

Minima Moralia

Dedication

The melancholy science, from which I make this offering to my friend, relates to a realm which has counted, since time immemorial, as the authentic one of philosophy, but which has, since its transformation into method, fallen prey to intellectual disrespect, sententious caprice and in the end forgetfulness: the teaching of the good life. What philosophy once called life, has turned into the sphere of the private and then merely of consumption, which is dragged along as an addendum of the material production-process, without autonomy and without its own substance. Whoever wishes to experience the truth of immediate life, must investigate its alienated form, the objective powers, which determine the individual existence into its innermost recesses. To speak immediately of what is immediate, is to behave no differently from that novelist, who adorns their marionettes with the imitations of the passions of yesteryear like cheap jewelry, and who sets persons in motion, who are nothing other than inventory-pieces of machinery, as if they could still act as subjects, and as if something really depended on their actions. The gaze at life has passed over into ideology, which conceals the fact, that it no longer exists.

But the relationship of life and production, which the latter degrades in reality into an ephemeral appearance of the former, is completely absurd. Means and ends are interchanged. The intuition of this ludicrous quid pro quo has not been totally expunged from life. The reduced and degraded essence bristles tenaciously against its ensorcelment in the façade. The change of the relations of production itself depends more than ever on what befalls the “sphere of consumption,” the mere reflection-form of production and the caricature of true life: in the consciousness and unconsciousness of individuals. Only by virtue of opposition to

production, as something still not totally encompassed by the social order, could human beings introduce a more humane one. If the appearance [*Schein*] of life were ever wholly abrogated, which the consumption-sphere itself defends with such bad reasons, then the overgrowth of absolute production will triumph.

In spite of this, considerations which begin from the subject have as much that is false in them, so much as life becomes appearance [*Schein*]. Because the overwhelming objectivity of the contemporary phase of historical movement consists solely of the dissolution of the subject, without a new one appearing in its stead, individual experience necessarily relies on the old subject, the historically condemned one, which is still for itself, but no longer in itself. It thinks of its autonomy as still secure, but the nullity, which the concentration camps demonstrated to subjects, already overtakes the form of subjectivity itself. Something sentimental and anachronistic clings to the subjective consideration, no matter how critically sharpened against itself: something of the lament about the way of the world, which is not to be rejected for the sake of its good intentions, but because the lamenting subject threatens to harden in its being-just-so [*Sosein*] and thereby to fulfill once again the law of the way of the world. The fidelity to one's own state of consciousness and experience is forever in temptation of falling into infidelity, by denying the insight, which reaches beyond the individuated [*Individuum*] and which calls the latter's substance by name.

Thus argued Hegel, whose method schooled that of *Minima Moralia*, against the mere being-for-itself of subjectivity on all its levels. Dialectical theory, averse to everything which is singular, cannot permit aphorisms to be valid as such. In the best of cases they may be tolerated, in the words of the *Preface* of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as "conversation." The latter's time however is over. Nevertheless the book does not forget the totality-claim of the system, which does not wish

anyone to escape it, any more than the rebellion against the latter. Hegel does not pay heed to the subject in accordance with the requirement, which he otherwise passionately defends: that of being in the matter [*Sache*] and not “always beyond it,” instead of “entering into the immanent content of the matter [*Sache*].” If the subject is disappearing today, aphorisms take on the weighty responsibility of “considering that which is disappearing itself as essential.” They insist, in opposition to Hegel’s procedure and nevertheless in concordance with his thought, on negativity: “The life of the Spirit [*Geistes*] wins its truth only by finding itself in what is absolutely torn apart. It is not this power as the positive, which looks away from the negative, as when we say of something, that it is nothing or wrong, and now, done with that, pass over from there to something else; rather it is this power only when it stares the negative in the face, tarrying on it.”

The dismissive gesture, with which Hegel in contradiction to his own insight, constantly runs roughshod over the individual, derives paradoxically enough from his necessary bias for liberalistic thought. The conception of a totality harmonious throughout all its antagonisms compels him to rank individuation, however many times he designates it as the driving moment of the process, as something lesser in the construction of the whole. That in prehistory the objective tendency asserts itself over the heads of human beings, indeed by virtue of the annihilation of the individual, without the reconciliation implied by the concept of the generality and the particular ever being historically achieved, this is distorted in Hegel: with lofty iciness he opts once more for the liquidation of the particular. Nowhere does he doubt the primacy of the whole. The more dubious the transition from the reflecting singularization to the glorified totality remains, as much in history as in Hegelian logic, the more enthusiastically philosophy clings, as justification of the existent, to the victorious motorcade of the objective

tendency. The development of the social principle of individuation into the victory of fatality already gives it occasion enough. Since Hegel hypostatizes bourgeois society as much as its founding category, the individuated [*Individuum*], he could not truly carry out the dialectic between the two. Admittedly, he assures us, with classical economics, that the totality produces and reproduces itself out of the interrelation of the antagonistic interests of its members. But he naively regards the individuated [*Individuum*] as such solely as that which is irreducibly given [*Gegebenheit*], which he just dismantled in his theory of cognition. In the individualistic society however the generality is realized not only through the interplay of individuals, rather the society is essentially the substance of the individuated [*Individuum*].

That is why social analysis can garner incomparably more from individual experience than Hegel conceded, while conversely the great historical categories, after all that has been perpetrated with them in the meantime, are no longer above suspicion of fraud. In the one hundred and fifty years which have passed since Hegel's conception, something of the force of protest has passed over again into the individuated [*Individuum*]. Compared with the paterfamilial scantiness, which characterizes its treatment in Hegel, it has won as much richness, differentiation and energy as it has, on the other hand, been weakened and hollowed out by the socialization of society. In the epoch of its disassembly [*Zerfalls*], the experience of the individuated [*Individuum*] as well as what it encounters contributes once more to a recognition, which it had concealed, so long as it was construed seamlessly and positively as the ruling category. In view of the totalitarian unison, which broadcasts the elimination of difference as immediately meaningful, a measure of emancipatory social power may have temporarily withdrawn into the sphere of the individual. That critical theory tarries in it, is not only due to a bad conscience.

All this is not to deny what is debatable in such an attempt. I wrote the book for the most part during the war, under conditions of contemplation. The violence which drove me into exile simultaneously blocked me from its full recognition. I had not yet admitted to myself the complicity of those who, as if in a magic circle, speak at all of what is individual, in view of the unspeakable things which collectively occurred.

Each of the three parts starts out from the narrowest private realm, that of the intellectual in emigration. After this follow considerations of wider social and anthropological scope; they pertain to psychology, aesthetics, and science in its relationship to the subject. The concluding aphorisms of each section lead thematically, too, to philosophy, without claiming to be conclusive and definitive: all of these are intended to mark points of attack or to generate models for future exertions of the concept.

The immediate occasion for writing this book was the fiftieth birthday of Max Horkheimer on February 14, 1945. The composition transpired in a phase in which, due to external circumstances, we had to interrupt our common work. The book wishes to proffer thanks and fidelity, by refusing to recognize the interruption. It is testimony to a *dialogue intérieur* [French: internal dialogue]: there is no motif herein, which does not belong as much to Horkheimer as to the person who found the time for formulation.

The specific approach of *Minima Moralia*, the attempt to represent moments of a common philosophy from the standpoint of subjective experience, means that the pieces do not entirely measure up to the philosophy, of which they are nevertheless a part. This is expressed as what is loose and nonbinding in the form, along with the renunciation of an explicit theoretical context. At the same time, such asceticism should atone for something of the injustice, wherein one continued to work alone

on something which can only be completed by both, and from which we shall not desist.

Minima Moralia

Reflections from the damaged life

Part One

1944

Life does not live
– Ferdinand Kürnberger

1

For Marcel Proust. – The son of well-to-do parents who, whether out of talent or weakness, chooses a so-called intellectual occupation as an artist or scholar, has special difficulties with those who bear the distasteful title of colleagues. It is not merely that his independence is envied, that the seriousness of his intentions is doubted and that he is presumed to be a secret envoy of the established powers. Such mistrust is borne out of resentment, yet would usually find its confirmation. However the actual resistances lie elsewhere. The occupation with intellectual [*geistigen*] things has meanwhile become “practical,” a business with a strict division of labor, with branches and *numerus clausus* [Latin: restricted entry]. Those who are materially independent, who choose out of repugnance towards the shame of earning money, are not inclined to recognize this. For this he is punished. He is no “professional” [in English in original], ranks in the hierarchy of competitors as a dilettante, regardless of how much he knows about his subject, and must, if he wishes to pursue a career, display a professional tunnel vision even narrower than that of the most narrow-minded expert. The suspension of the division of labor to

which he is driven, and which the economic state of affairs allows him, within certain limits, to realize, is considered especially scandalous: this betrays the aversion to sanction the hustle and bustle dictated by society, and high and mighty competence does not permit such idiosyncrasies. The departmentalization of the Spirit [*Geist*] is a means of abolishing such there, where it is not ex officio or contractually obligated. It does its work all the more surely, as those who continually reject the division of labor – if only in the sense that they enjoy their work – reveal, by this selfsame measure, their vulnerabilities, which are inseparable from the moments of their superiority. Thus is the social order [*Ordnung*] assured: this one must play along, because one could not otherwise live, and that one, who could indeed live, is kept outside, because they don't want to play along. It is as if the class which the independent intellectual deserted from revenges itself, by forcibly pushing through its demands precisely where the deserter sought refuge.

2

Grassy seat. – The relationship to parents is undergoing a sad, shadowy change. They have lost their awe through their economic powerlessness. Once we rebelled against their insistence on the reality principle, the sobriety which was always ready to recoil into the rage against those who do not renounce. Today however we find ourselves facing a presumably younger generation, which is in every one of its impulses unbearably more grown up than the parents ever were; which has renounced, before things ever came to a conflict, and which derives their authority from that, implacably authoritarian and unshakeable. Perhaps one always experienced the parental generation as harmless and disempowered, once the latter's physical energy subsided, while one's own generation seemed to be threatened by youth: in the antagonistic society, the relationship of the generations is also one of competition, behind which stands naked violence. Today however things are regressing to a condition which does

not know the Oedipus complex, but only the slaying of the father. One of the most telling symbolic atrocities of the Nazis was the killing of the extremely old. Such a climate produces a belated and rueful understanding with one's parents, similar to the one between condemned prisoners, disturbed only by the fear that we, ourselves powerless, may not be able to care for them some day as they cared for us, when they owned something. The violence which is inflicted on them makes us forget the violence they committed. Even their rationalizations, the once-hated lies with which they sought to justify their particular interest as the general one, show an inkling of the truth, the urge towards the reconciliation of conflicts, which the upbeat successor generation happily denies. Even the faded, inconsequential and self-doubting Spirit [*Geist*] of the elders is more approachable than the quick-witted stupidity of junior. Even the neurotic peculiarities and malformations of the older adults represent character, that which is humanly achieved, compared with pathic health, infantilism raised to a norm. One realizes in horror that when one previously clashed with one's parents, because they represented the world, one was secretly the mouthpiece of a still worse world against the merely bad. Unpolitical attempts to break out of the bourgeois family usually only lead to deeper entanglement in such, and sometimes it seems as if the disastrous germ-cell of society, the family, is simultaneously the nourishing germ-cell of the uncompromising will for a different one. What disintegrates, along with the family – so long as the system continues – is not just the most effective agency of the bourgeoisie, but also the resistance which indeed oppressed the individual, but also strengthened the latter, if not indeed producing such. The end of the family cripples the counter-forces. The dawning collectivistic social order [*Ordnung*] is the mockery of one without class: it liquidates, along with the bourgeois, at the same time the utopia, which at one time drew nourishment from the mother's love.

Fish in water. – Since the comprehensive apparatus of distribution of highly concentrated industry has dissolved the circulation-sphere, this latter begins an astonishing post-existence. While the economic basis for the occupation of go-betweens disappears, the private life of innumerable people becomes that of agents and go-betweens, indeed the realm of the private is wholly swallowed up by a mysterious enterprise [Geschäftigkeit: business, activity, busyness], which bears all the marks of the commercial kind, only in a situation where nothing is really being done. Those who are afraid, from the unemployed to professionals who in the next moment may come to feel the wrath of those whose investments they represent, believe they can win over the ubiquitous company executive only through sensitivity, assiduousness, accessibility, by one way or another, through the qualities of traders, and soon there is no relationship which is not seen in terms of other relationships, no impulse which is not subjected to prior censorship, in order not to deviate from approval. The concept of relationships, a category of mediation and circulation, never prospered best in the actual circulation-sphere, in the market, but in closed, monopoly-like hierarchies. Now that the entire society is becoming hierarchal, opaque relationships adhere everywhere, wherever there was still the appearance [*Schein*] of freedom. The irrationality of the system is expressed not less in the economic fate of particular individuals [*Einzelnen*] than in the parasitic psychology of such. Earlier, when there was still something like the disreputable bourgeois separation of occupation and private life, whose passing one would almost like to regret, whoever pursued goals in their private life was eyed with distrust, as a loutish gatecrasher. Today whoever engages in something private, which does not have a discernible goal, appears as arrogant, foreign and improper. Whoever isn't "out" for something [*wer nichts "will"*]: literally, whoever doesn't want, wish, intend to do something] is almost suspect: no-one trusts anyone else to help them get by, without legitimating themselves through counter-claims. Myriads of people make

their living out of a condition, which follows the liquidation of occupations. These are the nice people, the popular ones, who are friends with all, the just ones, who excuse every sort of meanness as “human” [in English in original] and incorruptibly defame every non-normalized impulse as “sentimental” [in English in original]. They are indispensable thanks to their knowledge of all the channels and back doors of power, they guess its most secret judgments and live off the dexterous communication of such. They are to be found in all political camps, even there, where the rejection of the system is taken for granted and for that reason a lax and cunning conformism of its own has developed. Often they win over people through a certain benevolence, through the sympathetic sharing of the life of others: selflessness as speculation. They are clever, witty, sensible and flexible; they have polished the old trader-spirit with the achievements of the day-before-yesterday’s psychology. They are ready for anything, even love, yet always faithlessly. They betray not from instinctual drives, but from principle: they value even themselves as a profit, which they do not wish to share with anyone else. They are bound to the Spirit [*Geist*] with affinity and hate: they are a temptation for the thoughtful, but also their worst enemies. For they are the ones who subtly apprehend and despoil the last hiding-places of resistance, the hours which remain free from the demands of the machinery. Their belated individualism poisons what still remains of the individuated [*Individuum*: individual, the individuated].

4

Final clarity. – The newspaper obituary for a businessman once read: “The breadth of his conscience competed with the goodness of his heart.” The lapse committed by the mourners in the rarefied, elevated language called for at such times, the involuntary admission that the kind-hearted deceased was devoid of a conscience, expedites the funeral procession on the shortest path to the land of truth. When a man of advanced age

becomes famous for being especially benign [*abgeklärt*: clarified, mellowed], one can presume that his life represented a series of scandals. He has gotten used to outrage. The broad conscience passes itself off as greatness of mind [*Weitherzigkeit*], which forgives everything, because it understands it all too well. A quid pro quo steps between one's own guilt and that of others, which is resolved in favor of whoever got the best of the deal. After such a long life, one just can't distinguish who did what to whom. In the abstract representation of universal injustice, every concrete responsibility collapses. The scoundrel twists it around, as if he experienced it himself: if you only knew, young man, what life is really like. Those however who are already distinguished in the middle of life by special benevolence, are usually drawing an advance on such benignity [*Abgeklärtheit*]. Whoever is not evil, does not live benignly [*abgeklärt*], but in a peculiarly bashful manner, hardened and intolerant. Due to a lack of appropriate objects, the latter hardly knows any other expression of their love than the hatred of inappropriate ones, through which they admittedly come to resemble what they hate. The bourgeoisie however is tolerant. Their love for people, as they are, originates in the hatred of rightful human beings.

