

A text dump on Ludwig Klages

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Review of The Philosophy of Life and Death by Egbert Klautke

The Philosophy of Life and Death: Ludwig Klages and the Rise of a Nazi Biopolitics. By Nitzan Lebovic. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013. Pp. 316. Cloth \$95.00. ISBN 978-1137342058.

Lebovic's book studies the "philosophy of life" (*Lebensphilosophie*) in Germany through the prism of one of its most notorious proponents, Ludwig Klages (1872-1956), one of the most successful, but largely forgotten, right-wing intellectuals of the twentieth century. Originating in the crisis of rationality around the turn of the century, the philosophy of life gained popularity during the 1920s "and was later integrated into Nazi rhetoric as biopolitics" (1), Lebovic argues. The starting point for the author's interest in Klages was "an intense reading in the work of Walter Benjamin" (1), who showed an ongoing fascination with the works of Klages that puzzled many of his followers. Not least because of Giorgio Agamben's readings of Benjamin, elements of the philosophy of life have found their way into contemporary political theory, but the historical context in which this peculiar set of ideas thrived and mattered has been forgotten. Lebovic thus proposes to trace "the origins of this discourse of life, its politicization, Nazification, and later transformation" (1). He stresses the "critical potential" (5) of *Lebensphilosophie* and argues against a linear understanding of the history of ideas that traces a direct course from "the early 1900s to the rise of national socialism" (5).

The book is divided into five main chapters that present aspects of Klages's "life and works" in a roughly chronological order. Lebovic does not provide a full biography of Klages, but important aspects of his interpretation of Klages's works rely on biographical information. He does a good job of contextualizing his subject's idiosyncratic philosophy and its reception. Klages was an antisemite whose best friends were Jews, as were some of his admirers. Among his childhood friends in Hanover was Theodor Lessing, who went on to become a popular philosopher in his own right and was killed by Nazi thugs in 1933 while in exile in Czechoslovakia. Klages had ended his friendship with Lessing abruptly in 1899, probably due to entrenched antisemitism. In fin-de-siecle Munich, Klages formed the esoteric "cosmic circle" together with Alfred Schuler and Karl Wolfskehl, before he fell out with Wolfskehl in dramatic fashion over their views on Zionism. In the 1920s, with the help of some of his devoted disciples, including Hans Eggert Schroder and Hans Prinzhorn, Klages started a crusade against Freudian psy-

choanalysis. This attack on Freud relied heavily on Johann Jakob Bachofen's theory of an ancient matriarchy.

Instead of Freud's "psychology without a soul" (121), Klages advertised his "characterology" and "graphology" as the appropriate methods to understand the human mind. These "empirical" parts of Klages's work fascinated Benjamin and were supported by the philosopher of art Emil Utitz, whose own study on *Charakterologie* owed much to Klages and "became a landmark in the field and a constant reference for later works" (150). Shortly before power was handed over to the National Socialists, Klages published the third volume of his magnum opus, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, a relentless attack on utilitarianism and rationalism that, despite its length, cemented his reputation among the enemies of liberalism.

Lebovic's chapter on Klages's *Lebensphilosophie* under Nazism is of central importance to his argument. The account depends on the assumption that the "philosophy of life" formed an integral part of Nazi ideology, despite the fact that Klages was criticized by committed Nazis such as Alfred Baumler and Alfred Rosenberg. The Nazi Party, Lebovic claims, gradually accepted Klages's specific philosophical vocabulary, and "Klages's philosophy of life" was slowly implemented into "Nazi political education during the 1930s and 1940s" (191). To prove this point, Lebovic refers to a close follower of Klages since the early 1920s, Rudolf Bode, who made a career under the Nazis as a teacher of gymnastics and "body culture" (even though he was certainly not "appointed"¹ as *Gymnastikpabst* in 1941). Lebovic also mentions the founding, in 1933, of a Working Group for Biocentric Research (*Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung*) by students of Klages. This group tried to establish contacts with the state and party but was shut down in 1936. Based on this evidence, Lebovic's argument that Klages and his *Lebensphilosophie* were central to the ideology and policies of the Nazis is not fully convincing. While there were certainly attempts to make biology, via racial studies, the center of Nazi thinking and pedagogy, and while multiple references to the term "life" and its composita can be found in Nazi "rhetoric," the Nazis did not rely on or depend on Klages's *Lebensphilosophie*.

Regardless of these critical comments, Lebovic has produced a stimulating book. Even if he does not always provide convincing answers, he often poses the right questions. The main flaw of the study lies in its attempt to address too many audiences at once: the book oscillates between an intellectual biography of Klages, a study of the reception and wider importance of his works during and after his lifetime, the "Nazification" of his thought, and present-day debates about "biopolitics," which can be traced back to the history of the "philosophy of life." The many different perspectives that Lebovic's study opens up underline the importance of the history of *Lebensphilosophie* and of Ludwig Klages, and call for further studies into these fascinating topics.

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¹ Ibid., pp. 172-173.

The Philosophy of Life and Death

Front Matter

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 The Philosophy of Life and Death: Ludwig Klages and the Rise of
 a Nazi Biopolitics
 By Nitzan Lebovic

Title Page

The Philosophy of Life and Death
 Ludwig Klages and the Rise of a Nazi Biopolitics
 Nitzan Lebovic
 palgrave
 macmillan

Publisher Details

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE AND DEATH
 Nitzan Lebovic, 2013.
 Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2013 978-1-137-34205-8
 First published in 2013 by
 PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
 in the United States—a division of St. Martin's Press LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New
 York, NY 10010.

Where this book is distributed in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world, this is by Palgrave Macmillan, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

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ISBN 978-1-349-46528-6 ISBN 978-1-137-34206-5 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9781137342065

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Lebovic, Nitzan, 1970-

The philosophy of life and death : Ludwig Klages and the rise of a Nazi biopolitics / Nitzan Lebovic.

pages cm.—(Palgrave studies in cultural and intellectual history)

1. Klages, Ludwig, 1872-1956 I. Title.

B3279.K64L43 2013 193—dc23

2013012387

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library. Design by Newgen Knowledge Works (P) Ltd., Chennai, India.

First edition: September 2013

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Illustrations

1 .1 The portrait of Ludwig Klages as a young man, *ca.* 1895 23

2 .2 “The Cosmic Circle.” From left to right: Karl Wolfskehl,

Alfred Schuler, Ludwig Klages, Stefan George, Albert Verwey 31 1.3 Franziska (Fanny) Graf zu Reventlow, *ca.* 1893 32

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Preface

This book would not have been possible without the help of a few dear friends, colleagues, and my close family. Their encouragement and support also gave me, the grandson of Jewish refugees from central Europe, the courage to research the origins of much of the Nazi rhetoric without adopting a series of assumptions about how this rhetoric took hold and advanced.

The key to this book is a plea for openness, especially about topics we find abhorrent or would prefer to keep hidden. For decades, Walter Benjamin's interest in reactionaries such as Ludwig Klages and life philosophy (*Lebensphilosophie*) caused even Benjamin's closest friends to doubt his political judgment and philosophical reason. It is only in the last two decades that an independent and a somewhat marginal philosophy, leading from Michel Foucault to Giorgio Agamben, made an attempt to step outside the normative, linear history of ideas that divided the world into pro-Nazis and anti-Nazis, reactionaries and progressives, and enabled a richer and more sophisticated look at the unintentional shift that spurred this process.

The philosophical interest in radical and reactionary movements such as *Lebensphilosophie* followed a broader historical research of this movement, mostly affiliating it with Nazi ideology. This book represents another attempt to bring the philosophical and the historical worlds together, on their own terms, and in the service of all past, present, and future introspection. During the many months of research for this book I discovered documents—letters, manuscripts, pamphlets—that were never published or even read before. Many of them are quoted here. I owe the kindness and warmth of Thomas Kemme, at the Klages Nachlass, a great debt. He and his colleagues at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv Marbach supplied me with material and advice that were badly needed for a young scholar who was taking his first steps into an unfamiliar world. Dr. Ulrich von Bulow and Prof. Dr. Heinrich Raulff, the general archivist and the director of the archive, enabled the use of many historical documents and gave me the authorization to quote from many of them, for the first time. A few families gave me a similar authorization to quote from private letters. I would like to thank Erika Seesemann who opened her father's archive for me, herself reading those letters for the first time, one table behind me. I am grateful also to Peter and Sigrid Deussen, Christa Gauss, and Ulrich Bode for the permission to quote from their family's archives. I found their commitment to historical factuality and fairness very touching and honest, even where it shed some problematic light on the history of their families. Those private archives testify to the great importance of *Lebensphilosophie* to the lives of many thinkers, writers, politicians, and artists in Germany, since the early 1900s and

up to the present. The permission to quote freely from those archives allowed me to shape a well-balanced narrative. Nevertheless, as the archive requires, I should state that in spite of all the trouble I have taken to locate the owners of rights, I might have an owner who was not listed anywhere. If so, I alone am responsible for whatever use has been done with the material according to the customary law of fair use and copy rights.

The good advice of my advisers at UCLA—Saul Friedlander, David Myers, Peter Reill, Andrew Hewitt, and Samuel Weber—encouraged me to develop this freedom of opinion and intellectual sophistication. The remarkable generosity of Anson Rabinbach helped me greatly along the way and assisted me in giving this manuscript its final shape. This group of scholars, first and foremost my two advisors, taught me not only the secrets of academic life and erudite study, but also the personal ethics of caring as a teacher and an open, boundless love of ideas. I was lucky enough to get the advice of some of the leading scholars in contemporary intellectual history; I greatly profited from the introspective comments I received from John McCole, Benjamin Lazier, Samuel Moyn, and Ethan Kleinberg, and the anonymous reviewers of this manuscript. Good friends such as Zvi Ben-Dor, Avner Ben-Zaken, Hillel Eyal, Igal Halfin, Shaul Katzir, Thomas Meyer, Ofer Nur, Glili Shahar, and Eugene Sheppard accompanied the process of writing this book with a good word during hard times. My colleagues and friends at Lehigh University—Eduardo Portela, John Savage, and Laurence Silberstein—read parts of this manuscript and encouraged me to complete its revision. Stephen Cutcliffe and my colleagues at the history department at Lehigh University supported me with the means and time to complete the task. Sam Gilbert helped me with this text at different stages along the way and invested much time in improving its style. His friendship and advice became so dear to me that I could not imagine myself writing this book without him. Joanne Hindman helped me in the final stages of preparation and was efficient and smart in correcting and refining the text.

Finally, this book owes its very existence to my parents, Raphael, Ilana, and Chava. It owes its soul to my loving wife, Avigail, and my two children, Asaf and Yael. Parts of the book were written when my loving and supporting parents-in-law were dying of terminal cancer, and my family was going through a hard time. It is with the irrevocable memory of the past and with the endless hope for and love of the future that such projects come to be. Seeing my family coping with our new situation was an important life lesson.

Finally, it is with the painful memory of my grandmother, Gertrud Lebovic nee Fleischer, who died shortly after I finished my dissertation, that I end this preface. The sole survivor of a family murdered by the Nazis, but quoting Schiller to her very last days, she taught me a lesson about endless kindness and open-mindedness that I vowed to emulate.

Introduction: Where It All Began

This book started from an intense reading in the work of Walter Benjamin and the interest I took in one recurring reference in his writings—the texts of the anti-Semite Ludwig Klages (1872-1956). Behind this relatively unknown figure (to twenty-first-century readers), I found a whole network of references to a philosophical movement known at the time as the philosophy of life (*Lebensphilosophie*), and I discovered that Klages was one of its outspoken representatives. This turn-of-the-century movement bloomed during the 1920s and was later integrated into the Nazi rhetoric as biopolitics. Biopolitics will be understood here in the most general sense, characterized by Roberto Esposito as that in which “life becomes encamped in the center of every political procedure,”¹ a definition closest to the Nazi use of the concept in 1932. As a Nazi discourse, it disappeared after the Second World War, to be revived in the past ten years in a very different cloth. This book traces the origins of this discourse of life, its politicization, Nazification, and later transformation. In so doing, I make a plea of relevance to everyone interested in the rise of Nazi biopolitics, but more than that, to everyone interested in the radical *critique* of biopolitics, as shown in Walter Benjamin’s writings and by recent critics of democracy from the left—for example, Giorgio Agamben, Roberto Esposito, Michael Hardt, and Antonio Negri—who adapted Benjamin’s reflections to our present-day reality. In this book, I call for historians of anti-Semitism to pay attention to the aesthetic theories that lie at the core of right-wing politics, and I ask left-wing critics to take more seriously the right-wing critique of Enlightenment dogmatism. The aim of this book, in other words, is to explain and rehistoricize the 1920s’ “Weimar syndrome” or “Weimar-complex” still so prevalent in our culture and political thinking.² Much of our contemporary thinking about democracy and totalitarianism still owes its framework of conceptualization to this period of revolutionary thinking, on both ends of the political spectrum.

I started following the surprising relationship between Benjamin and Klages shortly after the 9/11 attacks in New York and Washington, when the growing popularity of the antiglobalization movement, the failure of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and the deep disappointment over any form of American involvement in the Middle East—on either side of the political map—heightened a need for new solutions. A sense of urgency pushed both conservative and progressive critics to pursue unconventional political philosophies in order to justify either a more aggressive policy of intervention

¹ Book I of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Oxford text, edited by H. Stuart-Jones; translated by Arnold J. Toynbee.

² R. W. Hutchinson, *Prehistoric Crete* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962).

or a critical politics of suspicion of intervention or the interests that motivate it. The most apparent outcome, in these terms, was a new critical philosophy that attacked both ends of the political spectrum, and—much as the German radicals did in the 1920s—distanced itself from all forms of conventional politics. Best known among a few—now famous—figures, was Giorgio Agamben, the editor of Walter Benjamin’s oeuvre in Italian. It is hard to miss the consistent tribute given in Agamben’s work to German intellectuals of the 1920s and more specifically to those who transcended the usual political lines. Walter Benjamin, Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger, and Hannah Arendt are known to readers of European history or culture. Add to that list Jacob von Uexkull, Kurt Goldstein, Stefan George, Ludwig Klages, Ernst Cassirer, Gershom Scholem, and Martin Buber to identify just a few of those intellectuals of the 1920s who star in the writings of biopolitical critics a century later. German Jews and German Aryans, liberals and conservatives, anti-Semites and Semites, men and women were writing about contemporary politics embedded in a deep sense of crisis and were searching for radical alternatives to it. More than that, they all suspected that conventional parliamentary politics could not handle well the explosion of revolutionary energy. All of them lived through the First World War spectacle of damaged and eviscerated bodies, predominant in the broken art (and heart) of the European 1920s. All identified it as the uninviting opening to a different, bloody period. All of them wrote obsessively about life as a central political concept flung as a critical weapon against liberal utilitarianism, technological innovation, economic growth, legal norms, and a failed democratic praxis. From a political perspective, the cluster of life concepts (life form, life force, living experience, life stream) served radicals on both the left and the right, and they both used this cluster to radicalize their own camp.

This book is not the first to point out the curious revival of the biopolitical philosophy of the German 1920s at the heart of contemporary political philosophy. In fact, biopolitical philosophers marked it out themselves, usually without historicizing their interest. The biopolitical obsession with life, as Roberto Esposito shows, “is organistic, anthropologist, and naturalist . . . Here what is spoken about,” he continues, “is not any state but the German state, with its peculiar characteristics and vital demands.”³ In a rare moment of historical reflection for this theory, Esposito shows in three chronological steps that the timing moved from the German 1920s to the French 1960s and finally to the contemporary “Anglo-Saxon world,”⁴ which is “still ongoing.”⁵ Esposito, like Agamben and other biopolitical critics, identifies figures such as Jacob von Uexkull, Ludwig Klages, Rudolf Kjellen, Georg Simmel, and Henri Bergson as *Lebensphilosophers* of the early 1900s. But again, like others—including Michel Foucault—Esposito neglects to identify the shared basis for this movement. Even the partial awareness of

³ Herodotus, Book I, chapters 56 to 58.

⁴ Available in Ludwig Klages, *The Biocentric Worldview* (London: Arktos, 2013).

⁵ Tuist is a term coined by Klages. The distinction between tuist and egoist entails a recognition of the characterological distinction between those whose drives and affects are focused on the “you,” as opposed to those who are centered solely upon their own ego.

the importance of Germany in the 1920s is usually described as an appealing call for radical thinking. Little if any attention is given to the shared discursive grounds that are so common to the individuals on both ends of the political map.

The first major task of this book, then, is to do exactly that: identify and describe the discourse of life, a “jargon of life” as some called it during the 1920s. Identifying better the roots and development of life philosophy (*Lebensphilosophie*, or vitalism⁶) will help us understand better both the past—the pre-Nazi and Nazi understanding of life—and the present. As Donna V. Jones summarizes in her recent book about the impact of Bergson’s *elan vital*: “As a radical or renegade discourse, vitalism represents protest, disillusion, and hope. Life often grounds opposition today, after the political disappearance of a subject/object of history and skepticism . . . Life has become the watchword of today’s extraparliamentary politics.”⁷ Eugene Thacker followed a similar history and politics of life from Aristotle, to Heidegger, Bergson, and Deleuze, while arguing that “the question of ‘life’ is the question that has come to define our contemporary era.”⁸ As this book shows, if the question of life is so pertinent to us, so is the discussion of the German 1920s and its obsession with *Lebensphilosophie*. Indeed, this particular hurly burly is far from being done, or won.

1. The intellectual history

Very little of the literature that mentions the impact of life philosophy on both Nazis and their enemies, on pre-1933 and post-1945 political culture, explore it in depth. This weakness does not imply any lack of attention. On the contrary, intellectual historians, sociologists, and philosophers have been able to identify correctly the strong impact that life philosophy had on the European culture during the early 1920s.

As Heinrich Rickert, the acclaimed neo-Kantian philosopher, warned, *Lebensphilosophers* formulated a comprehensive, aesthetic discourse of “naked life [*blossen Leben*],” turning it into the “fashionable philosophical trend of our time.”⁹ A mere decade after it was considered fashionable, life philosophy was co-opted by the Nazis. In a review written in 1930, Walter Benjamin identified “those habitues of the chthonic forces of terror, who carry their volumes of Klages in their packs.”¹⁰ In 1935 Thomas Mann at-

⁶ Ibid., p. 17. Esposito quotes from Rudolf Kjellen, *Grundriss zu einem System der Politik* (Leipzig: Rudolph Leipzig Hirzel, 1920), pp. 3-4.

⁷ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 136. Hoche worked with another follower of Klages, the Jewish *Lebensphilosoph* Kurt Goldstein. He was also close to a central figure of the Klages circle, the psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn.

⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 3.

⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 2000).

