos of the trip, in which the landscape is littered by those who saw nothing of it, grabbing as a souvenir, whatever fell unremembered into nothingness. Yet whoever sends flowers, enraptured, will involuntarily reach for those which appear mortal.

We can thank our life to the difference between the economic framework, late industrialism, and the political facade. To theoretical critique, the different is slight: everywhere the superficial character [*Scheincharakter*] of, say, public opinion, the primacy of the economy in actual decisions, can be displayed. For countless individuals however this thin and ephemeral husk is the basis of their entire existence. Precisely those who set store in their thinking and actions on change, as what is solely essential, owe their existence to what is inessential, to appearance [*Schein*], indeed to what according to the measure of the great historical laws of development came about as mere accident. Yet doesn't this affect the entire construction of essence and appearance? Measured by the

concept, what is individual has in fact become as void as Hegel's philosophy anticipated: yet *sub specie individuationis* [Latin: in relation to the one eternal substance], absolute contingency – as something permitted, abnormally living on, as it were – is itself what is essential. The world is a system of horror, but that is why those who think of it entirely as a system do it too much honor, for its unifying principle is division, and it reconciles, by asserting the wholesale irreconcilability of the general and particular. Its essence [*Wesen*] is mischief [*Unwesen*]; its appearance [*Schein*] however, the lie, by virtue of which it continues to exist, is the placeholder of truth.

73

Deviation. – The official optimism of its adherents is a sign of the decay of the workers' movement. It seems to grow with the iron consolidation of the capitalist world. The inaugurators never considered success as guaranteed and for that reason said uncomfortable things to the workers' organizations their entire lives. Today, now that the position of the opponent and its reach over the consciousness of the masses has become infinitely stronger, the attempt to abruptly change this consciousness by renouncing agreement with it is considered reactionary. Those who link the critique of capitalism to that of the proletariat – which itself more and more merely reflects capitalist tendencies of development – are suspect. Across class boundaries, the negative element of thought is denounced. The wisdom of Kaiser William, "I won't tolerate doomsayers," has permeated the ranks of those he wished to crush. Whoever pointed out, for example, the complete lack of any spontaneous resistance by German workers, is told it's all in flux right now, so it's not possible to judge; whoever wasn't over there, amongst the poor German victims of the air raids – victims who had no qualms about air raids, as long as they were directed at others – should shut up, and anyway agrarian reforms are impending in Romania and Yugoslavia. The more however that the

rational expectation disappears that the doom of society has been really averted, the more reverently they pray to the old names: mass, solidarity, party, class struggle. While no thought from the critique of political economy is upheld by the adherents of the Left platform; while its newspapers daily and naively trumpet theses which trump all revisionism, but mean absolutely nothing and could be replaced on demand tomorrow by exactly the opposite ones, the ears of those who follow the party line display musical acuity, as soon as there is the slightest hint of disrespect for slogans divested of theory. International patriotism meshes seamlessly with hurrah-optimism. Those who are loyal are supposed to pledge allegiance to a people, regardless of which one. In the dogmatic concept of a people, however, the acknowledgment of the context of destiny between human beings as the authority for action, the idea of a society emancipated from the compulsion of nature is implicitly repudiated.

Even hurrah-optimism is the perversion of a motif which has seen better days: of not being able to wait. By trusting in the condition of technics, change was thought of as immediately impending, as the next possibility. Conceptions rooted in long-range time scales, precautions, comprehensive popular-pedagogical measures, were suspected of sacrificing the goal they professed. At that time the autonomous will expressed itself in an optimism which defied death. What has remained of this is only the shell, the faith in the power and scope of organization, without the readiness to play one's own part, indeed permeated with destructive conviction that spontaneity may indeed no longer be possible, but the Red Army will conquer in the end. The insistent spot-check, that everyone should affirm that everything will turn out just fine, casts those who remain unyielding under suspicion of being defeatists and turncoats. In fairy-tales, the toad who came from the depths was always a harbinger of great happiness. Today, when the sacrifice of utopia looks as similar as its realization as the Antichrist looks like the Paraclete [the Redeemer],

toad has become an epithet among those who themselves remain in the depths. Left optimism repeats the pernicious bourgeois superstition, one shouldn't speak of the devil but should focus on the positive. "You are not satisfied with this world? Then you can go search for another one" – this is the colloquial speech of socialist realism.

74

Mammoth. – Some years ago, the report circulated in American newspapers about the discovery of a well-preserved dinosaur in the state of Utah. It was emphasized that the specimen in question had outlived its species and was a million years younger than any hitherto known. Such reports, like the repulsively humorous craze for the Loch Ness monster and the King Kong film, are collective projections of the monstrous total state. One prepares for its horrors by getting used to giant images. In the absurd willingness to accept these, a humanity mired in powerlessness makes the desperate attempt to grasp the experience of what makes a mockery of every experience. But this does not exhaust the notion that prehistoric animals are still alive or at least went extinct just a few million years ago. The hope excited by the presence of what is most ancient, is that animal creation might survive the injustice done to them by human beings, if not humanity itself, and bring forth a better species, which finally succeeds. Zoological gardens originated from the same hope. They are laid out on the model of Noah's ark, for ever since they have existed, the bourgeois class has been waiting for the Biblical flood. The use of zoos for entertainment and instruction seems to be a thin pretext. They are allegories of the possibility that a specimen or a pair can defy the doom which befalls the species as a species. That is why the all too richly outfitted zoological gardens of major European cities seem like signs of decline: anything more than two elephants, two giraffes, and a hippopotamus is a bad sign. Nor is there any mercy in Hagenbeck's layout with trenches and without bars, which betray the ark, by masquerading as

the salvation called Ararat. The more invisible the boundaries become, the more completely the freedom of the creatures is repudiated, whose gaze could be ignited by the longing for the wide distance. They relate to proper zoos what botanical gardens are to palm leaf gardens. The more that civilization preserves and transplants unspoiled nature, the more implacably the latter is controlled. One can afford to encompass ever greater units of nature and to leave the interior of such tracts seemingly intact, while previously the selection and domestication of particular pieces still testified to the necessity of conquering nature. The tiger which paces to and fro in its cage, mirrors back negatively through its confused state something of humanity, but not however those who frolic behind impassable trenches. The antiquated beauty of [Alfred] Brehm's *Animal Life* rests on this point, that it describes all animals as if they were behind the bars of a zoo, even and precisely when citing the reports of imaginative researchers on life in the wilderness. The fact however that animals in cages really do suffer more than in open layouts, that Hagenbeck in fact represents the progress of humanity, attests to the unavoidability of imprisonment. It is a consequence of history. Zoological gardens in their authentic form are products of 19th century colonial imperialism. They blossomed following the opening up of the wild regions of Africa and Central Asia, which paid symbolic tribute in the form of animals. The value of the tribute was measured in terms of its exoticism, of its rarity. The development of technics cleared this away and abolished exoticism. The lion bred on the farm is as domesticated as the horse, which has long since become subject to birth-control. But the millennium has not dawned. Only the irrationality of culture itself, the nooks and crannies of the city, in which the walls, towers and bastions of zoos are crammed, are capable of preserving nature. The rationalization of culture, which opens a window to nature, thereby completely absorbs it and abolishes along with difference also the principle of culture, the possibility of reconciliation.

Cold hostel. – Ominously, in the song cycle whose midpoint went “I’m at the end of all my dreams,” Schubert’s disillusioned Romanticism designated solely the cemetery for the name of the inn. The *fata morgana* [Latin: mirage] of the land of idleness and ease is afflicted by rigor mortis. The guests and innkeeper are under a spell. The former are in a hurry. They would prefer to keep their hats on. Sitting on uncomfortable seats, they are behooved, by checks shoved at them and the moral pressure of those waiting in line behind them, to leave the place, which still bears the mocking name of a café, as quickly as possible. The innkeeper however, including all the assistants, is not who he or she is, but a salaried employee. Probably the decline of the hotel craft [*Hotelwesens*] dates back to the dissolution of the antique unity of hostel and bordello, whose memory lives on nostalgically in every glance at the smartly-dressed waitress and the tell-tale gestures of the maids. Since however the last ambiguity – even the one which still clings to the word “intercourse” – has been driven out of guest service, the most honorable sphere of circulation, things have become quite grim. Step by step, and always on irrefutable grounds, the means annihilate the ends. The division of labor, the system of automatic performances, ensures that no-one is really interested in the comfort of the customer. No-one knows how to read a customer’s face, for what they might be in the mood for, because the waiter doesn’t know the dishes anymore, and even if one suggested something oneself, one would be reproved for overstepping one’s competence. No-one hurries to serve the patiently waiting guest, if the one who is responsible for this is busy: the concern for the institution which culminates in the prison, takes precedence – as in the clinic – over the subject which is administered as an object. That the “restaurant” is separated by a hostile abyss from the hotel, from the empty husk of the room, is self-evident, just as much as the time-limits on eating and in the

unbearable “room service” [in English in original], from which one flees into the drugstore, to the public shop, behind whose uninviting counter a juggler with fried eggs, crispy bacon and ice-cubes proves to be the last friend of the guest. In the hotel however the porter brushes away every unforeseen question with a surly nod to another counter, usually closed. The objection that all of this is nothing but a caterwauling *laudatio temporis acti* [Latin: praise for times past] doesn’t hold water. Who would not prefer the Prague Blue Star or the Austrian Court in Salzburg, even if they had to cross the hall to enter the bathroom and if they were no longer awakened by unfailing central heating in the early morning? The nearer one moves to the sphere of immediate, bodily existence, the more dubious progress becomes, the Pyrrhic victory of fetishized production. Sometimes such progress becomes afraid of itself, and it seeks to join back together the labor-functions which have been calculatingly separated, if only symbolically. Therein arise figures such as the “hostess” [in English in original], a synthetic female innkeeper. Just as she in reality takes care of nothing, has no real wherewithal to bring together the divided and frozen institutions, but is limited to the nugatory gesture of welcome and in any case overseeing the employees, so does she look – peevishly pretty, an upright, thin, strenuously youthful and faded woman. Her true purpose is to ensure that the entering guest does not even seek out the table by themselves, at which customers are processed. Her amenity is the reverse-picture of the dignity of the bouncer.