5

Doctor, that is kind of you. – Nothing is harmless anymore. The small joys, the expressions of life, which seemed to be exempt from the responsibility of thought, not only have a moment of defiant silliness, of the cold-hearted turning of a blind eye, but immediately enter the service of their most extreme opposite. Even the tree which blooms, lies, the moment that one perceives its bloom without the shadow of horror; even the innocent “How beautiful” becomes an excuse for the ignominy of existence, which is otherwise, and there is no longer any beauty or any consolation, except in the gaze which goes straight to the horror, withstands it, and in the undiminished consciousness of negativity, holds

fast to the possibility of that which is better. Mistrust is advisable towards everything which is unselfconscious, casual, towards everything which involves letting go, implying indulgence towards the supremacy of the existent [*Existierende*]. The malign deeper meaning of comfort, which at one time was limited to the toasts of cozy sociability, has long since spread to friendlier impulses. When in the chance conversation with a man on the train, one acquiesces, in order to avoid a quarrel, to a couple of sentences which one knows ultimately certify murder, is already an act of treachery; no thought is immune against its communication, and uttering it at the wrong place and in the context of a false agreement is enough to undercut its truth. Every visit to the cinema, despite the utmost watchfulness, leaves me dumber and worse than before. Sociability itself is a participant in injustice, insofar as it pretends we can still talk with each other in a frozen world, and the flippant, chummy word contributes to the perpetuation of silence, insofar as the concessions to those being addressed debase the latter once more as speakers. The evil principle which has always lurked in affability develops, in the egalitarian Spirit [*Geist*], into its full bestiality. Condescension and making oneself out as no better are the same. By adapting to the weaknesses of the oppressed, one confirms in such weaknesses the prerequisite of domination, and develops in oneself the measure of barbarity, thickheadedness and capacity to inflict violence required to exercise domination. If, in the latest era, the gesture of condescension is dispensed with, and solely adaptation becomes visible, then it is precisely in such a perfect screening of power that the class-relationship, however denied, breaks through all the more irreconcilably. For intellectuals, unswerving isolation is the only form in which they can vouchsafe a measure of solidarity. All of the playing along, all of the humanity of interaction and participation is the mere mask of the tacit acceptance of inhumanity. One should be united with the suffering of human beings: the smallest step to their joys is one towards the hardening of suffering.

6

Antithesis. – For those who do not play along, there exists the danger of considering themselves better than others and misusing their critique of society as an ideology for their own private interest. While feeling their way towards making their own existence into the flickering picture of the right one, they should remain aware of its insubstantiality and know how little the picture can replace the right life. Such considerations however contradict the gravitational force of what is bourgeois within them. Those who are at a distance are as entangled as those who are actively engaged; the former have nothing over the latter, except the insight into their entanglement and the happiness of the tiny freedom, which lies in the recognition as such. Their own distance from business as usual is a luxury, solely spun off by that business as usual. That is why every impulse towards self-withdrawal bears the marks of what is negated. The coldness which it must develop is not to be separated from the bourgeois one. In the monadological principle, even where it protests, lurks the ruling generality. Proust's observation, that the photographs of the grandfathers of a duke and a Jew from the entrepreneurial class look so similar, that no-one thinks of the social ranking order, strikes at a far more comprehensive state of affairs [*Sachverhalt*]: all of those differences which comprised the happiness, indeed the moral substance, of individual existence, objectively disappear behind the unity of the epoch. We detect the decay of education, and yet our prose, measured against Jacob Grimm or Bachofen, has phraseologies in common with the culture-industry which we did not suspect. Moreover we no longer know Greek or Latin like Wolf or Kirchhoff. We point out the transition of civilization into alphabetism and ourselves forget to write letters or to read a text of Jean Paul, as it must have been read in his time. We abhor the coarsening of life, but the absence of any objectively binding common decency [*Sitte*: morals] compels us at every step into modes of conduct, speech and calculation

which are barbaric, measured by humane standards, and tactless, even by the dubious standards of the good society. With the dissolution of liberalism, the authentic bourgeois principle, that of competition, was not overcome, but passed over from the objectivity of social processes into the composition [*Beschaffenheit*: character, constitution] of pushing and shoving atoms – into anthropology, as it were. The subjugation of life to the production-process degradingly inflicts something of that isolation and loneliness on every single person, which we are tempted to consider the matter of our superior choice. The notion that every single person considers themselves better in their particular interest than all others, is as long-standing a piece of bourgeois ideology as the overestimation of others as higher than oneself, just because they are the community of all customers. Since the old bourgeois class has abdicated, both lead their afterlife in the Spirit [*Geist*] of intellectuals, who are at the same time the last enemies of the bourgeois, and the last bourgeois. By allowing themselves to still think at all vis-a-vis the naked reproduction of existence, they behave as the privileged; by leaving things in thought, they declare the nullity of their privilege. The private existence, which yearns to look like one worthy of human beings, simultaneously betrays the latter, because the similarity of the general implementation is withdrawn, which more than ever before requires an independent sensibility [*Besinnung*]. There is no exit from the entanglement. The only responsible option is to deny oneself the ideological misuse of one's own existence, and as for the rest, to behave in private as modestly, inconspicuously and unpretentiously as required, not for reasons of good upbringing, but because of the shame that when one is in hell, there is still air to breathe.

7

They, the people. [in English in original] – The circumstance that intellectuals mostly deal with other intellectuals should not mislead them into thinking they are worse than the rest of humanity. For they encounter

one another primarily in the most embarrassing and degrading situation of all, that of competing supplicants, and are thereby nearly always compelled to show their worst side to each other. Other people, especially the simple folk whose virtues intellectuals are wont to praise, usually meet them in the role of someone trying to sell them something, who doesn't have to worry about the customer horning in on their turf. It is easy for the auto mechanic and the sales-girl at the liquor store to remain free of impudence: friendliness is in any case mandated from above. If on the other hand illiterates come to intellectuals in order to have letters written, these latter may indeed make a reasonably good impression. But the moment simple folk have to brawl for their share of the social product, they surpass anything in the canon of envy and hatefulness displayed by literati or musical directors. The glorification of the splendid *underdogs* [in English in original] ends up in glorifying the splendid system which made them so. The justifiable feelings of guilt of those exempted from physical labor ought not become an excuse for rural idiocy [famous phrase used by Marx to describe the stagnation of peasant life]. Intellectuals who write solely about intellectuals and give them their bad name in the name of that which is authentic [*Echtheit*] only strengthen the lie. A large part of the prevailing anti-intellectualism and irrationalism, all the way to Huxley, is set in motion by the fact that writers complain about the mechanism of competition without themselves being able to see through the latter, and so fall victim to such. In the field most their own, they have shut out the consciousness of *tat twam asi* ["Thou art this," quote from Upanishads]. That is why they then rush into Indian temples.

8

If bad boys should tempt you. – There is an *amor intellectualis* [Latin: abstract love] for the kitchen staff, the temptation for those who work theoretically or artistically, to relax the intellectual [*geistigen*] claim on oneself, to lower one's niveau, to follow all manner of platitudes in the

matter [*Sache*] and expression, which one had rejected as an alert appraiser. Since no categories, not even that of cultivation [*Bildung*: education], can be proscribed to intellectuals anymore, and a thousand demands of hustle and bustle endanger the concentration, the effort of producing something with a measure of integrity is so great, that scarcely anyone is still capable of it. The pressure of conformity, which burdens everyone who produces something, furthers lowers their demands on themselves. The center of intellectual [*geistigen*] self-discipline as such is understood to be disintegrating. The taboos which comprised the intellectual [*geistigen*] stature of a human being, often sedimented experiences and unarticulated recognitions, direct themselves continuously against one's own impulses, which one learned to condemn, which however are so strong, that only an unquestioning and unquestionable juridics [*Inстанz*] can halt them. What applies to the life of the instinctual drives, applies no less to the life of the mind: the painter and composer, who forbid themselves the use of this or that color combination or chord contrast as kitschy, the author who finds that a linguistic configuration gets on their nerves as banal or pedantic, react so forcefully because there are layers within them which are drawn by such. The rejection of the hegemonic overgrowth of culture presumes that one has participated enough in the latter to feel it in one's fingertips, as it were, simultaneously drawing from this participation the forces to dismiss it. These forces, which make their appearance as such in individual resistance, are for that reason by no means of a merely individual sort. The intellectual conscience, in which they are integrated, has a social moment so much as the moral superego. It crystallizes in the conception [*Vorstellung*] of the right society and its citizens. If this conception is set aside – and who could still blindly subscribe to it – then the intellectual compulsion towards the bottom loses its inhibitions, and all the junk which the barbaric culture has left behind in the individuated [*Individuum*] comes into view: half-education, laxness, cloddish trustfulness,

shoddiness. Mostly it is rationalized as humanity, as the wish to make oneself understandable to other human beings, as cosmopolitan responsibility. But the sacrifice of intellectual self-discipline is borne far too easily, to really believe that it is indeed one. This is drastically evident when observing intellectuals whose material situation has changed: as soon as they have convinced themselves even the slightest bit that they must earn a living by writing and nothing else, they send the same junk into the world, down to the last nuances, which in their lush times they once denounced with the utmost ferocity. Entirely like formerly wealthy emigres, who can finally be as greedy in foreign lands as they always wanted to be at home, so do those who are impoverished in Spirit [*Geiste*] march enthusiastically into the hell, which is their heaven.

9

Above all one thing, my child. – What is unmoral about lies does not consist of the injury to the sacrosanct truth. No society which forces its compulsory members to hand themselves over with language, in order to overtake them that much more quickly, has the right to call on such. It does not befit universal untruth, to insist on the particular truth, while nonetheless inverting the latter straightaway into its opposite. In spite of this, something repellent clings to the lie, and though the consciousness of this was indeed beaten into one with the old whip, this simultaneously said something about the master of the dungeon. The mistake lies in all too much honesty. Whoever lies, is ashamed, because in every lie they must experience what is degrading in the existing state of the world, which compels them to lie, if they wish to live, while warbling “Be ever true and honest” [song scored by Mozart] in their ear. Such shame saps the energy of the lies of those who are more subtly organized. They do it badly, and only thereby does the lie come to be genuinely unmoral for others. It suggests the former think the latter are stupid, and serves to express disrespect. Among today’s cunning practitioners, the lie has long

since lost its honest function, of concealing something real. No-one believes anyone, everyone is in the loop. Lies are told only when someone wants others to know they aren't important, that the former does not need the latter, and does not care what they think. Today the lie, once a liberal means of communication, has become one of the techniques of brazenness, with whose help every single person spreads the iciness, in whose shelter they thrive.

10

Separated-united. – Marriage, whose despicable parody lives on in a time when the basis of the human right of marriage has been withdrawn, serves today mostly as a trick of self-preservation: each of the two conspirators deflects the responsibility for any villainy which they might commit onto the other, while in truth they exist together opaquely and swampily. The only proper marriage would be one, in which both have an independent life for themselves, without the fusion which rests on an economically compulsory community of interest, but which instead would involve taking mutual responsibility for each other out of freedom. Marriage as a community of interest inexorably signifies the degradation of the interested parties, and what is perfidious about the existing state of affairs, is that no-one, even if one knew of this, can avoid such degradation. Sometimes one might entertain the thought that it is only those who are emancipated from the pursuit of interests, that is to say the rich, who retain the possibility of a marriage without shame. But this possibility is entirely formal, because those who are privileged are precisely the ones to whom the pursuit of interests has become second nature – otherwise they would not maintain their privileges.

11

Table and bed. – As soon as human beings divorce, even the most kind-hearted, friendly and educated ones, a cloud of dust enshrouds and daubs everything it touches. It is as if the sphere of intimacy, the inattentive trust of the common life is transformed into a poisonous substance, once the relationships are broken, in which they rested. What is intimate between human beings is compassion, patience, refuge for personal characteristics. If it is distorted, then the moment of weakness therein hoves into view, and during divorces such a turn towards the outside is unavoidable. Things which were once signs of loving care, pictures of reconciliation, make themselves suddenly self-standing as values and show their evil, cold and pernicious side. After separations, professors break into the dwellings of their wives, in order to carry off objects from the desk, and well-appointed ladies denounce their men for tax-evasion. If marriage afforded one of the last possibilities of constructing humane cells in the inhuman generality, then the generality revenges itself in its disassembly [Zerfall], by taking control of that which was apparently an exception, the alienated social orders of justice and property which underlies it and which pours scorn on those who thought themselves secure from it. Precisely that which is safeguarded turns into the cruel requisite of being sacrificed. The more “generously” the lovebirds originally behaved with each other, the less they thought of ownership and obligation, the more horrid the humiliation. For it is even in the realm of the juridically undefined, in quarrel, defamation, in the endless conflict of interests flourishes. Everything shadowy, on whose ground the institution of marriage is raised, the barbaric access of the man to the property and labor of the woman, the not less barbaric sexual oppression, which tendentially compels the man to take lifelong responsibility for someone with whom he once took pleasure in sleeping with – this crawls out of the cellars and fundamentals into the open, when the house is demolished. Those who once experienced the good generality in the restricted belonging to each other, are now compelled by the society to consider themselves scoundrels and

to learn, that they are the same as the generality of unrestricted nastiness outside. The generality proves itself in divorce as the mark of shame of the particular, because the particular, marriage, is not capable of realizing the true generality in this society.

12

Inter pares. – [Latin: among equals] In the realm of erotic qualities, a revaluation seems to be occurring. Under liberalism, well into our day, married men from high society who were unsatisfied with their strictly brought up and correct spouses absolved themselves in the company of female artists, bohemians, sugar babies [*süsse Mädchen*: sweet maidens] and cocottes. With the rationalization of society this possibility of unregimented happiness has disappeared. The cocottes are extinct, the sugar babies probably never existed in Anglo-Saxon countries and other lands of technical civilization, while the female artists and those bohemians who exist parasitically in the mass culture are so thoroughly permeated with the latter's reason, that those who flee in longing to their anarchy, to the free accessibility of their own use-value, are in danger of waking up to the obligation of engaging them as assistants, if not at least recommending them to a film-executive or scriptwriter they know. The only ones who are still capable of something like irrational love are precisely those ladies who the spouses once fled on excursions to Maxim's [Maxim: famous restaurant in Paris]. While they are as tiresome to their own husbands, due to the latter's fault, as their own mothers, they are at least capable of granting to others, what all others have withheld from them. The long since frigid libertine represents business, while the proper and well brought up lady represents yearning and unromantic sexuality. In the end, the ladies of society garner the honor of their dishonor, in the moment when there is no more society and no more ladies.