¹⁰ Agamben “paulanized” Benjamin, Scholem, Taubes, and other German/Jewish thinkers discussed in this book since his *Homo Sacer*. For the most coherent exploration of that philosophical move see

tacked *Lebensphilosophie* as the core of “fascist” rhetoric and named Ludwig Klages as a representative of this philosophy and a prefascist thinker himself. A well-known conservative and mystic, Klages was also seen by his opponents as an early proponent of national socialism, or as Mann put it, a “criminal philosopher,” a “pan-Germanist,” “an irrationalist,” a “Tarzan philosopher,” “a cultural pessimist . . . the voice of the world’s downfall.”¹¹ From then on, *Lebensphilosophie*—and Klages as a leading *Lebensphilosoph*—would be identified with Nazism, racism, and anti-Semitism. The earlier positive reception of *Lebensphilosophie* among radicals on the left was ignored and suppressed.

In *The Destruction of Reason*, published first in German in 1954, Georg Lukacs—a well-known neo-Marxist who was educated in Germany—identifies *Lebensphilosophie* with “the dominant ideology of the whole imperialist period in Germany,”¹² and, furthermore, with the type of irrational and antiparliamentary “belligerent preparation for the impending barbaric reaction of the Nazi regime.” “Herein,” he continues, “lies the significance of the philosophy of Ludwig Klages.”¹³ Lukacs pays tribute to *Lebensphilosophie* as a whole—and to Ludwig Klages in particular as the one “who actually transformed vitalism into an open combat against reason and culture.”¹⁴ “Klages’s whole philosophy,” Lukacs argues, “is only a variation on this one primitive idea. His significance lies in the fact that never before had reason been challenged so openly and radically.”¹⁵ Lukacs—and a generation of postwar historians—names Klages as a founder of modern vitalism. The implication of his vitalism cannot be undermined, for “Klages’s polemics were directed against the future,”¹⁶ which Lukacs identifies with

Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹¹ Eric Santner, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), p. 13.

¹² Giorgio Agamben, “Absolute Immanence,” in *Potentialities*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 220.

¹³ Brian Massumi, “National Enterprise Emergency: Steps Toward an Ecology of Powers,” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 26:6 (November 2009), p. 170. I tried to explain the relevance of such readings for a contemporary understanding of life in Nitzan Lebovic, “Life,” in *Maftekh: Lexical Review of Political Thought* 2 (2011): <http://mafteakh.tau.ac.il/en/issue-2e-winter-2011/life/> (accessed June 1, 2013).

¹⁴ Agamben comes close to it without making it a historical argument, when he points out Heidegger’s role as the mediator between two philosophical traditions. The first leads from Kant, via Husserl, to Heidegger and then Levinas and Derrida; the other leads from Spinoza, via Nietzsche, to Heidegger and then Foucault and Deleuze. In short, any examination of “the coming philosophy” should consider the 1920s’ debate about the role of life and immanence in Heidegger and his fellow critics of democracy, on the way to biopolitics and “immanentation.” *Ibid.*, p. 239.

¹⁵ “Diese Formung des Lebens in seinem ganzen Verlaufe durch den Tod ist bisher sozusagen etwas Bildhaftes.” Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1994), p. 107.

¹⁶ Simmel stresses here a temporal dimension of a being which turns *Sein* (being) into a particular presence. *Sosein* was used by different *Lebensphilosophers*, for example, Georg Simmel, Max Scheler, and Ludwig Klages. It is translated differently for every thinker, and sometimes, as various translations of Simmel prove, differently in different works of the same thinker. Simmel used the term repeatedly.

rationality, progress, and social ideals.¹⁷ In his view, *Lebensphilosophie* in general and Klages in particular declared an all-encompassing war against the very existence of temporality itself; for Lukacs, irrationalism was inherently stagnant or reactionary.

Disregarding life philosophy in general and Ludwig Klages in particular is symptomatic of a whole historiographical approach. George Mosse, a German-Jewish refugee and one of the founders of cultural and intellectual history, depicts life philosophy as the intellectual basis of what he identifies with the “irrationalism” of the fascist “third force.” In *Masses and Men*, in a chapter titled “The Mystical Origins of National Socialism,” Mosse identifies Julius Langbehn, Alfred Rosenberg, and Ludwig Klages with a mystical neoromantic movement that opposed civilization and modernity. He writes, “Ludwig Klages, the Munich philosopher, told [the youth movement] that modern civilization was ‘drowning the soul of man.’ The only way out for man, who belonged to nature, was a return to mother earth. Such ideas led naturally to a deepening of the cult of the peasant.”¹⁸ In fact, Mosse knows very well that “drowning the soul of man” refers to a late romantic legacy that Klages shared with many progressive thinkers, including Walter Benjamin, Georg Simmel, and even Friedrich Engels before them. But he ignores that, in light of the later use the Nazis made of such quotes.¹⁹ What matters most to Mosse is a phenomenon that Hannah Arendt, Michel Foucault, and Giorgio Agamben place at the heart of all forms of totalitarian thinking, whether capitalistic, Marxist, or fascist: that is, the “total politicization of life” and the erasure

See *ibid.*, p. 108. For another example of Simmel’s use of *Sein* see the first page of his *Philosophy of Money*, which was translated as a “particular quality of being.” See Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 56. Then again, in his book about the history of sociology, David Frisby translated the same term when used by Max Scheler as “essence.” See David Frisby, *The Alienated Mind: The Sociology of Knowledge in Germany, 1918-1933* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 30.

¹⁷ Heinrich Rickert, *Die Philosophie des Lebens: Darstellung und Kritik der philosophischen Modestromungen unserer Zeit* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr Verlag, 1920).

¹⁸ Heinrich Rickert, *Unmittelbarkeit und Sinnbedeutung: Aufsatze zur Ausgestaltung des Systems der Philosophie* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1939), p. 57 (emphasis in original). The concept of immediacy, popularized by Nietzsche, had garnered great interest among *Lebensphilosophers* since the early 1900s. Yet not before the early 1920s could one attach it to any particular view of politics.

¹⁹ Georg Imdahl and David F. Krell are an exception to that rule; in their careful readings of Heidegger’s early writings, both labor to demonstrate the close interest and impact of Heidegger’s own editorial working and research of Dilthey’s life philosophy. Heidegger’s later rejection of *Lebensphilosophie* cannot disguise the impact it had on his interest in the living temporality of the *Dasein*. See David F. Krell, *Daheim Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), and Georg Imdahl, *Das Leben Verstehen, Heideggers formal anzeigende Hermeneutik in den frühen Freiburger Vorlesungen* (Wurzburg: Konigshausen und Neumann, 1997). A few intellectual historians paid close attention to Heidegger’s interest in *Lebensphilosophie* from a different angle. Let me mention here only the most recent and excellent two volumes Peter Gordon published on Heidegger’s proximity to Franz Rosenzweig, and the opponents of Ernst Cassirer and neo-Kantianism. See Peter E. Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and *idem.*, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

of boundaries between the private and the public.²⁰ “The boundaries between public and private were abolished,” Mosse writes, “just as the dividing line between politics and the totality of life had ceased to exist.”²¹ Mosse, like Lukacs, sees a direct course that led from the early 1900s to the rise of national socialism. In contrast, the purpose of this book is to reject the temptation of explicative anachronisms, and understand *Lebensphilosophie* on its own terms. A closer examination of this “world-view” reveals the critical potential of *Lebensphilosophie* and its growing affiliation with affirmative forms of biopolitical control.

In my first chapter, I develop Mosse’s path by exploring Klages’s role in a small group of bohemian artists and poets that shaped the modern discourse of *Lebensphilosophie*. During the early 1900s most of them surrounded the poet and guru Stefan George. Mosse draws a direct line between the romantic “organic human being in contact with cosmic forces,”²² the terminology of this group—part of which called itself “the cosmics”—and Hitler: “Hitler’s aim was to construct an organic society in which every aspect of life would be integrated with its basic purpose.”²³ My discussion in chapter 1, however, demonstrates that there was much more to the group than a pre-Hitlerian demagoguery. In fact, half of the group were Jewish scholars; moreover, before the mid-1920s there was little in this group that would indicate either a general left-wing or right-wing orientation in political matters. Its organicism was developed as an alternative to bourgeois culture on either side of the political spectrum.

Mosse, like Lukacs before him, failed to appreciate that there was more to irrationalism than the arbitrary appearance of romantic concepts—especially “life force, which corresponded to the emotions of man.”²⁴ Such concepts were part of a larger discourse of aesthetics and philosophy and, even more than that, a discourse that avoided linearity, introductions, and closures. The few historical interpretations of *Lebensphilosophie*, mostly uncritical and often anachronistic, tended to emphasize Klages as a leading thinker but failed to identify clear roots or possible effects of his controversial innovations within a distinct discourse. Wilhelm Dilthey’s empathic historicism and experiencing (*Erleben*), Friedrich Nietzsche’s rejection of historicism, or Bergson’s *duree* (duration, translated to German as *Dauer*) were rarely measured against the vocabulary of life as a relevant political discourse.²⁵ This oversight led those who attempted

²⁰ Victor Klemperer, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1966), p. 20. English translations often miss the importance of vocabulary to the essence (*Wesen*) of Nazi language.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²² Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 5.

²³ Edward Ross Dickinson, “Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse about ‘Modernity,’” in *Central European History* 37:1 (2004): 1–38.

²⁴ “Das Hauptgewicht der nationalsozialistischen Sprachbeeinflussung liegt auf der neuen Sinngebung oft alter, bekannter Worte.” Manfred Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, inaugural dissertation submitted to the philosophy faculty of the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University of Greifswald (Greifswald: Hans Adler Buchdruckerei, 1935), p. 11.

²⁵ Boaz Neumann, *New German Critique* 85, Special Issue on Intellectuals (Winter 2002), 110.

more ideological readings of *Lebensphilosophie* to emphasize those contributions opposed to modernism and Enlightenment thinking, ignore all others, and explain the movement's success by underlining the ignorance, backwardness, or absolute irrationality of the period. If these accounts acknowledged that Walter Benjamin, Ernst Cassirer, or Thomas Mann were heavily invested in the vocabulary of *Lebensphilosophie* or in Klages's philosophy, they mentioned their interest, at best, as a bizarre anecdote. As a result, Klages's archive was never fully opened, and many letters were never published. Even more intriguing is the fact that German life philosophy never garnered the close attention that would have explained its wide and deep impact.

In his well-known *Antidemokratisches Denken in der Weimarer Republik*, published originally in 1962, Kurt Sontheimer names Klages as one of the prime representatives of "the vulgar *Lebensphilosophie* of the twentieth century."²⁶ He mentions Thomas Mann's notion of the "*Verhunzung der Lebensphilosophie*" (rebuken of *Lebensphilosophie*) and then moves into a short and sober description of the philosophical problems addressed by Theodor Lessing, the well-known German-Jewish *Lebensphilosoph*, and his childhood friend and philosophical muse, Ludwig Klages. Sontheimer admits that "Ludwig Klages made a great impression on his contemporaries," but faults him for his "passionate rejection of technical civilization, which [Klages saw as] bound to abandon the rational spirit."²⁷ Sontheimer never advances much beyond the conclusion that this cultural and critical pessimism (*kulturkritische Pessimismus*) was the product of a crisis.²⁸

A more sophisticated reading of pre-Nazi rhetoric developed only with the next generation of scholars. They noticed the close relation between *Lebensphilosophie* and modern philosophy, be it Nietzsche's, Dilthey's, or Bergson's. My second chapter focuses on that background, necessary to the understanding of the development of *Lebensphilosophie*. Jeffrey Herf's *Reactionary Modernism* (1984), Steven Aschheim's *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany* (1992), and Martin Jay's *Songs of Experience* (2005)

²⁶ Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, p. 13.

²⁷ "Was heisst Leben? Leben heisst *kaempfen*! Schom Heraklit sagte: Der Kampf is der Vater aller Dinge, und Nietzsche beantwortete die Frage . . . so: 'Die Welt ist der Wille zur Macht und nichts ausserdem.' Wohin du auch schaut, ueberall findest du Kampf ums Dasein, Ringen um selbsterhaltung, Arterhaltung und Entwicklung . . . Sie vergessen, dass es den Menschen nur so Scheint, weil unser Denken beschraenkt ist in *Raum und Zeit*, weil wir nicht erkennen, was sich da in der *Ewigkeit* entwickeln und erloesen will . . . Der erste Schritt zu bewusstem Leben heisst: Erkenne dich selbst! In dir selbst, in deinem Rassenerbgut liegt der geheimnisvolle Wille deines Lebens." Fritz Reinhardt, ed., Redenmaterial der NSDAP, vol. 4, article 24, "Weltanschauung, NS," p. 1. No further publication details are given; all emphases in the original. Karl Dietrich Bracher spoke of the "army of agitators" the Nazi trained in that context: Karl D. Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1969), p. 159. See also Goebbels's description of his propaganda success, based on "battalions of speakers," which he still insisted were a "mystical phenomenon" in Joseph Goebbels, *Der Angriff. Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1935), pp. 94-96.

²⁸ "Weil das Judentum mit den Gesetzen des Lebens ging, darum gab ihm das Leben recht, darum hat es heute eine weltbeherrschende Machtstellung ueber die arischen Volker erreicht." Fritz Reinhardt, ed., Redenmaterial der NSDAP, p. 3.

historicize crucial elements in *Lebensphilosophie* that led from the fin-de-siecle philosophy to the rise of fascism in Germany. These historians emphasize the central role of *Lebensphilosophie* in the general radicalization of political philosophy before and during the Weimar republic.²⁹ However, all three books characterize certain motifs *within Lebensphilosophie* while abstaining from a comprehensive argument concerning it as a whole. Narrowing the scope to how *Lebensphilosophie* understood technology (Herf), how it realized a set of Nietzschean ideas (Aschheim), or how it functioned within a new notion of experience (Jay) does not support a comprehensive argument about *Lebensphilosophie*. Steven Aschheim chooses to tackle a generational history that follows on Friedrich Nietzsche's impact. Jeffrey Herf approaches the topic from a high discussion of modernism and its irregular movement between progression and reaction. Jay looks at *Lebensphilosophie* within the discourse of its time, but limits his discussion to another modernist hesitation between the legacy of the Enlightenment and its opponents. Hence, for Herf, *Lebensphilosophie*—and Klages within it—represents a comprehensive plan to bring together modern technology and reactionary politics. “‘Life,’ he writes, ‘was the first and last thing,’ freed from any program or system. It displayed a ‘profound order.’”³⁰ For Aschheim, Klages is a representative of a general bias in *Lebensphilosophie*, “a post-Nietzschean in every sense of the term.”³¹ Aschheim characterized Klages as an heir to the Nietzschean “elemental ecstasy” and “erotic rapture” who had not been left any of “Nietzsche’s individualism,” terms that contrast those used by Herf. For Jay, Klages represents the “frankly counter-Enlightenment defense of pseudo-sciences like graphology, . . . [whom Benjamin found as] an ally in the struggle to realize a redemptive notion of experience.”³² The three meet at a point that intersects with George Mosse: “For Klages,” writes Aschheim, “the Dionysian realm was important because there life manifested itself.” Klages, he concludes, “was the most radical German exponent of irrationalist *Lebensphilosophie*.”³³

Recent histories of philosophy follow a very similar path to the one marked by historians. Karl Albert, a well-known philosopher in Berlin, interprets Klages mostly through the eyes of Georg Lukacs, who “sees in Klages ‘one that used *Lebensphilosophie* in the open struggle against reason [*Vernunft*] and culture [*Kultur*].’”³⁴

Likewise, a large majority of historians and philosophers missed the magnitude of *Lebensphilosophie* as a cultural and political “jargon” or what I call a discourse. Historians have missed the language of enthusiasms and the superlatives of life—which made

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-79*, trans. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 19.

³⁰ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 143.

³¹ Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus, and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 14.

³² Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 111.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

life much more than a causal chain of events—judging the antihistoricist *Lebensphilosophie* to be utterly nonsensical. As a result, a few questions were left unanswered: Why is *Lebensphilosophie* so closely linked with a certain negative approach to politics and ideology? What made this specific jargon the best critical tool against reason and culture?

For Lukacs and Mosse, as for their later disciples, *Lebensphilosophie* existed because Nazism did, not the reverse. They ignored the radical and critical origins of *Lebensphilosophie* during the early 1900s, its gradual formation as a discourse during the 1910s, its own politicization at the outbreak of the First World War and during the Weimar republic, and, finally, the reluctance by most *Lebensphilosophers* to accept the Nazi racial interpretation of life during the early 1930s or the rejection of almost all *Lebensphilosophers* by Nazism during the late 1930s. Their oversight does not remove responsibility from *Lebensphilosophie* or *Lebensphilosophers*, but it does mean that Nazism cannot be taken as an explanation for *Lebensphilosophie*. A recent revival of interest in *Lebensphilosophie* is telling enough: a group of highly sophisticated Benjamin scholars, on the one hand, and a group of radical biopolitical critics, on the other hand, are ample proof for that.

2. Benjaminia

In 1930 Walter Benjamin recommended to his close friend, Gershom Scholem—a Kabbalah scholar living in Jerusalem—that he read Klages’s philosophical work. “I took a rather perfunctory look at the first volume; to study it thoroughly would take many weeks. It is, without a doubt, a great philosophical work, regardless of the context in which the author may be and remain suspect.”³⁵ Shortly thereafter, responding to a complaint from Scholem, who found Palestine an excessively “Nietzschean” place, Benjamin counseled him to read Klages’s interpretation of Nietzsche.³⁶ This exchange with Scholem followed almost two decades of Benjamin’s intense interest in the *Lebensphilosophie*, and psychologist Werner Fuld, perhaps the first to touch on Benjamin’s curious interest in Klages, explains it by repeating Scholem’s observation concerning Benjamin’s interest in the “subversive radicalization of reactionary authors.”³⁷ More recently, a group of Benjamin experts cited this relationship as one of the more significant from the perspective of Benjamin research. John McCole, Ansgar Hillach, Horst

³⁵ Vitalpolitik is grounded in the principle of growth or reduction that lies at the bottom of all competitive systems: economic, organic-physiological, or totalitarian. It assumes that politics, economics, society, and the individual all share the same form and image of the living body. It is exactly this shared body, or “synthesis of individuals,” according to Foucault, that allows the system to have “no explicit contract, no voluntary union, no renunciation of rights, and no delegation of natural rights to someone else. In short, there is no constitution of sovereignty by a sort of pact of subjection.” Ibid., pp. 242-243, 300.

³⁶ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 259.

³⁷ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 137.