76

Gala dinner. – How progress and regression are intertwined today, can be gleaned from the concept of technical possibilities. The mechanical processes of reproduction have developed independently of what is reproduced and have become autonomous. They count as progressive, and anything which does not take part in them, as reactionary and narrow-minded. Such beliefs are promoted all the more, because the moment the

super-gadgets remain unused, they threaten to turn into unprofitable investments. Since their development essentially concerns what under liberalism was called “packaging,” and at the same time crushing the thing itself under its own weight, which anyway remains external to the apparatus, the adaptation of needs to this packaging has as its consequence the death of the objective claim. The fascinated eagerness to consume the newest procedure, does not only create indifference towards what is transmitted, but comes to benefit stationary junk and calculated idiocy. It confirms the old kitsch in ever new paraphrases as *haute nouveauté* [French: high novelty]. The defiant and narrow-minded wish to respond to technical progress by buying nothing which isn't a hit, to refuse to remain behind the production-process, irregardless of the meaning of what is produced. Everywhere, following the crowd, swarming around, and standing in lines substitutes for the somewhat rational need. The hatred of a radical, all too modern composition is scarcely less than that of a film which is already three months old, to which the newest one is preferred at any price, even though this last is not the slightest bit different. Just as the customers of mass society wish to be in on the scene, they can leave nothing out. If 19th century connoisseurs sat down only for one act of an opera, with the barbaric aside that they wouldn't cut their dinner short for any spectacle, then meanwhile the barbarism, which has cut off the possibility of escape to dinner, cannot stuff itself enough with its own culture. Every program must be sat through to the end, every “best seller” [in English in original] must be read, every film must be seen during its first release in the movie theater. The abundance of what is consumed without choice becomes calamitous. It makes it impossible to find one's way, and just as one looks for a guide [Führer: literally “leader” or “guide,” but a pun on Hitler's official title] in a monstrous department store, so too does the population, penned in by attractions, wait for a leader of their own.

Auction. – Unfettered technics eliminates luxury, not by declaring privilege as a human right, but by severing the possibility of fulfillment in the midst of raising general living standards. The express train which races through the continent in three nights and two days is a miracle, but the trip in it has nothing of the faded glory of the train bleu [French: blue train]. What comprised the voluptuousness of travel, which began by waving farewell through the open window, the friendly concern of those who accepted tips, the ceremonial meals, the unalloyed feeling of being favored, which does not take anything away from anyone else, has disappeared along with the elegant people who were wont to promenade before the departure on old-fashioned platforms, and who will henceforth be sought for in vain in the halls of the most prestigious hotels. That the steps of the train are drawn in, signifies to travelers on even the most expensive express that they must obey the terse instructions of the company like prisoners. They are given indeed the exactly calculated value for their money, but nothing which isn't already included in the statistically average claim. Knowing such conditions, whoever would have the idea of setting out with his beloved, as formerly was done from Paris to Nice? But one cannot shake off the suspicion that even the deviant luxury, which noisily proclaims itself as such, has an element of something capricious, of something artificially gotten up. As per Veblen's theory, it is more about permitting those who can pay, to prove to themselves and others their status, than about meeting their in any case increasingly undifferentiated needs. While the Cadillac is surely superior to the Chevrolet, since it costs more, this superiority, otherwise than in the old Rolls Royce, is derived from a total plan, which cleverly equips the first with better cylinders, brakes, and accessories the second with worse ones, without changing anything in the basic schema of the mass product: one need only make small changes in production to transform a Chevrolet

into a Cadillac. Thus luxury is being hollowed out. For in the middle of general fungibility, happiness clings without exception to what is not fungible. No exertion of humanity, no formal reasoning can alter the fact that the clothing which shimmers like a fairy-tale is worn by the one and only, not by twenty-thousand others. Under capitalism, the utopia of the qualitative – what by virtue of its difference and uniqueness does not enter into the ruling exchange relationship – flees into the fetish character. But this promise of happiness in luxury presupposes once more privilege, economic inequality, precisely a society based on fungibility. That is why the qualitative itself turns into a special case of quantification, the not-fungible into the fungible, luxury into comfort and in the end into senseless gadgets. In such a circle the principle of luxury goes to pieces even without the leveling tendency of mass society, over which the reactionaries sentimentally fuss and fume. The inner composition of luxury is not indifferent to what useless things, through their total embedding in the realm of usefulness, experience. Its remainders, even objects of the greatest quality, already look like junk. The delicacies with which the super-rich fill up their homes, call out helplessly for a museum, yet this latter would, as per Valery's insight, kill the meaning of statues and paintings; only their mother, architecture, points to their proper place. Held fast however in the houses of those to which nothing binds them, they are a slap in the face of the mode of existence which private property has developed into. If the antiquities with which millionaires before the WW I surrounded themselves still mattered, because they raised the idea of the bourgeois dwelling to a dream – the fearful dream – without exploding it, then the chinoiseries [French: ticky-tacky luxuries] which they meanwhile have turned to, sullenly tolerate the private owner, who is only at ease in the light and air which are locked away by luxury. Functionalist luxury is a nonsense, on which false Russian princes who work as interior decorators for Hollywood may earn their keep. The lines of advanced taste converge in asceticism. The child reading *A Thousand*

and One Nights, intoxicated by rubies and emeralds, asked the question, what indeed is so wonderful about the possession of such stones, given that they are described not as a means of exchange, but as a hoard. The entire dialectic of enlightenment is at work in this question. It is as reasonable as unreasonable: reasonable, in becoming aware of idolization, unreasonable, in turning against its own end, which is present only there, where it is not held accountable to any authority, or indeed to any intention: no happiness without fetishism. By and by, however, the skeptical child's question has spread to every luxury, and even naked sensual pleasure is not immune to it. To the aesthetic eye, which represents what is not useful against utility, what is aesthetic – when violently cut off from purpose – turns into what is anti-aesthetic, because it expresses violence: luxury turns into brutality. In the end it becomes swallowed up by drudgery or conserved as a caricature. Whatever of the beautiful flourishes under horror, is a mockery and ugly to itself. Nevertheless its ephemeral shape stands for the avoidability of horror. Something of this paradox lies in the basis of all art; today it is expressed in the fact that art still exists at all. The firmly held idea of the beautiful demands, that happiness be cast off and at the same time maintained.

78

Over the mountains. – Snow White expresses, more perfectly than any other fairy-tale, the idea of melancholy. Its pure picture is the queen, who gazes into the snow through the window and wishes for her daughter in terms of the lifeless, animated beauty of the snow-flakes, the black sorrow of the window-frame, the stab of bleeding; and then dying in childbirth. The happy ending takes away nothing from this. As the wished-for granting is really death, the salvation remains appearance [*Schein*]. For the deeper perception does not believe that she, who lies like someone sleeping in a glass coffin, was awakened. Isn't the poison bite of apple, dislodged from her throat by the bumpiness of the journey, rather than a

means of murder, the remainder of the unrealized, exiled life, from which only now she recovers, since no deceiving emissaries lure her any more? And how frail sounds the happy end: “Then Snow White found him good and went with him.” How it is repealed by the wicked triumph over wickedness. Thus when we hope for salvation, a voice says to us, that hope is in vain, and yet it is above all this hope, powerless, alone, which permits us to draw another breath. All contemplation can do no more, than patiently delineate the ambiguity of melancholy in ever new figures and approaches. The truth is not to be separated from the delusion that one day, out of the figures of appearance [*Schein*], there would nonetheless be salvation.

79

Intellectus sacrificium intellectus. [Latin: Intellectuals sacrifice to intellectuals]. To presume that thinking would profit from the decline of the emotions through increasing objectivity, or that it would remain indifferent to such, is itself an expression of the process of dumbing down. The social division of labor recoils on human beings, however much the former may facilitate the accomplishments required of the latter. The faculties, which develop through reciprocal effect, shrivel once when they are torn from each other. Nietzsche’s aphorism, “The degree and kind of sexuality of human beings reaches into the furthest peak of their Spirit [*Geistes*]” strikes at more than just a psychological state of affairs. Because even the most distant objectifications of thought are nourished by the drives, to destroy the latter is to destroy the former’s own condition. Isn’t memory inseparable from the love, which wants to preserve, what nevertheless passes away? Doesn’t every impulse of the imagination arise from the wish, which transcends the existent in all fidelity, by displacing its elements? Indeed isn’t the simplest perception modeled on the fear of what is perceived, or the desire for such? It is true that the objective meaning of cognitions has, with the objectification of the world, separated

itself ever further from the basis of the drives; it is true that cognition fails, where its objectified achievement remains under the baleful spell of the wishes. However if the drives are not at the same time sublated in the thought, which escapes such a baleful spell, then there can be no cognition anymore, and the thought which kills the wish, its father, will be overtaken by the revenge of stupidity. Memory is tabooed as uncalculable, unreliable, irrational. The intellectual asthma which results from this, which culminates in the breakdown of the historical dimension of consciousness, immediately debases the synthetic apperception which, according to Kant, is not to be separated from the “reproduction in the imagination,” from commemoration. Imagination, today attributed to the realm of the unconscious and defamed in cognition as a childish, injudicious rudiment, creates alone that indispensable relation between objects, out of which all judgment originates: if it is driven out, then the judgment, the actual act of cognition, is exorcised as well. The castration of perception, however, by a controlling authority, which refuses it any desiring anticipation, thereby compels it into the schema of the powerless repetition of what is already familiar. That nothing more is actually allowed to be seen, amounts to the sacrifice of the intellect. Just as, under the unrestrained primacy of the production process, the wherefore of reason disappears, until it degenerates into the fetishism of itself and of externalized power, so too does it reduce itself down to an instrument and comes to resemble its functionaries, whose thought-apparatus only serves the purpose, of hindering thought. Once the final emotional trace is effaced, what solely remains of thinking is absolute tautology. The utterly pure reason of those who have completely divested themselves of the capacity “to imagine an object even without its presence,” converges with pure unconsciousness, with idiocy in the most literal sense, for measured by the overweening realistic ideal of a category-free actuality, every cognition is false, and true only if the question of true or false is inapplicable. That this is a question of wide-ranging tendencies, is evident

at every step of the scientific enterprise, which is on the point of subjugating the rest of the world, like so many defenseless ruins.

80

Diagnosis. – That the world has meanwhile turned into the system which the Nazis unjustly berated as the lax Weimar Republic, is evident in the pre-established harmony between institutions and those who they serve. A humanity is secretly emerging, which hungers for the compulsion and restriction, which the nonsensical continuation of domination imposes. These human beings however have, favored by the objective social arrangement, seized hold of the functions which by rights ought to generate dissonance against the pre-established harmony. Among all the cashiered slogans, one stands out: “pressure produces counter-pressure” – yet if the former becomes powerful enough, then the latter disappears, and society appears to want to contribute considerably to entropy, by a deadly equilibrium of tensions. The scientific enterprise has its exact equivalent in the kind of minds [*Geistesart*], which it harnesses: they need hardly do any violence to themselves, proving eager and willing administrators of their own selves. Even when they prove to be quite humane and reasonable beings outside of the enterprise, they freeze into pathic stupidity the moment they think professionally. Far from perceiving such prohibitions on thought as something hostile, the candidates – and all scientists are candidates – feel relieved. Because thinking burdens them with a subjective responsibility, which their objective position in the production-process prevents them from fulfilling, they renounce it, shake a bit and run over to the other side. The displeasure of thinking soon turns into the incapacity to think at all: people who effortlessly invent the most refined statistical objections, when it is a question of sabotaging a cognition, are not capable of making the simplest predictions of content ex cathedra [Latin: from the chair, e.g. Papal decision]. They lash out at the speculation and in it kill common sense. The more intelligent of them

have an inkling of what ails their mental faculties, because the symptoms are not universal, but appear in the organs, whose service they sell. Many still wait in fear and shame, at being caught with their defect. All however find it raised publicly to a moral service and see themselves being recognized for a scientific asceticism, which is nothing of the sort, but the secret contour of their weakness. Their resentment is socially rationalized under the formula: thinking is unscientific. Their intellectual energy is thereby amplified in many dimensions to the utmost by the mechanism of control. The collective stupidity of research technicians is not simply the absence or regression of intellectual capacities, but an overgrowth of the capacity of thought itself, which eats away at the latter with its own energy. The masochistic malice [*Bosheit*] of young intellectuals derives from the malevolence [*Bösartigkeit*] of their illness.