13

Aid, assistance and advice. – Every intellectual in emigration is, without exception, damaged, and if one does not wish to be taught a cruel lesson behind the airtight doors of one's self-esteem, would do well to recognize this. One lives in an environment which necessarily remains incomprehensible, even if one can manage to find their way among trade union organizations or automobile traffic; one is forever getting lost. Between the reproduction of one's own life under the monopoly of mass-culture and objective, responsible work there lies an irreconcilable breach. One's language has been expropriated and the historical taproot from which one derived their powers of cognition has been taken away. The isolation becomes worse, the more that closed and politically-directed groups form, suspicious of their own members, hostile towards those branded as the members of others. The share of the social surplus allocated to foreigners is never enough to go around and drives them into a hopeless secondary competition amongst themselves, in the midst of the more general one. All this leaves telltale marks on every individual. Whoever escapes the shame of being reduced to the lowest common denominator [*Gleichschaltung*: "leveling," notorious term of Nazi propaganda] bears this exceptional condition as their particular brand: as an illusory and unreal existence in the life-process of society. The relations between those who have been expelled are even more poisoned than between those who are long-standing residents. All metrics become false, the vision blurs. That which is private asserts itself improperly, hectically, vampire-like precisely because it no longer really exists and convulsively wants to prove otherwise. That which is public is consigned to the unspoken oath of fealty on the public platform. The gaze takes on the aspect of that which is manic and at the same time cold in all grasping, devouring, commandeering. Nothing helps outside of the steadfast diagnosis of oneself and of others; the attempt, through consciousness, to

not so much elude the calamity as to deprive it of its catastrophic violence, that of blindness. One should exercise the most extreme caution in choosing one's private circle, insofar as one has a choice at all. One should beware above all of seeking out influential types from whom "one can expect something." The eye for potential advantages is the mortal enemy of the construction of relationships worthy of human dignity; though solidarity and consideration for others may ensue from these latter, they can never originate in thoughts of practical deals. No less dangerous are the mirror images of power, the lackeys, toadies and leeches who make themselves agreeable to those better off than themselves, in an archaic manner which could only flourish in the economically extraterritorialized conditions of emigration. While they bring their protector small advantages, they drag him down as soon as they are accepted, an ever-present temptation which is exacerbated by his own helplessness while abroad. If the esoteric gesture in Europe was often merely a pretext for the blindest self-interest, the concept of *austerité* [French: austerity], though far from being completely sea-worthy, remains nevertheless the most suitable lifeboat. Only a very few have, of course, an appropriate craft at their disposal. Most of those who climb aboard are threatened with starvation or madness.

14

Le bourgeois revenant. – [French: the returning bourgeois] The Fascist regimes of the first half of the 20th century have absurdly stabilized an obsolete economic form, multiplying the terror and misery the latter required for its continued preservation, now that its senselessness is plain as day. Private life however is also marked by this. Along with the reach of administration, the asphyxiating social order of the private, the particularism of interests, the long since obsolete form of the family, the right of property and its reflection in the character have all been shored up once more. But with a bad conscience, the barely disguised consciousness

of untruth. Whatever was once good and proper in what was bourgeois – independence, persistence, thinking ahead, consideration – is rotten to its innermost core. For while bourgeois forms of existence are doggedly preserved, their economic prerequisites have fallen away. That which is private has gone over completely into that privation, which it secretly always was, and the stubborn grip on one's own interest is intermingled with the rage that one is no longer capable of perceiving that things could be different and better. The bourgeoisie have lost their naïveté, and for that reason have become wholly obdurate and malevolent. The benevolent hand which even now cares for and nourishes their little garden as if it had not long ago turned into a "lot" [in English in original], but fearfully holds the unknown intruder at a distance, is already that which refuses to grant the political refugee asylum. Objectively threatened, the power elite and their functionaries become subjectively utterly inhuman. Thus the class comes into itself and makes the destroying will of the course of the world into its own. The bourgeoisie live on like ghosts who threaten catastrophe.

15

Le nouvel avare. – [French: the new miser] There are two kinds of greed. One is the archaic kind, the passion which begrudges nothing to oneself and others, whose physiognomic traits were immortalized by Moliere and theorized by Freud as the anal character. It comes to fruition in the miser [in English in original], the beggar who secretly owns millions, who is the puritanical mask, as it were, of the mysterious caliph out of fairy-tales. The miser is related to the collector, the manic one or the great lover, like Gobseck is to Esther [characters in Balzac novel]. Now and then one still runs across them as curiosities in the local section of the newspaper. The greedy of today regard nothing as too expensive for themselves, but everything as too expensive for others. They think in equivalencies, and their entire private life stands under the law of giving less than they get back, but always just enough to get back something. Every little favor

they dispense is marked by an unspoken, “is that really necessary?,” “do I really have to?.” Their surest sign is the rush to revenge themselves for some consideration they have received, in order to forestall even the slightest gap in that chain of exchange-acts, by which one is reimbursed. Because everything is rational [in English in original] and businesslike with them, they are – unlike Harpagon and Scrooge – neither to be convicted nor converted. Their amiability is a measure of their implacability. When push comes to shove, they put themselves irrefutably in the right and turn the law into injustice, while the madness of the shabby skinflint had the redeeming feature that, according to the tendency, the gold in the cash-box drew thieves to it, indeed that its passion could be stilled only in sacrifice and loss, just as the erotic desire for possession is stilled in self-abandonment. The greedy of today however no longer practice asceticism as excess, but with caution. They are insured.

16

On the dialectic of tact. – Goethe, who was quite aware of the threatening impossibility of all human relationships in the dawning industrial society, sought to represent tact in the Wilhelm Meister novels as the providential information [*rettende Auskunft*: rescuing information, saving accommodation] between alienated human beings. This information seemed to him as one with relinquishment, with renunciation of undiminished closeness, passion and unbroken happiness. To him, what was humane consisted of a self-restriction, which adjudicated the unavoidable course of history – the inhumanity of progress, the atrophy of the subject – as its own affair [*Sache*]. But what has occurred since then makes Goethean relinquishment look like fulfillment. Tact and humanity – to him the same – have meanwhile gone down precisely the road which, according to his belief, they were to preserve us from. For tact has its precise historical hour. It is the one in which the bourgeois individuated [*Individuum*] rid itself of absolutist compulsion. Free and solitary, it stood

for itself, while the forms of hierarchical respect and devotion developed by absolutism, divested of their economic foundation and their threatening force, are still extant enough to make living together inside privileged groups bearable. Such a paradoxical opening debut [*Einstand*], as it were, of absolutism and liberality can be detected everywhere from Wilhelm Meister to Beethoven's attitude towards the conventional schemata of musical composition, and indeed even in the logic of Kant's subjective reconstruction of objectively binding ideas. Beethoven's regular recapitulations following dynamic developments, Kant's deduction of the scholastic categories out of the unity of consciousness, are in an eminent sense "tactful." The prerequisite of tact is a convention which is both fractured and yet still extant. This has now irretrievably decayed, and lives on only in the parody of forms, a capriciously dreamed up or recollected etiquette for the ignorant, like the preaching of advice columnists in newspapers, while the common understanding which might have borne those conventions in their humane hour has passed over into the blind conformity of auto-owners and radio listeners. The dying out of the ceremonial moment appears at first glance to benefit tact. The latter is emancipated from everything heteronomous, everything which is rote learning in the bad sense [*schlecht Auswendigen*], and tactful behavior could only be one which guided itself according to the specific constitutive features [*Beschaffenheit*] of each human relationship. Such emancipated tact however runs into the same difficulties which everywhere plague nominalism. Tact meant not simply subordination to ceremonial convention: the latter has been unstintingly ironized by all modern humanists. The achievement of tact was on the contrary as paradoxical as its historical position. It demanded the actually impossible reconciliation between the unauthenticated claim of convention and the unruly one of the individuated [*Individuums*]. Tact could not at all be measured, outside of that convention. This latter represented, however insubstantially, that which is general, which comprises the substance of

the individual claim. Tact is the determination of difference. It consists of knowing deviations. But when, once emancipated, it confronts the individuated absolutely, without a generality from which it could be deciphered, it falls short of the individuated and finally does the latter injustice. The inquiry into one's health, when this is no longer required and expected by one's upbringing, turns into nosiness or an insult, and the silence on touchy subjects turns into empty indifference, as soon as no rule governs what one should or should not speak about. Individuals thus begin to react with hostility to tact, and not without reason: a certain kind of politeness does not give them the feeling of being addressed as human beings, but evokes an intuition of the inhumane condition in which they find themselves, and those who are polite run the risk of seeming impolite, because they still make use of politeness like some outmoded prerogative. Ultimately, emancipated, purely individual tact turns into a mere lie. What can be marked of it today in the individuated, is what it specifically silences – the actual and still more the potential power, which each person embodies. Behind the demand to confront the individuated as such, without any preamble, absolutely as befits such, lies an eager supervision, checking whether each word tacitly gives an account of what the addressee, amidst an all-encompassing hierarchy hardened in itself, is saying, and which are the addressee's chances. The nominalism of tact aids the triumph of that which is most general, the naked reach of administration, even in the most intimate constellations. The write-off of conventions as outmoded, useless and extraneous ornaments only confirms the most extraneous of all things, a life of immediate domination. That the discontinuation of this caricature in schoolboyish camaraderie makes existence even more unbearable, as the mockery of freedom, is merely a further sign of how impossible it has become for human beings to live together under current conditions.

All rights reserved. – The signature of the epoch is that no human being, without any exception, can determine their life in a somewhat transparent sense, as was earlier possible by gauging market relationships. In principle everyone, even the mightiest of all, is an object. Even the profession of general affords no sure protection anymore. No defenses are stringent enough in the Fascist era to protect headquarters from air strikes, and commanders who behave with traditional caution are hanged by Hitler and beheaded by Chiang Kai-shek. It follows that anyone attempting to somehow make it through – and even the continuation of life has something nonsensical about it, as in dreams wherein one witnesses to the end of the world and crawls out afterwards from an underground cellar – should simultaneously be prepared, at any moment, to extinguish their life. That is the sad truth which emerges from Zarathustra's exuberant doctrine of the free death. Freedom has contracted into pure negativity, and what at the time of the *Jugendstil* [art nouveau] was known as dying in beauty, has reduced itself to the wish to shorten the endless degradation of existence as much as the endless misery of dying, in a world in which there are far worse things to fear than death. – The objective end of humanity is only another expression for that which is the same. It attests to the fact that individual persons have, as individuals – as these latter represent the species-being [*Gattungswesen*] of humanity – lost the autonomy through which they could have realized the species.

18

Asylum for the homeless. – How things are going for private life today is made evident by its arena [*Schauplatz*]. Actually one can no longer dwell any longer. The traditional dwellings, in which we grew up, have taken on the aspect of something unbearable: every mark of comfort therein is paid for with the betrayal of cognition [*Erkenntnis*]; every trace of security, with the stuffy community of interest of the family. The newly functionalized ones, constructed as a *tabula rasa* [Latin: blank slate], are

cases made by technical experts for philistines, or factory sites which have strayed into the sphere of consumption, without any relation to the dweller: they slap the longing for an independent existence, which anyway no longer exists, in the face. With prophetic masochism, a German magazine decreed before Hitler that modern human beings want to live close to the ground like animals, abolishing, along with the bed, the boundary between waking and dreaming. Those who stay overnight are available at all times and unresistingly ready for anything, simultaneously alert and unconscious. Whoever flees into genuine but purchased historical housing, embalms themselves alive. Those who try to evade the responsibility for the dwelling, by moving into a hotel or into a furnished apartment, make a canny norm, as it were, out of the compulsory conditions of emigration. Things are worst of all, as always, for those who have no choice at all. They live, if not exactly in slums, then in bungalows which tomorrow may already be thatched huts, trailers [in English in original], autos or camps, resting-places under the open sky. The house is gone. The destruction of the European cities, as much as the labor and concentration camps, are merely the executors of what the immanent development of technics long ago decided for houses. These are good only to be thrown away, like old tin cans. The possibility of dwelling is being annihilated by that of the socialistic society, which, having been missed, sets the bourgeois one in motion towards catastrophe. No individual person can do anything against it. Even those who occupy themselves with furniture designs and interior decoration, would already move in the circle of artsy subtlety in the manner of bibliophiles, however opposed one might be against artsiness in the narrow sense. From a distance, the differences between the Viennese workshops and the Bauhaus are no longer so considerable. In the meantime, the curves of the pure purposive form have become independent of their function and pass over into ornaments, just like the basic shapes of Cubism. The best conduct in regards to all this still appears to be a nonbinding, suspending one: to lead

a private life, so long as the social order of society and one's one needs will allow nothing else, but not to put weight on such, as if it were still socially substantial and individually appropriate. "It is one of my joys, not to be a house-owner," wrote Nietzsche as early as *The Gay Science*. To this should be added: ethics today means not being at home in one's house. This illustrates something of the difficult relationship which individual persons have *vis-à-vis* their property, so long as they still own anything at all. The trick consists of certifying and expressing the fact that private property no longer belongs to one person, in the sense that the abundance of consumer goods has become potentially so great, that no individual [*Individuum*] has the right to cling to the principle of their restriction; that nevertheless one must have property, if one does not wish to land in that dependence and privation, which perpetuates the blind continuation of the relations of ownership. But the thesis of this paradox leads to destruction, a loveless lack of attention for things, which necessarily turns against human beings too; and the antithesis is already, the moment one expresses it, an ideology for those who want to keep what is theirs with a bad conscience. There is no right life in the wrong one.

19

Do not knock. – Technification is making gestures in the meantime precise and rough – and thereby human beings. They drive all hesitation out of gestures, all consideration, all propriety [*Gesittung*]. They are subjected to the irreconcilable – ahistorical, as it were – requirements of things. Thus one no longer learns to close a door softly, discreetly and yet firmly. Those of autos and frigidaire have to be slammed, others have the tendency to snap back by themselves and thus imposing on those who enter the incivility of not looking behind them, of not protecting the interior of the house which receives them. One cannot account for the newest human types without an understanding of the things in the environs which they continually encounter, all the way into their most

secret innervations. What does it mean for the subject, that there are no window shutters anymore, which can be opened, but only frames to be brusquely shoved, no gentle latches but only handles to be turned, no front lawn, no barrier against the street, no wall around the garden? And which auto-driver has not felt the temptation, in the power of the motor, to run over the vermin of the street – passersby, children, bicyclists? In the movements which machines demand from their operators, lies already that which is violent, crashing, propulsively unceasing in Fascist mistreatment. Not the least fault for the dying out of experience is due to the fact that things assume a form under the law of their purposiveness which restrict their interaction to mere application, without the surplus – were it that of freedom of behavior, were it that of the autonomy of the thing – which might survive as the kernel of experience, because it is not consumed by the moment of action.