Bredekamp, Irving Wohlfarth, Michael Jennings, Joseph Mali, and the late Miriam Bratu Hansen, among others, have all pointed out the importance of Klages's *Lebensphilosophie* to Benjamin's critical philosophy and politics. The major voices among literary theoreticians, as in the case of historians and philosophers, could be divided between those reading Benjamin's interest in *Lebensphilosophie* with or against the legacy of rationalism and the Enlightenment: a group that reads Benjamin's interest in *Lebensphilosophie* as a subversive political tool and a group that sees it mostly via the prism of radical aesthetics. None of the researchers has ever contemplated the thought of *Lebensphilosophie* as a discourse that stands in the middle of a wider political reality with different ramifications. Nevertheless, some of them have made excellent interpretations in this field. John McCole's *The Antinomies of Tradition* was among the first to portray and analyze Benjamin's interest in Klages in a systematic way. McCole historicized Benjamin's interest in different marginal thinkers during his studies in Munich, between 1915-1917, and his interest in "draw[ing] precise distinctions among the various members of the [George] circle," focusing on Ludwig Klages.³⁸ McCole argues that Benjamin developed a two-pronged response to Klages's stress on a mythical vitalism, and "both were at the center of his concerns in this period: One . . . was not to deny the existence or power of mythic images but to develop a theory capable of permeating them with historical knowledge."³⁹ A second response was "to articulate a positive theory of *Technik* that would transcend the crude dualism on which *Lebensphilosophie* was founded. Benjamin suggested several times that a detailed reckoning with Klages remained a desideratum."⁴⁰ McCole is correct to identify that Benjamin did not see Klages "as the only target of this argument,"⁴¹ but rather made an attempt to answer *Lebensphilosophie* via Klages. Irving Wohlfarth writes that Benjamin "was a discriminating reader of Ludwig Klages"⁴² and used Klages as a critical tactic: "Ben-

³⁸ Foucault uses this term in *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 248.

³⁹ "It has been evident for a number of centuries how, in the general consciousness, the thought of death has become less omnipresent and less vivid . . . In the course of the nineteenth century, bourgeois society—by means of medical and social, private and public institutions—realized a secondary effect, which may have been its subconscious main purpose: to enable people to avoid the sight of the dying." Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Selected Writings*, vol. 3:1: 1935-1938 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 151.

⁴⁰ For a short but coherent description of Foucault's notion of biopower and biopolitics, see Chloe Taylor, "Biopower," in *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (Durham, NC: Acumen, 2011), p. 48.

⁴¹ "Heute, glaube ich, geht ein immer starker anwachsendes Raunen durch Millionen und aber Millionen Menschen Seelen . . . eines tiefen Wissens, dass wir in einer der grosten Zeiten und Weltenwende leben, in einer Epoche, die einen bis in die Wurzeln gehenden Umbruch nicht nur auf einigen Gebieten des Daseins, sondern fur unser ganzes Lebensgefuhl bedeutet." Alfred Rosenberg, "Der Kampf um die Weltanschauung," *Redenmateriel der NSDAP*, ed. Fritz Reinhardt, p. 5.

⁴² The Reich's minister of education explained on January 15, 1935, that the first priority of the Reich was political education, and he went on to say that "allein die Biologie kann den Begriff der Rasse und Vererbung und die rassischen Lebensgesetze von der Seite der Tatsachen-Forschung her zwingend entwickeln." *Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie 1: Schriften uber Familie, Volk und Rasse* (Berlin: Zentralverlag der NSDAP/Fritz Eher Verlag, 1938), p. 7.

jamin identifies the medium within which the encounter between modern man and the cosmos is to take place . . . To cross Klages with Kant, Hegel and Marx—with *Aufklaerung* [Enlightenment]— . . . and to cross the Enlightenment with Klages: this is the way to the planetarium. Benjamin steepes himself in Klages’s and [Johann Jakob] Bachofen’s worlds of myth, aura, and ritual, the better to distance himself of them.”⁴³ Ansgar Hillach emphasized the intense interest Klages and Benjamin shared in relation to images and action: “Ludwig Klages, whom Benjamin had read and, at least for a time, regarded highly, calls this expressive movement the ‘metaphor of action,’ . . . [which] tends toward a general characteristic—e.g., opposition—which is sought as an impression or an experience.” The form of expression of fighting transforms this relation into its opposite; it is “fulfilled by the breaking of opposition . . . in a vitalistic sense, [and] such an impulse can be understood as a general life force or as the will to destruction.”⁴⁴ Michael Jennings reminded us that the context for Benjamin’s interpretation of Baudelaire was “the structures of historical time” from an unexpected perspective, mostly mediated via Georg Simmel’s interpretation of origin and life (in Goethe) and Klages’s and Jung’s interpretation of phantasmagoria as “collective psychology.”⁴⁵

Miriam Bratu Hansen followed another track of Benjamin researchers, which is the idea of the aura. Her explanation and clarification of this interest is worth our attention, as it unpacks beautifully this surprising relationship between Benjamin and Klages. Benjamin, according to Hansen, was interested in the quality of the “aura” as a “transgenerational symbol-space” that allowed Benjamin “to recognize the new once again and the incorporation of new images,” all leading in her eyes to “how substantially he was thinking at one with, through, and against Klages.”⁴⁶ Klages’s writings, “properly fragmented,” provided Benjamin with not only an abundance of insights and motifs, but also a foil and catalyst that helped him formulate his own approach to technological modernity. Central to this theory of experience was Klages’s concept of

⁴³ “Fehlt es an einer solchen Erziehung, so entstehen ‘Politiker,’ deren Wesen und Gefahr keiner klarer durchschaut und gezeichnet hat als der Fuhrer des neuen Deutschland, Adolf Hitler. Er hat auch in seiner eigenen Entwicklung ein unumstossliches Vorbild fur solche politische Erziehung gegeben.” Hans Gerber, ed., *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934), p. vi.

⁴⁴ “[D]ie Universitat . . . muss vielmehr auch den Gehalt der personlichen Uberzeugung bilden.” Ibid.

⁴⁵ “Was aber ist es, was den immer wechselnden Strom des Lebens uber die Erde hintreibt?” Ernst Lehmann, “Der Einfluss der Biologie auf unser Weltbild,” in *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934), p. 131.

⁴⁶ “Alle biologischen Erfahrungen sprechen dafur, dass dieses Prinzip eine uberragende Rolle im Entwicklungsgeschehen spielt . . . Jedermann weiss nun aus den unzahligen traurigen Buchern der Gegenwart, dass unser deutsches Volk bei der immer starker zuruckgehenden Geburtzahl diesem Grundsatz der Selektionstheorie nicht mehr gerecht wird. Biopolitisch sind uns die Volker an unserer Ostgrenze durch ihre viel hohere Geburtzahl weitgehend uberlegen.” Ibid., p. 138.

the image or *Bild*, epitomized by the so-called *Urbild*, the “daemonically enchanted image that transforms ordinary objects into visions or epiphanies.”⁴⁷

My third chapter discusses the relationship between Benjamin and Klages in detail, as well as how a discursive understanding of *Lebensphilosophie* could contribute to our understanding of the different political and philosophical variations, and where Benjamin himself is located within it. The frame for this particular story is the “Bachofen debate” of the mid-1920s. As Joseph Mali explained it in *Mythistory*, Benjamin considered the contribution of Klages and Bachofen—Klages helped to revive him during the early 1920s—to be central to his own thinking: “Benjamin duly saw that Bachofen’s ‘regressive’ attempt to ascertain the mythological compulsions in modernity did not necessarily entail reactionary political ideology; rather, it was . . . a critical attempt.”⁴⁸ A careful examination of the discourse, during the mid-1920s, demonstrates that while Benjamin was indeed interested in the progressive and subversive elements of it, Klages was interested in a more conservative (albeit not less subversive) version of it. Finally, a third, more political strand evolved out of this exchange, a chapter that was transformed into the core of Nazi rhetoric. *Lebensphilosophie* marks the paradoxical point of convergence as well as separation of those worlds.

Biopolitical thinkers have extended this discussion of Benjamin from their particular fields—whether modern culture, science, politics, or the image—to an interdisciplinary investigation that placed at its core a present theory of law and its inherent relation to the concept of life. Agamben analyzed different texts by Benjamin in his *Man without Content* (1997) through *The State of Exception* (2005). Together with Eric Santner, Mladen Dolar, Eva Geulen, Astrid Deuber-Mankowsky, Kenneth Reinhardt, and others,⁴⁹ he repositioned Benjamin as a current post-postmodern thinker who enables us to reconsider the politics of life in the post-9/11 world. Benjamin’s “thesis opposes a ‘real’ [*wirklich*] state of exception, which it is our task to bring about,” writes Agamben, “to the state of exception in which we live, which has become the rule . . . Law that becomes indistinguishable from life in a real state of exception is confronted by life that . . . is entirely transformed into law.”⁵⁰ If, as Agamben notes, “today there is not even a single instant in which the life of individuals is not modeled, contaminated, or controlled by some apparatus,” our first task is to document and map both the models and the critical responses.⁵¹ Our second is “to bring to light the Ungovernable, which is the beginning and, at the same time, the vanishing point

⁴⁷ “Kein Zweifel aber auch: Nicht nur in Nordamerika gibt es eine Negerfrage, nicht nur in aller Welt eine Judenfrage u.s.f.-in jedes deutsche Haus ist durch die Arbeit Hans Gunthers die Kenntnis gedrungen von der rassischen Verschiedenheit innerhalb unseres Volkes.” *Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁴⁸ Sheila Faith Weiss, “Pedagogy, Professionalism, and Politics: Biology Instruction during the Third Reich,” in *Science, Technology, and National Socialism*, ed. Monika Renneberg and Mark Weller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 189.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 193.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

⁵¹ See James G. Lennox, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Biology: Studies in the Origins of Life Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 129.

of every politics.”⁵² Only a careful history of the 1920s discourse—which still hovers above us—could expose the weak spots and the positive potentialities of life and its politics, the suppressed and the “Ungovernable.” Klages and Benjamin’s insistence on the ur-image, on the one hand, and the Nietzschean *Rausch* (ecstasy) on the other, indicate a conscious attempt to do so.⁵³ Agamben drew much attention with a general claim: “In the ‘politicization’ of bare life—the metaphysical task *par excellence*—the humanity of living man is decided.”⁵⁴ But Agamben’s own analysis never historicized this claim properly.

The second task of this book, then, is to try to identify the present and future of this discourse, its dead ends, and its revolutionary potential.

3. Characterology and anti-Freudian Lebensphilosophie

Werner Fuld suggests that Benjamin’s interest in Klages during the 1920s was an outcome of his agreement with Klages’s rejection of Freudian psychology.⁵⁵ This rejection and its remolding by Klages and other *Lebensphilosophers* occupies my fourth chapter. In it I focus on the contribution of *Lebensphilosophie* to an anti-Freudian psychology, identified with a post-Nietzschean “depth psychology” or a Klagesian “characterology,” itself the careful elaboration of a late romantic discourse. In a review written in 1938 Thea Stein-Lewinson introduced Klages’s graphology and psychology to the English reader. Her conceptual synthetic evaluation of Klages’s contribution is still one of the best ever written.

Stein-Lewinson opens her review by stating the most important factor of Klages’s system as a whole: “His philosophy is not logocentric but biocentric; the world of man is a battlefield between soul and mind.”⁵⁶ Stein-Lewinson was the first non-German to explain in a methodical way how, according to Klages, “there is unity of character

⁵² Tobias Schneider has denied that Klages ever subscribed to Nazi anti-Semitism. See Schneider, “Ideologische Grabenkämpfe: Der Philosoph Ludwig Klages und der Nationalsozialismus 1933-1938,” in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 49:2 (2001): 275-294.

⁵³ Hannah Arendt came close to Klages’s claim but with the opposite ideological conclusions; she recognized Aristotle as the creator of a Western *bios politikos*, which she tied to the concepts of *praxis* and *lexis* (speech), the cornerstones of modern democratic politics. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958), pp. 12, 25.

⁵⁴ Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, in *Samtliche Werke*, vol. 2 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1966), p. 866. This passage first appeared in a much shorter book entitled *Geist und Seele*, which Klages published in 1918; he integrated much of that book into *Der Geist* in 1929.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 867.

⁵⁶ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, Deutsche Literaturarchiv am Marbach (henceforth DLA), Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

in all the volitional movements of any individual,”⁵⁷ and how this unity is related to the living principle: “Every state of the living body is the expression of an impulse system.”⁵⁸ Klages’s ability to tie together psychology, character, representation, expression, and impression made him the leading graphologist of his generation: “As a result of Klages’s leadership, graphology has been used as a psychodiagnostic method in Europe for the last three decades and has found practical applications.”⁵⁹ Still, the scarce historical work done in this field was not able to expose the intricate ties among different psychological schools, Klagesian characterology, graphology, “psychodiagnostics,” and contemporaneous politics, and art. A few excellent works explored in depth such topics as Gestalt psychology and the reception of anti-Freudianism in Germany. The first to remind us about German psychology and the heavy investment of *Lebensphilosophie* in it was the historian of psychology, Ulfried Geuter, during the early 1980s.⁶⁰ Geuter’s narrative follows mostly the division between a postenlightened psychology and the postromantic psychology in Germany; the psychological chapter of *Lebensphilosophie* naturally fell into the latter. Jacob Golomb, a philosopher from Jerusalem who worked extensively on Nietzsche’s philosophy, helped to place much of Klages’s post-Nietzschean psychology as the inheritor of Nietzsche’s depth psychology. Mitchell G. Ash identified this worldview as “the dynamic flow of interrelationship between the ‘totality of human nature’ and the world Dilthey called simply ‘life’ or ‘life itself.’”⁶¹ Ash’s contribution, now considered a standard text in the history of psychology, also portrayed the close relationship between 1920s psychology and life philosophy via the development of characterology and psychodiagnostics. “From outside the university came yet another challenge,” writes Ash, “from proponents of so-called

⁵⁷ This was the same Bodeschule für Körperziehung München, in Schloss Nymphenburg, still known to many Bavarians: <http://www.bode-schule.de>.

⁵⁸ Bode summarized his philosophy as follows:

1. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind Bewegungen des ganzen Körpers. Niemals beobachten wir eine isolierte Bewegung (Prinzip der *Totalität*).
2. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen verlaufen rhythmische, d.h. sie nehmen ihren Ausgang von den grossen Körpermuskeln . . . (Prinzip der *Rhythmik*).
3. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind aufeinander abgestimmt, so dass bei geringstem Kraftaufwand die grösste Krafwirkung erzielt wird. Dieser Abstimmung entspricht die Abstimmung im Formverhältnis der Körperteile zueinander (Prinzip der *Form*).
4. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit langsamen Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem entspannten Muskelzustand und münden wieder in diesen (Prinzip der *Entspannung* oder der *Schwere*).
5. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit schnellem Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem Gleichgewichtsverhältnis antagonistischer Muskelspannungen. Die Bewegung entsteht durch Spannung der einen Muskelgruppe und Entspannung der anderen (Prinzip der *Vorbereitung*).

Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁵⁹ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 127.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Hitlerrummel mit allem Tamtam eingesetzt.” Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, April 2, 1927, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 47.

‘scientific graphology’ and ‘characterology,’ led by Ludwig Klages. With the help of handwriting analysis, Klages and his followers claimed to discover people’s true inner lives behind their ‘masks of courtesy.’⁶² As other historians of psychology demonstrate, anti-Freudian life philosophy was driven by a small set of key references, among them Dilthey, Nietzsche, and Bachofen, the latter a popular reference during the 1920s, mostly due to Klages and his disciples. Werner Bohleber and, most recently, Anthony Kauders have focused on the anti-Freudian psychology that covered some important strands within *Lebensphilosophie*.⁶³ Kauders found quite a few of Klages’s disciples among those vocal opponents of Freudian psychoanalysis who rejected it in favor of “life that confronts us in all of its animated varieties” and “the special ‘power of life.’”⁶⁴

In spite of growing attention given to such elements as these converging with *Lebensphilosophie*, no systematic attempt was made to unpack this convergence between *Lebensphilosophie* as a political, aesthetic, psychological, or biopolitical philosophy. One of the contributions of this book is to follow such ties as part of the general history of *Lebensphilosophie* and its corresponding integration into the Nazi system, not as an independent psychological system, but as part of an alternative view of life and its inherent relation to death, the inhumane, and the transsubjective. Klagesian *Charakterologie*—adapted later by key elements in the Nazi regime (a plan to train SS officers in characterology was in the making during the 1940s)—was meant to shape a different human temporality based on biological potential, not the evolution of qualities in a dynamic personality.

4. Biocentrism

A book published in 1933 under the title *Biologie, Nationalsozialismus und neue Erziehung* (Biology, national socialism, and education) summarized the achievements of the previous decades: “All relevant powers of the people, for the importance of life and the shaping of fate, are biological.”⁶⁵ Countless publications aimed at educators and functionaries throughout the Third Reich repeated that same point. Any understanding of the collective and the individual must pass through the biological. More than just a system, the biological here meant a principle of operation.

⁶² Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, December 13, 1930, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 5. See also Erich von Ludendorff, *Weltkrieg droht auf deutschem Boden: Broschur* (Munich: Faksimile-Verlag, 1931).

⁶³ For the first, see the analysis of Laure Guilbert, *Danser avec le IIIe Reich: les danseurs modernes sous le nazisme* (Brussels: Complexe, 2000), p. 152. For the latter, see Rudolf Bode, *Angriff und Gestaltung* (Berlin: Widukind Verlag, 1939).

⁶⁴ “Das Ziel ist: Die . . . Bewegung hervorgehen zu lassen aus der Instinktiven Sicherheit in der Erzeugung natürlicher Bewegung, wie sie jedes Tier und auf jedes körperlich unverdorbene Kind hat.” Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁶⁵ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, p. 128.

Biocentrism—a concept popularized during the 1920s—was seen as the “apparatus” carrying any form of life into the psychology of the individual, the politics of the collective, the aesthetics and temporality of any order and existence.

A growing contemporaneous interest in biocentrism, bio-information, bionics, biotechnology, depth ecology, and different aspects of biopolitics and bioethics brought much attention to the heavy legacy of *Lebensphilosophie* in general and of Ludwig Klages in particular. Chapter 5 of this book reviews some of the relevant history of biocentrism and traces its path from a popular postromantic worldview to a modern Nazi science of race. The “micro-history” of the Klages group—including mostly journalists or enigmatic, forgotten thinkers—and of its gradual involvement with the Nazi regime traces the more general process occurring to *Lebensphilosophie*.⁶⁶ Read against the general history of the elitist German conservative revolution, in which many of the life philosophers—Klages included—were usually placed by historians, this chapter follows life philosophy beyond it. In the years since Hermann Rauschning’s treatise, *The Conservative Revolution*, was published in 1941, three works on biopolitics and the conservative revolution have appeared. Roger Woods’s *Conservative Revolution in the Weimar Republic*, Stefan Breuer’s *Anatomie der konservativen Revolution*, and Jeffrey Herf’s *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* are just a few of the better examples of comprehensive historical works on what became a well-known term relating to such figures as Klages, Ernst Junger, Gottfried Benn, Martin Heidegger, and Carl Schmitt.