81

Large and small. – One of the most disastrous transfers from the realm of economic planning into that of theory, which is actually no longer distinguished from the architectonic of the whole, is the belief that intellectual labor can be administered according to the criteria of whether what one is working on is necessary or reasonable. A ranking hierarchy of urgency is established. But to rob thought of the moment of involuntariness, is precisely to cashier its necessity. It reduces itself to detachable, interchangeable dispositions. Just as in the war economy, where priorities are decided in the distribution of raw materials, in the production of this or that type of weapon, so too is a hierarchy of importance creeping into the construction of theory, with a preference given for especially up to date or especially relevant themes, and disregard or indulgent toleration for what is secondary, which may pass merely as padding of the basic facts, as finesse. The notion of what is relevant is produced according to an organizational point of view, that of contemporaneity measured by the objectively most powerful tendency of

the day. The schematization into important and subsidiary subscribes to the form of the value-order of ruling praxis, even when it contradicts such as content. In the origins of progressive philosophy, in Bacon and Descartes, the cult of the important is already at work. In the end, however, this latter reveals something unfree, something regressive. Importance is represented by the dog on a walk, which spends minutes sniffing at some random spot, unyielding, earnest, reluctant, and then satisfies its bodily needs, scrapes the ground with its feet and runs along, as if nothing had happened. In prehistoric times life and death may have depended on this; after millennia of domestication it has turned into a nutty ritual. Who is not reminded of this, when watching a serious committee determining the urgency of problems, before the staff of coworkers is given a carefully designated and time-tabled list of tasks. Everything of importance has something of such anachronistic obstinacy, and as a criterium of thought, it is tantamount to the latter's ensorcelled fixation, to the renunciation of self-constitution. The great themes however are nothing other than the primordial odors, which cause the animal to hold still, and where possible to produce them once more. This does not mean that the hierarchy of importance is to be ignored. Just as its philistinary mirrors that of the system, so too is it saturated with all the latter's violence and stringency. However thought should not repeat it, but dissolve it through its completion. The division of the world into primary and subsidiary matters, which has always served only to neutralize the key phenomena of the most extreme social injustice as mere exceptions, should be followed to the point that it is convicted of its own untruth. It, which turns everything into objects, must itself become the object of thought, instead of steering the latter. The great themes will also appear, though scarcely in the traditional "thematic" sense, but rather refractedly and eccentrically. The barbarism of immediate magnitude [*Grösse*] remains philosophy's legacy of its earlier alliance with administrators and mathematicians: what does not bear the stamp of the overinflated world-

historical bustle, is consigned to the procedures of the positive sciences. Philosophy behaves therein like bad painting, which imagines that the dignity of a work and the fame which it garners, depend on the dignity of the painted object; a picture of the Battle of Leipzig would be worth more than a chair in oblique perspective. The difference between the conceptual medium and the artistic one changes nothing in this bad naïveté. If the process of abstraction strikes all conceptual formation with the delusion of magnitude [*Grösse*], then what is also preserved in this, through the distance of the action-object, through reflection and transparency, is the antidote: the self-critique of reason is its ownmost ethics [*eigenste Moral*]. Its opposite in the most recent phase of a thought which disposes over itself is nothing other than the abolition of the subject. The gesture of theoretical labor, which arranges themes according to their importance, neglects those doing the laboring. The development of an increasingly smaller number of technical capacities is supposed to suffice, to adequately equip them to deal with every assigned task. The thinking subjectivity is however exactly what does not let itself be fitted into a heteronomous set of tasks arranged from above: it is adequate to the latter only insofar as it does not belong to such, and its existence is thereby the prerequisite of every objectively binding truth. The sovereign matter-of-factness, which sacrifices the subject to the investigation of truth, rejects at once truth and objectivity itself.

82

Three steps from the body. [colloquial expression meaning, to keep one's distance] – Positivism disparages once more the distance of thought to a reality, which reality itself no longer tolerates. By not wanting the hushed-up thought to be anything more than something provisional, a mere abbreviation of what is factually grasped under it, its independence *vis-à-vis* reality disappears, as well as the energy to penetrate the latter. The thought which actually breaks into empirical life, can only happen at a

distance from life. While thought relates to facts and moves by critiquing them, it moves no less through firmly held difference. It thereby expresses exactly what is, because it is never entirely just what it expresses. Essential to it is an element of exaggeration, of shooting beyond things, of dissociation from the weight of what is factual, by virtue of which it completes the determination of being, at once strictly and freely, instead of merely reproducing it. Every thought resembles therein play, with which Hegel no less than Nietzsche compared with the work of the Spirit [*Geistes*]. What is unbarbaric in philosophy rests on the tacit consciousness of that element of irresponsibility, of blessedness, which stems from the fleetingness of thought, which continually escapes, what it judges. Such excessiveness is suspect to the positivistic Spirit and handed over to folly. The difference from facts turns into mere incorrectness, the moment of play into a luxury, in a world where the intellectual functions must account for every minute of their time with a stopwatch. However as soon as thought denies its unsurmountable distance and wishes to prove its literal correctness with a thousand subtle arguments, it trips itself up. If it falls out of the medium of the virtual, of anticipation, which cannot be fulfilled by any single actuality, in short, if it seeks to become a simple statement rather than a meaning, then everything which it states becomes in fact false. Its apologetics, inspired by insecurity and a bad conscience, can be rebutted at every step by recourse to that non-identity, which it does not wish to acknowledge, and which nevertheless alone makes it thought. If it wanted to make excuses for distance as if it was a privilege, it would do no better, but would proclaim two sorts of truths, that of facts and that of concepts. That would dispel the truth and denounce thinking. Distance is no security-zone but a field of tension. It manifests itself not so much in slackening the truth-claim of concepts, as in the tenderness and fragility of thinking. What is called for in regards to positivism is neither cantankerousness nor putting on airs, but rather the cognitive-critical proof of the impossibility of a coincidence between the concept

and what fulfills it. The hunt for the account-balancing [*Ineinander-Aufgehen*] of what cannot be reduced to the same denominator is not the perennially striving toil, which beckons to salvation, but naive and inexperienced. What positivism reproaches thinking for, thought has known and forgotten a thousand times over, and only in such knowing and forgetting does it become thinking. That distance of thought from reality is itself nothing other than the precipitate of history in concepts. Operating with the latter without distance would be, amidst all its resignation, or perhaps precisely because of such, the affair of children. For thought must aim beyond its object, precisely because it does not entirely arrive at such, and by assuming that it does arrive, positivism is uncritical, imagining that it carries there out of mere conscientiousness. The transcending thought takes its own inadequacy into account more thoroughly than one steered by the scientific control-apparatus. It extrapolates, however hopelessly, in order to master what is unavoidably too little, by virtue of the overtaxed exertion of what is too much. The illegitimate absolutism which philosophy is reproached for, the allegedly conclusive stamp, originates precisely in the abyss of relativity. The exaggerations of speculative metaphysics are scars of reflecting understanding, and solely what is not yet proven unveils proof as tautology. By contrast the immediate caveat of relativity, what confines itself, what remains in the same delimited conceptual realm, deprives itself through such caution of precisely the limit, which to think is, in Hegel's magnificent insight, the same as to cross. The relativists would accordingly be the true – the bad – absolutists and moreover the bourgeoisie, who would like to insure their knowledge [*Erkenntnis*: cognition] like property, only to lose it all the more thoroughly. Solely the claim of the unconditional, the spring over the shadow, does justice to what is relative. By taking untruth on itself, it leads to the border of truth in the concrete consciousness of the conditionality of human knowledge [*Erkenntnis*: cognition].

Vice-President. – Advice to intellectuals: don't let yourselves be represented. The fungibility of all accomplishments and human beings and the belief derived from this, that everyone should be able to do everything, prove in the midst of the existent to be a fetter. The egalitarian ideal of interchangeability [*Vertretbarkeit*: fungibility] is a fraud, if it is not supported by the principle of revocability and accountability to the “rank and file” [in English in original]. The ones who are most powerful are those who do the least themselves, while shifting as much of the burden as they can onto others, to who they lend their name while pocketing the advantage. It seems like collectivism and amounts only to making oneself seem too good, of being exempt from labor by virtue of access to its alienated form. To be sure, interchangeability has an objective basis in material production. The quantification of labor processes diminishes over time the difference between the general director and the service-employee in the gasoline station. It is a miserable ideology, to claim that under present conditions the administration of a trust requires any more intelligence, experience, and even training than reading a manometer. While this ideology is tenaciously upheld in material production, the Spirit [*Geist*] is subjugated to its opposite. This is the doctrine, since gone to the dogs, of the *universitas literarum* [Latin: world of knowledge], of the equality of all in the republic of sciences, wherein every person does not merely check up on everyone else, but is supposed to be qualified to do what anyone else does, equally well. Interchangeability subjugates thought to the same procedure just as exchange does to things. What is incommensurable is eliminated. Since however thought must first of all critique the comprehensive commensurability which stems from the exchange-relationship, this commensurability, as the intellectual [*geistiges*] relations of production, turns against the productive forces. In the material realm interchangeability is what is already possible, and non-

interchangeability is the pretext, which hinders it; in theory, which ought to see through such a quid pro quo [Latin: something for something else], interchangeability allows the apparatus to proceed even where its objective opposite might be located. Non-interchangeability alone could halt the integration of the Spirit [*Geistes*] into the ranks of employees. The gratuitously self-evident demand, that every intellectual achievement should be mastered by every qualified member of the organization, turns the most narrow-minded scientific technician into the standard of the Spirit [*Geistes*]: what precisely gives the latter the capacity to critique their own technification? Thus does the economy cause that process of equalization, which it elsewhere protests with the gesture “stop thief.” The question of individuality must be posed anew in the epoch of its liquidation. While the individuated [*Individuum*], like all individualistic production processes, remains behind the state of technics and is historically outmoded, what devolves to it, as the condemned against the victor, is in turn the truth. For it alone preserves, in however a distorted manner, the trace of what gives all technification its authorization, the consciousness of which this technification nevertheless at once cuts itself off from. By proving that unrestrained progress is not immediate identical with that of humanity, its opposite is capable of granting progress asylum. A pencil and eraser are of more use to thought than a staff of assistants. Those who wish neither to hand themselves over wholesale to the individualism of intellectual production, nor to commit themselves headlong to the collectivism of an egalitarian interchangeability which is contemptuous of human beings, must rely on free and solidaristic cooperative labor under common responsibility. Anything else would sell out the Spirit [*Geist*] to forms of business and thereby ultimately to the latter’s interests.