20

Struwwelpeter. [Shock-headed Peter, story by Hoffman] – When Hume sought to defend epistemological contemplation against his urbane English contemporaries, something ever and anon disreputable to gentlemen [in English in original] as “pure philosophy,” he used the argument: “Accuracy is, in every case, advantageous to beauty, and just reasoning to delicate sentiment.” That was itself pragmatic, and yet it contains implicitly and negatively the entire truth concerning the Spirit [*Geist*] of praxis. In the profit-based economy, the practical social orders [*Ordnungen*] of life, while claiming to benefit human beings, cause what is human to wither, and the wider they spread, the more they cut off everything which is tender. For tenderness between human beings is nothing other than the consciousness of the possibility of non-purposive relations, which strikes those who are caught up in purposes as consolation; the legacy of ancient privileges, which promises a condition without privilege. The abolition of privilege by the bourgeois ratio

ultimately abolishes this promise too. When time is money, it seems the right thing to do to save time, above all one's own, and one excuses such thriftiness with all due respect for the other. One is straightforward. Every veil which steps between human beings conducting business is felt to be a disturbance of the functioning of the apparatus, in which they are not only objectively incorporated, but to which they belong with pride. That they greet each other with the hellos of tried-and-true indifference instead of doffing their hats, that they send each other interoffice memos devoid of addresses or signatures instead of letters, are the endemic symptoms of the sickness of contact. Alienation manifests itself in human beings precisely in the fact that distances fall away. For only so long as they are not overwhelmed with giving and taking, discussion and conclusion, access and function, would enough space remain between them for that fine mesh of threads, which connects them to each other, and whereby that which is external [*Auswendige*] truly crystallizes as what is assimilated [*Inwendiges*]. Reactionaries such as the followers of C.G. Jung have noticed something of this. "It is a typical feature," goes an *Eranos* essay by G. R. Heyers, "of those not fully formed by civilization, that a theme may not be immediately dealt with, indeed may not even be mentioned; on the contrary the conversation must move in spirals by itself towards its actual object." Instead, the shortest connection between two people is now the straight line, as if they were points. Just as the walls of houses are nowadays poured out of cement molds, so too has the social mortar between human beings been replaced by the pressure, which holds them together. What is different, is no longer even understood, but appears, if not quite as the Viennese culinary specialty with a tinge of something headwaiterly, then as childish trustfulness or impermissible closeness. In the form of the offhand comments concerning the health and disposition of the spouse, which precede the business lunch, the opposition to the social order of purposes has itself been seized by such, adduced into the latter. The taboo against talking shop and the incapacity to talk to each

other are in truth the same thing. Because everything is business, it may not be named as such, rather like the rope in the house of someone who has hanged themselves. Behind the pseudo-democratic demolition of formulaic modes [*Formelwesen*], archaic courtliness, and useless conversations which are not unfairly suspected of being gossip, behind the apparent clarification and transparency of human relations, which no longer permits anything which is undefined, stands the arrival of open barbarity. The direct answer, which tells others the facts of the matter to their face, without digressions, hesitations, or reflections, already has the form and sound of the commands, which under Fascism the dumb issued to the silent. The matter-of-factness [*Sachlichkeit*] between human beings which clears away the ideological ornamentation between them, has itself already become an ideology of those who wish to treat human beings as things.

21

No exchanges allowed. – Human beings are forgetting how to give gifts. Violations of the exchange-principle have something mad and unbelievable about them; here and there even children size up the gift-giver mistrustfully, as if the gift were only a trick, to sell them a brush or soap. For that, one doles out charity [in English in original], administered well-being, which papers over the visible wounds of society in coordinated fashion. In its organized bustle, the human impulse no longer has any room, indeed even donations to the needy are necessarily connected with the humiliation of delivery, the correct measure, in short through the treatment of the recipient as an object. Even private gift-giving has degenerated into a social function, which one carries out with a reluctant will, with tight control over the pocketbook, a skeptical evaluation of the other and with the most minimal effort. Real gift-giving had its happiness in imagining the happiness of the receiver. It meant choosing, spending time, going out of one's way, thinking of the other as

a subject: the opposite of forgetfulness. Hardly anyone is still capable of this. In the best of cases, they give what they themselves would have wished for, only a few shades of nuance worse. The decline of gift-giving is mirrored in the embarrassing invention of gift articles, which are based on the fact that one no longer knows what one should give, because one no longer really wants to. These goods are as relationless as their purchasers. They were shelf warmers [*Ladenhueter*] from the first day. Likewise with the right to exchange the gift, which signifies to the receiver: here's your stuff, do what you want with it, if you don't like it, I don't care, get something else if you want. In contrast to the embarrassment of the usual gifts, their pure fungibility still represents something which is more humane, because they at least permit the receiver to give themselves something, which is to be sure simultaneously in absolute contradiction to the gift.

In relation of the greater abundance of goods, which are available even to the poor, the decline of gift-giving may appear unimportant, and considerations on such as sentimental. However, even if it became superfluous in a condition of superfluity – and this is a lie, privately as well as socially, for there is no-one today whose imagination could not find exactly what would make them thoroughly happy – those who no longer gave would still be in need of gift-giving. In them wither away those irreplaceable capacities which cannot bloom in the isolated cell of pure interiority, but only in contact with the warmth of things. Coldness envelops everything which they do, the friendly word which remains unspoken, the consideration which remains unpracticed. Such iciness recoils back on those from which it spread. All relations which are not distorted, indeed perhaps what is reconciliatory in organic life itself, is a gift. Those who become incapable of this through the logic of stringency [*Konsequenz*: consequence, corollary], make themselves into things and freeze.

Baby with the bathwater. – One of the central motifs of cultural critique since time immemorial is that of the lie: that culture produces the illusion of a society worthy of human beings, which does not exist; that it conceals the material conditions on which everything human is constructed; and that by seeking to console and assuage, it ends up preserving the bad economic determinacy of everyday existence. This is the notion of culture as ideology, which at first glance both the bourgeois doctrine of violence and its opponent, Nietzsche and Marx, seem to have in common. But precisely this notion, like all hand-wringing against lies, has a suspicious tendency to itself become an ideology. This is evident in the realm of the private. Thoughts concerning money and the conflicts attendant on such invariably reach deep into the most heartfelt erotic, sublime and spiritual [*geistige*: spiritual, intellectual] relationships. The cultural critic could demand, following the logic of consequence and the pathos of the truth, that all relations ought to be reduced to their material origins, without any consideration and directly according to the interests of the participants. After all, meaning is never free from its genesis, and it would be easy to show the trace of injustice, sentimentality, and frustrated and therefore doubly poisonous interest in everything which overlays or mediates that which is material. Yet if one wished to act radically on this insight, one would uproot all that is true along with everything untrue, everything which, however powerlessly, dares to try to escape the demesne of universal praxis, indeed all the chimerical anticipations of a worthier state of affairs, and would thereby fall back into that barbarism which one reproaches culture for mediating. In the bourgeois cultural critics after Nietzsche this unexpected reversal was always evident; Spengler enthusiastically endorsed it. But Marxists are not immune to this either. Once cured of the social democratic belief in cultural progress and confronted with the rising tide of barbarism, they face the constant

temptation to advocate such as the “objective tendency” and, in an act of desperation, to expect salvation from the mortal enemy who, in the guise of the “antithesis,” is supposed to blindly and mysteriously arrange a happy ending. Invoking the material element against the Spirit [*Geist*] as a lie bears a kind of dubious affinity with political economy, which one subjects to immanent critique, comparable to the complicity between the police and the underworld. Since the banishment of utopia and the unity of praxis and theory was made compulsory, one has become all too practical. The fear of the powerlessness of theory yields the pretext of declaring fealty to the almighty production-process and thereby fully concedes the powerlessness of theory. Traces of malice are not entirely foreign to authentic Marxist discourse, and today there is a growing resemblance between the spirit of business and the sober, juridical critique, between vulgar materialism and the other kind, in which it becomes increasingly difficult to properly separate subject and object. – To identify culture solely with lies is most disastrous at the moment when it really becomes absorbed by such, and this identification is enthusiastically lauded in order to compromise every thought which resists such. If one calls material reality the world of exchange-value, and culture, that which refuses to accept the domination of such, this refusal is indeed illusory so long as the existent continues to exist. But since the free and equal exchange is itself a lie, whatever denies it stands at the same time for the truth: lies accordingly become a corrective on the lie of the world of commodities, and consequently denounce such. That culture has hitherto failed is not a grounds for demanding its failure, by strewing the store of milled flour on spilled beer like Katherlieschen [reference to fairy-tale]. Human beings who belong together should neither be silent about their material interests nor reduce themselves to their lowest common denominator, but should reflectively grasp their relationship and thereby move beyond such.

23

Plurale tantum [Latin: only in the plural] – If society is truly one of rackets, as a contemporary theory teaches, then its truest model is precisely the opposite of the collective, namely the individual [*Individuum*] as monad. By pursuing the absolutely particular interest of every single individual, the essential nature [*Wesen*] of the collective can be most precisely studied, and it requires no great leap to decipher the organization of the various conflicting drives under the primacy of the reality-oriented ego from the beginning as an innervated band of robbers with a leader, followers, ceremonies, oaths, oath-breaking, interest-conflicts, intrigues and all the other paraphernalia. One need only observe outbreaks, in which the individual [*Individuum*] reacts energetically against the environment, as for example rage. The enraged always seem to be their own gang-leaders, whose unconscious has received the command to strike mercilessly, and from whose eyes gleams the satisfaction of speaking for the many, which they indeed are. The more someone is taken up with their aggression, the more perfectly they represent the repressing principle of society. In this sense, perhaps more than in any other, the rule applies: that which is most individual would be the most general.

24

Tough baby [in English in original] – A certain gesture of manliness, be it one's own, be it that of another, deserves mistrust. It expresses independence, surety of the power of command, the silent conspiracy of all men with each other. Earlier one anxiously called it, awe-struck, the whims of lords, today it is democratized and is played by film heroes for the benefit of the lowliest bank employee. The archetype for this is the good looking man in a smoking jacket, who enters his bachelor's pad alone one late evening, turns on the indirect lighting, and pours a whisky-soda: the carefully recorded fizzing of the mineral water says what the

arrogant mouth does not; that he despises whatever does not smell of smoke, leather and shaving cream – above all, women, and for that very reason they swarm all over him. For him, the pinnacle of human relations is the club, the site of a respect founded on a considerate inconsiderateness. The joys of such men, or on the contrary of their models, which hardly anyone alive really matches, for human beings are always better than their culture, have altogether something of the latent act of violence. By all appearances, this is threatened to others, though he has long since had no need to do so, sprawled on his easy chair. In truth it is past violence against himself. If all pleasure sublates earlier displeasure [Unlust], then here displeasure is raised – as pride in bearing it – unmediated, untransformed, stereotypically into pleasure: unlike wine, every glass of whiskey, every puff on the cigar still recalls the reluctance, which it must have cost the organism, to accustom itself to such powerful stimuli. According to their own constitution, the he-men would thus be what they are usually presented as in film scripts, masochists. The lie is concealed in their sadism, and it is as liars that they truly become sadists, agents of repression. That lie is nothing other than repressed homosexuality, which emerges as the only approved form of what is heterosexual. In Oxford one can differentiate between two kinds of students: the “tough guys” [in English in original] and the intellectuals; the latter are equated almost without further ado to those who are effeminate. There is a great deal of evidence that the ruling class polarizes itself according to these extremes on the road to dictatorship. Such disintegration is the secret of integration, of happiness of unity in the absence of happiness. In the end the “tough guys” [in English in original] are the ones who are really effeminate, who require the weaklings as their victims, in order not to admit that they are like them. Totality and homosexuality belong together. While the subject falls apart, it negates everything which is not of its own kind. The opposites of the strong man and the compliant youth fuse into a social order, which unreservedly

asserts the masculine principle of domination. By making everyone, without exception – even presumed subjects – into its objects, it recoils into total passivity, virtually into what is feminine.

25

Think not of them. – It is well-known that the former life of emigres is being annulled. Earlier it was the warrant of arrest, today it is intellectual [*geistige*: intellectual, spiritual] experience which is declared non-transferable and simply out of bounds. What is not reified, what cannot be counted and measured, falls away. Not satisfied with this, reification extends even to its own opposite, the life which is not immediately actualized; whatever continues to live on, merely as thought and memory. For this they have devised a unique rubric. It is called “background” and appears as an appendix in questionnaires, after gender, age and occupation. The violated life is still dragged along by the victory car of the united statisticians, and even that which is past is no longer safe from the present, which, by remembering it, consecrates it once more to forgetting.

26

English spoken. [in English in original] – In my childhood I often received books as gifts from elderly British ladies, with whom my parents maintained relations: richly illustrated children’s books, and even a tiny green Bible bound in leather. All were in the language of the gift-givers: none of them thought to ask whether I could actually read them. The peculiar inaccessibility of the books, which sprang at me with pictures, huge titles and vignettes, without giving me any chance to decipher the text, led me to believe that these weren’t really books at all, but rather advertisements, perhaps for machines, like the ones my uncle produced in his London factory. Since I have come to live in Anglo-Saxon countries

and to speak English, this consciousness has not dimmed but rather strengthened. There is a girl's song from Brahm, based on a poem by Heyse, which goes: "Oh heart's woe, you eternity / only self-other is bliss for me." In the most popular American version, this is rendered as: "O misery, eternity! / But two in one were ecstasy." The passionate, medieval-era nouns of the original have been turned into brand names of hit songs, which sing the praises of the latter. In the light they switch on, the advertising-character of culture radiates .

27

On parle francais. [French: one speaks in French, French is spoken] How closely sex and language are intermingled becomes apparent when reading pornography in another language. No dictionary is needed to read Sade in the original [i.e. French]. Even the most refined expressions for that which is indecent, whose awareness is imparted by no school, no parents' house, and no literary experience, are understood intuitively, just as in childhood, when the most euphemistic expressions and observations regarding sexual matters shoot together into the correct representation. It is as if the imprisoned passions explode, upon being called by these names, blind words like the wall of one's own repression, striking violently and irresistibly into the innermost cell of meaning, which it itself resembles.

28

Paysage. [French: countryside] – What is missing in the American landscape is not so much the absence of historical memories, as the romantic illusion has it, as the fact that no hand has left a trace in it. This relates not merely to the absence of farm-fields, the stubbly and often tiny scrub-like forests, but above all the streets. These are always immediately blasted out of the landscape, and the more successful their smoothness and

breadth, the more relationless and violent their shimmering path stands in contrast to its all too wild, overgrown environs. They bear no imprint [*Ausdruck*: expression, imprint]. Because they know no traces of shoes or wheels, no gentle footpaths along their edge as a transition to the vegetation, no side-paths into the valley below, they lack that which is mild, softened, rounded in things, on which hands or their immediate tools have worked. It is as if no-one had combed the landscape's hair. It is disconsolate and inconsolable. This corresponds to the manner of its perception. For what the hurrying eye has merely viewed from the car cannot be retained, and the latter sinks as tracklessly, as the traces on such fade away.

29

Dwarf fruit. – It is the courtesy of Proust to spare the reader the embarrassment of thinking themselves more adroit than the author.

In the nineteenth century the Germans painted their dream, and it always turned into a vegetable. The French needed only to paint a vegetable, and it was already a dream.

In the Anglo-Saxon lands, the whores look as if they dispensed the punishments of hell along with the sins.

Beauty of the American landscape: that the immeasurable size of the entire land is inscribed, as expression, even in the smallest of its segments.

In the memory of emigration, every German venison roast tastes as if it was freshly felled by the Freischuetz.

Nothing is true in psychoanalysis except its exaggerations.

One can tell if one is happy by listening to the wind. This latter reminds the unhappy of the fragility of their house and pursues them in fitful sleep

and violent dreams. To the happy, it sings the song of their safety and security [Geborgensein]: its raging whistle registers the fact that it no longer has any power over them.