In contrast, my close reading of *Lebensphilosophie* shifts the center of attention of a generational, political emphasis to a discursive one. Rather than discussing many of these figures in terms of their national or generational loyalties, this book views their discursive loyalty as precedent to their political affiliation. The demands made by *Lebensphilosophie*—and only later those made by personal loyalty—forced Klages to support national socialism. Such an emphasis does not clean Klages or his support group of their ingrained anti-Semitic worldview, but it identifies this anti-Semitism with their general notion of life. The result was an agreement with the Nazi identification of the self with life and the Jew with death, even when disagreeing with how the Nazis carried this plan forward, that is, to the death camps.

A different sort of confusion characterizes how we understand biopolitics today. Chapter 6 returns to the more general discussion of biopolitics and traces the first appearance of the term “biopolitical” in those circumstances and that specific discourse of life forms. Biopolitics was created, as a thought, during the high days of *Lebensphilosophie*, after it was politicized by the Nazi regime. As Sheila Faith Weiss writes, “The politicization of biology education was not an invention of Nazi pedagogues and was

⁶⁶ Ibid.

not merely imposed from above after 1933.”⁶⁷ After all, a history of *Lebensphilosophie* traces the growing identification between this corpus of life concepts and what the German education system came to see, during the 1920s, as the proper “*Lebenskunde*, the ‘teaching of life’ or ‘science of life’—a name that seemed to support the broader philosophical outlook long since held by most biology teachers.”⁶⁸

By adapting *Lebensphilosophie* into their view of biopolitics, the Nazis kept the revolutionary instinct of this philosophy while applying it in a reactionary political context. From our perspective, a careful separation of earlier uses of biocentrism by *Lebensphilosophers* and the later understanding of the term points out the semantic change.

In a sentence, biocentrism is shifting from an aesthetic context to a political one. The course of Klages’s *Urbild* is a good illustration of this change. If during the early 1900s it was used mostly for aesthetic purposes, since the late 1920s it was gradually taken by Nazi theoreticians and applied in a genetic and exclusionary context. The concept of biocentrism was coined and shaped during the period of change by a few *Lebensphilosophers* and adapted by the later Nazi biopolitics.

The very few texts dedicated to biocentrism have pointed out the necessary relation between the 1920s discourse of life, the radical critique of normative politics, and the different aesthetic experiments. Nicholas Agar describes it in a short text: “Life,” he writes, “does not seem to be similarly connected to normative concepts.”⁶⁹ Biocentrism represents, from this perspective, a “rejection of any hierarchy in nature” and a “revolution in moral thinking, . . . much more radical than that urged on by the animal welfarist.”⁷⁰ In short, the biocentrist core pushes our limits beyond the usual identification of a post-Nietzschean animalism and instinctiveness toward a new world of meaning based on the ontological power of human temporality, or finality, and its representation: “According to this approach a representation is a structure whose biofunction is to directly modify or funnel the impact of environmental forces through to movement or behavior.”⁷¹

⁶⁷ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, February 6, 1941, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8373, letter no. 17.

⁶⁸ For Bode and his role see also Tobias Schneider, “Ideologische Grabenkämpfe,” pp. 283-284.

⁶⁹ “Denn theoretisch habe ich immer und immer betont, dass die einseitige Unterjochung des Körpers unter die Gewalt des Geistes, genannt ‘Körperherrschaft,’ die Gefahr einer Verflachung und Vernegerung des Seelischen in sich birgt, denn alle Zweckhaftigkeit ist zielstrebig und nur in einseitig eingegrenzten Bahnlängen vollzieht sich der ‘Störunglose’ Ablauf der Bewegung . . . Dieses verläuft aber nicht in zielstrebigem Bahnen, sondern in rhythmischen! Und praktisch habe ich das Übermaß der Zielstrebigkeit bekämpft, indem ich die Schwindung, jenes geheime Vibrieren, das den Menschen nicht nur mit dem Menschen, sondern auch mit aller Natur verbindet.” Rudolf Bode, “Körpererziehung und Kultur,” in *Der Rhythmus, Zeitschrift für gymnastische Erziehung Mitteilungen des Bodebundes* 5:3 (July-September 1927): 99.

⁷⁰ “[Die] höchste Offenbarung . . . zum Grundprinzip aller körperlichen Bildung machte und dessen Wiedererweckung als das eigentliche pädagogische Problem der Gegenwart aufstellte.” Ibid.

⁷¹ “Alle Bewegungen müssen sich von innen entladen als rhythmischgeformte, in dem Sinn, dass die Bewegung von einem Zentrum aus auf den ganzen Körper überstrahlt.” Rudolf Bode, “Die Bedeutung

A recent book dedicated to biocentrism and experimental arts focuses again on the German 1920s and the unique relation between radical politics, political philosophy, and different experiments with aesthetics. According to Oliver Botar, one of the editors,

The transposition of the scientific debate to the metaphysical plane and the search for authentic expression was most famously and most radically carried out by Klages in his 1929 magnum opus, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* [Intellect as the Enemy of the Soul]. Following the critiques of Bloch and Georg Lukacs, Klages's book was received curiously as a John the Baptist-like preparing of the way for Hitler's messianic anti-rationalism, or alternatively, it was praised as a searing critique of the instrumental modern consciousness before even Heidegger engaged in it. As Fellmann has pointed out, a more nuanced view of Klages and his thought would be helpful.⁷²

For Botar, biocentrism should be understood as "Nature Romanticism updated by the Biologism of the mid-to-late nineteenth century" and part of the modern fascination with "philosophical worldviews and cultural concepts of Biocentrism, Bioromantik, and Biomorphism, . . . [s]haped by the *Lebensphilosophie*" of Nietzsche, Bergson, Simmel, and

Klages, or by a related group of German scientists such as Ernst Haeckel, Hans Driesch, and Raoul France.⁷³ It was the last and the least known, France, who invented the concept of biocentrism in 1920, as part of his Munich-based Biocentric Institute and his biocentric philosophy, typically describing a long list of "types," "life configurations," and "primary forms of being."⁷⁴

5. For a better definition of *Lebensphilosophie*

It is crucial to conclude this introduction with a more consistent attempt to define and historicize *Lebensphilosophie*.

Lebensphilosophie—the philosophy of life (*Leben*) or living experience (*Erleben*)—was rooted in bodily experiences seen as extending and perhaps contradicting

der körperlichen Bewegung für die Erneuerung der deutschen Kultur," *Rhythmus* 13, pp. 286-293. See also Norbert Hopster and Ulrich Nassen, *Literatur und Erziehung im Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1983), p. 53.

⁷² "Unsere Aufgabe als Hochschullehrer ist es, sie zu gestalten: eine neue Erkenntnislehre, eine neue Ethik, die Wissenschaft der uns artgemässen totalen Lebensordnung unseres Volkes." Hans Lohr, "Wesen und Sinn der nationalsozialistischen Akademie des NSD-Dozentenbundes der Christian-Albrechts-Universität," in *Kieler Blätter*, no. 1 (1938): 40. Quoted in Monika Leske, *Philosophen im "Dritten Reich", Studie zu Hochschulkund Philosophiebetrieben im faschistischen Deutschland* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1990), p. 81.

⁷³ "Sprache ist nicht bloss äussere Form, gute Sprache nicht Schmuck des Lebens, sondern Ausdruck der volkischen Denkform und Denkweise. Darum bedeutet Zucht der Sprache zugleich Zucht des Denkens und des Charakters." Ernst Krieck, *Dichtung und Erziehung* (Leipzig: ArmanenVerlag, 1941), p. 147.

⁷⁴ "Die Sprachgesetz des Volkes . . . seiner besonderen *Lebensaufgaben* und seines eigentümlichen *Lebenssinns* kommt." Ernst Krieck, *Die Wirklichkeit*, vol. 1 of *Volkisch-politische Anthropologie* (Leipzig: Armanen, 1936), p. 39 (emphases in the original).

the conventional interests of philosophy. Largely speaking, the chronology of *Lebensphilosophie* should trace its course from the early anti-Enlightenment origins to romanticism, the Dilthey-Nietzsche period, early modernism, political radicalism, and finally to Nazism and the fusion of *Lebensphilosophie* with biopolitics.

The first *Lebensphilosophers* were identified with the late eighteenth century, pro-vegetarian *Diatatiks* and early environmentalism.⁷⁵ But not until the turn of the nineteenth century did *Lebensphilosophie* become a widely shared vocabulary. The first journal dedicated to *Lebensphilosophie* was established during the 1790s, and by the 1830s a few books attested to the popularity of the new approach, often trying to gain legitimacy from classical sources in Greek and Roman philosophy.⁷⁶ In 1827 the Jena romantics did much to further the aestheticization of *Lebensphilosophie*, and the most notable work that emerged from this milieu was Friedrich von Schlegel's *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie des Lebens* (Lectures about the philosophy of life, 1827).⁷⁷ Schlegel attacked the systematic philosophy of the day and advocated "*einheit der Gesinnung*" (unity of conviction) against the Kantian separation of cognition and analysis from the world. As Robert J. Richards shows in his comprehensive *Romantic Conception of Life*, the majority of the romantics in Germany shared this inclination to freedom outside scientific and materialistic boundaries; they would rather focus on the concept of life, or "life force" (*Lebenskraft*), as they liked to call it, an idea that suggested, "at least according to Schelling, that nature could act freely, without constraint of natural law."⁷⁸ Peter Reill's stimulating *Vitalizing Nature in the Enlightenment* demonstrates that the romantic science of nature—*Naturphilosophie*—created a new worldview at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and should be understood as a new "'dynamic language' of nature . . . [that] stood in stark contrast to the language of change evolved by Enlightened vitalists."⁷⁹ In the German *Naturphilosophie*, science-oriented romantics such as Carl Gustav Carus (1789-1869)—one of Klages's sources of inspiration—placed the soul above any matter and the image above the object. "Carus, as all of the *Naturphilosophen*," writes Reill, "did not consider the body the determinant of the psyche, but rather the vessel of its spiritual principles."⁸⁰

Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi, Novalis (the pseudonym of Friedrich von Hardenberg), Ignaz Paul Vitalis Troxler, and Lorenz Oken can all be considered contributors to a philosophy devoted to ur-images and to the soul of nature, often contrasted with the post-Kantian motivation for *Bildung* (education, cultivation, and civilization). After

⁷⁵ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 231, 238.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 284.

⁷⁷ Ernst Cassirer, *Zur Metaphysik der symbolischen Formen, Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1995), p. 24.

⁷⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 26.

⁷⁹ Peter E. Gordon, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 75.

⁸⁰ Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 53.

the contributions of Friedrich Nietzsche and Wilhelm Dilthey, German philosophers took another step away from empirical and measured nature, deeper into the unquantifiable soul, both collective and individual. As Anne Harrington shows in her work on holism in German science, the metaconcepts of *Ganzheit* (whole), *Leben* (life), and *Erleben* (living experience) stood above all, demonstrating how tropes of life served both consciously or unconsciously, both constructing a sense of reality and simultaneously used as tools for understanding it, portraying both the collective as a complete, united, harmonious form and the individual soul as its seed, letter, image.⁸¹ Supplying an ideal—often fictive—notation of the past, *Naturphilosophie* and early *Lebensphilosophie* stood against the more authoritarian voice of historicism. The gap was bridged with Wilhelm Dilthey's hermeneutics of life. Hans-Georg Gadamer, looking back at the process that led from the early nineteenth century's organic and empirical language to Dilthey's hermeneutics, concludes that "[Dilthey's] coined word *Erlebnis*, of course, expresses the criticism of Enlightenment rationalism, which . . . emphasized the concept of life [*Leben*]."⁸² After rebelling against the Enlightenment rationality, *Lebensphilosophie* rebelled against the conventional voice of nineteenth-century historians who depicted history as a clear story line, made up of facts, known events, and a chain of great figures. *Lebensphilosophie*'s version of history argued in favor of a factual but nonlinear and anti-enlightened storyline. During the nineteenth century, then, *Lebensphilosophie* chose the path of resistance to consensual forms of thinking. This rebelliousness became its credo during the early 1900s.

The editors of the *Historisches Worterbuch der Philosophie* (The historical dictionary of philosophy) identified early twentieth-century *Lebensphilosophie* with German or German-educated thinkers such as Ludwig Klages, Theodor Lessing, Jose Ortega y Gasset, Oswald Spengler, and Richard Muller-Freienfels. These names mean little if anything to readers of our own day, but they were known to every reader of the early 1900s newspapers. These men brought the philosophy of life into the heart of the artistic community, popularized the philosophy as a *weltanschauung*, and, most importantly, helped rework the vocabulary as a political and a temporal tool. "Totality, whole, organism—these are the leading concepts of this perspective on life . . . The development of reality would be judged here not as progress or development, but as eternal cyclical rotation [*Kreislauf*]."⁸³

The *Historisches Worterbuch* defines *Lebensphilosophie* as a cluster of concepts and describes it as a uniquely German phenomenon, unknown to Anglophone or Franco-

⁸¹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 33, 39.

⁸² Oliver A. I. Botar, "Raoul France and National Socialism: A Problematic Relationship," a paper given to the Fifth International Congress of Hungarian Studies, Jyväskylä, Finland, 2011, p. 8. I thank Professor Botar for sharing this unpublished paper with me.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

phone cultures.⁸⁴ Its principal advocates, according to the editors of the dictionary, made up the school of life hermeneutics that sprang from Wilhelm Dilthey during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The movement, they argue, developed in a few directions, united by an emphasis on resistance. An alternative to normative culture, the movement mostly focused on the relationship between biology (or psychology) and the philosophical understanding of life. What, then, was the source of its power?

If a lesson has to be drawn here, it concerns the power of words. “I take the world to be a vast symbolic language,” Klages wrote as early as 1910, “which must be deciphered by speculative absorption. We do not observe facts, but look them in the face and ask what vital pulse, what secret constructive impulse, or what evolution of the soul, seems to speak in these lines.”⁸⁵ Unfortunately, Klages did not have the courage to look his own words “in the face” at the end of World War II. He peered back to the early 1920s, a period of radicalism and openness to Jews, and then he performed a series of surgical operations on his own archive and his post-1933 correspondence. Many letters from those years are missing; some entire years are gone. Sometimes it is just one line here or there blacked out with pen, but one can still manage to make out the humiliating passages about Jewish erudite “apes” and American efficient “murderousness.”

The end was not pretty for Klages. Still, it was his *Lebensphilosophie* that seduced both the educated (*gebildet*) and the intellectual elite, before the Nazi butchers pounced on it, and it is that early discourse that is still very much present in our intellectual surroundings. By refusing to accept responsibility for their own mistakes, which included making *Lebensphilosophie* the sole reservoir of metaphors for German right-wing reactionaries, *Lebensphilosophers* who survived the war guaranteed its suppression. That earlier *Lebensphilosophie* flourished, thanks to the Jewish intellectuals who carried it across the borders of Germany. Walter Benjamin was only the best known among them. The current

stress on life within the context of biopolitical critique closes a circle by bringing the present back to a set of terms and emphases of the 1920s. As argued in the following chapters, we are still trying to come to terms with the radical aesthetics of that period and its impact on our politics and ethics.

In 1933 Eric Voegelin wrote in *Race and State*, “In general we recommend that those who have so much to say about spirit and soul read, among other things, some

⁸⁴ Rene Romain Roth, *Raoul H. France and the Doctrine of Life* (Bloomington, Ind.: First Books Library, 2000), p. 176. France is also known as the inventor of the concept of biotechnology, which he identified with “the study of living and life-like systems” (p. 109).

⁸⁵ Botar’s paper traces the explicit references to France’s work among the artistic avant-garde of the 1920s, among them well-known names such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Fritz Neumeyer, Mies van der Rohe, and El Lissitzky.

works by Klages—not in order to adopt his theories but simply to learn what they are actually dealing with.”⁸⁶ Let us, then, examine some works by Klages.

⁸⁶ Oliver A. I. Botar, “Defining Biocentrism,” in *Biocentrism and Modernism*, ed. Oliver A. I. Botar and Isabel Wunsche (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 17-18.

1. From the Beginning of Life to the End of the World

In May 1932 Ludwig Klages, a pioneer of modern vitalism and of graphology, published the third and final volume of *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (Spirit as the adversary of the soul). An autodidact, Klages compiled in this book almost 20 years' worth of research and publication. Developing a system he hoped would remedy a world gone mad, Klages began by rejecting all limits and boundaries, proposing in their stead a philosophy based on "life's flow" (*Strom des Lebens*) and "the reality of images" (*Wirklichkeit der Bilder*). The two concepts were heavily embedded in the jargon of *Lebensphilosophie*, a concept identified with Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), and Henri Bergson (1859-1941) in the late nineteenth century. All three philosophers, and Klages in turn, tried to reassess the contribution of German idealism to contemporary culture. In so doing, they rejected the notion of a scientific telos and idealist truth value in favor of an "aesthetic fundamentalism."¹ While Nietzsche, Dilthey, and Bergson are considered to be "serious" philosophers, Klages is considered by the historians and thinkers discussed in this book as the principal father of Nazi rhetoric and a vital promoter of the irrational opposition to Enlightenment values.

Klages's case is a paradigmatic one. Like other radical conservatives, he observed Nazism as a movement of the masses that served as a temporary transporter of much deeper philosophies. Like other opportunists, he considered using Nazism for his own purposes, and then found himself cheated by it and betrayed by his fellow party representatives. As I will show in this chapter and beyond, the heart of Klages's agreement with the Nazi credo rested in its anti-Semitic messages. Klages identified Judaism and its forms as objectionable on a biological basis but also as a philosophy and a form. His philosophical interest did not make his virulent anti-Semitism easier to absorb. He adopted the stereotypes of Jews readily enough, but he was willing to ignore those stereotypes when he found individual Jews to be more faithful to the discourse of *Leben*, against their "Molochism."² Interestingly enough, on the occasions when Klages expressed intellectual admiration, it was more often for Jews than for non-Jewish Germans. Three Jews— Theodor Lessing, a childhood friend, and Karl Wolfskehl and

¹ Book I of the History of the Peloponnesian War, Oxford text, edited by H. Stuart-Jones; translated by Arnold J. Toynbee.

² R. W. Hutchinson, Prehistoric Crete (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962).

Richard Perls, two Jewish disciples of Stefan George—made the most radical impression on him during the first three decades of his life, and he admired Melchior Palagyi, a Hungarian Jewish philosopher and physicist, in the second half of his life. Indeed, anti-Semitism seems too simple an answer in his case. Not because it is not a possibility at all, but because it cannot be comprehended from its later interpretation and application by national socialism. The defining conflicts of Klages's early adulthood, with Theodor Lessing and Stefan George, indicate just how important this issue was for Klages, well before he encountered a more disciplined theory of race.