Timetable. – Few things differentiate the mode of life appropriate to intellectuals so deeply from that of the bourgeoisie than the fact that the former do not recognize the alternative between labor and pleasure. The labor which need not, in order to cope with reality, initially do all the evil to its subject, which it later does to others, is pleasure even in the desperate exertion. The freedom, which it means, is the same which bourgeois society reserves solely for recuperation and through such regimentation at once takes back. Conversely, those who know of freedom find everything about what this society tolerates as pleasure unbearable, and outside of their work, which to be sure includes what the bourgeoisie displace to the holidays as “culture,” refuse to engage in substitute pleasures. “Work while you work, play while you play” [in English in original] – this counts as one of the founding principles of repressive self-discipline. The parents who wanted their children to bring home good grades as a matter of prestige, could least bear it when the latter read too long at night or, in the parents’ judgment, intellectually overexerted themselves. Yet out of their foolishness spoke the genius of their class. The doctrine drilled in since Aristoteles, of moderation as the virtue befitting reason, is among other things an attempt, to establish the socially necessary division of human beings into functions independent of each other so firmly that none of these functions would get the idea of crossing over to others and calling to mind actual human beings. One could no more imagine Nietzsche in an office, the secretary answering the telephone in the foyer, sitting at a desk until five, than playing golf after a full days work. Under the pressure of society, only the cunning intertwining of happiness and labor would leave the door open for actual experience. It is constantly less tolerated. Even the so-called intellectual occupations are being utterly divested of pleasure, by their increasing resemblance to business. Atomization advances not only between human beings, but also in the single individual [*Individuum*: individuated], in its life-spheres. No fulfillment may be attached to labor, which would

otherwise lose its functional obscurity in the totality of purpose, no spark of sensibility [*Besinnung*] may fall in free time, because it might spring into the work-world and set it aflame. While labor and pleasure are becoming more and more similar in their structure, they are at the same time separated ever more strictly by invisible lines of demarcation. Pleasure and Spirit [*Geist*] are being driven out of both in equal measure. In one as the other, brute seriousness and pseudo-activity prevails.

85

Muster. – Whoever is engaged in praxis, as it is called, is pursuing interests, is realizing plans, automatically turns the human beings they come into contact with into friends and enemies. By looking at them as if deciding how they fit into their intentions, one reduces them in advance, as it were, to objects: those ones are useful, the others are not. Every divergent opinion appears to the reference-system of predetermined purposes, without which no praxis could manage, as burdensome resistance, sabotage, intrigue; every agreement, even if it came from the most despicable interest, turns into support, something of use, a testimony of alliance. Thus impoverishment appears in relation to other human beings: the capacity to perceive the other as such and not as a function of one's own will, above all however that of fruitful opposition, the possibility of going beyond oneself through the imbrication [*Einbegreifen*] of what contradicts, withers away. It is replaced by a judgmental knowledge of human beings, for which even the best are ultimately the lesser evil, and the worst, are not the greatest. This manner of reaction however, the schema of all administration and "personnel policy," already tends, before any political formation of will and commitment of exclusive political tickets, towards fascism. Whoever has once made it their business to judge acceptability, views the person being judged, to a certain extent out of technological necessity, as an insider or outsider, one of one's own people or a foreigner, accomplice or victim. The stiffly

scrutinizing, ensorceled and ensorceling gaze, which is typical of all leaders of horror, has its model in the appraising one of the manager, who tells the applicant to take a seat and illuminating the latter's face, so that it pitilessly disintegrates into the light of usefulness and the dark of what is objectionable or unqualified. The end is the medical investigation, according to the alternatives: assignment in the labor-force or liquidation. The New Testament sentence, "Whoever is not for me, is against me" was from time immemorial spoken from the heart of anti-Semitism. It is a fundamental feature of domination, that everyone who does not identify with such, is relegated for the sake of mere difference to the enemy camp: it is not for nothing that Catholicism is merely the Greek word for the Latin totality, which the Nazis have realized. It means the equalization of what is different, whether "deviation" or another race, with the enemy. Nazism has therein achieved the historical consciousness of itself: Carl Schmitt defined the essence of the political precisely by the categories of enemy and friend. Progress to such consciousness makes the regression to the child's mode of behavior – children either like things, or are afraid – to its own. The a priori reduction to the friend-enemy relationship is one of the Ur-phenomena of recent anthropology. Freedom would not be choosing between black and white, but stepping out of such a proscriptive choice.

86

Little Hans. – Intellectuals, and especially those inclined to philosophy, are cut off from material praxis: disgust for it drove them to deal with so-called intellectual things. But material praxis is not only the prerequisite of their own existence, but also rests on the basis of the world, with whose critique their labor coincides. If they know nothing of the basis, then they end up in the void. They stand before the choice, of being informed or of turning their backs on what they detest. If they inform themselves, then they do violence to themselves, thinking against their impulses and, on top

of everything else, are in danger of becoming as sordid as what they are dealing with, for the economy is no joke, and whoever wishes even to understand it, must “think economically.” If they however do not involve themselves, they hypostatize their Spirit [*Geist*], which was above all formed on economic reality, on the abstract exchange-relation, as something absolute, while this latter could become Spirit [*Geist*] solely in the sensibility of its own conditionality. The intellectual is thereby seduced into vainly and disconnectedly substituting the reflex for the thing. The fatuous-deceptive importance, which the public cultural enterprise assigns to intellectual products, adds stones to the wall, which locks cognition away from economic brutality. The isolation of the Spirit [*Geist*] from business helps the intellectual business to become a comfortable ideology. The dilemma reaches deep into the most subtle reactions of the intellectual mode of conduct. Only those who remain pure to a certain extent, have enough hate, nerves, freedom and mobility to withstand the world, but precisely by virtue of the illusion of purity – for they live in the “third person” – they allow it to triumph not merely the world outside, but in the innermost cells of their thought. Whoever however knows the business all too well, thereby unlearns [*verlernen*: to forget, unlearn] to recognize it; the capacity of distinction vanishes from them, and they are threatened by the relapse into barbarism, just as others are threatened by the fetishism of culture. That intellectuals are at the same time beneficiaries of the bad society and yet those, on whose socially unnecessary labor it largely depends, as to whether a society emancipated from utility succeeds – this is by no means a contradiction which is once and for all acceptable and thus irrelevant. It gnaws unceasingly at its objective quality. Whatever intellectuals do, is wrong. They experience drastically, as a life and death issue, the ignominious alternative, which late capitalism secretly poses to all of its members: to become just another adult or to remain a child.

Fight club. [*Ringverein*: wrestling-club] – There is a type of intellectual, who is all the more thoroughly to be distrusted, the more they curry favor through honesty of toil, “intellectual seriousness,” and even modest sobriety. These are the fighters, who are in a permanent struggle with themselves, who cast their decisions in terms of the military mobilization of the entire person. But things aren’t so terrible as that. Their radical stance, of putting everything on the line, has nevertheless a reliable armature at its disposal, whose dexterous deployment in the battle with the angel punishes the former as a lie: one need only page through the books of publishers like Eugene Diederich or in those of a certain kind of cringingly emancipated theologians. The barrel-chested vocabulary casts doubt on the “fairness” [in English in original] of the fight match arranged and fought out by inwardness. The expressions all refer to war, life-threatening danger, actual annihilation, but they describe mere procedures of reflection, which indeed may have been linked to a fatal outcome for Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, who the fighters like to quote, but certainly not however their unelected followers, who claim to be at risk. While they credit the sublimation of the struggle for existence – that of spiritualization and that of courage – to their redoubled honor, the moment of danger is simultaneously neutralized by internalization, debasing it to an ingredient of a smugly rooted, hale and hearty world-view. The external world is regarded from an indifferent-superior vantage point, because due to the seriousness of the decision, it doesn’t even enter into the equation; it is left as it is, and in the end even acknowledged. The savage expressions are artsy-craftsy decoration like the cowry-shells of the female gymnasts, whose company the fighters are so partial to. The sword-dance is decided in advance. It doesn’t matter if the categorical imperative has the victory or the right of the individual – if the candidate succeeds in freeing themselves from personal belief in God or recovers it

again, if they withstand the abyss of being or the harrowing experience of the senses, they fall on their feet. For the power which directs the conflicts, the ethos of responsibility and integrity, is always cast in an authoritarian mold, a mask of the state. As long as they choose the appropriate goods, then everything is just fine. If they come to rebellious conclusions, then they cater to and trump the demand for powerful, independent men. In every case they certify like good sons the office, which could hold them to account, and in whose name nevertheless the entire internalized trial was actually conducted: the gaze, under which they seem to be brawling like two ill-mannered school-boys, is from the start the one which punishes. No fight match without referees: the entire brawl is staged by a society, which has migrated into the individuated [*Individuum*], simultaneously supervising the battle and participating in it. It triumphs all the more fatally, the more oppositional the results are: priests and senior school-masters, whose conscience compels them to confess to world-views which get them in trouble with the authorities, always sympathize with persecution and counter-revolution. Just as self-confirming conflicts have an illusory element in them, so too is the bogusly staged dynamic of self-torment really repression on the fly. They developed the entire spiritual enterprise only because they are not permitted to discharge their illusion and rage outside, and are prepared to transform the battle with the inner enemy once more into the deed, which according to them was there in the beginning. Their prototype is Luther, the inventor of inwardness, who threw his bottle of ink at the body of the devil, who does not exist, already meaning the peasants and Jews. Only the crippled Spirit [*Geist*] needs self-hatred in order to demonstrate its spiritual essence, which is untruth, with physical violence.

88

Simple Simon. – That the individual is being liquidated lock, stock and barrel, is still too optimistic a thought. The salvation of the individual

being [*Einzelwesen*] would lie in the abolition of the monad through solidarity, in its binding negation, for only in its relation to the generality would the former become something specific. The contemporary condition is far distant from this. The calamity occurs not as the radical extirpation of what has been, but rather by ignominiously pulling down what is historically condemned and dragging it along powerlessly as dead, neutralized. In the middle of standardized and administered human units the individuated [*Individuum*] continues to exist. It is even protected and wins monopoly-value. But it is in truth still merely the function of its own uniqueness, an exhibition piece like the fetuses in jars, at which children once stared and grinned. Since it no longer leads an independent economic existence, its character ends up in contradiction with its objective social role. Precisely because of this contradiction, it is sheltered in nature-parks, enjoyed in idle contemplation. The individualities imported into America, which through importation are already no longer such, are called “colorful personality” [in English in original]. Their eager uninhibited moods, their wacky ideas, their “originality,” even if this was only a special ugliness, even their mangled accent devalues what is human as the costume of a clown. Since they are rendered as subalterns in the universal mechanism of competition, and can only adapt themselves to the market and survive via their paralyzed otherness, they fall passionately into the privilege of their self and exaggerate themselves, to the point of completely uprooting what they stood for. They cleverly flaunt on their *naïveté*, which, as they quickly discover, endear them to the powers that be. They sell themselves as heart-warmers in the commercial cold, flatter through aggressive jokes, which are masochistically enjoyed by their protectors, and confirm through their comic lack of dignity, the solemn dignity of the host-nation. The *graeculi* [Latin: Greek expatriate teachers of Latin] may have behaved similarly in the Roman Empire. Those who put their individuality on sale, pass the sentence of judgment which society has pronounced on them – as their own voluntary judges – as their own. Thus they also

objectively justify the injustice, which they experience. They underbid the general regression as private contractors of the regressive, and even their loud resistance is mostly only a more devious means of adaptation to weakness.