The silent din, long familiar to us from our dream-experiences, blares in our waking hours from the newspaper headlines.

The mythical message of doom renews itself in the radio. Whoever broadcasts something important in an authoritarian manner, broadcasts trouble. In English solemn [in English in original] means ceremonial and threatening. The power of the society behind the speaker turns by itself against the listener.

That which has most recently happened is always portrayed as if it had been destroyed in a catastrophe.

The expression of that which is historical in things is nothing other than past torment.

In Hegel, self-consciousness was the truth of self-certainty, according to the words of the *Phenomenology [of Spirit]*, the “native realm of truth.” No sooner had they ceased to understand that, than the bourgeoisie were self-conscious at least in the pride that they owned property. Today self-conscious [in English in original] means only the reflection on the ego as an embarrassment, as the innervation of powerlessness: to know, that one is nothing.

With many people, it’s already an exercise in shamelessness, when they say I.

The mote in your own eye is the best magnifying glass.

Even the most impoverished person is capable of recognizing the weaknesses of the most powerful; even the dumbest, the mental errors of the most clever.

The first and only principle of sexual ethics: the accuser is always wrong.

The whole is the untrue.

30

Pro domo nostra. [Latin: to subdue us?] – When the brassy mouths of the symphony orchestras of many countries were stilled by the previous war – a war which seems, like every war, peaceful compared to the one which followed – Stravinski wrote *History of a Soldier* for a sparse, shock-laden chamber ensemble. It became his best score, the only truly binding surrealist manifesto, whose convulsive-dreamlike compulsion endowed music with something of the negative truth. The prerequisite of the piece was poverty: it demolished the official culture so drastically because it was barred from the latter's material wealth, as well as from the ostentation which was hostile to culture. Therein lies a clue for intellectual [*geistige*] production after the current war, which has left behind a measure of destruction in Europe which even the gaping holes of that music could not have imagined. Today progress and barbarism are so intertwined as mass culture that only barbaric asceticism against this latter and against the progression of the means may again produce that which is unbarbaric. No work of art, no thought which does not innervate the rejection of false wealth and first-class productions, of color films and television, of millionaire magazines and Toscanini, has a chance to survive. The older media, not geared for mass production, win new relevancy: that of the not yet encompassed and of improvisation. They alone could outflank the unified front of trusts and technics [*Technik*]. In a

world in which even books no longer look like books, the only books are those which are no longer such. If the invention of the printing press stood at the beginning of the bourgeois era, then soon its repeal through mimeography will come due, the only appropriate and inconspicuous means of dissemination.

31

Cat out of the bag. – Even solidarity, socialism's most honorable mode of conduct, is ill. At one time it wished to realize the doctrine of brotherhood, to wrest it from the generality in which it was an ideology, reserving it for the particular, the Party, which was supposed to solely represent the generality in the antagonistic world. Groups of human beings were solidaristic because they committed their lives together, and because their own lives were, in view of the tangible possibility, not the most important thing, so that they were prepared to sacrifice themselves for each other without the abstract obsession of the idea but also without individual hope. Such giving up of self-preservation had as a prerequisite the recognition and freedom of the decision: lacking these, the blind interest of the particular reimposes itself. Meanwhile however solidarity has passed over into the trust that the Party has a thousand eyes, into enlistment into uniformed workers' battalions which are assumed to be stronger, in swimming along with the current of world-history. Whatever is to be temporarily gained in security from this, is paid for with permanent fear, sycophancy, mutual backscratching and ventriloquy: the energies which one could have used to feel out the weakness of the enemy are used to anticipate the moods of one's own leaders, before whom one trembles deep down more than before the old enemy, intuiting that in the end the leaders both here and there will come to an accommodation on the backs of those they have integrated. The reflex of this can be felt between individuals. Whoever is considered progressive – according to the stereotypes to which people are classified in advance, without even

signing the imaginary contract which seems to bind the true believers, who are themselves to be recognized by something imponderable in gesture and speech, a kind of rough-hewn, obedient resignation, like a password – always has the same experience. The true believers, or those in related factions who are all too similar, meet you and expect solidarity from you. They appeal expressly and implicitly to the common progressive agenda [*Einverständnis*]. However, the moment when you hope for the slightest sign of the same solidarity from them, or even mere sympathy for your own share of the social product of suffering, they show you the cold shoulder, which is the only thing left remaining of atheism and materialism in the age of restored popes. Those who are organized want intellectuals of prominence to issue proclamations on their behalf, but the moment they fear they have to issue proclamations for themselves, the latter are capitalists, and the same prominence on which they speculated is now ludicrous sentimentality and stupidity. Solidarity is polarized in the desperate fidelity of those for whom there is no way back, and in the virtual extortion of those who want nothing to do with prison wardens, nor wish to deliver themselves to robbers.

32

Savages are not better human beings. – One can find in Black [i.e. African] students of national economy, in Siamese [Thai] students at Oxford, and in devoted art-historians and musicologists of petty bourgeois background generally the inclination and readiness to combine the appropriation of what is new and to be learned with a boundless respect for what is established, validated or recognized. An unreconciled inner sensibility [*Gesinnung*] is the opposite of wildness, neophyte status or “non-capitalist zones.” It presupposes experience, historical memory, the lability of the intellect and above all a thorough share of the social surplus. It is observed time and again that those recruited young and innocent into radical groups defect the moment they become aware of the force of

tradition. One has to have this latter in oneself in order to hate it properly. That it is the snobs rather than the proletarians who have a taste for avant-garde aesthetic movements sheds light on politics, too. Latecomers and newcomers alike have a worrisome affinity for positivism, from the devotees of Carnap in India to the bold defenders of the German masters Matthias Grünewald and Heinrich Schütz. It would be poor psychology to presume that what one is excluded from arouses only hate and resentment; it also awakens a possessive, impatient sort of love, and those who repressive culture keeps at a distance can turn, easily enough, into the latter's most narrow-minded partisans. This resonates even in the overcompensating High German of the worker who as a socialist wants "to learn a bit," to take part in the so-called cultural heritage, and the banality of the Bebels consists not so much in their foreignness to culture than in the enthusiasm with which they presume it as a fact, identifying with it and indeed thereby inverting its meaning. Socialism is in general as little immune from this transformation as the theoretical slippage into positivism. It can happen easily enough that in the Far East Marx takes the place vacated by Driesch and Rickert. At times it is to be feared that the interrelationship of the non-Occidental peoples in the antagonisms of industrial society, in itself long overdue, will primarily benefit the rational increase of production and transport and the modest raising of living standards, rather than those to be emancipated. Instead of expecting miracles from pre-capitalist peoples, the mature capitalist ones ought to be on their guard against their own sobriety, their slipshod affirmation of what is traditional, and the successes of the West.

33

Far from the firing-line. – Reports of air raids seldom fail to mention the names of the firms which manufactured the aircraft: Fokker-Wolf, Heinkel, and Lancaster appear where one once talked about cuirassiers, lancers and hussars. The mechanism of the reproduction of life, its

exploitation and annihilation, is immediately the same, and industry, the state and advertising are fused accordingly. The old exaggeration of skeptical liberals, that war is merely a business, has come true: the power of the state has given up even the appearance [*Schein*] of independence from particular profit interests and puts itself into the latter's service, which it always did in reality, now ideologically as well. Every glowing mention of the chief firm involved in the razing of cities enhances its good calling, for whose sake the best contracts for the reconstruction are doled out.

Like the Thirty Years' War, so too does this war – whose beginning no-one will be able to remember anymore, once it comes to an end – disintegrates into discontinuous field campaigns, separated by blank pauses; the Polish campaign, the Norwegian, the French, the Russian, the Tunisian, the Normandy Invasion. Its rhythm, the alternation of spasmodic action and complete standstill, due to a lack of geographically accessible enemies, has itself something mechanical about it, which characterized the means of war in the particular and which has very likely evoked once more the preliberal form of the campaign. This mechanical rhythm however completely determines human conduct towards the war, not only in the disproportion between individual bodily strength and the energy of motors, but deep into the most secret cells of the modes of subjective experience. The sheer incommensurability of the body to the war of attrition the previous time around [i.e. WW I] already made authentic experience impossible. No-one could have talked about it the way the battles of the artillery-general Napoleon Bonaparte were recounted. The long interval between war memoirs and the armistice is not an accident: it testifies to the laborious reconstruction of memory, which remains conjoined to something powerless and even inauthentic in all those books, regardless of whatever horrors the writer witnessed. WW II however is as completely devoid of experience as a machine is to the movements of a

body, which it resembles only in periods of illness. The less the war retains any sense of continuity, history, the “epic” element, but to a certain extent starts all over again at each phase, the less can it leave behind a continuous and unconsciously preserved picture of memory. Everywhere, with each explosion, it has broken through the protective shield in which personal experience formed, the duration between the healing forgetting and the healing memory. Life has transformed itself into a timeless succession of shocks, between which gape holes, paralyzed intermediary spaces. Nothing however is perhaps more catastrophic for the future than the fact that soon literally no-one will be able to think of this, that every trauma, every unprocessed shock of that which recurs, is a ferment of coming destruction. – Karl Kraus was right to call his play *The Last Days of Humanity*. What is happening today should be called *After Doomsday*.

The total concealment of the war through information, propaganda, commentary, the film crews in the leading tanks and the heroic death of war reporters, the mishmash of manipulated-enlightened public opinion and unconscious action, all this is another expression for desiccated experience, the vacuum between human beings and their doom, in which their doom actually consists. The reified, frozen mold of events, as it were, substitutes for this itself. Human beings are turned into the actors of a monster documentary film, which no longer knows any viewers, because even the very last one has to participate on the silver screen. The genesis of the belabored talk of the “phony war” lay in precisely this moment. It originated to be sure from the Fascist technique of dismissing the real horrors of the war as “mere propaganda,” precisely in order to facilitate those horrors. Yet like all tendencies of Fascism, this too has its origin in elements of reality, which ends up prevailing only by virtue of that Fascist attitude, which sneeringly hinted at such. The war really is “phony” [in English], but its “phyness” [in English] is more terrifying than any

terror, and those who make light of this only contribute that much more to the calamity.

Had Hegel's philosophy of history encompassed this epoch, then Hitler's robot-bombs would have taken their place, next to the death-scene of Alexander and similar images, among the empirically selected facts in which the symbolic state of the world-spirit is immediately expressed. Like Fascism itself, the robots are self-steering and yet utterly subjectless. Just like the former, they combine the utmost technical perfection with complete blindness. Just like the former, they sow the deadliest panic and are completely futile. – "I have seen the world-spirit," not on horseback but on wings and headless, and this at once refutes Hegel's philosophy of history.

The thought that after this war life could continue on "normally," or indeed that culture could be "reconstructed" – as if the reconstruction of culture alone were not already the negation of such – is idiotic. Millions of Jews have been murdered, and this is supposed to be only the intermission and not the catastrophe itself. What exactly is this culture waiting for anyway? And even if there was time left for countless people, is it conceivable that what happened in Europe would have no consequences, that the sheer quantity of victims would not recoil into a new quality of the entire society, into barbarism? As long as like follows like, the catastrophe perpetuates itself. One need only consider retribution for the murdered. If just as many of the others were to be killed, then the horror would turn into an institution and the precapitalist schemata of blood for blood, which from its inception in prehistoric times still reigns only in the most distant mountain provinces, be reintroduced and expanded, only with entire nations as subjectless subjects. If however the dead are not avenged and mercy is shown, then an unpunished Fascism has despite everything stolen its victory, and after it has once been shown how easily it is done, it will be perpetuated **[perpetrated?]** in other places. The logic of history is

as destructive as the human beings which it begets: wherever their inertia tends to go, it reproduces the equivalent of past calamities. Normality is death.

As to the question as to what should be done with a defeated Germany, I would know only two ways to answer. First: I would at no price and under no circumstances be an executioner or deliver legal pretexts for executioners. Second: I would not wish to hold back, least of all with the apparatus of the law, anyone who wished to avenge past atrocities. That is a through and through unsatisfying, contradictory answer, as ill-fitting to the generalization as to the praxis. But perhaps the fault already lies with the question and not primarily with me.

Weekly show at the movies: the invasion of the Marianas, among them Guam. The impression is not one of battles, but of mechanical highway and demolition work undertaken with an immeasurably increased vehemence, even of “fumigation,” pest control on a telluric scale. Operations are carried out until grass no longer grows. The enemy functions as patient and corpse. Like the Jews under Fascism, he appears only as the object of technical-administrative measures, and when he defends himself, his counter-actions have the same character. Therein is the Satanic element, that to a certain extent this war requires more initiative than war in the old style, that it costs the subject all its energy, as it were, to achieve subjectlessness. The realization of Edward Grey’s humane dream, of a war without hate, is complete inhumanity. – Autumn 1944.

34

Johnny-Head-in-Air. [Character in Heinrich Hoffman’s *Struwwelpeter*] – Between cognition [*Erkenntnis*: recognition, knowledge] and power exists not only the interrelation of servility, but also one of truth. Many

cognitions, even if they formally strike the mark, are void due to their lack of proportion with the distribution of forces. When the exiled doctor says, “For me, Adolf Hitler is a pathological case,” then the clinical evidence may ultimately confirm his statement, but its disparity to the objective catastrophe which spreads over the world in the name of the paranoid one, makes the diagnosis ridiculous, wherein the diagnostician merely puffs themselves up. Perhaps Hitler is a pathological case “in himself,” but most certainly not “for himself.” The vanity and impoverishment of many of the demonstrations against Fascism in emigration are interrelated. Those who think in the form of free, distanced, disinterested judgments, were unable to assimilate the experience of violence – which really and truly rendered such thinking powerless – in these forms. The almost insoluble task consists of refusing to allow oneself to be rendered dumb, either by the power of others or by one’s own powerlessness.

35

Return to culture. – The assertion that Hitler has destroyed German culture is nothing but an advertising trick of those who wish to rebuild it from their telephone-desks. What Hitler extirpated in art and culture had long led an apochryphal and cut-off existence, whose last hiding-spaces were swept away by Fascism. Whoever did not play along, had to go into inner emigration years before the outbreak of the Third Reich: at the very latest, since the stabilization of the German currency, which coincided with the end of Expressionism, German culture had stabilized itself in the spirit of the Berlin illustrated magazines, which conceded little to the strength through joy [notorious Nazi slogan], national auto highways, and upbeat exhibition-classicism of the Nazis. In its broadest measure, German culture pined for its Hitler precisely where it was most liberal, and it would be an injustice to reproach the editors of Moss and Ullstein or the reorganizers of the *Frankfurter News* for following the sensibilities of the times. They were already this way, and their line of least resistance

to the intellectual goods they produced meshes seamlessly into the line of least resistance to political rule, whose ideological methods included, in the Fuehrer's own words, above all comprehensibility for the most stupid. This has led to a catastrophic confusion. Hitler has extirpated culture, Hitler drove Mr. Louis into exile, therefore Mr. Louis is culture. And so he is. A glance at the literary production of those emigrants who, by dint of discipline and a strict compartmentalization of spheres of influence, have come to represent the German Spirit [*Geist*], show just what one can expect from the happy rebuilding process: the introduction of Broadway methods on the Kurfurstendamm [main road of Berlin], which by the 1920s was distinguishable from the former only by its lesser means, not better ends. Whoever intends to do something against cultural fascism, must come to grips with Weimar, the "Bombs on Monte Carlo" and the Press Ball, if one does not wish to discover that, in the end, ambiguous figures such as Fallada under Hitler said more than the spotless German personalities, who succeeded in transferring their prestige.