This significance, however, has no bearing on the question of political and moral responsibility; in what follows I shall attempt to historicize and move *with* Klages and his thought, not against it, as if from the point of view of an anachronistic judgment. As a result, this chapter, and the book as a whole, will illustrate a set of themes by way of Klages's relationships with those whom he thought were representing them: Stefan George and his circle;³ Theodor Lessing, the faithful Jewish and idealist childhood friend; and the love affair with the Bohemian feminist Franziska zu Reventlow and her ironic commentary about the "jargon of life superlatives" in Munich.⁴

If Klages can be taken to represent *Lebensphilosophie*, an historical and theoretical peek is required to pursue the gradual politicization and Nazification of Germanic life. Otherwise, one could easily miss the intensity and gravity with which Klages and his fellow *Lebensphilosophers* used the concepts of life and form, whole and immanence, lifetime and living experience.

1. The life before the life: Klages, Lessing, and George in the 1890s

Born in Hanover in 1872, Ludwig Klages lived most of his youth with a younger sister, an authoritative father, and a sentimental aunt.⁵ His mother died giving birth to his sister. His father, a salesman and a former military officer, tried to provide Klages with the education and

Figure 1.1 The portrait of Ludwig Klages as a young man, *ca.* 1895. Photo: Veritas Munich. DLM: Ludwig Klages Nachlass.

discipline that would allow him to climb the social ladder. According to Klages's later recollections, his father relied on a tough approach in dealing with his intelligent son. Perhaps because of the trouble he had communicating with his father, in childhood Klages developed a fantasy world largely shaped by the romantic literature of the period. In the unpublished notes for an autobiography, he proudly described his

³ Herodotus, Book I, chapters 56 to 58.

⁴ Available in Ludwig Klages, *The Biocentric Worldview* (London: Arkos, 2013).

⁵ Tuist is a term coined by Klages. The distinction between tuist and egoist entails a recognition of the characterological distinction between those whose drives and affects are focused on the "you," as opposed to those who are centered solely upon their own ego.

childhood visions, narrating his tale in the third person: “When he was far from other people, and away from school assignments, . . . the cloth of his body was torn and filled with his magical soul: the chairs in the room started to talk, the tapestry on the walls was cut into faces.”⁶

At his high school, Klages befriended Theodor Lessing, a young Jewish student strongly drawn to romanticism. (Lessing already possessed a remarkable intellectual curiosity and would later become an important contributor to *Lebensphilosophie* himself.) The literary and fantasy world the two shared blurred the social differences between them. Lessing’s family was richer, thanks to his father’s medical clinic; Klages did better at school. But society would intrude. According to Lessing, “Ludwig’s father did not view his son’s fraternization with ‘*Juden*’ [Jews] as acceptable.”⁷ In spite of their own rocky relationship, Klages later came to agree with his father’s anti-Semitism. He commented on Lessing’s memoirs, published after his old friend’s death, “The most grotesque statement made by Lessing is that he was a ‘friend of the house.’ In fact, he was never welcomed, and finally was prohibited from visiting. Klages senior could not tolerate—‘smell’ was his expression—Lessing.”⁸ The correspondence between the two confirmed Klages’s recollection. In a letter to Lessing written in 1890, Klages announced: “Your name is banned in our house. It is seen as a satanic residue of hell itself, a despicable stain.”⁹ Here and in other letters written during the early 1890s, Klages tells Lessing how he fought to preserve their friendship in spite of his father’s disapproval.

In 1891 Klages moved to Leipzig, where, following his father’s instructions, he decided to study industrial chemistry. But the lively artistic and philosophical scene in Munich presented an irresistible temptation. Upon arriving in Munich in 1893, he lived for a short while at the same boardinghouse as Stefan George. George, a decade older than Klages and already beginning to enjoy the local fame his poetry and mysticism brought him, befriended the new arrival. Two years later, Lessing followed Klages to Munich. Klages had showed George some of his friend’s writings, but the response was not positive: “Stefan George thinks that there is too little that is positive in your book.”¹⁰ In a slight every author feels keenly, George remarked: “The author must be

⁶ Ibid., p. 17. Esposito quotes from Rudolf Kjellen, *Grundriss zu einem System der Politik* (Leipzig: Rudolph Leipzig Hirzel, 1920), pp. 3-4.

⁷ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 136. Hoche worked with another follower of Klages, the Jewish *Lebensphilosoph* Kurt Goldstein. He was also close to a central figure of the Klages circle, the psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn.

⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 3.

⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 2000).

¹⁰ Agamben “paulanized” Benjamin, Scholem, Taubes, and other German Jewish thinkers discussed in this book since his *Homo Sacer*. For the most coherent exploration of that philosophical move see Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

very young.”¹¹ Lessing wrote about the strain of their friendship in his autobiography, “Klages’s friendship with Stefan George was the first cause of our alienation.”¹² Rebutting another section of Lessing’s posthumous book, Klages insisted, “Lessing’s report about his meetings with George is full of lies. It was Klages that showed Lessing’s writings to George; the latter was nauseated and utterly refused to meet the author.”¹³

As Klages’s study of chemistry—inspired equally by his father’s insistence as by Goethe’s metaphors—could not serve as a vehicle for the ideas he developed under the influence of Stefan George, he switched to a program in psychology and philosophy. His academic mentor was Theodor Lipps (1851-1914), a philosopher and expert in psychology and aesthetics, who theorized an understanding of empathy on the basis of its psychological appearance or expression. In developing his aesthetics, Lipps focused on the need to systematize the notion of inner experience (*Wissenschaft der inneren Erfahrung*) on the basis of physical and apparent forms.¹⁴ Klages translated this inner experience first in pure, aesthetic terms; even as he caved to his father’s pressure and prepared his thesis in chemistry, he contributed a number of poems and brief articles to George’s journal, *Blatter fur die Kunst* (literally, Pages for the arts) that reflected the great interest he took in both Lipps’s philosophy and George’s poetry. Lipps and George served as authority figures—Klages had little use for his father, who deeply resented his son’s academic rebellion. Nevertheless, on July 1, 1900, Klages received his doctorate in philosophy, after altering his topic to suit a philosophical discourse and against the explicit wishes of his father.

Klages’s friendship with Lessing was a casualty of Klages’s intense commitment to the new ideas he encountered in Munich. Lessing’s description of the end of the relationship bears all the marks of the sort of romantic schoolboy alliance familiar to readers of Thomas Mann’s stories: “When we separated in 1900, I sent back many of Klages’ letters . . . He later destroyed every sign of our friendship . . . It is his great pride that made him see that all he hated in himself, the entirety of his will to power [*seinen Willen zur Macht*], his indoctrinated pride, his cold drive . . . everything was

¹¹ Eric Santner, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), p. 13.

¹² Giorgio Agamben, “Absolute Immanence,” in *Potentialities*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 220.

¹³ Brian Massumi, “National Enterprise Emergency: Steps Toward an Ecology of Powers,” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 26:6 (November 2009), p. 170. I tried to explain the relevance of such readings for a contemporary understanding of life in Nitzan Lebovic, “Life,” in *Maftekh: Lexical Review of Political Thought* 2 (2011): <http://mafteakh.tau.ac.il/en/issue-2e-winter-2011/life/> (accessed June 1, 2013).

¹⁴ Agamben comes close to it without making it a historical argument, when he points out Heidegger’s role as the mediator between two philosophical traditions. The first leads from Kant, via Husserl, to Heidegger and then Levinas and Derrida; the other leads from Spinoza, via Nietzsche, to Heidegger and then Foucault and Deleuze. In short, any examination of “the coming philosophy” should consider the 1920s’ debate about the role of life and immanence in Heidegger and his fellow critics of democracy, on the way to biopolitics and “immanentation.” *Ibid.*, p. 239.

related to my name and the sign of my blood and what is called the marks of my race. And the more Ludwig Klages felt that this friendship had been an error, [the more he wished to] rip off this holy bond, and the more he felt he needed to forget me.”¹⁵ As Elke-Vera Kotowski has recently shown in the only comprehensive narrative of the relationship, the friendship managed to survive until their radically different political and social paths drew the men apart. Close friendship, strong competitiveness, self-distancing, and enmity characterized the course of Klages’s relationship with Lessing. A close attachment ended in radical expressions of hatred and racial stereotyping.¹⁶ A very similar course would also characterize his relationship with Karl Wolfskehl, the best-known follower—Jewish and pro-Zionist—of Stefan George.

Klages appears to have been happy to let his new Munich acquaintances blot out all thought of Lessing. Later, when he was asked about this friendship, he either ignored the question or explained it as a youthful error. But in time two disturbing events joined Klages’s name to that of Lessing. The first was the incident known in the press as the Lessing case. The second was Lessing’s murder and the posthumous publication of his memoirs.

In April 1925, while teaching at Hannover’s Technische Hochschule (technical college), Lessing published an article against Paul von Hindenburg’s presidency in a Prague journal. Hardly an exercise in sober reasoning, the article described Hindenburg as “a servant . . . a symbol of representation, a question mark, a zero. One might say: better to have a zero than a Nero. Unfortunately history shows us that behind every zero a crafty Nero is always hiding.”¹⁷ The Hannover newspaper picked up the article, revised it in a sensationalist vein to emphasize the more scandalous passages, and silently omitted the more reasoned parts. The reactions were outraged and violent.

Hannover’s local administration encouraged the student organization to respond to Lessing’s diatribe. The chancellor at the school kept his distance from the affair for fear of being incriminated as an assistant to an unpatriotic Jew. With the support of the vice chancellor, who orchestrated much of the protest, the students called on the chan-

¹⁵ “Diese Formung des Lebens in seinem ganzen Verlaufe durch den Tod ist bisher sozusagen etwas Bildhaftes.” Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1994), p. 107.

¹⁶ Simmel stresses here a temporal dimension of a being which turns *Sein* (being) into a particular presence. *Sosein* was used by different Lebensphilosophers, for example, Georg Simmel, Max Scheler, and Ludwig Klages. It is translated differently for every thinker, and sometimes, as various translations of Simmel prove, differently in different works of the same thinker. Simmel used the term repeatedly. See *ibid.*, p. 108. For another example of Simmel’s use of *Sosein* see the first page of his *Philosophy of Money*, which was translated as a “particular quality of being.” See Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 56. Then again, in his book about the history of sociology, David Frisby translated the same term when used by Max Scheler as “essence.” See David Frisby, *The Alienated Mind: The Sociology of Knowledge in Germany, 1918-1933* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 30.

¹⁷ Heinrich Rickert, *Die Philosophie des Lebens: Darstellung und Kritik der philosophischen Modestromungen unserer Zeit* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr Verlag, 1920).

cellor to fire Lessing immediately. After a final meeting with the reluctant chancellor, Lessing decided to leave Germany for Prague. Minutes kept at the student meetings and at Lessing's meeting with the chancellor reveal strong anti-Semitic undertones, as do the reports about the affair published in the German newspapers. Gangs of students gathered to march in front of Lessing's house and the school, and his house was vandalized by a student gang, with the blessing of the school administration and the town's police. As Lessing reported in his diaries, the chancellor finally yielded to the growing pressure and sent a letter to the student organization, arguing that "Lessing cannot be considered an educator of German youth." Lessing, deeply hurt, commented: "This was told about a fifty-three-year old scholar who has . . . dedicated all his time [to the German youth] for thirty years, and was removed as if [he] knew nothing."¹⁸ According to Lessing's own account, more than 400 newspapers reported on the affair. Hans Driesch, the most important biologist in Germany, himself a proponent of *Lebensphilosophie*, called the affair a case of the "German Dreyfus," but where, he asked, would Germany find its "German Zola"?¹⁹

In fact, one candidate did aspire to the job; among the small number of people willing to defend Lessing publicly was another *Lebensphilosoph* from Giessen, August Messer (1867-1937). He sent an article protesting Lessing's treatment to the Hannover paper, but it was rejected on the grounds that Messer had "misunderstood Lessing's arguments."²⁰ Messer then decided to publish the article in his own review, *Philosophie und Leben* (Philosophy and life), and later expanded it into a book.²¹ In the book he republished not only Lessing's article and his own, but also Lessing's later reflections about the scandal, including a strong protest against the anti-Semitic tone of the incident. The book, *Der Fall Lessing: Eine objective Darstellung und kritische Würdigung*

¹⁸ Heinrich Rickert, *Unmittelbarkeit und Sinndeutung: Aufsätze zur Ausgestaltung des Systems der Philosophie* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1939), p. 57 (emphasis in original). The concept of immediacy, popularized by Nietzsche, had garnered great interest among *Lebensphilosophers* since the early 1900s. Yet not before the early 1920s could one attach it to any particular view of politics.

¹⁹ Georg Imdahl and David F. Krell are an exception to that rule; in their careful readings of Heidegger's early writings, both labor to demonstrate the close interest and impact of Heidegger's own editorial working and research of Dilthey's life philosophy. Heidegger's later rejection of *Lebensphilosophie* cannot disguise the impact it had on his interest in the living temporality of the *Dasein*. See David F. Krell, *I Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), and Georg Imdahl, *Das Leben Verstehen, Heideggers formal anzeigende Hermeneutik in den frühen Freiburger Vorlesungen* (Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann, 1997). A few intellectual historians paid close attention to Heidegger's interest in *Lebensphilosophie* from a different angle. Let me mention here only the most recent and excellent two volumes Peter Gordon published on Heidegger's proximity to Franz Rosenzweig, and the opponents of Ernst Cassirer and neo-Kantianism. See Peter E. Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and idem., *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

²⁰ Victor Klemperer, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1966), p. 20. English translations often miss the importance of vocabulary to the essence (*Wesen*) of Nazi language.

²¹ Ibid., p. 31.

(1926), did not win much public acclaim, and—unlike Lessing’s attack—was quickly forgotten.

Lessing escaped from Germany immediately after Hitler was appointed. He assumed, correctly, that his life was in danger. In February 1933 Lessing had moved to Prague and then to Kurbad Marienbad (Marianske Lazne) and published articles against anti-Semitism and the radical German nationalism from there. His articles, often presenting a SocialDemocratic interpretation of *Lebensphilosophie*, were viewed as a serious threat to the regime, and he was finally murdered by three Nazi agents, shot through the windows of his study. The murderers quickly returned to Germany and were never brought to trial, in spite of a quick and thorough investigation by the Czech authorities, which exposed their identity. Although he was said to have been angered by the crime, Klages nevertheless continued to contest fiercely the account of their friendship that appeared posthumously in Lessing’s book. His rebuttal includes much anti-Semitism and deep scorn for “the Jew Lessing,” or even, the year after the Kristallnacht pogrom, referring to Lessing as the typical “ghetto Jew.”²²

In his autobiography, *E inmal und Nie Wieder* (1935), Lessing describes accepting Klages as the dominant figure in their relationship. It appears that he continued to admire him to the day of his death, as a photograph of Lessing’s study taken after his murder in Marienbad shows a number of pictures that were arranged one above the other on the wall. The highest is a picture of Ludwig Klages; underneath are Arthur Schopenhauer, Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Wilhelm Jordan.²³ From our perspective it is difficult to imagine a Jewish socialist admiring such an awkward mixture of characters and their ideas. As indicated by Lessing’s readings in *Lebensphilosophie*, such a mixture made enough sense for a veteran of the 1920s.

Lessing never denied the strong influence Klages had on his thought, in spite of his sympathy and commitment to the political left. Though he had studied with Theodor Lipps and Edmund Husserl, Lessing seems to have been incapable of producing philosophical writings that did not echo the style and approach of Klages. In October 1925, when the storm over his Hindenburg article was bearing down on him, Lessing submitted a short text to the journal *Junge Menschen*, an organ of the German youth movement. In this text, Lessing employed the Klagesian dichotomies of *Geist* (spirit) and *Seele* (soul), temporary and eternal, and rejected the Cartesian notion of extension as the expression of the godly universe. “The spirit that strove to extension can be called flat,” he wrote. “It flattens the soul into loneliness, [to] the unsocial . . . All that is human is historical, temporal. I, however, consider myself in terms of other powers, . . . the clouds, the sea, the wind, the mountains, the forests.”²⁴ Even in this text,

²² Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 5.

²³ Edward Ross Dickinson, “Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse about ‘Modernity,’” in *Central European History* 37:1 (2004): 1-38.

²⁴ “Das Hauptgewicht der nationalsozialistischen Sprachbeeinflussung liegt auf der neuen Sinngebung oft alter, bekannter Worte.” Manfred Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, inaugural

possibly Lessing's most personal and explicitly confessional, he employed the language he had gleaned from his old friend and from their youthful obsession with Wilhelm Jordan (1819-1904)—the liberal thinker who advocated a “gesunden Volksegoismus” (a healthy national egoism) and popularized the Niebelungen myth—and Schopenhauer. For both Klages and Lessing, the most fundamental elements of existence common to those three thinkers transgressed all possible forms, most importantly, linearity.

No study of Klages could be complete without an appraisal of his anti-Semitism, and no study that acknowledges the connections between life and thought can ignore the trajectory of Klages's relations with Lessing. When the friendship cooled, Klages convinced himself that his interest in Lessing had been quite “scientific.”²⁵ After his rejection from the George group, Lessing saw himself dissected in an essay on the “psychology of idealism” that Klages published in 1906; the subject was “Ahasver, a poet.”²⁶ In the essay Klages described the stereotypical Jew, clearly implied by the allusion to Ahasver, the traditional German wandering Jew: “He is emotional . . . with little self-assurance . . . His behavior is utterly formless and immediate, . . . yet he is a ‘poet,’ a man who aspires to the highest morality . . . This poet is an ‘idealist.’ . . . He cannot live without the appearance of greatness.”²⁷ Only years later did Klages admit that “Ahasver” was indeed the description of Lessing. (Lessing was accurate when identifying himself with this “type.”) Writing of himself in the third person, Klages revealed, “In this essay, Klages is ‘Peer Gynt, a philosopher,’ and Lessing the idealist ‘Ahasver.’ . . . The essay was first published in 1906, but existed already in 1895, which shows only . . . the extent to which Klages had seen through his friend.”²⁸ If accurate, Klages's later recollections prove the existence of his anti-Semitism— still cultural and nonviolent but nevertheless virulent—in place during the height of this

dissertation submitted to the philosophy faculty of the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University of Greifswald (Greifswald: Hans Adler Buchdruckerei, 1935), p. 11.

²⁵ Boaz Neumann, *New German Critique* 85, Special Issue on Intellectuals (Winter 2002), 110.

²⁶ Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, p. 13.

²⁷ “*Was heisst Leben? Leben heisst kaempfen!* Schom *Heraklit* sagte: Der Kampf is der Vater aller Dinge, und Nietzsche beantwortete die Frage . . . so: ‘Die Welt ist der Wille zur Macht und nichts ausserdem.’ Wohin du auch schaut, ueberall findest du Kampf ums Dasein, Ringen um selbsterhaltung, Arterhaltung und Entwicklung . . . Sie vergessen, dass es den Menschen nur so Scheint, weil unser Denken beschraenkt ist in *Raum und Zeit*, weil wir nicht erkennen, was sich da in der *Ewigkeit* entwickeln und erloesen will . . . Der erste Schritt zu bewusstem Leben heisst: Erkenne dich selbst! In dir selbst, in deinem Rassenerbgut liegt der geheimnisvolle Wille deines Lebens.” Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, vol. 4, article 24, “Weltanschauung, NS,” p. 1. No further publication details are given; all emphases in the original. Karl Dietrich Bracher spoke of the “army of agitators” the Nazi trained in that context: Karl D. Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1969), p. 159. See also Goebbels's description of his propaganda success, based on “battalions of speakers,” which he still insisted were a “mystical phenomenon” in Joseph Goebbels, *Der Angriff. Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1935), pp. 94-96.