89

Blackmail. – Whoever won't take any advice, can't be helped, said the bourgeoisie, with advice which cost nothing, wishing to buy themselves out of helping while at the same time winning power over the needy person who came to them. But contained therein was at least the appeal to reason, which was thought of in the same way by the supplicant and the one who declined to help, and which at a distance recalled justice: whoever followed clever advice, might occasionally find a way out. That's all over. Those who cannot help, should therefore not give advice: in a social order, in which all mouse-holes are stopped up, mere advice turns immediately into condemnation. It is inevitably tantamount to telling the supplicant to do exactly whatever is left of their ego most violently rejects. Wiser for a thousand previous situations, they know all too well what sort of advice they will receive, and come only when ingenuity has failed and something must happen. They are not improved by this. Whoever once sought advice and finds no help anymore, above all those who are weaker, appear in advance to be extortionists, whose mode of conduct is spreading irresistibly along with the great trusts. One can observe this most clearly in a certain type of person who is committed to help, who looks out for the interests of needy and powerless friends, and yet who takes on the aspect of something darkly ominous in their zeal. Even their finest virtue, selflessness, is ambiguous. While they are right to intervene for those who should not fall into ruin, behind the insistent "you must help" stands the tacit appeal to the hegemony of collectives and groups, which no-one can afford any longer to slight. By not dissociating

themselves from those who are unmerciful, the merciful become emissaries of mercilessness.

90

Institute for deaf-mutes. – While the schools drill human beings in speech as in first aid for the victims of traffic accidents and in the construction of gliders, the schooled ones become ever more silent. They can give speeches, every sentence qualifies them for the microphone, before which they can be placed as representatives of the average, but the capacity to speak with each other is being suffocated. It presupposes an experience worthy of being communicated, freedom of expression, and independence as much as social relations. In the all-encompassing system conversation turns into ventriloquism. Everyone is their own Charlie McCarthy: thus the latter's popularity. Words are turning altogether into the formulas, which were previously reserved for greetings and farewells. For example, a young lady successfully raised according to the latest desiderata should be able to say, at every moment, what is appropriate in a "situation," according to tried and true guidelines. However such determinism of speech through adaptation is its end: the relation between the thing and the expression is severed, and just as the concepts of the positivists are supposed to be nothing more than placeholders, those of positivistic humanity are literally turned into coins. What is happening in the voices of the speakers, is what, according to the insight of psychology, happened to that of the conscience, from whose resonance all speech lives: it is replaced down to the most refined cadence by a socially prepared mechanism. As soon as this last stops functioning, creating pauses, unforeseen by unwritten statutes of law, panic ensues. This has led to the rise of intricate games and other free-time activities, which are supposed to dispense with the burden of conscience of speech. The shadow of fear however falls ominously on the speech which remains. Impartiality and objectivity in the discussion of objects are disappearing even in the most

intimate circles, just as in politics, where the discussion was long since dispelled by the word of power. Speaking is taking on a malign gesture. It is becoming sportified. One tries to score as many points as possible: there is no conversation which the opportunity for competition does not worm itself into, like a poison. The emotions generated by the subjects being discussed, in conversations worthy of human beings, attach themselves pigheadedly to the narrow issue of who is right, outside of any relationship to the relevance of the statement. As a pure means of power, however, the disenchanted word exerts a magical power over those who use it. It can be observed time and time again how something once uttered, no matter how absurd, accidental or incorrect, precisely because it was once said, tyrannizes the speaker like a possession they cannot break away from. Words, numbers, and meetings, once concocted and expressed, become independent and bring all manner of calamity to those in their vicinity. They form a zone of paranoid infection, and it requires the maximum reason to break their baleful spell. The magicalization of the great and inconsequential political slogans is repeated privately, in the seemingly most neutral of objects: the rigor mortis of society is overtaking even the cells of intimacy, which thought themselves protected from it. Nothing is being done to humanity from the outside only: dumbness is the objective Spirit [*Geist*].

91

Vandals. – The haste, nervousness and discontinuity observable since the rise of the great cities, is spreading epidemically, as plague and cholera did before. Powers are arising therein, which the scurrying passersby of the 19th century could not have dreamed of. Everyone must always be planning something. Free-time is required to be exhausted. It is planned, employed for undertakings, filled up with the visit of every possible institution or through the fastest possible locomotion. The shadow of this falls on intellectual labor. It takes place with a bad conscience, as if it

were moonlighting from some sort of urgent, albeit purely imaginary occupation. In order to justify its own activity to itself, it adopts the gestures of what is hectic, under high pressure, of the enterprise racing against the clock, of every sensibility – including itself – which stands in its way. Often it seems as if intellectuals reserved for their own production only the hours left over from obligations, excursions, appointments and unavoidable pleasures. The accumulation of prestige by those who can present themselves as so important, that they must be everywhere, is repulsive, and yet to some extent rational. They stylize their life with intentionally hammed-up dissatisfaction as a single *acte de présence* [French: act of presence]. The joy with which they reject an invitation by referring to a prior engagement, announces a triumph in the competition. Similarly, the forms of the production-process are repeated more generally in private life or in the forms excluded from realms of labor. One's entire life is supposed to look like an occupation, and to hide, through this similarity, anything not yet immediately dedicated to commerce. Yet the fear thereby expressed, only reflects a much deeper one. The unconscious innervations which harmonize the individual existence to the historical rhythm, beyond thought-processes, have an inkling of the dawning collectivization of the world. Since however the integral society does not sublimate individuals positively in itself, but rather squeezes them into an amorphous and pliable mass, every individual dreads this as the process of being absorbed, something experienced as inevitable. "Doing things and going places" [in English in original] is the sensorium's attempt to create a kind of protective stimulus against a threatening collectivization, to get used to the latter, by schooling oneself in the hours apparently left in freedom to be a member of the masses. The strategy therein is to outdo the danger. One lives to a certain extent even worse, that is with still less of an ego, than one can expect to live. At the same time one learns, through the playful excess of giving up the self, that for someone who in all seriousness lives without an ego, things can be easier instead of harder. It

all goes very fast, because there is no alarm for earthquakes. Those who do not play along, and that's as much to say, those who do not swim bodily in the stream of human beings, become afraid of missing the bus and drawing the revenge of the collective down on themselves, rather like entering a totalitarian party all too late. Pseudoactivity is a re-insurance [*Rückversicherung*: reinsurance, a secondary insurance covering a set of original insurance policies], the expression of preparation for self-sacrifice, in which alone one has an inkling of a guarantee of self-preservation. Security beckons in the adaptation to the most extreme insecurity. It is conceived of as a flight charter, which brings one as quickly as possible someplace else. In the fanatical love of autos, the feeling of physical homelessness resonates. It is the foundation of what the bourgeoisie inaccurately called the flight from oneself, from the inner void. Whoever wants to come along, may not be different. The psychological void is itself only the result of false social absorption. The boredom from which human beings flee, merely mirrors the process of running away, in which they have long been caught. For that reason alone the monstrous apparatus of pleasure stays alive and swells larger and larger, without a single person getting pleasure from such. It canalizes the compulsion to be at the scene, which would otherwise grab the collective by the throat, indiscriminately, anarchically, as promiscuity or wild aggression – a collective which, at the same time, nevertheless consists of no-one else than those who are underway. They are most closely related to the addict. Their impulse reacts exactly to the dislocation of humanity, which leads from the murky blurring of the difference between city and country, the abolition of the house, via the movement of millions of unemployed, all the way to the deportations and mass uprooting of peoples in the destroyed European continent. The nullity and lack of content of all collective rituals since the youth-movement represents retrospectively the groping anticipation of overpowering historical hammer-blows. The myriads who suddenly fall prey to their own abstract

quantity and mobility, to hitting the road in swarms, like a drug, are recruits of the movement of peoples, in whose feral realms bourgeois history is getting ready to end.

92

Picture-book without pictures. – The objective tendency of the enlightenment, to abolish the power of all images over human beings, does not correspond to any subjective progress of enlightened thought towards imagelessness. After the idols were cast down, and metaphysical ideas irresistibly demolished concepts previous understood as rational and authentically thought, the thinking unleashed by the enlightenment and immunized against thinking is passing over into a second representativeness [*Bildlichkeit*], an imageless and biased one. Amidst a net of relationships in which human beings have become entirely abstract to each other and to things, the capacity of abstraction disappears. The alienation of schemata and classifications from the data subsumed under them, indeed the pure quantity of processed materials, which has become incommensurable to the circumference of individual human experience, constantly necessitates the archaic retranslation into sensuous signs. The little stick figures and houses, scattered in statistical texts like hieroglyphics, may appear in every specific case to be accidental, a mere means of assistance. But it is not for nothing that they look so similar to countless advertisements, newspaper stereotypes, and toys. In them the representation is victorious over what is represented. Its outsized, simplistic and thus false comprehensibility reinforces the incomprehensibility of the intellectual processes, from which their falseness – the blind, non-conceptual subsumption – cannot be separated. Ubiquitous pictures are nothing of the sort, because they simultaneously present the entire generality, the average, the standard model as something unique, something particular, while ridiculing such. Even the abolition of the particular is derisively turned into something particular. The demand

for this has already sedimented itself as a need, and is reproduced everywhere by the mass culture, after the model of the “funnies” [in English in original]. What was once called Spirit [*Geist*], is dispelled by the illustration. It is not merely that human beings no longer have the capacity to imagine what has not been drilled into them and shown in abbreviated form. Even the joke, in which at one time the freedom of the Spirit [*Geist*] crashed into the facts and caused the latter to explode, has passed over into illustration. The pictorial jokes which fill the magazines, are for the most part pointless, empty of meaning. They consist of nothing other than a challenge to the eye of a competition with the situation. Schooled by innumerable prior cases, one is supposed to see “what’s happening” faster than the significant moments of the situation are developing. What such pictures act out, in anticipation of their completion by the well-versed observer, is the throwing of all meaning overboard like ballast in the snapshot of the situation, in the unresisting subjugation to the empty hegemony of things. The state-of-the-art joke is the suicide of intention. Whoever commits it, is rewarded by acceptance in the collectivity of laughter, which has horrifying things on its side. Even if one wanted to try to understand such jokes by thinking, one would remain helplessly behind the tempo of unleashed things, which race ahead even in the simplest caricature, like the concluding chase at the end of animated films. Sagacity turns immediately into stupidity in the face of regressive progress. No other understanding is left to thought than the horror of what is incomprehensible. Just as the sober-minded gaze, which meets the billboard smile of a toothpaste beauty, perceives the misery of torture in her manufactured grin, so too does the death-sentence of the subject, implicit in the universal victory of subjective reason, bristle from every joke and truly every visual representation.