36

The health unto death. – If something like a psychoanalysis of today's prototypical culture were possible; if the absolute hegemony of the economy did not mock every attempt at explicating conditions by the psychic life of their victims; and if the psychoanalysts themselves had not long ago sworn fealty to those conditions – then such an investigation would have to show that contemporary sickness exists precisely in what is normal. The libidinal achievements which are required of the individual [*Individuum*], who behaves in a manner sound in body and mind, are such that they can be perfected only by virtue of the deepest mutilation, of an innervation of castration by the "extroverts" [in English in the original]; by comparison, the old task of identification with the father was indeed the child's play which it was rehearsed as. The "regular guy" [in English in original], the "popular girl" [in English in original] must repress not

only their desires and cognitions, but also all of the symptoms generated by repression in bourgeois times. Just as the old injustices are left unchanged by the generous mass display of light, air and hygiene, but are concealed precisely by the gleaming [*blinkende*] transparency of rationalized enterprise, so too has the most internalized [*inwendige*] health of the epoch cut off the flight into sickness, without changing the slightest bit of the latter's etiology. The darkened exits have been wiped out as an embarrassing waste of space and displaced into the bathroom. This confirms the suspicion which psychoanalysis long harbored, before it itself turned into a piece of hygiene. Where the light is brightest, is where the fecal secretly rules. The verse: "Misery remains. As it ever was. / You can't completely uproot its laws / But you make it an invisible cause," applies in the household of the psyche even more than where the abundance of goods obscures, for the time being, constantly increasing material differences. To this day, no science would suffice to plumb the depths of the hell in which those deformations are produced, which surface later as cheerfulness, decisiveness, sociability, as successful adaptation to what is unavoidable and as unvarnished common sense. There is reason to presume that these derive from still earlier phases of childhood development than the origin of neuroses: if these latter are the result of a conflict in which the drive is beaten down, then the former bespeaks a condition which is as normal as the damaged society which it resembles, that of a prehistorical assault, as it were, which smashes the forces of the psyche before a conflict can even occur, and the later state of unconflictedness reflects the predetermined social being, the a priori triumph of the collective instance, not healing through cognition [*Erkennen*: recognizing, understanding]. The iron nerves and calm under fire which are the crucial prerequisites for applicants of highly paid positions, are the picture of the asphyxiated silence, which the employers of the human resources manager later impose politically. The sickness of the healthy is solely to be diagnosed objectively, in the disproportion

between the rational way they lead their lives and the possibly reasonable determination of their lives. But the trace of the sickness betrays itself nonetheless: they look as if their skin were printed with a rash in regular patterns, as if in mimicry of what is inorganic. It requires little to imagine those bent on proving their quicksilver liveliness and overpowering energy as prepared corpses, to whom the news of their not quite successful demise has been withheld for reasons of population policy. At the root of ruling health lies death. All of its movements resemble the reflex-movements of beings, whose hearts have stopped. Hardly ever does a furrowed brow – testimony to some fearsome and long-forgotten effort – or a moment of pathetic stupidity in the middle of fixed logic, or indeed a helpless gesture, preserve the disturbing traces of disappeared life. For the socially designated sacrifice is so universal, that it manifests itself in the society as a whole and not in the individual person. It has taken over the sickness of all individuals, as it were, and in it, in the bottled-up madness of Fascist actions and in all its innumerable precursors and mediations, the subjective catastrophe inscribed in the individuated [*Individuum*] is integrated with the visibly objective one. There is hardly consolation in the thought that the sickness of what is normal is not necessarily the opposite of the health of those who are sick, but rather that the latter only represents, for the most part, the schemata of the same catastrophe in a different form.

37

This side of the pleasure-principle. – The repressive traits in Freud have nothing to do with that lack of benevolence [*Güte*], which the ever-industrious revisionists refer to in the strict sexual theory. Those who are benevolent by profession fabulate profits on the basis of closeness and immediacy, precisely where no-one knows anything about anyone else. They betray their victims by affirming, in the weakness of the latter, the course of the world which made them so, and inflict just as much injustice

on the latter, as the truth they omit. If Freud lacked such benevolence, then on this score at least he would be in the company of critics of political economy [i.e. Marx], which is better than that of Tagore and Werfel. On the contrary, what is fatal is that, in opposition to bourgeois ideology, he materialistically pursued conscious behavior into the basis of its unconscious grounding in the drives, yet simultaneously accords with the bourgeois contempt for the drives, which is itself the product of precisely those rationalizations, which he demolishes. He partakes, in the words of the *Introductory Lectures*, of “the general estimation... that social goals stand higher than fundamentally, self-servingly sexual ones.” As an expert psychologist, he takes the contrast between social and egoistic as a given, statically. He no more recognizes in it the work of repressive society than the trace of the disastrous mechanisms, which he himself had described. Or rather, he oscillates, theoryless and bending to prejudice, between negating the renunciation of the drives as a repression contrary to reality, or else praising it as a sublimation which encourages culture. Something of the Janus character of culture lives objectively in this contradiction, and no amount of praise to healthy sensuality can gloss over it. In Freud however this results in the devaluation of the critical standard for the goal of the analysis. Freud’s unenlightened enlightenment plays into the hands of bourgeois disillusionment. As the late opponent of hypocrisy, he stands ambiguously between the will for outright emancipation of the oppressed and the apology for outright oppression. Reason for him is a mere superstructure, not so much, as official philosophy charges, because of his psychologism, which penetrates deeply enough into the historical moment, but on the contrary because he discards the only purpose, both distant from meaning and reasonless, in which the means of reason could prove itself to be reasonable: pleasure. As soon as this latter is disparagingly classified as a trick of species preservation, dissolved into sly reason, as it were, without naming the moment therein, which reaches beyond the circle of that which has lapsed

back into nature [*Naturverfallenheit*], the ratio degenerates into rationalization. Truth is consigned to relativity and human beings to power. Only those who locate utopia in the blind somatic pleasure, which has no intention and which stills this last, would be capable of an idea of truth which stood the test. In Freud's work, however, the double enmity towards the spirit [*Geist*: mind] and towards pleasure, whose common root was precisely what psychoanalysis delivered the means to comprehend, unwillingly reproduces itself. The passage in *Future of an Illusion*, where the commercial traveler's maxim that heaven is to be left to the angels and the sparrows is cited with the miserable wisdom of a bitter old man, is the companion piece to that passage from the *Lectures*, where he condemns in horror the perverse practices of the jet set. Those who are equally disgusted by pleasure and heaven, in fact function best as objects: one can frequently observe something empty and mechanized in successfully analyzed patients, which should be reckoned not on account of their sickness, but on their healing, which breaks what it emancipates. The much-ballyhooed therapeutic transference – whose resolution comprises, and not for nothing, the crux of analytic labor – the elaborate situation, in which the subject voluntarily and calamitously completes that cancellation of themselves, which once seemed to be involuntarily and happily realized by devotedness, is already the schema of a reflective mode of conduct, which liquidates, just like the followers of the supreme leader, all spirit [*Geist*: spirit, mind] as well as the analysts, who betrayed it.

38

Invitation to dance. – Psychoanalysis likes to give itself credit for returning to human beings their capacity for enjoyment, since this latter is disrupted by neurotic sickness. As if the mere term “capacity for enjoyment,” assuming the thing even exists, did not suffice to degrade such in the worst possible way. As if a happiness, which is due to the

speculation on happiness, would not be the opposite of happiness, a further trespass of institutionally planned modes of conduct into the ever-shrinking domain of experience. What sort of condition must the ruling consciousness have achieved, when the binding proclamation of extravagance and champagne-inebriation, formerly reserved for attaches in Hungarian operettas, is raised to a maxim of the right life in brute earnest. Decreed happiness looks exactly like what its name suggests: to partake of it, the fortunate neurotic must also sacrifice the last bit of reason left remaining by repression and regression, and for the sake of the psychoanalyst, has no choice but to find inspiration in the trashy film, the expensive but bad meal at the French restaurant, the serious “drink” [in English in original] and sexuality reduced to doses of “sex” [in English in original]. Schiller’s comment, “Life is beautiful nonetheless,” always a piece of paper-mâché, has become idiocy, ever since it has been trumpeted in chorus with that omnipresent advertising, in whose fanfares even psychoanalysis, despite its better possibilities, joins in. Since people have altogether too few inhibitions rather than too many, without being a jot healthier for this, then a cathartic method must, if it does not wish to be measured in terms of successful adjustment and economic success, aim at making human beings aware of unhappiness, of the general kind as well as that which is indissolubly their own; and to take from them the apparent satisfaction, by virtue of which the hideous social order perpetuates itself within them, as if its external grip were not already powerful enough. Only in the surfeit of false pleasure, in the contrariness to what is offered, in the intuition of the inadequacy of happiness, even where it is still one – let alone there, where it is bought by giving up the supposedly sickly resistance against its positive surrogate – would the thought dawn, of what one might experience. The injunctions on “happiness” [in English in original], in which the sanatorium director who prescribes good living and the frantic propaganda bosses of the entertainment industry chime as one, bear the traits of the raging father,

who shrieks at the children, because they aren't running downstairs in transports of joy when he comes home from work in a bad mood. Part of the mechanism of domination is that one is forbidden to recognize the suffering which that domination produces, and there is a straight line connecting the evangelical lecture on the joy of life to the construction of slaughter-houses for human beings so far off in Poland, that everyone in one's own ethnic group can convince themselves they don't hear the screams of pain. That is the schema of the undisturbed capacity for enjoyment. Those who name it as such, however, are triumphantly diagnosed by the psychoanalysts as merely suffering from an Oedipal complex.

39

Ego is id. – It is customary to link the development of psychology to the rise of the bourgeois individual [*Individuums*: individual], in antiquity and since the Renaissance. One should not overlook the contrary moment, which psychology holds in common with the bourgeois class, and which today has developed into exclusivity: the oppression and dissolution of precisely the individuated [*Individuums*], in whose service the reciprocal relationship of cognition [*Erkenntnis*: cognition, knowledge] to its subject was based. If all psychology since Protagoras elevated human beings by thinking of them as the measure of all things, then it has also simultaneously and from the very beginning turned the latter into objects, analytic material, and consigned them, once they are lined up as things, to nullity. The denial of objective truth through the recourse to the subject implies its own negation: no measure remains for the measure of all things, it decays into contingency and turns into untruth. This however points back to the real life-process of the society. The principle of human domination, which developed into an absolute, has thereby turned its point against human beings as the absolute object, and psychology has participated in sharpening that point. Under the gaze of the former, the

ego, its leading idea and its a priori object, has always been turned into something non-existent. By drawing on the fact that the subject is not really one in the exchange-society, but is in fact an object, psychology could deliver the weapons which enabled that society to turn it into one, and to keep it down. The decomposition of human beings into capabilities is a projection of the division of labor on its presumed subjects, inseparable from the interest in deploying them with ulterior motives, above all in order to be able to manipulate them. Psychotechnics is no mere decayed form of psychology, but immanent in its principle. Hume, in whose work every sentence testifies to genuine humanism and yet simultaneously dismisses the ego as a prejudice, expresses in such contradictions the essence of psychology as such. In this he still had the truth on his side, for what the ego sets itself up as, is in fact mere prejudice, the ideological hypostasis of the abstract centers of control, and the critique of this last demanded the demolition of the ideology of “personality.” But this demolition simultaneously makes the residue that much more susceptible to control. This becomes flagrant in psychoanalysis. It confiscates the personality as the lifelong lie, as the highest rationalization which holds together the countless rationalizations, which enable individuals [*Individuum*] to achieve the renunciation of the drives and to align themselves with the reality-principle. Precisely by proving such, however, it simultaneously confirms to human beings their own non-existence. It alienates [*entaeussern*: to alienate, disclose, realize] them from themselves, denouncing their autonomy along with their unity and subjecting them completely to the mechanism of rationalization – that of adjustment. The intrepid critique of the ego in itself passes over into the demand, that the other’s ought to capitulate. In the end the wisdom of the psychoanalysis truly becomes what the Fascist unconscious of the tabloid magazines considers it to be, to the technics of a special racket among others, which irrevocably binds helpless and suffering human beings to itself, in order to command them and exploit them. Suggestion and

hypnosis, once rejected as apochryphal, like a sideshow magician at the town market, return in their grandiose system once again like the short feature in the blockbuster film. The ones who help because they know better, turn into the ones who humiliate others through bossy privilege. What remains of the critique of the bourgeois consciousness is only that shrugging of the shoulders, by which all doctors have announced their secret complicity with death. – In psychology, in the boundless fraud of what is merely interiorized [*bloss Inwendigen*] (it is not for nothing that this has to do with the “properties” [in English in original] of human beings) is reflected what the organization of bourgeois society has since time immemorial practiced on external property. As a result of social exchange, the former has developed the latter, only with an objective reserve clause, which every bourgeois intuits. The individual person is thereby on loan, as it were, from its class, and those who are its functionaries are ready to take it back, as soon as generalized property endangers its principle, which consists precisely of withholding. Psychology repeats in personal traits, what happened to property. It expropriates individual persons, by apportioning its happiness to them.

40

Always say it, never think of it. – Since depth psychology has, with the help of film, soap operas and Horney, plumbed the deepest crevices, organized culture is cutting off the last possibility human beings have of experiencing themselves. Prefab enlightenment transforms not only spontaneous reflection, but also the analytic insights, whose power is equivalent to the energy and passion which it took to achieve them, into mass-produced products, and the painful secrets of individual history, which orthodoxy is already wont to reduce to formulas, into humdrum conventions. The dissolution of rationalizations becomes itself a rationalization. Instead of performing the labor of self-constitution, well-schooled experts cultivate the capacity to subsume all drive-conflicts

under concepts such as inferiority complex, mother-fixation, “extrovert” [in English in original] and “introvert” [in English in original], which they fundamentally cannot access at all. The horror of the abyss of the self [*Ich*: I, ego, self] is removed by the consciousness, that it’s only a question of arthritis or “sinus troubles” [in English in original]. Conflicts thereby lose that which was threatening. They are accepted; by no means healed, but merely slotted into the surface of a normalized life like an inevitable piece of inventory. Simultaneously they are absorbed, as a general ill, by the mechanism of immediate identification of the individual with the social instance, which has long since taken hold of the presumably normal modes of conduct. In the place of that catharsis, whose success was never guaranteed in advance, steps the winning of pleasure [*Lustgewinn*], of being an exemplar of the majority in one’s own weakness; not in order to earn the prestige of the interesting pathological case, as with the sanatorium inmates of yesteryear, but on the contrary in order to prove that one belongs to the group precisely by means of those defects, and to transfer the power and greatness of the collective to oneself. Narcissism, which loses its libidinal object due to the disassembly of the ego, is replaced by masochistic pleasure of no longer being an ego, and the younger generation guards its egolessness with rare enthusiasm, as a lasting and common possession. The realm of reification and normalization is extended in this manner into its most extreme contradiction, that which is assumed to be abnormal and chaotic. What is incommensurable is made, precisely as such, commensurable, and the individual [*Individuum*] is hardly capable of an impulse anymore, which could not be named an example of this or that publicly acknowledged constellation. Meanwhile, such an externally adopted and perfected identification – one beyond, as it were, its own dynamic – ultimately abolishes, along with the genuine consciousness of the impulse, this last as well. It turns into the reflex of stereotypical atoms to stereotypical stimuli, to be flipped on and off like a switch. Moreover, the

conventionalization of psychoanalysis triggers its own castration: sexual motives, partly denied, partly approved, become entirely harmless, but also entirely void. Along with the fear, which they could provoke, also disappears the pleasure, which they could obtain. Psychoanalysis thus becomes the victim of precisely that substitution of the appropriate superego via the dogged adoption of a relationless external one, which it taught itself to understand. The latest grandly conceptualized theorem of bourgeois self-critique has turned into a means of transforming bourgeois self-alienation in its latest phase into an absolute, while thwarting the intuition of the age-old wound, which contains the hope of a better one in the future.