²⁸ “Weil das Judentum mit den Gesetzen des Lebens ging, darum gab ihm das Leben recht, darum hat es heute eine weltbeherrschende Machtstellung ueber die arischen Volker erreicht.” Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, p. 3.

period of friendship. The year 1895, we recall, was a time when Klages and Lessing were reunited in Munich and under the influence of George.

In a manner similar to that in which he confronted other problematic issues connected to his past, Klages employed a strategy of suppression and erasure when he transformed his erstwhile friend into a generalized type. More important, he equated Jewishness with idealism. The implication, in discursive terms, is that Klages equated resistance to idealism with resistance to the social status of Jews. The opposition he created was thus a clash between two systems of narratives.

As time went on, circumstances obliged a formally apolitical Klages to clarify the political implications of his philosophy, especially with regard to the categories of life (*Leben*). The period between 1899 and

1904 was crucial for this process. Ludwig Klages tormented himself with two paranoid obsessions: he worried constantly about being pursued and persecuted by the Jewish press, and he saw himself as the victim of a widespread conspiracy of his own epigones, from Schwabing to Berlin. Lessing, in his mind, was only the most obvious among them. Though he never acknowledged it, these two fears involved a great deal of overlap. Perhaps the disciple Klages feared most, we learn in *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, was Lessing, whom Klages constantly accused of recycling ideas he had pioneered. Needless to mention, Klages utterly denied any value to Lessing's contribution to *Lebensphilosophie* and refused to admit any positive effect from him. The rebellious socialist turn this philosophy took with Lessing stood for an active act of "betrayal."²⁹

From the existing state of the Klages archive, it is clear he made a conscious effort to erase any trace of interest in Lessing or to ignore him during the later part of his life. He makes no mention of Lessing in his extant letters and the only mention of Lessing was by another of Klages's correspondents, Hans Prinzhorn, one of his major disciples and a well-known theoretician of psychology. (I will return to Prinzhorn and the "Deussen case" in chapters 4 and 6.) Prinzhorn called the matter "wretched" but confessed to be "confused," an ambiguous assessment that implies some political sympathy for Lessing's critique but a resentment of its bearer.³⁰ The issue was clarified verbally, because there is no further discussion of it in their exchange. The only exception to the rule came in 1936, when a young and rebellious disciple of Klages named Julius Deussen mentioned Lessing as a source of inspiration for Klages and his philosophy. The other Klages disciples launched a vicious counterattack, with Klages himself pulling the strings. They informed the Gestapo that Deussen was half Jewish, a rather serious accusation at this time. The episode forced Deussen to quit his hometown and abandon all of his philosophical aspirations.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-79*, trans. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 19.

³⁰ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 143.

2. A comment about Klages's early (cultural) anti-semitism

Klages's anti-Semitism is one of the clear characteristics that appear throughout the different periods of his life and philosophy and unite them. But it is covered with different mantles in different periods. As shown in his relationship with Lessing, his anti-Semitism was present in the relationship from a very early stage of the friendship, first in latent forms—presented by Klages's father—and then becoming more and more explicit, as Klages repositioned himself vis-a-vis his father, his colleagues, his childhood friend, and, most importantly—as will be shown in later chapters—his philosophical and political context. His anti-Semitism was veiled by differentiating the individual from the group and by the historical typology that linked Judaism to Christianity—both “religions of the spirit” had undermined the grounds for a new beginning, said Klages.³¹ Not the Jew, but Judea and Judas possessed the primal Jewish character; the modern Jew was not biologically determined but culturally conditioned. Yet, even when Klages spoke in terms that scholars characterize as “cultural anti-Semitism,”³² his store of images was taken from the philosophy of biology and closer, then, to racial anti-Semitism. During the fin-de-siècle heyday in Munich, while shifting his loyalties from Lessing to George, Klages started to rationalize his anti-Semitism in a physiognomic and graphological research. If one's handwriting expressed one's cultural attributes—it was possible to find out about the typical Judeo-Christian *geistlichkeit* (spirituality, intellectuality), according to Klages—it also revealed the influence of “roots” and “origin,” or bodily characteristics. Though there was variety among the Jews, all evinced a certain hysteria, materialism, and decadence, and Klages proceeded to find those Jews who proved the exception. Lessing became an object of research and observation, a “type.”

Klages grounded his first observations in a more systematic system than his own. During the late 1890s, Klages became interested—even obsessed—with the writings of the philosophical critic Eugen Dühring (1833-1921), the Prussian critic of Marx and advocate of “heroic materialism,” known to English speakers mostly from Friedrich Engels's *Anti-Dühring* (1878); there is hardly any reason to doubt Klages's own statements on the subject.³³ As shown by his library, Klages acquired all of Dühring's books. He even succeeded in convincing Theodor Lessing of Dühring's genius, about whom, Lessing wrote, “there is no light without shadows, and no shadows without light.”³⁴ Dühring was also known as a founder of scientific anti-Semitism and the author of *The*

³¹ Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus, and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 14.

³² Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 111.

³³ Ibid., p. 12.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

Jewish Question as a Question of Race, Morality, and Culture (1881).³⁵ Klages, like his hero before him, tried to match racial stereotypes with erudite research on types.

In *From Prejudice to Destruction, Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933*, the historian Jacob Katz mentions Eugen Dühring as a major source of modern anti-Semitism: “In Dühring’s view, Jews were a unique human species with marked physical and moral characteristics. All those were negative, and they were evident in their record ever since the Jews had appeared on the scene of human history.”³⁶ According to Katz, Dühring’s type of anti-Semitism has been incorrectly called an “anti-Christian anti-Semitism” because his “did not mean that this anti-Semitism derived from opposition to Christianity.”³⁷ Katz’s principal thesis—that anti-Semitism at large was the byproduct of “a *continuation* of the pre-modern rejection of Judaism by Christianity”—maintains that Dühring’s anti-Semitism and anti-Christianity formed an obstacle that had to be downplayed.³⁸ Katz contends that Klages, like Dühring, believed that the Jew was marked by physiognomic characteristics whose implications were visible in behavior recorded in the Bible.³⁹ But Klages also moved one step further. If modern culture was the evil conspiracy of a Judeo-Christian deadly spiritualization and historicization, *Lebensphilosophie* found the cure, shaping an alternative language.

3. The life jargon in Schwabing

In *Where Ghosts Walked: Munich’s Road to the Third Reich*, David Clay Large portrayed the bohemian groups in Munich in the 1890s with “a life of daily rebellion against the conventions and restrictions of bourgeois society.”⁴⁰ The acclaimed historian of German Nazism, George Mosse, described the bohemian George circle, in the Munich neighborhood of Schwabing, as the important spiritual center, where *volkisch* (folk

³⁵ Vitalpolitik is grounded in the principle of growth or reduction that lies at the bottom of all competitive systems: economic, organic-physiological, or totalitarian. It assumes that politics, economics, society, and the individual all share the same form and image of the living body. It is exactly this shared body, or “synthesis of individuals,” according to Foucault, that allows the system to have “no explicit contract, no voluntary union, no renunciation of rights, and no delegation of natural rights to someone else. In short, there is no constitution of sovereignty by a sort of pact of subjection.” Ibid., pp. 242-243, 300.

³⁶ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 259.

³⁷ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 137.

³⁸ Foucault uses this term in *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 248.

³⁹ “It has been evident for a number of centuries how, in the general consciousness, the thought of death has become less omnipresent and less vivid . . . In the course of the nineteenth century, bourgeois society—by means of medical and social, private and public institutions—realized a secondary effect, which may have been its subconscious main purpose: to enable people to avoid the sight of the dying.” Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller,” in *Selected Writings*, vol. 3:1: 1935-1938 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 151.

⁴⁰ For a short but coherent description of Foucault’s notion of biopower and biopolitics, see Chloe Taylor, “Biopower,” in *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (Durham, NC: Acumen, 2011), p. 48.

nationalism) blood and race ideology took hold and thrived. Its two central figures were “the poet Stefan George . . . [and] a promising young man named Ludwig Klages, later to be one of the

Figure 1.2 “The Cosmic Circle.” From left to right: Karl Wolfskehl, Alfred Schuler, Ludwig Klages, Stefan George, Albert Verwey. Photo: Karl Bauer. DLM: Ludwig Klages Nachlass.

Figure 1.3 Franziska (Fanny) Graf zu Reventlow, ca. 1893.

ornaments of German philosophy.”⁴¹ For Mosse, that was the historical origin of Nazi rhetoric. For the purpose of this book, this meeting of bohemians and artists in Munich marks the origin of a new form of *Lebensphilosophie*.

Geographically the center of the new world Klages had discovered was Cafe Luitpold in Munich’s Schwabing district, north of the university.⁴² There and in Cafe Stefanie, the city’s artistic avant-garde met to feast at the table of ideas set by Stefan George (1868-1933), the “*Meister*.” By the mid-1890s the group adopted a semiotic code that included a metaphysical jargon and mock-Roman attire. Among the leading anticosmopolitan modernists of Schwabing, Large mentions “the ex-Berliner” Theodor Lessing; the “queen of Schwabing,” the Countess Franziska zu Reventlow; and the “cosmic circle” or the “criminals of the dream,” revolving around Ludwig Klages. Schwabing, to Klages, was “the world suburb in which the fate of the next generation will be decided.”⁴³

Together with his fellow Georgians Alfred Schuler and Karl Wolfskehl, Klages developed an obsession with death dances, pagan cults, open eroticism, matriarchy, and anti-Semitism.⁴⁴ From an anachronistic perspective “it was culture that generated not only outstanding works of the modernist spirit . . . but also an internal critique of

⁴¹ “Heute, glaube ich, geht ein immer starker anwachsendes Raunen durch Millionen und aber Millionen Menschen Seelen . . . eines tiefen Wissens, dass wir in einer der grosten Zeiten und Weltenwende leben, in einer Epoche, die einen bis in die Wurzeln gehenden Umbruch nicht nur auf einigen Gebieten des Daseins, sondern fur unser ganzes Lebensgefuhl bedeutet.” Alfred Rosenberg, “Der Kampf um die Weltanschauung,” *Redenmateriel der NSDAP*, ed. Fritz Reinhardt, p. 5.

⁴² The Reich’s minister of education explained on January 15, 1935, that the first priority of the Reich was political education, and he went on to say that “allein die Biologie kann den Begriff der Rasse und Vererbung und die rassischen Lebensgesetze von der Seite der Tatsachen-Forschung her zwingend entwickeln.” *Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie 1: Schriften uber Familie, Volk und Rasse* (Berlin: Zentralverlag der NSDAP/Fritz Eher Verlag, 1938), p. 7.

⁴³ “Fehlt es an einer solchen Erziehung, so entstehen ‘Politiker,’ deren Wesen und Gefahr keiner klarer durchschaut und gezeichnet hat als der Fuhrer des neuen Deutschland, Adolf Hitler. Er hat auch in seiner eigenen Entwicklung ein unumstossliches Vorbild fur solche politische Erziehung gegeben.” Hans Gerber, ed., *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934), p. vi.

⁴⁴ “[D]ie Universitat . . . muss vielmehr auch den Gehalt der personlichen Uberzeugung bilden.” Ibid.

cosmopolitan modernity and political liberalism that could easily be embraced by the Nazis and their *volkisch* allies.”⁴⁵

In more precise terms, the process began at the point of fusion of the concept of life (as a philosophical view), the creation of a new poetic language, a social-geographical center, and a well-shaped context. The heroes of Franziska zu Reventlow’s novel, *Herrn Dames Aufzeichnungen; oder, Begebenheiten aus einem merkwürdigen Stadtteil* (The notebooks of Mr. Lady, or occurrences in a certain quarter, 1902), which was inspired by George’s group, speak much about a new language of enthusiasm and insist that the alternative culture they belong to has a geographic specificity:

“My dear man,” said the philosopher, “‘enormous’ is a superlative. The superlative of all superlatives. In time you will notice that true Schwabing bohemians [*Wahn-mochingers*] speak a special jargon, which you must learn to master if you want to fit in.”⁴⁶

As Reinhard Falter shows, Klages identified the countess herself, his lover, as a pure “element of life,” as the “fundamental soul” or the “rotating swastika” (drehende Swastika).⁴⁷ His own philosophical career was tightly connected with this affair, and the heavy symbolic language of Schwabing. This “jargon” had to be mastered by all who wanted to participate in the cafe culture, and it drew on a lexicon Klages would later exploit in his philosophical writings. Even chitchat was likely to involve talk of *Leben* (life), *Kosmisch* (cosmic), and *Erlebnis* (living experience). “Here *Leben* is so much discussed, and so constantly, as if no aspect of it is self-evident,”⁴⁸ wrote Reventlow. Life became so broad a concept that it blurred the boundaries between life and death, aesthetics and actual experiencing, the ancient and the present, the primordial Ur and its fulfillment in the present. In her roman a clef Reventlow presents Klages under the name “Hallwig” and assigns him responsibility for much of this metaphysical jargon, especially that which related to the “cosmic experience of life”:

“Hear me well, Maria,” said the philosopher . . . “As your friend Hallwig teaches, it is not we who act, compose, dream, and so on, but the primary substances [*Ursubstanzen*] that are embedded in us. On the topic of the hierarchical order of historical substances

⁴⁵ “Was aber ist es, was den immer wechselnden Strom des Lebens über die Erde hintreibt?” Ernst Lehmann, “Der Einfluss der Biologie auf unser Weltbild,” in *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934), p. 131.

⁴⁶ “Alle biologischen Erfahrungen sprechen dafür, dass dieses Prinzip eine überragende Rolle im Entwicklungsgeschehen spielt . . . Jedermann weiss nun aus den unzähligen traurigen Büchern der Gegenwart, dass unser deutsches Volk bei der immer starker zurückgehenden Geburtszahl diesem Grundsatz der Selektionstheorie nicht mehr gerecht wird. Biopolitisch sind uns die Völker an unserer Ostgrenze durch ihre viel höhere Geburtszahl weitgehend überlegen.” Ibid., p. 138.

⁴⁷ “Kein Zweifel aber auch: Nicht nur in Nordamerika gibt es eine Negerfrage, nicht nur in aller Welt eine Judenfrage u.s.f.-in jedes deutsche Haus ist durch die Arbeit Hans Gunthers die Kenntnis gedrungen von der rassistischen Verschiedenheit innerhalb unseres Volkes.” Ibid., p. 139.

⁴⁸ Sheila Faith Weiss, “Pedagogy, Professionalism, and Politics: Biology Instruction during the Third Reich,” in *Science, Technology, and National Socialism*, ed. Monika Renneberg and Mark Weller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 189.

[*Rangordnung der historischen Substanzen*], he and Delius appear to disagree, since the latter seems to think they are all Roman, while the first thinks that they are all cosmic.”⁴⁹

This perplexes Mr. Lady (the author’s stand-in), who is told, “‘Mr. Lady, please do not look at me so skeptically . . . The cosmic is what we would call the experiencing [*Erlebnis*], which originated in principle. Dreams, too, would play an important role here.’”⁵⁰ Reventlow’s irony cannot disguise the fact that the new jargon captivated the imagination of the young and rebellious elite. In particular, it offered the George circle an ultimate and new way to think of reality as nothing but images, an endless play with prehistorical images taken straight from myths and fairy tales. The psychological and social challenge was great: it offered a full exposure of the social and artistic limits of conventions. “Life” became a code word for a new aesthetic agenda, inherently embedded in everyday life and thought. “Praxis” was nothing but an image of its most extreme ends.

In addition to mastering the jargon of the George circle, recent arrivals also had to cope with the intricacies of cafe seating. Many who have written about the period mention the politics of seating, which the group seems to have understood as a tactical and a meaningful declaration about the arts, politics, love, and hate. Stefan George, for example, liked to sit a bit apart so that he might observe without being involved—though in reality he was always the cynosure, even when he did not speak. In his autobiography Lessing recorded a scene rich in detail about the politics of seating:

“I was sitting in [Cafe] Luitpold when George showed up with his inseparable shadow, Karl Wolfskehl. Right after that, my Klages entered the room and, seeing the two poles of his friendship, . . . stood in the middle, between the two tables . . . Wolfskehl invited us to George’s table, but I replied that they could come to mine, if he so desired . . . When Klages accused me of foolishness, I answered that it had nothing to do with foolishness: it was a symbol.”⁵¹

By 1897 the mutual influence George and Klages exerted on each other’s thinking was clearly recognizable in both their published and unpublished texts. During that period George published a series of books that strove to change the whole poetics of the German language and reshape the relation between word and matter, signifier and signified. The poems reflected the obsession with life and human finality.

From *Das Jahr der Seele* (*The Year of the Soul*, 1897) to *Der Teppich des Lebens und die Lieder von Traum und Tod* (The tapestry of life and the songs of dreams and death, 1899), the vocabulary of the poems owed much to the *Lebensphilosophie* discourse of the time. The latter book gave George the reputation he longed for and made him the bestknown poet of that generation, the *Meister* or the spiritual *Führer*. These honorific titles do not appear to have been applied to George in jest; they referred

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 193.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 188.

⁵¹ See James G. Lennox, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Biology: Studies in the Origins of Life Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 129.

in all seriousness to a seer at the height of his spiritual powers.⁵² In an introductory note to George's poetry journal, *Blätter für die Kunst*, from 1896, Karl Wolfskehl referred to George as "the priest of the spirit," capable of discovering a new "*Reich*" of artistic creation. When George declared, "The path to life has been found," his admirers took him seriously and—as Wolfskehl did—integrated it into their own poetic voice.⁵³ Not satisfied with merely dictating matters of aesthetics and philosophy to his followers, George often had strong opinions on their individual lives and sometimes even their sexual preferences.⁵⁴ George's influence and appeal were immense: Georg Simmel and Max Weber—the founders of modern sociology—and the poet Rainer Maria Rilke attended his readings and expressed their admiration. The young Walter Benjamin admired his verse so much that he visited Heidelberg in 1914 just to wait for hours on a bench in order to catch a glimpse of the poet taking his daily walk. One of George's collections, *Der Stern des Bundes* (The star of the covenant, 1913) would later become *the* war book, the one that many soldiers of that generation carried on their way to the trenches of World War I.