Intention and copy [Abbild]. – The pseudorealism of the culture-industry, its style, is not to be explained by the sleazy shenanigans of film magnates and their lackeys, but was necessitated, under the ruling conditions of production, by the stylistic principle of naturalism itself. If one wished to blindly consecrate the film to the representation of daily life, for example on the model of Zola, something which would in fact be possible with the means of mobile photography and a sound-track, then the resulting entity [*Gebilde*] would be diffuse, externally unarticulated, foreign to a public accustomed to visual spectacles. Radical naturalism, which the technique of film strongly suggests, would dissolve every context of surface meaning and end up as the extreme opposite of familiar realism. The film would pass over into the associative stream of images and receive its form solely as in their pure, immanent construction. Yet if instead of this, one attempted to choose words and gestures which could be related to an idea endowing them with meaning – either on commercial grounds, or for the sake of objective intention – the perhaps unavoidable attempt would end up in an equally unavoidable contradiction with the prerequisites of naturalism. The lesser density of reproducibility [*Abbildlichkeit*] in naturalistic literature still left room for intention: in the seamless mesh of the duplication of reality through the technical apparatus of film, every intention, even if it were itself the truth, turns into a lie. When compared with the literal fidelity of the copy [*Abbild*], the word which is supposed to beat the character of the speaker or the meaning of the whole into the audience's head sounds "unnatural." It justifies the world as being as meaningful as itself, even before the first planned fraud, the first actual distortion is committed. No-one talks that way, no-one moves that way, while the film urges over and over again, that's how everyone does it. One is trapped: conformism is caused a priori by meaning [*Bedeutung*: noun form of the verb "bedeuten," to mean] in itself, regardless of what the concrete significance [*Bedeutung*: noun form of "meaning"] may be, while it is nonetheless only through meaning [*Bedeuten*] that conformism,

the respectable repetition of what is factual, could be shaken. True intentions would be possible only through the renunciation of intention. That this latter and realism are incompatible, that the synthesis turned into a lie, is rooted in the concept of meaningfulness [*Deutigkeit*: meaning, significance]. It is ambiguous [*zweideutig*]. It relates without distinction to the organization of the thing as such and to its transmission to the audience. This ambiguity however is no accident. Meaningfulness [*Deutigkeit*] indicates the point of indifference between objective reason and communication. It is right, insofar as the objective form, the realized expression, speaks, turning itself outwards out of itself, and wrong, insofar as it damages the form through calculations aimed at the audience. Every single artistic and also theoretical work must show itself equal to the urgent necessity of such ambiguity [*Doppelsinn*]. The explicit [*deutliche*] form, however esoteric, yields to consumerism; the inexplicit kind is dilettantish according to its immanent criteria. Quality is decided by the depth, at which the entity [*Gebilde*] takes up the alternatives within itself and so masters them.

94

Hue and cry [*Staatsaktion*: great fuss]. – The increasing impossibility of the representation of what is historical speaks to the extinction of art. That there is no adequate drama on fascism, is due not to a lack of talent, rather talent is withering away due to the insolubility of the most urgent task facing writers. They have to choose between two principles, which are equally inappropriate to the subject-matter: psychology and infantilism. The former, which has meanwhile become aesthetically obsolete, has been handled by significant artists as a trick and with a bad conscience, ever since modern drama learned to see its object in politics. Schiller's prologue to *Fiesco* states: "If it is true, that only sentiment awakens sentiment, then the political hero is not, I think, an appropriate subject for the theater, to the extent that he must set aside the human being, in order

to be the political hero. It was not my intent to breathe that living glow into my tale, which rules through the vocal product of enthusiasm, but to spin the cold, unfruitful hue and cry [*Staatsaktion*] out of the human heart, and precisely thereby to reattach it to the human heart – to involve the man through the head, which knows the affairs of the state – to borrow situations for humanity from inventive intrigues – that was my intent. In addition, my relationship with the bourgeois world made me more familiar with the heart, than with the cabinet of state, and perhaps this precise political weakness has become a poetic strength.” Hardly. The link between alienated history and the human heart was already a pretext in Schiller, to justify the inhumanity of history as humanly comprehensible, and was given the theatrical lie, whenever the technique equated the “man” to the “head, which knows the affairs of the state” – for example, in the buffoonish-accidental murder of Leonore by the betrayer of his own conspiracy. The tendency to aesthetic reprivatization pulls the rug from underneath the feet of art, while it attempts to conserve humanism. The cabals of the all too well constructed plays of Schiller are powerless intermediary constructions between the passions of human beings and a social and political reality which is already incommensurable with such, and for that reason no longer graspable in human motivations. The most recent sign of this is the craze for second-rate biographies, which bring famous people closer as non-famously human. The same pressure for false humanization emerges in the calculated reintroduction of “plots” [in English in original], of the action as a harmonious, logically consistent context of meaning. Under the prerequisites of photographic realism, this would be untenable in film. To capriciously restore it, is to fall behind the experiences of the great novels, on which film parasitically lives; they obtained their meaning precisely as the dissolution of the context of meaning.

If one wished to clear the table of all this and seek to represent the political sphere in its abstraction and extra-humanity, excluding the deceptive mediations of what is internalized, then things would go no better. For it is precisely the essential abstraction of what truly happened, which simply refutes the aesthetic picture. In order to make it capable of any kind of expression, the writer is compelled to translate it into a kind of children's speech, into archetypes and thus to "bring it nearer" a second time around – no longer to feeling, but to that authority of comprehending reflection which still lies before the constitution of language, which even epic theater cannot evade. The appeal to these authorities already formally sanctions the dissolution of the subject in collective society. The object however is scarcely less falsified by such a labor of translation than the deduction of a religious war to the erotic needs of a queen. Human beings today have become as infantile as the simplistic drama, which abjures the former's representation. In lieu of this, the political economy which the latter charges itself with representing, though in principle unchanged, is nevertheless so differentiated and advanced in each of its moments, that it evades schematic parables. To paint the decision-making inside large-scale industry as the wheeling and dealing of crooked vegetable-grocers suffices for a monetary shock, but not however for dialectical theater. The illustration of late capitalism through pictures from the agrarian or criminal storehouse does not allow the mischief of today's society to emerge from its wrapping in complicated phenomena. Rather, the lack of concern for the phenomena, which themselves would need to be developed out of the essence, distorts the essence. It interprets the conquest of power by the mightiest harmlessly, as machination of rackets outside of society, not as the coming-to-itself of society in its own right. The unrepresentability of fascism however stems from the fact that there is as little freedom of the subject anymore in such, as there is in the reflection on it. Consummated unfreedom can be recognized, not represented. Where freedom appears as a motive in political stories today,

as for example in the praise of heroic resistance, it has the shameful quality of a powerless reassurance. The outcome always ends up being determined by world politics, and freedom itself emerges as ideological, as a speech about freedom, with stereotypical declamations, not in humanly commensurable actions. After the dissolution of the subject, art is least of all to be saved by being stuffed by a taxidermist, and the object which today would alone be worthy of it, namely what is purely inhuman, escapes it through both a lack of measure and inhumanity.

95

Damper and drum. – Taste is the truest seismograph of historical experience. Like scarcely any other faculty, it is capable of indicating even its own behavior. It reacts against itself and recognizes itself as tasteless. Artists, who repel, who shock, spokespersons of unmitigated cruelty, are steered in their idiosyncrasy by taste: the genre of the finer things in life, the domain of neo-Romantic nervous types, the cultivation of sensibility, is – even to their protagonists – as coarse and clueless nowadays as the Rilke verse, “For poverty is a great luminosity from within...” The delicate shudder, the pathos of being different are only normalized masks in the cult of oppression. It is precisely the aesthetically advanced nerves which find what is self-righteously aesthetic to be unbearable. The individual [*Individuum*] is so through and through historical, that it is capable of rebelling against the fine threads of its late-bourgeois organization with the fine threads of late-bourgeois organization. In the antipathy towards all artistic subjectivism, towards expression and soulfulness, the flesh creeps at the lack of historical tact, no differently from how subjectivism once drew back from bourgeois convention. Even the rejection of mimesis, the innermost concern of functionalism, is mimetic. The judgment on the subjective expression does not fall from outside, in political-social reflection, but in immediate impulses, every one of which turns its countenance from the image in the

mirror, compelled in view of the culture-industry to shame. Right at the top is the defamation of erotic pathos, which the displacement of lyric accents testifies to not less than the sexuality in the works of Kafka, which stands under a collective baleful spell. In art since expressionism, the whore has become a key figure, while she is dying out in reality, because it is solely in what is shameless that sexuality can be depicted without aesthetic shame. Such displacements of the deepest modes of reaction have reached the point, that art in its individualistic form has decayed, without making its collective form possible. It is not a question of the fidelity and independence of individual artists, to unflinchingly hold fast to the sphere of the expressive and to oppose the brutal compulsion of collectivization, it is rather that they must feel this compulsion even in the most secret cells of their isolation, even against their will, if they do not wish to helplessly and untruthfully remain, through an anachronistic humanity, behind what is inhuman. Even intransigent literary expressionism, the lyrics of Stramm, the dramas of Kokoschka, have a naive, liberal-trustful aspect as the flip side of their genuine radicalism. The advance beyond them however is no less dubious. Works of art which consciously wish to remove the harmlessness of absolute subjectivity, thereby raise the claim of a positive community, which is not present in themselves, but which is arbitrarily cited. That turns them into mere mouthpieces of doom and to the prey of the final *naïveté*, which sublates them – of still being art at all. The aporia of the responsible work comes to benefit irresponsible ones. If there comes a time that the nerves are entirely abolished, then there will be no cure against the renaissance of the springtime of song, and nothing will stand in the way of the popular front stretching from barbaric futurism to the ideology of the film.