41

Inner and outer. – Out of piety, laziness, and calculation, philosophy continues to muddle through in an ever narrower academic framework, and even there, it is increasingly being replaced with organized tautology. Whoever entrusts themselves to credentialed profundity, fall victim just as a hundred years ago to the compulsion to be, at every moment, just as naive as one's colleagues, on whom one's career depends. But extra-academic thinking, which would like to elude such compulsion as well as the contradiction between high-flown materials and narrow-minded [*spiessbuergerlicher*: petty bourgeois] treatment, is threatened by a scarcely less urgent danger: by the economic pressure of the market, which at least the professors in Europe were sheltered from. Philosophers who want to earn a living as authors, must offer at every instant something rarefied, something exquisite, maintaining themselves through the monopoly of rarity, as it were, as opposed to that of credentials. The noisome concept of the inspirational sound-bite [*geistigen Leckerbissens*: spiritual tidbit, taste of enlightenment], dreamed up by pedants, ends up scoring an embarrassing point against its nay-sayers. If the good old Schmock [hack journalist in play by Freytag] groaned under the

newspaper editor's demand, to write with constant brilliance, then he also registers in all naïveté the law which implicitly presides over the works of the cosmogonic Eros and the Cosmos Atheos [reference to mystical work by Klages], the shape-shifting of the gods and the secret of the gospel according to St. John. The life-style of the belated bohemian, which is forced upon non-academic philosophers, soon gives the former a fatal affinity to that which is artsy, spiritually kitschy, sectarian and half-educated. The Munich before WW I was a breeding grounds for that spirituality [*Geistigkeit*], whose protest against the rationalism of the schools culminated, via the cult of the costume festivals, in Fascism even faster than the half-hearted system of old Rickert. So great is the power of the advancing organization of thought, that those who wish to stay outside are driven to the vanity of resentment, to the babbling of self-promotion, and ultimately the vanquished ones to con games. When the professors posit the principle of *sum ergo cogito* [Latin: I think, therefore I am] and fall prey in the open system to agoraphobia, and in thrownness [*Geworfenheit*: notorious Heideggerian term] to the pre-industrial community [*Volksgemeinschaft*: folk community, notorious term of Nazi propaganda], then their opponents go astray, unless they are very much on guard, in the real of graphology and aerobics [*rhythmischen Gymnastik*]. The compulsive types there correspond to the paranoids here. The wistful opposition to factual research, the legitimate consciousness that scientism forgets what is best, exacerbates through its naïveté the split from which it suffers. Instead of comprehending the facts, behind which others are barricaded, it hurriedly throws together whatever it can grab from them, rushing off to play so uncritically with apochryphal cognitions, with a couple isolated and hypostatized categories, and with itself, that it is easily disposed of by referring to the unyielding facts. It is precisely the critical element which is lost in the apparently independent thought. The insistence on the secret of the world hidden beneath the shell, which dares not explain how it relates to the shell, only reconfirms through such

abstemiousness the thought that there must be good reasons for that shell, which one ought to accept without question. Between the pleasure of emptiness and the lie of plenitude, the ruling condition of the spirit [*Geistes*: mind] permits no third option.

Nevertheless the glance at what is remote, the hatred of banality, the search for that which has not yet been grasped, for what has not been encompassed by the general conceptual schema, is the last chance for thought. In an intellectual [*geistigen*] hierarchy, which continually holds everyone responsible, then irresponsibility alone is capable of immediately calling the hierarchy itself by name. The sphere of circulation, whose marks are borne by intellectual outsiders, opens the last refuges to the spirit [*Geist*], which it is selling off, at the moment when these no longer really exist. Whoever offers something which is one of a kind, which no-one wants to buy anymore, represents, even against their will, freedom from exchange.

42

Freedom of thought. – The suppression of philosophy by science has led, as is commonly known, to a separation of the two elements whose unity, according to Hegel, comprises the life of philosophy: reflection and speculation. The land of truth is soberly consigned to determinations of reflection, and speculations are tolerated therein with an ill grace, solely as a mere formulation of hypotheses, which are to be thought up outside of working hours and solved as quickly as possible. Whoever might believe that the speculative realm is preserved, undisputed, in its extra-scientific realm – left in peace, as it were, by the hustle and bustle of universal statistics – is thoroughly mistaken. Speculation is hit hard from the outset by the separation from reflection. It either degrades into the compliant parroting of traditional philosophical schemes or degenerates, in its distance from facts which have been rendered blind, into the babble

of a non-binding private world view. Not content with this, the scientific enterprise incorporates speculation into itself. Among the public functions of psychoanalysis, this is not the least. Its medium is the free association. The road into the unconscious of the patient is constructed by excusing them of the responsibility for reflection, and the analytical formation of theory follows the same track, whether it takes its cue from the progression and blockages of those associations, or whether the analyst, even the most gifted ones like Groddeck, trust to their own associations. Relaxed on the analyst's couch, one rehearses what was once achieved by the most extreme exertion of thought by Schelling and Hegel in the lecturer's podium: the decoding of the phenomenon. But such a relaxation of tension affects the quality of the thinking: the difference is hardly less than that between the philosophy of revelation [Schelling's later philosophy] and the gossip of the mother-in-law. The same movement of the Spirit [*Geistes*], whose "material" was formerly to be raised to the concept, is itself degraded to a mere material for the conceptual social order. Whatever ideas cross one's mind, are good enough for experts to decide whether the originator is a compulsive character, an oral type or a hysteric. By virtue of the slackening of responsibility, which lies in the separation from the reflection, from the control of understanding, speculation is consigned to science as an object, whose subjectivity is extinguished along with it. Thought, by allowing the administrative schema of the analysis to recall its unconscious origins, forgets to be thought. From the true judgment, it turns into a neutral material. Instead of mastering itself by performing the labor of the concept, it powerlessly entrusts its own processing to the doctor, who already knows everything anyway. Thus speculation is conclusively broken and turned into a fact, which can be filed in one of the branches of classification as a piece of evidence of what is always the same.

Fear-mongering does not apply. – What the truth might objectively be, remains difficult enough to discern, but when dealing with human beings one should not allow oneself to be terrorized by this. There are criteria there, which seem satisfying at first. One of the most reliable is the reproach that an expression is “too subjective.” If this is laid down with that indignation, which echoes with the furious harmony of all reasonable people, then one has reason to be satisfied with oneself for a couple of seconds. The concepts of what is subjective and what is objective have been completely inverted. Objective means the non-controversial side of the phenomenon [*Erscheinung*], its unquestioned imprint, taken as it is, the facade constructed out of classified data, therefore the subjective; and they call subjective, whatever breaks through such, emerging out of the specific experience of the thing, divesting itself of prejudged convention and setting the relation to the object in place of the majority decision concerning such, which they cannot even see, let alone think – therefore, what is objective. How vacuous the formal objection to subjective relativity is, can be observed in its own actual field, that of aesthetic judgments. Those who have subjected themselves in earnest, out of the energy of their precise reaction, to the discipline of a work of art, to the compulsion of its shape, of its immanent law of form, find the objection against what is merely subjective in their experience dissolving like a threadbare appearance [*Schein*], and every step they take further into the matter, by virtue of their extreme subjective innervation, has incomparably greater objective power than comprehensive and much-vindicated conceptual formations, such as that of “style,” whose scientific claim comes at the cost of such experience. This is doubly true in the era of positivism and of the culture-industry, whose objectivity is calculated by administrating subjects. In contrast to this, reason has fled completely into eyeless [*fensterlos*] idiosyncrasy, which the caprice of the power-brokers castigates as caprice, because they want the powerlessness of

subjects, out of fear of the objectivity, which alone is sublated in these subjects.

44

For post-Socratics. – Nothing is less worthy of intellectuals, who have undertaken to achieve what was earlier called philosophy, than the wish to be proved correct in the discussion, and one would like to say, in the citation of evidence. The wish to be proved correct, down to its most subtle logical form of reflection, is the expression of that spirit [Geistes] of self-preservation, whose dissolution makes up the particular concern of philosophy. I knew someone who met with all the celebrities from epistemology, the natural sciences and social sciences, one after another, thoroughly discussed his system with each one and, after no-one dared to raise an argument against its formalism, considered his work conclusively established. Something of such naïveté is ubiquitous in works where philosophy even distantly resembles the gesture of conviction. Underlying this is the prerequisite of the *universitas literarum* [Latin: universal literacy], an a priori common agreement of minds [*Geister*: minds, spirits], which are able to communicate with each other, and thereby indeed on complete conformism. When philosophers, well-known for being averse to silence, enter into a conversation, then they should speak as if they were being proved wrong, but in a manner which convicts the opponent of untruth. The point is not to generate cognitions which are absolutely correct, bulletproof and watertight – these run unavoidably into tautology – but rather those which direct the question of their correctness towards themselves. – This is not to argue for irrationalism, the positing of capricious theses, justified through the revelatory beliefs of intuition, but the abolition of the distinction between thesis and argument. To think dialectically means, in this respect, that the argument should achieve the criticality [Drastik] of the thesis and the thesis should contain the plenitude of its ground within itself. All bridging concepts, all connections

and logical helping operations, which are not in the matter itself, all secondary consequences not suffused with the experience of the object, should fall away. In a philosophical text, all propositions should stand equally near to the midpoint. Though Hegel would never have said as much, his entire procedure testifies to this intention. Since it does not recognize that which is first, then strictly speaking neither should it recognize that which is second or derived, and it has displaced the concept of mediation from formal intervening determinations into the matter itself, thereby seeking to overcome its difference from a thinking which is external to such or mediates it. The limits to the success of such an intention in the Hegelian philosophy, are simultaneously the limits of its truth, namely the remnants of *prima philosophia* [Latin: first philosophy], the supposition that the subject is something which in spite of everything is “first.” One of the tasks of dialectical logic is to expunge the last traces of the deductive system, together with the last legalistic [advokatorischen] gestures of thought.

45

“*Yet how ill does everything growing seem...*” [Quote from poem by Trakl] – Dialectical thinking defies reification also in the sense, that it refuses to confirm the individual as singled-out and in separateness: it ascertains precisely this isolation as the product of the general. Thus it works as a corrective against manic fixity as well as the unresisting and empty drift of the paranoid spirit [*Geistes*], which pays for the absolute judgment with the sacrifice of the experience of the matter [*Sache*]. But for that reason dialectics is nonetheless not what it became in the English Hegelian school and then all the more so in Dewey’s strenuous pragmatism, the “sense of proportions” [in English in original], the putting of things in their correct perspective, simple but intractable common sense. If Hegel seemed to come close to such a view in his conversations with Goethe, defending his philosophy against Goethean Platonism by

saying that the former was “fundamentally nothing more than the regular, methodically constructed spirit of contradiction, which dwells within all human beings,” a “gift which proves its worth in the distinction of the true from the false,” then the canny formulation contains, trickster-style, in the praise of “what dwells within every human being,” the simultaneous denunciation of the “common sense” [in English in original] which is made into its innermost determination, because it cannot be derived from “common sense” [in English in original,” but contradicts such. “Common sense” [in English in original], the appraisal of correct relationships, the cosmopolitan, practiced eye, schooled in the market, shares with the dialectic the freedom from dogma, limitation and prejudice. Its sobriety forms an indispensable moment of critical thinking. But also its sworn enemy, due to the renunciation of delusionary waywardness. The generality of the opinion, immediately assumed as one in society, as it is, necessarily has consensus as its concrete content. It is no accident that in the 19th century it was precisely outworn dogmatism, afflicted by the Enlightenment with a bad conscience, appealed to common sense, so that an arch-positivist like Mill was compelled to polemicize against such. The “sense of proportions” [in English in original] wholly relates to the injunction to think in the standard relationships and orders of magnitude of life, which remain fixed. One need only have once heard the dyed-in-the-wool representative of a ruling clique say, “That’s of no importance,” one need only observe at what times the bourgeoisie speaks of exaggeration, hysteria, and foolishness, to know that it is precisely where the appeal to reason emerges most promptly, that the issue unavoidably concerns an apology for unreason. Hegel emphasized the healthy spirit of contradiction with the hardheadedness of the peasant, who has learned over the centuries to withstand the hunts and tithes of the mighty feudal lords. It is the special concern of philosophy to knock the healthy viewpoints held by later power-brokers regarding the immutability of the course of the world for a loop, and to decode in their “proportions” [in

English in original] the true and reduced mirror-image of immeasurably enlarged disproportions. Dialectical reason [*Vernunft*: reason] is, against the ruling one, unreason [*Unvernunft*]: only by carrying over and sublating the latter, does it become rational [*vernünftig*: reasonable, rational]. How biased and Talmudic indeed was the insistence, in the middle of the functioning exchange society, on the distinction between the total work-hours expended by workers and those necessary for the reproduction of their lives. How Nietzsche put the cart before the horses, on which he charged, how Karl Kraus, Kafka, even Proust, each in their own manner, falsified the picture of the world in a biased manner, in order to shake off falsity and bias. Dialectics may not stop before the concepts of the healthy and the sick, nor indeed before the latters' family relations, the rational and the irrational. Once it recognizes the ruling generality and its proportions as sick – and marked in the most literal sense with paranoia, with “pathic projection” – then it finds the cells of healing solely in what the standards of that social order portray as sick, absurd, paranoid – indeed, “insane,” and it is true as today as in the medieval era, that only fools speak the truth to power. In this respect it is the duty of the dialectician to help this truth of the fool to attain the consciousness of its own reason [*Vernunft*], without which it would indeed perish in the abyss of that sickness, pitilessly dictated by the common sense of others.