The group surrounding George got used to identifying the world with literary phenomena and symbolism with reality. Interestingly, this group also identified such high aestheticism with a revolutionary instinct, an antibourgeois tactic of exposure—via literature—of the artificiality of oppressive norms. Klages often referred to this time as the "*Ibsenzeit*," since everybody was reading Henrik Ibsen, and, via Ibsen, the world. The writings of Nietzsche were also a subject of an intense and enthusiastic debate.⁵⁵ Both writers were identified during the early 1900s with an explicit young rebellion against the bourgeois elite and the stasis of Prussian politics. Max Scheler (1874-1928), at that time a young scholar already showing great promise, tended to observe the George circle from a nearby seat, and referred to this utter rejection of conventions as an expression of "aesthetic exasperation."⁵⁶ It was certainly a time of searching—searching for that which would permit radical change, searching for a new language that would not surrender to the rules of the aristocratic Wilhelminian period or those of the new bourgeois class, searching for new human types, the ideal society. New and esoteric sciences, as well as mystical philosophies, would figure in the search.

⁵² Tobias Schneider has denied that Klages ever subscribed to Nazi anti-Semitism. See Schneider, "Ideologische Grabenkämpfe: Der Philosoph Ludwig Klages und der Nationalsozialismus 1933-1938," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 49:2 (2001): 275-294.

⁵³ Hannah Arendt came close to Klages's claim but with the opposite ideological conclusions; she recognized Aristotle as the creator of a Western *bios politikos*, which she tied to the concepts of *praxis* and *lexis* (speech), the cornerstones of modern democratic politics. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958), pp. 12, 25.

⁵⁴ Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, in *Samtliche Werke*, vol. 2 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1966), p. 866. This passage first appeared in a much shorter book entitled *Geist und Seele*, which Klages published in 1918; he integrated much of that book into *Der Geist* in 1929.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 867.

⁵⁶ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, Deutsche Literaturarchiv am Marbach (henceforth DLA), Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

If the group exhibited a sort of orthodoxy in its heterodoxy, one of the features of the orthodoxy rejected by Klages was patriarchy. Much as George longed to assume the role of father figure, Klages insisted on distance.⁵⁷ George articulated some of the ambivalence he and Klages both had about the relationship in a poem entitled “L. K.,” in which George expresses his yearning, erotic and intellectual, for Klages, accompanied by a bitter complaint about his young friend’s unreliability: “And that I often search for you as much as you / arouse in me and to me belong? Do not betray / Can you deny you fly from me more the more I am in you?”⁵⁸

While he could hardly escape from George’s strong influence, Klages tried to forge an independent voice on the margins of the group. He began to see George as un-German and rejected George’s symbolism because it seemed too French. In contrast to George, Klages argued, he himself emphasized the Germanic image and the German language that led him to try to eliminate the gap between symbol and reality, representation and object. To resolve the paradoxes with which he wrestled, Klages looked into alternative sciences such as graphology and physiognomy. He hoped that these hermeneutic systems could help him show that images were not part of reality or a representation of reality, but reality itself. Fact and image were not interrupted by any process of mimesis. For Klages, aesthetics did not exist in an exterior dimension to the facts, but an inherent aspect of reality. They shaped and created reality, rather than reacting to or describing it.

4. Hallwig and Molochism

In 1897, the same year George published his *Tapestry of Life*, Klages published a short essay in *Blatter fur die Kunst* entitled “Vom Schaffenden” (On creativity). In this early attempt at a theory of poetic creation, Klages contrasted *Leben* (life) with

⁵⁷ This was the same Bodeschule fur Korperziehung Munchen, in Schloss Nymphenburg, still known to many Bavarians: <http://www.bode-schule.de>.

⁵⁸ Bode summarized his philosophy as follows:

1. Alle natuerlichen Bewegungen sind Bewegungen des ganzen Korpers. Niemals beobachten wir eine isolierte Bewegung (Prinzip der *Totalitaet*).
2. Alle natuerlichen Bewegungen verlaufen rhythmische, d.h. sie nehmen ihren Ausgang von den grossen Korpermuskeln . . . (Prinzip der *Rhythmik*).
3. Alle natuerlichen Bewegungen sind aufeinander abgestimmt, so dass bei geringstem Kraftaufwand die grosste Krafwirkung erzielt wird. Dieser Abstimmung entpricht die Abstimmung im Formverhaeltnis der Korperteile zueinander (Prinzip der *Form*).
4. Alle natuerlichen Bewegungen mit langsamen Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem entspannten Muskelzustand und munden wieder in diesen (Prinzip der *Entspannung* oder der *Schwere*).
5. Alle natuerlichen Bewegungen mit schnellem Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem Gleichgewichtsverhaeltnis antagonistischer Muskelspannungen. Die Bewegung entsteht durch Spannung der einen Muskelgruppe und Entspannung der anderen (Prinzip der *Vorbereitung*).

Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

Verstehen (understanding), a term coined by Wilhelm Dilthey to stand for the basic connection between life and history as the motto of his philosophy of life, shown by those who “are striving to understand themselves from within themselves.”⁵⁹ Klages continued to develop this relationship in two later versions of the text and in his later psychological work. Never published, the revisions show much greater theoretical independence—they amounted to a radicalization of Dilthey’s *Lebensphilosophie*—and reflect the growing personal tension between Klages and George. In the final version, dated 1899, Klages wrote:

The poetic is not based on different passions, as is generally thought . . . It is also not [a result of] the character of the poet, since many poets were lacking character [*charakterlos*]. Poetry is, rather, the effect of two components: the radical life instinct of youth, which the Greeks called the Dionysian stature . . . and the joy of naming . . . Here we observe the poet’s joy in naming. What poetry awakens in us is not the same world that was stolen from us by the language of naked understanding [*blossen Verstandes*]. It is the world of the intricate and it took form within.⁶⁰

In “Vom Schaffenden” Klages limited himself to a general observation concerning the borders between external and internal forms. “The form,” he wrote, “is unlearnable as an exact *essence* [*Wesen*] or *temperament*. Only in artistic creation would it take [the shape of] a clear expression.”⁶¹ Later he opposed the puritan artistic expression with the idealistic *Geist* [spirit] or the intellectual drive to differentiate and classify, as he put it in 1898, the “manner of the actor and the liar: the Jew,”⁶² and as he wrote in 1899, clearly echoing Nietzsche, “The imageless will to power [*Wille zur Macht*] is the true principle of life’s enemy, namely, Judaism.”⁶³ Judaism and its ban on iconography expressed to Klages a pure contrast to the essence of things. This position extended beyond Judaism, as two years later he associated the *Geist* with the very principle of monotheism: “The *Geist* is monotheism itself, in the action of the scholar, who subsumes under it all other principles. The *Geist* wishes to control everything. It unites the world in the ‘I’ or the Logos . . . [I]t fights all over the world and places the tyranny of formula over the ur-powers.”⁶⁴ If Klages was indeed a typical post-Nietzschean, as most historians contend, this position was not a very faithful

⁵⁹ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 127.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Hitlerrummel mit allem Tamtam eingesetzt.” Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, April 2, 1927, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 47.

⁶² Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, December 13, 1930, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 5. See also Erich von Ludendorff, *Weltkrieg droht auf deutschem Boden: Broschur* (Munich: Faksimile-Verlag, 1931).

⁶³ For the first, see the analysis of Laure Guilbert, *Danser avec le IIIe Reich: les danseurs modernes sous le nazisme* (Brussels: Complexe, 2000), p. 152. For the latter, see Rudolf Bode, *Angriff und Gestaltung* (Berlin: Widukind Verlag, 1939).

⁶⁴ “Das Ziel ist: Die . . . Bewegung hervorgehen zu lassen aus der Instinktiven Sicherheit in der Erzeugung natürlicher Bewegung, wie sie jedes Tier und auf jedes körperlich unverdorbenes Kind hat.”

teaching of Nietzsche. Klages detested the will to power, as will be shown in the next chapters, and often equated it with Western and Jewish materialism, a betrayal of Nietzsche's own emphasis on multiplicity and perspectivism.⁶⁵ In a collection of notes later added to the same file and dated between 1902 and 1906, Klages goes further still, characterizing as Jewish that which emphasizes the uniqueness of the concept of truth. He argues that this "is typical of the monotheistic religions as a whole. This is Yahwehism [*Jahweism*] (in other words a system arising from the unspeakable name of the Jewish god), since it tries to burn [into us] an image of God."⁶⁶ This assertion is echoed in a passage from Reventlow's *Herrn Dames Aufzeichnungen*: "Hallwig is responsible for the concept known in our jargon as 'Molochism.' . . . Moloch, my dear Mr. Lady, was, as you know, the ancient god who was nourished by the flesh of young children . . . We call 'Molochic' everything that is opposed to life, life-annihilating—in short, the opposite of the cosmic, . . . [of] the Aryan representation of the constructive, cosmic principle, which the Semites have destroyed, the anti-Molochic."⁶⁷ These are images that, indeed, dispel all suspicion of insecurity.

Was it then Klages who forged the connection between the life discourse and anti-Semitism? Can he be considered the one who politicized the notion of *L eben* or the Jewish opposition to it? Is that not stretching his influence too wide? Let us provisionally say that Klages was apparently successful in convincing some that his historical and philosophical perspective on the world and its forms was novel, that he possessed, as the quite biased Reventlow often notes, special powers and "light." In her diary she wrote: "I am often with the Klages circle . . . The best is being with K. alone; then light is everywhere."⁶⁸ Reventlow cannot be assumed to have written out of an emotional state alone. As her 1902 novel proved, she was capable of demonstrating sharp irony about Klages's cosmic jargon or his mystical views. Her diaries show a self-determined, passionate, and intellectual personality who was admired for her beauty but chose to rebel against the expectations associated with gender. Reventlow raised a child as a single mother, which was not a simple matter in the aristocratic circles she came from. She shared her bed with numerous lovers, smoked obsessively, wrote in support of feminism and the avant-garde, and declared herself a female "gladiator." "I have read Marie Bashkirtseff to the end," she reported on February 18, 1895, "and although I find it stupid, I must compare my life with hers . . . [S]he said herself: '*J/ene suis ni peintre ni sculpteur ni musicien ni femme ni fille ni amie.*' (I am not a

Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁶⁵ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, p. 128.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, February 6, 1941, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8373, letter no. 17.

⁶⁸ For Bode and his role see also Tobias Schneider, "Ideologische Grabenkämpfe," pp. 283-284.

painter, a sculpture, a musician, not a woman, a man, not a friend) . . . Nothing is too terrible for us when we wish to be gladiators.”⁶⁹

Judging from her comments, mixing admiration and frustration, Reventlow’s affair with Klages seems to have been a heroic attempt to grasp the ungraspable. She often expressed her admiration to Klages, but her irony shows she never believed she was his inferior. Writing to Klages in December 1901, she distinguished herself and Klages from the other members of the George circle: “While I looked at all of them, I thought about you. It was clear to me that between you and them lies an abyss. I am perhaps terribly arrogant to speak so, . . . but for the same reason I am not moved to speak about the G-book. I know that I do not understand some of it . . . It is as if a stream of living blood [*lebendem Blut*] is rushing beneath, and all these people hear perhaps something of the sound but do not know what the blood and the stream are. You are another world.”⁷⁰ The “G-book” to which Reventlow refers is Klages’s first book, *Stefan George*, published a few months after the letter was sent. The book was dedicated to George, though with the same kind of ambivalence apparent in the later versions of “Vom Schaffenden.”

5. The cosmic circle

As Klages reconstructed his worldview, his philosophy started to affect his personal life. This culminated in a conflict with Karl Wolfskehl (1869-1948) in 1904 that shook Schwabing’s bohemian culture and forced Klages’s implicit rejection of George’s authority in an open challenge. At the heart of the feud was Wolfskehl’s support of the Zionist movement and George’s refusal to expel him for that support. This, for Klages, was the point of no return.

To understand the conflict itself, however, we must outline the formation of and relationships within the famous Munich “cosmic circle,” made up of Alfred Schuler (1865-1923), Klages, Wolfskehl, George himself, and Ludwig Derleth (1870-1948); the Countess Franziska zu Reventlow—who became Klages’s lover for a short period—attended some of the meetings as well. At the center of the small group stood Schuler, Klages, and Wolfskehl. The establishment of the cosmic circle (*Kosmische Runde*) in

⁶⁹ “Denn theoretisch habe ich immer und immer betont, dass die einseitige Unterjochung des Körpers unter die Gewalt des Geistes, genannt ‘Körperherrschaft,’ die Gefahr einer Verflachung und Vernegerung des Seelischen in sich birgt, denn alle Zweckhaftigkeit ist zielstrebig und nur in einseitig eingeengten Bahnlängen vollzieht sich der ‘Störunglose’ Ablauf der Bewegung . . . Dieses verläuft aber nicht in zielstrebigem Bahnen, sondern in rhythmischen! Und praktisch habe ich das Übermass der Zielstrebigkeit bekämpft, indem ich die Schwindung, jenes geheime Vibrieren, das den Menschen nicht nur mit dem Menschen, sondern auch mit aller Natur verbindet.” Rudolf Bode, “Körpererziehung und Kultur,” in *Der Rhythmus, Zeitschrift für gymnastische Erziehung Mitteilungen des Bodebundes* 5:3 (July-September 1927): 99.

⁷⁰ “[Die] höchste Offenbarung . . . zum Grundprinzip aller körperlichen Bildung machte und dessen Wiedererweckung als das eigentliche pädagogische Problem der Gegenwart aufstellte.” Ibid.

Schwabing provided an alternative to the George circle, though George was quick to claim some authority in the new group for himself. Robert Norton writes about the ideas espoused by the group:

While George was more than happy to entertain the suggestion that salvation may be attained through an ideal hermaphroditic pederasty, and was averse to Schuler's rejection of modernity as a sump of soulless materialism and dead rationality, he was less certain of Schuler's belief that the answer lay in [the] magical return to a previous state of being. At bottom, George was too much a pragmatist, and too dedicated to the notion that unforeseen possibilities still lay in the future, to surrender himself entirely to Schuler's desire to cancel the present by voyaging to the past.⁷¹

If George and Wolfskehl promoted a radical reform of the poetic language advocating a future-oriented vision, Klages and Schuler dived deeper into the far past, in search of relevant myths they could revive and reconstitute. According to Klages's later recollections, part of this effort had to do with a conscious attempt to battle the Judeo-Christian civilization. While the fascination with ancient myths was shared by all members of the George group, the purpose of studying them was still different; rather than erasing the Western civilization as a whole, Wolfskehl wanted to reform it.⁷² Karl Lowith, the well known historian of philosophy, described Wolfskehl in his autobiography as a "powerful, tall and important man [who] was one of the founding members of the George circle . . . [and] knew German and Romance literature better than many a specialist, an excellent translator."⁷³ Many years later, a deeply anti-Semitic Klages still acknowledged Wolfskehl with a mixture of sarcastic envy and admiration, as the "*Alleskenner*" (the know-it-all). And in the introduction he wrote in 1940 for Schuler's collected writings, Klages could not resist a note of pure admiration for Wolfskehl: "After [Wolfskehl] finished his Germanic studies, I have seen him amusing himself with philology [*Altphilologie*], . . . with archeology, . . . with Egyptology, . . . arguing with musicians about the history of music, with very learned aesthetes about Laconte de Lisle, Francois Coppee, Huysmans, Henri de Regnier, Rimbaud, Wilde,

⁷¹ "Alle Bewegungen müssen sich von innen entladen als rhythmischgeformte, in dem Sinn, dass die Bewegung von einem Zentrum aus auf den ganzen Körper überstrahlt." Rudolf Bode, "Die Bedeutung der körperlichen Bewegung für die Erneuerung der deutschen Kultur," *Rhythmus* 13, pp. 286-293. See also Norbert Hopster and Ulrich Nassen, *Literatur und Erziehung im Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1983), p. 53.

⁷² "Unsere Aufgabe als Hochschullehrer ist es, sie zu gestalten: eine neue Erkenntnislehre, eine neue Ethik, die Wissenschaft der uns artgemässen totalen Lebensordnung unseres Volkes." Hans Lohr, "Wesen und Sinn der nationalsozialistischen Akademie des NSD-Dozentenbundes der Christian-Albrechts-Universität," in *Kieler Blätter*, no. 1 (1938): 40. Quoted in Monika Leske, *Philosophen im "Dritten Reich", Studie zu Hochschulkund Philosophiebetrieben im faschistischen Deutschland* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1990), p. 81.

⁷³ "Sprache ist nicht bloss äussere Form, gute Sprache nicht Schmuck des Lebens, sondern Ausdruck der volkischen Denkform und Denkweise. Darum bedeutet Zucht der Sprache zugleich Zucht des Denkens und des Charakters." Ernst Krieck, *Dichtung und Erziehung* (Leipzig: ArmanenVerlag, 1941), p. 147.

Beardsley, and every time he gave the impression of being a professional or at least highly knowledgeable scholar.”⁷⁴

Schuler, who was far too passive to lead a philosophical movement by himself, accepted Klages as an equal and perhaps as his superior, though he was seven years older.⁷⁵ Wolfskehl joined their circle after Klages and Schuler had given their ideas a coherent identity; at the time his Jewishness did not seem to bother either party. During this period Klages appears to have been willing to accept Jews as friends, provided they had the “right” aesthetic and cultural beliefs. In his recollections about the group of cosmoists, the author Roderich Huch argues that it was Schuler who was most obsessed about Judaism (at least before 1904).⁷⁶ In 1900 Wolfskehl still appeared to be more of an “acceptable” Jew to Klages’s circle than Lessing, as Wolfskehl’s wife, Hanna, described Klages and Schuler, in a January 1901 letter to Stefan George, as “friends of the house.”⁷⁷

When the cosmic circle was established, Schuler was 33 years old, Wolfskehl 29, and Klages 26. Of the three, Wolfskehl had the closest ties to George; according to Klages, “Wolfskehl was sent [to spy] by George himself.”⁷⁸ Klages and Schuler carefully maintained their distance from the master and tried to develop their own ideas away from his charismatic critique. The two conducted a comprehensive search into the heart of ancient myths and mystical traditions, guided by Schuler’s obsession with the Roman Caesars and pagan cults before the rise of Christianity. As Klages wrote during the heyday of the Nazi regime, “Schuler discovered the ancient Indian symbol of the swastika already in 1895. He was the one who made this symbol into the center of a prehistorical humanity and taught it as what signifies the ‘inner perception’ [*innere Wahrnehmung*].”⁷⁹ Yet Wolfskehl, with his immense knowledge, contributed much to the “cosmic” effort. He was the one who discovered Johann Jakob Bachofen’s texts about classical matriarchy and death symbols, which proved crucial to the group’s thinking. As Klages’s biographer put it: “After reading Bachofen, Klages was filled with sadness about the lost world of Pellas.”⁸⁰ As I will demonstrate in the third chapter, the discovery of Bachofen’s matriarchy completely changed Klages’s thinking, and in some ways defines the whole relationship of *Lebensphilosophers*, shortly before

⁷⁴ “Die Sprachgesetz des Volkes . . . seiner besonderen *Lebensaufgaben* und seines eigentümlichen *Lebenssinns* kommt.” Ernst Krieck, *Die Wirklichkeit*, vol. 1 of *Volkisch-politische Anthropologie* (Leipzig: Armanen, 1936), p. 39 (emphases in the original).