96

Janus palace. – If one were so inclined as to put the system of the culture-industry in a grand, world-historical perspective, then it would be defined

as the planned exploitation of the age-old divide between human beings and their culture. The double character of progress, which constantly developed the potential of freedom simultaneously with the reality of oppression, has created a situation where the various peoples are ever more completely suborned into the control of nature and social organization, yet are at the same time incapable of understanding how culture goes beyond such integration, due to the compulsion which culture inflicts on them. What is human in culture – what is nearest of all, which represents their own affair against the world – has become alien to human beings. They make common cause with the world against themselves, and what is most alienated of all – the ubiquity of goods, their own reconfiguration into appendages of machinery – turns into the deceptive image of nearness. The great works of art and philosophical constructions have remained uncomprehended not because of their all too great distance from the core of human experience, but for the opposite, and it is easy enough to trace the incomprehension back to an all too great understanding: the shame of participation in universal injustice, which would become overpowering, as soon as one permitted oneself to understand it. Thus they cling to what mocks them, by confirming the mutilated form of their essence through the smoothness of its own appearance. During all periods of urban civilization, the lackeys of the existent have made a parasitic living off such unavoidable delusion: the later Attic comedy, the Hellenistic arts and crafts are already kitsch, although they did not yet have the technics of mechanical reproducibility and that industrial apparatus at their disposal, whose Ur-picture seems to be conjured up by the ruins of Pompeii. If one reads hundred-year-old entertainment novels like those of Cooper, then one finds therein in rudimentary form the entire Hollywood schema. The stagnation of the culture industry is probably not the result of its monopolization, but was innate to so-called entertainment from the very beginning. Kitsch is that mesh of invariants, which the philosophical lie ascribes to its solemn

designs. Nothing therein may fundamentally change, because the entire nonsense drills it into humanity, that nothing is allowed to change. So long however the course of civilization proceeded planlessly and anonymously, the objective Spirit [*Geist*] has not been conscious of that barbaric element, as something which necessarily dwells within it. Under the illusion of immediately aiding freedom, where it mediated domination, it has at least disdained to immediately contribute to its reproduction. It defamed the kitsch which accompanied it like a shadow, with an enthusiasm which to be sure expresses the bad conscience of high culture – a high culture which suspects that under domination it is nothing of the sort, and which is reminded by kitsch of its own mischief. Today, since the consciousness of the rulers is beginning to converge with the total tendency of society, the tension between culture and kitsch is falling apart. Culture no longer drags its despised opponent behind it powerlessly, but takes it under direction. By administering the whole of humanity, it administers too the break between humanity and culture. Even the crudity, pig-headedness and narrowness, which are objectively inflicted on the dominated, are accessed with subjective sovereignty as humor. Nothing indicates the simultaneously integral and antagonistic condition more exactly than such embedding of barbarism. Therein however the will of the administrators can call upon the will of the world. Their mass society did not first produce junk for customers, but the customers themselves. These latter hungered for films, radio and magazines; whatever in them remained unsatisfied by the social order, which takes from them without giving back what it promises, have pined only for the master of the dungeon to remember them and finally offer with the left hand a stone for the hunger, from which the right hand withholds the bread. Unresistingly, for a quarter century, elderly bourgeois who ought to know better have been running over to the culture-industry, which has so precisely calculated their starving hearts. They have no reason to be outraged over the young people who were corrupted to the marrow by Fascism. Those

who are subjectless, those who are culturally deprived of their heritage are the true inheritors of culture.

97

Monad. – The individual [*Individuum*] owes its crystallization to the forms of political economy, especially the urban marketplace [*Marktwesen*]. Even as an opponent of the pressure of socialization, it remains the latter's own product and similar to it. What endows it with resistance, with every trait of independence, originates in the monadological individual interest and its precipitate as character. The individual [*Individuum*] mirrors precisely in its individuation the preordained social law of exploitation, be it ever so mediated. This testifies however also to the fact that its decay in the contemporary phase must not be derived individualistically, but out of a social tendency, as something which succeeds by virtue of individuation and not as its mere enemy. Therein diverges the reactionary critique of culture from the other kinds. Often enough, the reactionary kind achieves a certain insight into the decay of individuality and the crisis of society, but puts the ontological responsibility for that on the individuated [*Individuum*] in itself, as something detached and inward: the objection of superficiality, lack of believability, lack of substance are the last words they have to say, and turning back is their only consolation. Individualists like Huxley and Jaspers condemn the individual [*Individuum*] for its mechanical emptiness and neurotic weakness, but the upshot of their condemnation is to sacrifice it rather than to critique the social *principium individuationis* [Latin: principle of individuation]. Their polemic is, as a half truth, already the entire untruth. Society is regarded therein as the immediate coexistence of human beings, out of whose attitude follows the whole, as it were, instead of as a system, which does not merely embrace and deform them, but reaches even into that humanity, which once ordained them as individuals. Through the universally-human interpretation of conditions, as they are,

the crude materiality which binds human existence to inhumanity is certified, even in the complaint against such. In its better days, the bourgeoisie, where it reflected historically, was quite conscious of such interwovenness, and only since its doctrine degenerated to the stubborn apologetics against socialism, have they forgotten about them. Not the least of the achievements of Jakob Burckhardt's Greek cultural history is that to have linked the erosion of Hellenistic individuality not merely to the objective decay of the polis, but precisely to the cult of the individual [*Individuum*]: "Following the deaths of Demosthenes and Phokion, the city [Athens] was astonishingly poor in political personalities, and not merely in political ones, for Epicurus, born in 342 to an Attic cleruch family in Samos, was the last world-historical Athenian of them all." (Jakob Burckhardt, Vol. 4.3. Ed., Stuttgart 1909, pg 515). The condition, in which the individual [*Individuum*] disappeared, is simultaneously one of unfettered individualism, in which "everything is possible": "Above all, individuals are celebrated instead of gods." (Ibid., pg 516). That the freeing of the individual [*Individuum*] by the hollowed out polis did not strengthen its resistance, but eliminated it and indeed individuality itself, as transpired in the dictator-states, is the model of one of the central contradictions which drove from the 19th century towards fascism. Beethoven's music, whose setting consists of socially communicated forms, and which, ascetically opposed to the private expression of feeling, resonates with the determinately guided echo of struggle, drawing precisely out of such asceticism all the richness and might [*Gewalt*] of the individual. Those of Richard Strauss, entirely at the service of individual claim and directed towards the glorification of the self-sufficient individual [*Individuum*], debases such to the mere reception-organ of the market, to the emulator of ideas and styles selected willy-nilly. Inside repressive society, the emancipation of the individual [*Individuum*] does not merely benefit such, but also reduces it to an entry. Freedom from society robs it of the energy for freedom. For as real as its relations to

others may be, it is, considered as something absolute, a mere abstraction. It does not have any sort of content which is not socially constituted, nor any impulse which goes beyond society, which would not be aimed at getting the social condition to go beyond itself. Even the Christian doctrine of death and immortality, in which the notion of absolute individuality is grounded, would be entirely void, if it did not include humanity. The individual who hoped for immortality absolutely and for themselves alone, would in such limitation only enlarge the principle of self-preservation into the absurdity, on which the wisdom “one must lose, in order to win” is the corrective. Socially the absolutization of the individual [*Individuum*] marks the transition from the universal mediation of social relationships, which as exchange also constantly demands the simultaneous limitation of the interests realized in such, to immediate domination, where the strongest rules. Through this dissolution of everything mediating in the individual [*Individuum*] itself, by virtue of which it was still a piece of a social subject, it is impoverished, brutalized and regresses to the condition of a mere social object. The individual [*Individuum*] sublates itself, as in the Hegelian sense, in something abstractly realized: the myriads who know nothing any more except their naked, rambling interest, are the same ones who capitulate as soon as organization and terror rope them in. If today the trace of what is human seems to cling solely to the individual [*Individuum*] as something which is perishing, then it is a warning to put an end to that fatality, which individuates human beings solely in order to be able to completely break them in their separation. The saving principle is sublated solely in its opposite.

98

Legacy. – Dialectical thinking is the attempt to break through the compulsory character of logic with its own means. But insofar as it must employ these means, it is at every moment in danger of falling prey to the

compulsory character itself: the ruse of reason would still like to prevail against dialectics. The existent [*Bestehende*] cannot surpass itself in any other way than by virtue of the general, which the existent itself has borrowed. The general triumphs over the existent by means of its own concept, and that is why the power of the merely existing [*Seienden*] threatens to reproduce itself in such triumph, out of the same violence, which it broke. Through the solitary dominion of the negation, the movement of thought, like that of history, is led unequivocally and exclusively according to the schemata of the immanent contradiction, with implacable positivity. Everything is subsumed by the historically appropriate major economic phases of the entire society and their development: the entire thinking process has something of what the Parisian artists called the *genre chef d'oeuvre* [French: genre of the masterpiece]. That the calamity is caused precisely by the stringency of such development, that this latter is linked to domination, is at any rate not explicit in critical theory [i.e. Marx], which, like the traditional one [i.e. Hegel], expected salvation from linear progression. In fact stringency and totality, the bourgeois thought-ideals of necessity and generality, circumscribe the formulation of history, yet for that very reason reflect the constitution of society in the fixed, stately, grand concepts, against which dialectical critique and praxis are aimed. If Benjamin observed that history had been hitherto written from the standpoint of the victor and needed to be written from that of the vanquished, then it should be added that while knowledge [*Erkenntnis*] must indeed represent the baleful linearity of the succession of victory and defeat, it must at the same time turn to whatever does not vanish in such a dynamic, and remains by the wayside – to a certain degree, the cast-off materials and blind spots, which escaped dialectics. It is the essence of what is vanquished to appear inessential, dispensable, whimsical in its powerlessness. What transcends the ruling society is not merely the potentiality developed by the latter, but equally that which does not fit into the historical laws of movement.

Theory is oriented to what is askew, what is impenetrable, what is not yet encompassed, which as such admittedly already bears something anachronistic in itself, but does not exhaust itself in what is obsolete, because it contains a dash of the historical dynamic. This is most easily seen in art. Children's books such as *Alice in Wonderland* or the *Struwwelpeter*, which rebuke any attempt to classify them as progressive or reactionary as absurd, contain incomparably more subtle ciphers, even of history, than the grand dramas of Hebbel, with their official thematics of tragic guilt, the change of the times, the course of the world and the individuated [*Individuum*]; and the disdainful and silly piano pieces of Satie evoke flashes of experience which the stringency of the Schönberg school, despite being backed by the entire pathos of musical development, cannot dream of. Precisely the magnificence of logical conclusions may unwittingly assume the character of what is provincial. Benjamin's writings are the attempt, in an ever new approach, to make that which is not already determined by grandiose intentions philosophically fruitful. His legacy consists of the task of refusing to consign such an attempt to the alienated puzzle-pictures of thought, but to recuperate what is devoid of intention via the concept: the necessity, to think simultaneously dialectically and undialectically.