46

On the ethics [Moral] of thinking. – Naive and unnaïve, these are concepts which are so closely intertwined, that nothing good will come of playing one against the other. The defense of the naive, undertaken by irrationalists and intellectual-haters of all kinds, is ignoble. The reflection which takes the side of naïveté, turns against itself: cleverness and obscurantism have ever been the same. By upholding immediacy via mediation, instead of comprehending the former as something mediated in itself, thinking inverts into the apologetics of its own opposite, into the

immediate lie. It serves all sorts of bad ends, from the obdurateness of the private things-are-just-so to the justification of social injustice as Nature. If one wished however to raise the opposite to a principle and – as I myself once did – call philosophy the binding obligation to the unnaïve, then one does hardly any better. It is not merely that un naïveté is a dubious medium of cognition [*Erkenntnis*] in the sense of adeptness, hard-bittedness, quick-wittedness, always prepared, through affinity to the practical social orders of life, and the all-round mental reservation against theory, to rebound into naïveté, the fixed gaze on purposes. Even where un naïveté is grasped in the theoretically responsible sense of what broadens, of what does not remain in the isolated phenomenon, of the thought of the whole, a shadow falls. It is just that broadening and inability to tarry, that implicit recognition of the priority of the generality over the particular, which comprises not only the deception of idealism, which hypostasizes concepts, but also its inhumanity, which degrades the particular, as soon as it seizes such, to a mere way-station and finally makes its peace with suffering and death, in a reconciliation which takes place only in the reflection – in the final analysis, the bourgeois coldness, which is all too happy to sign on to what is inevitable. Knowledge may broaden only where it persists by the individual, so that its isolation is disassembled by this insistence. This presupposes to be sure a relationship to the generality, though not one of subsumption, but almost its opposite. Dialectical mediation is not the recourse to what is more abstract, but the process of resolution of the concrete in itself. Nietzsche, who himself thought in all too wide horizons, knew something of this: “Those who wish to mediate between two incisive thinkers,” reads a passage in *The Gay Science*, “are marked as mediocre: they do not have eyes for what is unique; seeing things as the same and making things the same are the hallmarks of weak vision.” The ethics [Moral] of thinking do not consist of proceeding in a stubborn or sovereign manner, nor blindly or emptily, nor atomistically or consequentially. The double-sidedness of the method,

which among reasonable people gave to Hegelian phenomenology with name of abyssal difficulty by reasonable people, namely the demand, to allow the phenomenon to speak as such – the “pure onlooking” – and yet at every moment to maintain the reflection, its relation to the consciousness as a subject, expresses this ethos most acutely and in full depth of the contradiction. Yet how much more difficult this is to achieve, if one can no longer assume the identity of subject and object, the ultimate assumption which enabled Hegel to conceal the antagonistic demands of on-looking and construal. Nothing less is demanded of those who think today, than to be at every moment in the matter [*Sachen*] and outside of the matter [*Sachen*] – the gesture of Münchhausen, who pulled himself out of the swamp by his own pigtails, becomes the schemata of every cognition, which wishes to be more than either a fixed determination or a proposition. And then the philosophers still come along and reproach us, for not having a fixed standpoint.

47

De gustibus est disputandum [Latin: There is no accounting for taste.] – Even those who are convinced of the incomparability of works of art, find themselves continually entangled in debates where works of art, and precisely those of the highest and for that reason incomparable rank, are compared with and evaluated against each other. The objection invariably raised during such considerations, that it is all just a matter of collectors’ instincts, of measuring by ells, usually means only that the good citizens, to whom art can never be irrational enough, wish to keep the inner constitution and claim of truth distant from the works. The compulsion of the consideration is however located in the work of art itself. So much is true, that they do not allow themselves to be compared. Rather, they want to annihilate each other. It is not for nothing that the ancients [i.e. Greeks] reserved the pantheon of that which is compatible to the gods or to ideas, but required works of art to enter the *agon* [Greek: contest, conflict,

struggle], each one the mortal enemy of the other. The depiction of a “pantheon of classicism,” which Kierkegaard still clung to, is a fiction of neutralized upbringing. For if the idea of the beautiful is portrayed as merely divided up into many works, each individual one nevertheless reckons on an inalienable claim to the whole, claiming the beautiful for itself out of its uniqueness and can never admit its segmentation, without annulling itself. The beautiful, as something unitary, true and appearanceless [*scheinlos*], emancipated from such individuation, is not represented by the synthesis of all works, by the unity of arts and of art, but solely corporeally and actually: in the downfall of art itself. Every work of art aims at such a downfall, by seeking the death of all the others. That all art reckons on its own end, is another way of stating the same state of affairs. It is out of such a compulsion towards self-annihilation in works of art, from their innermost concern, that drives towards the appearanceless [*scheinlos*] picture of what is beautiful, which stirs up seemingly useless aesthetic disputes over and over again. While they stubbornly and obstinately wish to find what is aesthetically correct [*Recht*] and precisely thereby fall victim to an unquenchable dialectic, they are more correct than they can know; by delimiting each art-work, whose energy they take into themselves and raise to a concept, they work towards the destruction of art, which is its salvation. The aesthetic tolerance, which validates works of art in their immediate narrowness, without breaking this last, yields only the wrong downfall, that of the juxtaposition, which denies the claim of the unitary truth.

48

For Anatole France. – A questionable moment begins to surface in virtues such as open-mindedness, the capacity to vouchsafe and enjoy the beautiful, even in what is most mundane and unapparent. Once, in the epoch of overflowing subjective plenitude, aesthetic indifference in relation to the choice of the object, as well the energy to extract meaning

from everything one experienced, expressed the relation to the objective world itself, a relation which confronted the subject antagonistically – down into all of its fragments, as it were – and yet closely and significantly. In a phase when the subject abdicates before the alienated hegemony of things, its readiness to vouchsafe what is everywhere positive or beautiful, displays a resignation of critical capacity as much as of the interpretive imagination inseparable from such. Whoever finds everything beautiful, is now in danger of finding nothing beautiful. The generality of the beautiful is communicated to the subject in no other way than the obsession with the particular. No gaze achieves beauty, without being accompanied by indifference, and well-nigh contempt for everything outside of the viewed object. And it is solely through bedazzlement [*Verblendung*: dazzle, infatuation], the unjust closure of the gaze *vis-à-vis* the claim raised by everything which exists, that justice is done to what exists. By being accepted in its one-sidedness, for what it is, its one-sidedness is understood as its essence and reconciled. The gaze which loses itself in something which is beautiful, is one of the Sabbath [day of repose in Judaism]. It rescues in the object something of the peacefulness of its day of creation. However if this one-sidedness is sublated by a consciousness of the universal imposed from outside, if the particular is harried, substituted and weighed up, then the just view of the whole makes the universal injustice, which lies in exchangeability and substitution, its own. Such justice turns into the executor of mythos upon creation. To be sure, no thought is immune to such interweaving, none may be blinkered. But everything depends on the manner of the transition. The mischief comes from thought as might [*Gewalt*: power, violence], the shortcut of the path which finds the generality solely through what is impenetrable, whose theoretical content [*Gehalt*] is preserved in impenetrability itself, not in the derived congruence of various objects. One could almost say that the truth itself depends on the tempo, patience and duration of the tarrying on the particular: what goes beyond this,

without having entirely lost itself, what proceeds to judgment, without making itself guilty of the injustice of the intuition [*Anschauung*], loses itself in the end in the void. Liberality, which grants rights to human beings indiscriminately, amounts to annihilation, just like the will of the majority which inflicts harm on the minority, and thus makes a mockery of the democracy, according to whose principles they act. Indiscriminate benevolence towards all constantly threatens that coldness and remoteness against each, which are once again communicated to the whole. Injustice is the medium of true justice. Unrestricted benevolence turns into the confirmation of everything which is bad, by belittling its difference from the trace of what is good and leveling it to that generality, which springs hopelessly from the bourgeois-Mephistophelean wisdom, that everything which exists, deserves to perish. [Citation from Goethe's *Faust*] The salvation of beauty even in what is lackluster or indifferent appears that much more nobler as the obstinate insistence on critique and specification, as they are in truth more pliable to the social orders of life.

Mobilized against this is the sanctity of what is alive, which is reflected precisely in what is most ugly and distorted. But its reflection is nothing immediate, but solely something refracted: what is supposed to be beautiful just because it is alive, is for that reason already what is ugly. The concept of life in its abstraction, to which recourse is made here, is by no means to be separated from what is repressive, relentless, truly deadly and destructive. The cult of life in itself always amounts to that of these forces. Whatever the expression of life may mean, from brimming fertility and the frenetic drives of children, all the way to the competence of those who cobble together something correctly and the high spirits of the wife, who is idolized because appetite shows in her so unreservedly – all of this, taken absolutely, has something of the taking away of the light from others, of what is possible, in blind self-perpetuation. Rampant health as such is always already sickness. Its antidote is sickness which is conscious

of itself, the delimitation of life itself. Beauty is such healing sickness. It arrests life and thereby its decay. However if one denied sickness for the sake of life, then the hypostatized life passes over, by virtue of its blind separation from the other moment, into what is destructive and malevolent, insolent and self-aggrandizing. Whoever hates what is destructive, must hate life along with it: only what is dead is an allegory [*Gleichnis*: allegory, parable, analogy] of what is living and undistorted. Anatole France realized something of this, in his enlightened way. “No,” says the otherwise mild-mannered Mr. Bergeret, “I would rather believe, that organic life is the special illness of our unlovely planet. It would be unbearable to think that there is nothing but eating and being eaten throughout the endless universe.” The nihilistic antipathy in his words is not merely the psychological but also the material precondition of humanity as utopia.

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Ethics [Moral] and temporal order. – While literature has dealt with all manner of erotic conflicts, the simplest external motive for conflict has remained untouched, due to its obviousness. That is the phenomenon of being already taken: that a person beloved by us is inaccessible not because of inner antagonisms and inhibitions, too much coldness or overly repressed warmth, but because a relationship already exists, which excludes a new one. The abstract temporal order plays in truth the role which one would like to ascribe to the hierarchy of the feelings. The state of being taken, leaving aside freedom of choice and the decision, also has something wholly accidental about it, which appears to thoroughly contradict the claim of freedom. Even and exactly in a society healed from the anarchy of commodity production, there would scarcely be rules regarding how and in what order one got to know people. Were it any different, then such an arrangement would equate to the most unbearable assault on freedom. For that reason, the priority of what is accidental has

powerful reasons on its side: if a new person is preferred over another, then the latter is slighted, because the past of the common life is annulled, experience itself is, as it were, crossed out. The irreversibility of time sets an objective moral criterion. But this latter is entwined with mythos, like abstract time itself. The exclusivity posited in it develops according to its own concept into the exclusive rule of hermetically sealed groups, finally to that of large-scale industry. Nothing can be more touching than the worry of lovers, that a new person could attract love and tenderness – their finest possessions, just because they cannot be possessed – precisely by means of that newness, which is itself produced by the privilege of the older. But from this touchingness, whose disintegration would mean the simultaneous disintegration of all warmth and snugness [*Geborgensein*], leads an irresistible path from the aversion of the little child to its younger siblings and the contempt of the fraternity brother to the pledge, to the immigration laws which exclude all non-Europeans in social democratic Australia, all the way to the Fascist extermination of racial minorities, wherein in fact warmth and snugness explode into nothingness. It is not only, as Nietzsche knew, that all good things were once evil: even the most tender of these, left to its own momentum, has the tendency to culminate in unthinkable barbarity.

It would be idle to try to point out a path leading out of such entanglement. Yet the baleful moment can be named, which brings this entire dialectic into play. It lies in the exclusive character of what is first. The original relationship, in its mere immediacy, already presupposes that abstract temporal order. The concept of time is historically formed on the basis of the social order of property. But the desire for ownership reflects time as fear of losing, of irretrievability. What is, is experienced in relation to its possible non-being. It is thereby turned into a possession and precisely in such petrification to something functional, which can be exchanged for another, equivalent possession. Once become entirely a

possession, the beloved human being is actually no longer even looked at. Abstraction in love is the complement of exclusivity, which manifests itself deceptively, as its opposite, as the clinging to the appearance of someone-just-so. The object of this conventionalism slips out of the latter's hands, precisely because it is turned into an object, and forfeits the human beings, which it degrades to "my people." If human beings were no longer possessions of any kind, then they could also no longer be exchanged. The true affection would be one, which speaks specifically to the other, holding fast to beloved traits and not to the idol of personality, the mirror-reflection of possession. What is specific is not exclusive: it lacks the impulse towards totality. But in another sense it is nevertheless exclusive: it prevents the substitution of the experience which is indissolubly bound to it, not so by forbidding such, but because its pure concept prevents this substitution from happening in the first place. The protection of what is entirely determinate is that it cannot be repeated, and that is why it tolerates the other. The property relationship in human beings, the exclusive right of priority, recalls to mind the old saying: Lord, they're only human beings, which one, doesn't really matter. The affection which knows nothing of such wisdom, need not fear infidelity, because it would be immune to faithlessness.

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Gaps. – The demand that one should be intellectually honest amounts mostly to the sabotage of thought. It means to hold authors accountable, to explicitly portray all the steps which led them to their conclusion, and thus enable every reader to follow the process along and, where possible – for example, in academia – to duplicate it. Not only does this operate according to the liberal fiction of the popular, general communicability of every thought and inhibit its factually appropriate expression, but is also false as a principle of representation [*Darstellung*]. For the worth of a thought is measured by its distance from the continuity of what is familiar.

It is objectively devalued by the diminution of this distance; the more it approaches the previously established norms, the more its antithetical function disappears, and its claim is founded only in the latter, in the apparent relationship to its opposite, not in its isolated existence. Texts which anxiously undertake to document every last one of their steps, decay unavoidably into what is banal and into a boredom which relates not just to the tension during the reading, but also to its own substance. Simmel's texts, for example, suffer everywhere from the incompatibility of their distinctive objects with the painfully lucid treatment. They establish what is distinctive as the true complement of that mediocrity which Simmel wrongly believed to be Goethe's secret. But far beyond this, the demand for intellectual honesty is itself dishonest. Even if one followed for once the dubious instruction, that the representation [*Darstellung*] ought to model itself precisely on the thought-process, then this process would no more be one of discursive progress from step to step, as the reverse, that insights fall to the seeker of knowledge from heaven. Cognizing involves on the contrary a network of prejudices, intuitions, innervations, self-corrections, assumptions and exaggerations, in short in dense, grounded experience, which is by no means transparent in all places. Of this the Cartesian rule, that one should only turn to objects, "to whose clear and undoubted knowledge our mind [*Geist*] seems to suffice," including all order and disposition which relates to such, gives as false an account as the opposing doctrine of the apperception [*Wesensschau*], which is nevertheless inextricably entwined with the former. If this latter denies what is logically right, which in spite of everything validates itself in every thought, then the former takes what is logically right in its immediacy, in relation to every individual intellectual act and not as mediated through the stream of the entire life-consciousness of the cognizer. Therein however lies simultaneously a confession of deepest inadequacy. For if the honest thought unavoidably amounts to mere repetition – whether of what is already known, or of

categorical forms – the one which renounces the full transparency of its logical genesis for the sake of the relationship to its object, always incurs a certain guilt. It breaks the promise which is posited with the form of the judgement itself. This inadequacy resembles that of the life-line, which runs on bent, diverted, disillusioning according to its premises, and yet solely in this course, because it is continually less than what it should be, may it portray under the given conditions of existence an unregimented one. If life fulfilled its determination straightaway, then it would forfeit the latter. Whoever died in old age and in the consciousness of a guiltless, as it were, success, would secretly be the model pupil, who completes every grade with an invisible backpack, without gaps. Every thought which is not idle, however, remains marked by the impossibility of the full legitimation, as we know in dreams, that there are mathematics lessons which we miss for the sake of a blissful morning in bed, which can never be made up. Thought waits for the day that it is awakened by the memory of what was omitted, and is transformed into teaching.