99

Gold test. – Among the concepts to which bourgeois morality has shrunk, following the dissolution of its religious norms and the formalization of its autonomous ones, genuineness [*Echtheit*] ranks at the top. If nothing else can be stringently demanded from human beings, then at least, they should be entirely and wholly what they are. In the identity of each individual with itself, the postulate of incorruptible truth as well as the glorification of what is factual are transferred from the enlightened cognition to ethics [*Ethik*]. It is precisely the critically independent thinkers of the late bourgeoisie, fed up with traditional judgments and

idealistic phrases, who agree with this. Ibsen's admittedly refractory verdict on the lifelong lie, Kierkegaard's doctrine of existence have made the ideal of genuineness [*Echtheit*] into a touchstone of metaphysics. In Nietzsche's analysis, the word "genuine" already stands as something unquestionable, something exempt from the labor of the concept. To the converted and unconverted philosophers of Fascism, values such as authenticity, heroic endurance of the "thrownness" of individual existence, the border situation, ultimately become a means of usurping religious-authoritarian pathos without any sort of religious content. This drives towards the denunciation of everything which is not sound enough, which is not made out of corn and gristle, therefore the Jews: Richard Wagner had already played off genuine German art against foreign [*welsche*: medieval German term for foreign] bric-a-brac and thereby misused the critique of the culture market as an apology for barbarism. Such misuse is however not extrinsic to the concept of genuineness [*Echtheit*]. During the sale of its faded livery, seams and damaged patches are coming out, which were already invisibly present in the great days of opposition. The untruth lurks in the substrate of genuineness [*Echtheit*] itself, the individual [*Individuum*]. If the law of the course of the world is concealed in the *principium individuationis* [Latin: principle of individuation], as the antipodes of Hegel and Schopenhauer both recognized, then the intuition of the final and absolute substantiality of the ego becomes the victim of an appearance [*Schein*], which protects the existing social order, while its essence is already decaying. To equate genuineness [*Echtheit*] with truth is not tenable. It is precisely the unflinching self-constitution – that mode of conduct, which Nietzsche called psychology – and thus the insistence on the truth about oneself, which proves again and again, already in the first experiences of childhood, that the impulses on which one reflects are not entirely "genuine." They constantly contained something of imitation, play, wanting to be different. In pressing towards what is unconditionally fixed,

towards the being [*Sein*] of the existent [*Seiendes*], the will, which immerses itself in its own selfsame individuality instead of its social cognition, leads to precisely the bad infinity which since Kierkegaard the concept of genuineness [*Echtheit*] was supposed to exorcize. No-one expressed this more forthrightly than Schopenhauer. The querulous forebear of existential philosophy and malicious inheritor of great speculation truly knew the hollows and ravines of individual absolutism inside out. His insight is attached to the speculative thesis, that the individual [*Individuum*] would be only the appearance, not the thing in itself. “Every individual [*Individuum*],” goes a footnote in the fourth book of *The World as Will and Idea*, “is on the one hand the subject of cognition, that is, the complementary condition of possibility of the entire objective world, and on the other hand, the specific appearance [*Erscheinung*] of the will, of the same one which objectifies itself in each thing. But this duplicity of our essence does not rest on a unity existing for itself: otherwise we would be able to be aware of ourselves in ourselves, independently from the objects of cognition and of will [*Wollen*]: this however we simply cannot do, or rather as soon as we try to enter ourselves and, by directing our cognition inwards, wish to fully constitute ourselves, we lose ourselves in a bottomless void, finding ourselves like the crystal ball, out of whose depths a voice speaks, whose cause however is not found there, and by wishing to grasp ourselves, we catch, with a shudder, nothing but a wandering ghost. (Schopenhauer, Collected Works, Grand Duke Wilhelm-Ernst Edition, Book 1: *The World as Will and Idea*. I. Introduction by Eduard Grisebach. Leipzig. 1920, pg 371). He thereby called the mythical deception of the pure self by its name, as nugatory. It is an abstraction. What steps forward as an original entity, as a monad, results first from a social separation from the social process. Precisely as something absolute, the individual [*Individuum*] is a mere reflection-form of property-relations. In it the fictive claim is raised that what is biologically one would precede, according to its own lights, the social

whole, from which only violence isolates it, and its contingency is upheld as a measure of truth. It is not merely that the ego is enmeshed in society, but that the former owes the latter its existence in the most literal sense. All of its content comes from the latter, or in any case out of the relation to the object. It becomes all the richer, the more freely it develops the latter in itself and reflects it, while conversely its delimitation and hardening, which reclaims it as an origin, thereby cause it to be limited, impoverished and reduced. It is not for nothing that attempts to grasp the plenitude of the individual in its withdrawal into itself, such as Kierkegaard's, are tantamount to the sacrifice of the individual and to the selfsame abstraction, which Kierkegaard maligned in the idealistic systems. Genuineness [*Echtheit*] is nothing other than the defiant and obstinate persistence on the monadological form, which social oppression stamps on human beings. What does not wish to wither away, should rather take the stigma of the non-genuine on itself. It feeds on the mimetic legacy. What is human is attached to imitation: a human being turns into a human being first by imitating other human beings. In such behavior, the Ur-form of love, the priests of genuineness scent traces of that utopia, which could shake the apparatus of domination. That Nietzsche, whose reflection drove all the way into the concept of truth, dogmatically drew back from genuineness [*Echtheit*], makes him into what he ultimately wanted to be, a Lutheran, and his outbursts against play-acting are cut from the same cloth as the anti-Semitism which so outraged him in the arch-actor Wagner. He should not have reproached Wagner with play-acting – for all art, and music especially, is related to acting, and in every period of Nietzsche there rings the thousand-year echo of the rhetorical voices from the Roman senate – but the denial of play-acting by the actor. Indeed it is not only what is non-genuine, which plays at retaining being [*seinshaltig*], which is to be convicted a lie, but rather what is genuine itself turns into a lie the moment it becomes something genuine, that is to say in the reflection on itself, in its positing as something genuine, such

that it already steps beyond the identity which in the same breath it claims. The self cannot be spoken of as the ontological ground, but solely in any case theologically, in the name of what is cast in God's image [*Gottesebenbildlichkeit*]. Whoever holds fast to the self and shakes off theological concepts, contributes to the justification of the devilish positive, of cold-cut interest. It borrows from this last the aura of significance and turns the power of command of self-preserving reason into a high-flown superstructure, while the real self has already become in the world, what Schopenhauer recognized it as in introspection, a ghost. Its character of appearance [*Scheincharakter*] can be understood from the historical implications of the concept of genuineness [*Echtheit*] as such. In it hides the idea of the supremacy of the origin over what is derived. This is however already connected with social legitimism. All ruling elites claim to be the eldest of all, autochthonous. The entire philosophy of inwardness, with the claim of having contempt for the world, is the final sublimation of the barbaric brutality, that whoever was there first, has the greatest rights, and the priority of the self is as untrue as the priority of all who feel at home right where they are. Nothing changes, if genuineness [*Echtheit*] falls back on the opposition of *physei* [Latin: what is physical] and *thesei* [Latin: what is artificial], that what exists without the addition of human activity, would be better than what is artificial. The tighter the net of what human beings have made is drawn over the world, the more spasmodically do those who are doing the tightening, highlight their own primitivity and rootedness in nature. The discovery of genuineness [*Echtheit*] as the last bulwark of individualistic ethics [*Ethik*] is a reflex of industrial mass production. Only when countless standardized goods pretend, for the sake of profit, to be something unique, does the idea crystallize – as its antithesis, and yet according to the same criteria – that what is not to be reproduced is what is authentically genuine. Previously, the question of genuineness [*Echtheit*] was no more applied to intellectual entities [*Gebilde*] than the question of originality, which was unknown

even in the era of Bach. The deception of genuineness [*Echtheit*] goes back to bourgeois delusion regarding the exchange-process. What appears genuine, is what commodities and other means of exchange can be reduced to – above all, gold. The genuineness [*Echtheit*] abstracted like a proportion of a fine metal turns, like gold, into a fetish. Both are treated as if they were the substrate, which is nevertheless in truth a social relationship, while gold and genuineness [*Echtheit*] express only the fungibility, the comparability of things: they are precisely not in themselves, but for others. The non-genuineness of the genuine rests on the fact that it must pretend, in the society ruled by exchange, to be what it stands for, without ever being truly able to be such. The apostles of genuineness [*Echtheit*] of power, who dress down circulation, perform the dance of the money-veil at this latter's wake.

100

Sur l'eau [French: at sea]. To the question of the goal of an emancipated society, one receives answers such as the fulfillment of human possibilities or the richness of life. As illegitimate as the inevitable question may be, so inevitable is the repulsive, out-trumping response, which recalls to mind the social democratic personality-ideal of the heavily bearded naturalists of the 1890s, who wanted to live it up. Tenderness would be solely what is most crude: that no-one should starve any longer. Anything else would apply, to a condition which ought to be determined by human needs, a human behavior which is formed on the model of production as its own purpose. The utopian image of the unrestricted, energetic, creative human being has been infiltrated by the commodity fetishism, which in bourgeois society brings with it inhibition, powerlessness, the sterility of monotony. The concept of dynamics, which complements bourgeois "ahistoricity," is raised to something absolute, while it nevertheless, as the anthropological reflex of the laws of production, must be critically confronted in the emancipated society with

need. The idea of unfettered doing, of uninterrupted creating, of chubby-cheeked insatiability, of freedom as intense activity, feeds on the bourgeois concept of nature, which from time immemorial has served to proclaim social violence as irrevocable, as a piece of healthy eternity. It was due to this and not any presumed equalization that the positive designs of socialism, against which Marx bristled, remained in barbarism. What is to be feared is not the slackening of humanity in a life of luxury, but rather the dessicated expansion of what, in the guise of the all-natural, is social – the collectivity as the blind rage of making. The naively mandated unambiguity of the tendency of development towards the raising of production is itself a piece of that bourgeois nature [*Bürgerlichkeit*], which permits development only in one direction, because, integrated into the totality, ruled by quantification, it is hostile to the qualitative difference. If one thinks of the emancipated society as one emancipated precisely from such a totality, then alignments become visible, which have little in common with the raising of production and its human mirror-images. If uninhibited people are by no means the most pleasant, and are not even the freest, then the society which freed itself of its fetters, could arrive at the thought that even the productive forces are not the final substrate of human beings, but are rather the historically specific form of these last under commodity production. Perhaps the true society would become bored with development, and would out of freedom leave possibilities unused, instead of storming alien stars under a confused compulsion. What would begin to dawn on a humanity, which no longer knew urgent necessity [Not: necessity, privation], is just how delusory and futile all the arrangements hitherto created to escape privation [Not] have been – arrangements which used wealth to reproduce privation [Not] on an expanded scale. Enjoyment itself would be touched by this, just as its contemporary schema cannot be separated from industriousness, planning, imposing one's will, subjugation. *Rien faire comme une bête* [French: Doing nothing, like an animal], lying on the water and look peacefully

into the heavens, “being, nothing else, without any further determination and fulfillment” might step in place of process, doing, fulfilling, and so truly deliver the promise of dialectical logic, of culminating in its origin. None of the abstract concepts comes closer to the fulfilled utopia than that of eternal peace. Onlookers of progress such as Maupassant and Sternheim have helped to express this intention, shyly, in the only manner the fragility of the latter permits.