⁷⁵ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 231, 238.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁷⁷ Ernst Cassirer, *Zur Metaphysik der symbolischen Formen, Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1995), p. 24.

⁷⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 26.

⁷⁹ Peter E. Gordon, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 75.

⁸⁰ Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 53.

the rise of a distinct fascist *Lebensphilosophie*. It will suffice to say, here, that after reading Bachofen Klages attempted to reconstitute a version of *Lebensphilosophie* that would distinguish itself from the Judeo-Christian tradition as a whole. (“As Bachofen shows, . . .” wrote Klages, “it was first southern Europe, later Europe generally, which annihilated a few nations and enslaved others, in the shapes of Judaism or, one could say, Christianity.”⁸¹)

If Wolfskehl differed in any way from “typical” Jews, it was not for political apathy. When he witnessed the growth of anti-Semitism in fin-de-siecle France and Germany, Wolfskehl placed his remarkable intellectual powers at the disposal of the Zionist movement. He served as an official representative of Munich’s Jews, participated in the sixth Zionist Congress in Basel in 1903, and met Theodor Herzl.⁸² As late as 1940, Klages struck a clearly apologetic tone when explaining his anti-Semitic accusations against Wolfskehl, without ever doubting the validity of the stereotypes themselves:

“The reader might think it [Wolfskehl’s Zionism] is the same thing that it was in 1896! There was even then enough anti-Semitism (and it was not the stupidest either), which strongly supported the [Zionist] view that [it is] ‘better for the Jews to be in Palestine than among us’. We see it [in 1904] in a different light; Wolfskehl showed his belief in Yahwehism via his Zionism. The wondering Jew [*Juda*], so generally the reason behind it [Yahwehism], marks an unreliable figure, . . . One sees him as a rootless Jew [*bodenlose Jude*] . . . the law of the Yahwehism tries to renew itself and to revenge the past suppression of its people.”⁸³

As the years passed, the image of the cosmic circle changed, thanks greatly to Klages’s later recollections and editing of Schuler’s work. The work that raised Walter Benjamin’s curiosity in 1926 was seen as a clear statement of racial politics in 1940. Klages testified in his introduction to Schuler’s posthumous book, “When Schuler revived this ancient mystical symbol [of the swastika], he was aware that it was not just a general cross, . . . but one aimed specifically against Jewishness [*Jahwismus*] and the Yahweh of Saul and Paul [i.e., Christianity]. It was a cross meant to oppose the culture of martyrdom.”⁸⁴ When Klages revealed the leading part played by Wolfskehl in promoting the use of the swastika, together with the Judeo-Christian bond which in his eyes was opposed to it, he insisted, “It would be too simplistic to speak of

⁸¹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 33, 39.

⁸² Oliver A. I. Botar, “Raoul France and National Socialism: A Problematic Relationship,” a paper given to the Fifth International Congress of Hungarian Studies, Jyväskylä, Finland, 2011, p. 8. I thank Professor Botar for sharing this unpublished paper with me.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁴ Rene Romain Roth, *Raoul H. France and the Doctrine of Life* (Bloomington, Ind.: First Books Library, 2000), p. 176. France is also known as the inventor of the concept of biotechnology, which he identified with “the study of living and life-like systems” (p. 109).

anti-Semitism.”⁸⁵ Yet the consistent appraisal of Jewish symbols as the symbols of the “enemy” at every juncture in Klages’s life resists any other interpretation. Schuler’s investigations into ancient cults were driven by his general fascination with the ancient Roman world and with the history of aesthetic symbols. His interest appears to have had no political motivation, though clearly Schuler was obsessed with Judaism as a historical phenomenon. But at the time of his death in 1923, Schuler had never had any contact with the Nazi party—his life was remarkably devoid of political entanglements. It now seems likely that the intermediaries between Schuler, or his legacy, and the Nazis were Hugo and Elsa Bruckmann, a couple who supported Hitler from his early days as the leader of the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP, i.e., Nazi). The Bruckmanns were acquainted with Schuler and took an interest in his research; in fact, in 1930 they financed an early edition of Schuler’s literary estate, collected and edited by Klages and Gustav W. Freytag, a professor at Munich University and the son of the well-known novelist Gustav Freytag. The Bruckmanns could easily have shown Hitler Schuler’s papers about the swastika during one of his frequent visits to their house in the early 1920s. The two were also friendly with Klages and took a particular interest in the circle around Klages after it was formed in the early 1930s. Elsa Bruckmann remained an important supporter of the biocentric circle formed by Klages’s disciples in 1932, which fused biological and medical research with Klages’s philosophy.⁸⁶

When we scrutinize the conflict among Klages, Schuler, Wolfskehl, and George, we find that its content and language prove to be the result not of any biological notion of race, but of Germanism and what people make of it. At the time, race was still a metaphor for the artistic and cultural understanding of language, which impinged on the construction of different kinds of anti-Semitic thought and on their gradual politicization and actualization. If we compare this conflict with that which arose between Lessing and Klages, we find that the later one came to be an overall conflict that divided Klages’s world into two camps—the supporters and the enemies of Molochism, that is, the supporters and enemies of life itself. From Klages’s perspective, if the result of the early conflict was the end of a personal friendship, the result of the later one was the end of a certain collective, first and foremost the one around Stefan George. The first sign of the importance of George behind the conflict appeared in April 1899. After many delays, Schuler had finally invited a few friends to his house for a Roman dinner: Klages, Wolfskehl and his wife, and George. Robert Norton refers to the event as a “spiritual ambush.”⁸⁷ After dinner, Schuler read some of his recent poems. His turbulent and theatrical recitation shocked George and deeply impressed

⁸⁵ Botar’s paper traces the explicit references to France’s work among the artistic avant-garde of the 1920s, among them well-known names such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Fritz Neumeyer, Mies van der Rohe, and El Lissitzky.

⁸⁶ Oliver A. I. Botar, “Defining Biocentrism,” in *Biocentrism and Modernism*, ed. Oliver A. I. Botar and Isabel Wunsche (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 17-18.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

Klages. Here is Klages's account from his introduction to Schuler's *Fragmente and Vortrage*:

In the middle of Schuler's none-too-clean room were plates and candles . . . After the meal he started to read from his strongest fragments, with much pathos. He wanted to create, to form, so one felt, a magical surrounding . . . The old mother [Schuler's] is completely immersed, dropping down; Wolfskehl's immune spirit and soul draw back to absorb, while his wife sits motionless, since for her it is all "too lofty." George is restless, petulant, and irritable, [but] manages to control his agitation, . . . though he loses control of his demeanor. The atmosphere of tension is unbearable. No one could grasp exactly what Schuler was trying to do, but from his mouth came a volcano, lava . . . When it ended, everyone was left frozen, [grateful] only that it was over . . . All of a sudden I find myself alone with George and feel a hand taking mine: "This is madness! I cannot bear it! What were you doing when you brought me here! This is madness! Take me away, take me to some pub, where people, absolutely simple people, can smoke a cigarette and drink beer! I cannot bear it!"⁸⁸

That evening, Klages related in his introduction, sealed his convictions of Schuler's importance and allowed him to overcome George's influence.

In a recent study of the George circle's "aesthetic fundamentalism," Stefan Breuer remarks that "in contrast to the magical thought of the cosmic circle, George strove for a more sorted notion of the past."⁸⁹ It seems to me that the difference in interpreting the past reflects a more general understanding of the term "aesthetic fundamentalism." Delving with all their being into the past, near and far, is the most common characteristic of the cosmics, often expressed in almost farcical terms. George, in that respect, seemed to be more careful and methodologically disciplined, but also more engaged with his own status as a cultural guru, than with the realization of his mythic life vocabulary. If he was an aesthetic fundamentalist, George kept his fundamentalism within the well-protected boundaries of the artistic Schwabing area. As a rule, he refused to take sides in conflicts, as shown in the argument between the cosmics and Wolfskehl in 1904 or in the Nazi enthusiasm for his poetry. In both cases, George took sides only once he was left with no other option.

In discussions of aesthetics, Klages referred to George as a "symbolist," by no means a compliment: "The whole symbolism business [*Symbolisterei*] is nothing but the usurpa-

⁸⁸ "Rosenberg contra Klages," see John Claverely Cartney, web-page editor, "The Biocentric Metaphysics of Ludwig Klages" in <http://www.revilo-oliver.com> (accessed July 16, 2012), quoted in *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁸⁹ "Deshalb ist es kein Zufall, wenn auch unsere Einigung in das Jahr der nationalsozialistischen Erhebung fällt: Erst heute beginnt unsere praktische Wirksamkeit möglich und auch nötig zu werden . . . Der Schwerpunkt der NSDAP läuft wesentlich auf politischem Gebiet, die Ziele unseres Forschungskreises berühren die religiöse Sphäre. Infolge der gemeinsamen weltnanschaulichen Grundlage haben wir die Verpflichtung, die wirkliche Radikalität der nationalen Revolution dort zu wahren, wo der Politiker Vermittlungen sucht. Die staatliche Macht ist verpflichtet, dem kulturellen Aufbau Schutz zu gewahren, denn ohne ihn entbehrt sie ihres Inhaltes und überhaupt ihres Lebensrechtes." Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Konv.: Prosa.

tion of kings' thrones by bankers' sons. It amounts to choosing the ornamentation before building the house or laying down the floor. George belongs to that kind."⁹⁰ For Klages, Schuler represented a step toward the full actualization of the living past, not merely a representation of the past; he proved that the barriers could be razed.

In 1904 Klages's anti-Semitism finally severed his connection with George. During a private conversation with his erstwhile mentor, Klages asked, "What connects us to Judas?" by whom he meant Wolfskehl. And he went so far as to wonder whether George himself was purely German—after all, wasn't George's growing international fame based on his cultivation of Jewish publishers?⁹¹ Later he partially excused Wolfskehl for his Zionist activities, remarking that "since no Jew stands by himself," Wolfskehl had done little but shuttle ideas to and fro. He suspected George of exploiting a secret global Jewish network.⁹² Klages and Schuler concluded their indictment of George by noting that in addition to Wolfskehl he fraternized with Friedrich Gundolf, another disciple of Jewish descent, even though he had shortened his name to sound more German and had stoutly refused Wolfskehl's attempts to enlist him in the Zionist cause.⁹³ Ulrich

⁹⁰ Wolfgang Olshausen, "Ludwig Klages in Berlin, 1933," unnumbered manuscript in the "Prosa" section, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages,

⁹¹ On this group, see *Hestia: Jahrbuch der Klages-Gesellschaft 1967/1969* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1971). The work is described as "lectures on the theme of language and its importance in the work of Ludwig Klages" and includes articles by Hans Eggert Schroder, Albert Wellek, Heinz Alfred Mueller, Hans Kasdorf, Francoise Wiersma-Verschaffelt, and Otto Huth. On Hirt's research see also the court sitting at Nuremberg that took place July 29 to August 8, 1946, at <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/tgmwc/tgmwc-20/tgmwc-20-198-04.shtml>.

⁹² "(1) Der Mensch gehort den beiden Reichen des Lebens und des Geistes an. Folgt er den idealistischen oder materialistischen Gesetzen des Geistes, dient er der logozentrischen, -setzt er die Machte des Lebens als letzten Wert, dient er der *biozentrischen* Weltanschauung. Durch diese Entscheidung wird die Substanz des Menschen in ihrer *Existenz* und in ihrer Entwicklung bestimmt. (2) Mit besonderer Absicht verwenden wir die von Ludwig Klages gepragten Begriffe. In Klages erblicken wir den bedeutendsten Verkunder einer *Lebensphilosophie*, deren Unterstromung in die vorchristliche, germanische Zeit reicht . . . Gewiss mogen uns unter den lebenden Philosophen auch andere Namen bedeutungsvoll geworden sein, -kein Name besitzt eine Leuchtkraft wie derjenige *Klages*'. (3) Nie werden wir den zivilisatorischen Verfall unserer Kultur durch den Einfluss von *pseudo-radikalen* . . . durch den Einfluss von Ressentimentsgetriebenen Politikern ertragen. (4) Die selbstgeschaffene Bergung innerhalb einer Kulturgemeinschaft verlangt, die sich auf eine feste Hierarchie der Lebenswerte grundet, d.h. Blut-und Landschaftszusammenhang als Wurzeln unsrer Existenz anerkennt,-und entscheidendes Vertrauen auf die letzten bildenden Machte des *Menschen*: Das Wunder, die Liebe, das Vorbild gesetzt. (H. Prinzhorn gibt in seiner *Persönlichkeitspsychologie* [1932] die eindringlichste Zusammenfassung einer biozentrischen Wirklichkeitslehre vom Menschen.) (5) Als allgemein verbindliche *Methode* unserer Forschung kann das hinweisende oder symbolische Denken bezeichnet werden. In den Ergebnissen der *Charakterologie*, die vor allen auf diesen Erkenntnisweg angewiesen ist, erblicken wir die Bedingung fur eine notwendige Gesundung unseres Wirklichkeitssinn es . . . Hierbei sind wir davon uberzeugt, dass unsere wissenschaftlichen Moglichkeiten weniger im atomisierten Spezialistentum, als *zwischen* den Einzeldisziplinen liegen." "Der Arbeits-Kreis fur biozentrische Forschung (AKBF)," in DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Prosa, unpublished manuscripts (all emphases in the original).

⁹³ "Für das ihm innewohnende Vermögen der Wandlung und Erneuerung. Endlich waren wir solcher art Physiognomiker, aber in einem tieferen Sinne als dem bisher mit dem worte durchweg verbundenen.

Raulff reminds us how Klages interpreted the Jewish disciples around George: “Klages proceeded with a wondrous introspection to identify who *really* stands, for George, behind the divine Maximin (Maximilian Kronenberger, who Klages identified [with the Jewish name] ‘Kronfeld’): that was no other than Jahwe! . . . Wolfskehl was the puppeteer wire-puller of Zionism and George [served] as his poetic tool: What Klages surmises in 1940 is absolutely absurd, a paranoid absurdity.”⁹⁴

6. Stefan George, 1902

After the ties had been broken, Klages often denied ever having taken a serious interest in either Stefan George or his circle. Except for the introduction to Schuler’s texts, he never mentioned Wolfskehl again. In a letter he sent to his disciple Werner Deubel on November 14, 1922, he went so far as to ask that the relationship with George not be mentioned.⁹⁵ Then, when George’s canonization left Klages in the shadows during the second half of the 1920s, he changed tactics and described the relationship as one between equals. Writing again to

Deubel, he referred to the depiction of his friendship with George as a “myth,” suggesting that “it should be George as a ‘youthful Klages,’ the same as Klages was a ‘youthful George.’”⁹⁶ His frustration over the recurrent references to him as a former disciple of George became quite emphatic, as he referred to it as a “legend” that would be “shattered” by the pending publication of a book by Hans Naumann.⁹⁷ If he was not to escape from that construction quite so quickly, Klages did eventually earn his own reputation as a separate and distinct voice. Over time George’s shadow faded, but then the question of Klages’s anti-Semitism returned to resurrect the forgotten affair of 1904.

Wir fragen nicht mehr in erster Linie: welcher Vorgang folgt auf welchen andern? Sondern wir fragen . . . welche Lebensregungen *erscheinen* in ihnen? . . . Beharrung bedeutet zugleich Wiederholung; und aufgrund der Annahme von *Widerholungen des Gleichen* wird die Welt vom Geiste rechnerisch bewältigt. Allein die Wirklichkeit geht nur über jede von der Rechnung erreichte Dezimele unendlich hinaus.” Ludwig Klages to Carl Haeberlin, January 10, 1935, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61/5117, letter no. 1 (emphases in the original).

⁹⁴ Christian Eckle, “Erbcharakterologische Zwillingsuntersuchungen,” in *Beiheft zur Zeitschrift angewandte Psychologie und Charakterkunde*, ed. Otto Klemm and Phillip Lersch (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth Verlag, 1939), p. 11.

⁹⁵ Julius Deussen, *Klages Kritik des Geistes, mit 7 Figuren und einer monographischen Bibliographie Ludwig Klages und einer Bibliographie der biozentrischen Literatur der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1934).

⁹⁶ A. Abbott, “German Science Begins to Cure Its Historical Amnesia,” *Nature* 403 (2000): 474–475; William E. Seidelman, “Science and Inhumanity: The Kaiser-Wilhelm/Max Planck Society,” *Not Now: An Electronic Journal* 2 (Winter 2000), <http://www.baycrest.org/journal/ifnot01w.html> (accessed February 12, 2013).

⁹⁷ Julius Deussen to Joachim Haupt, July 11, 1933, DLA, Nachlass Julius Deussen, doc. no. 7, file 6.

In May 1933, in response to an inquiry from Deubel about George, Klages alluded contemptuously to both George's lack of formal education and his homosexuality, referring to him with the sarcastic "Dr." and the cruel "Stefanie"⁹⁸:

Behind this relationship with Dr. George is a critique of the man who turned the larger and better part of the German youth into our enemies. Stefanie's family tree, which I possess, and suspect [that he is not German], shows that the family has been in Germany for only two generations . . . Stefanie himself was called in his youth Etienne George and initially wrote only French poetry. As to the "youth" of my time, at least seventy percent [of the circle] seemed to be Jewish. In the big cities his headquarters was always in the home of rich Jews: Lepsius in Berlin, Wolfskehl in Munich. All this is known already.⁹⁹

Twenty years after the publication of his first book, Klages was preparing an edition of Bachofen's travel book about Greece with the Basel professor, Carl Albrecht Bernoulli, and wrote a letter in which he compared it to the book he had dedicated to George:

When I wrote the George book, I wrote freely in a "Delphic style." . . . I spent about seven years under the influence of [George's] "secret circle" [*Geheimkreise*] and lost track of how much of that was open to middlebrows [*gebildeten*] and how much was not.¹⁰⁰ I was therefore amazed when a highly cultivated person [*hochgebildeter Mann*] in Hamburg told me: "Your book is an attempt to bring George closer to us"—note that at the time George was considered as nothing but [an exemplary case of] difficult reading!—"but it is far more difficult than George's, much harder and more esoteric than his!" I needed fifteen years to free myself from the terrible concision of the "Delphic style" and am more convinced today than ever that for the middlebrows there is more and more that is considered esoteric.¹⁰¹

The anecdote illustrates the gap that existed between Klages and George during the early 1900s, as well as the strong influence that Bachofen had on Klages, in content as well as in style. At the time, Klages portrayed the middlebrows as a pathetic, judgmental group with a limited horizon of expectations. One of fate's great ironies is that this esoteric prose Klages adopted from George added significantly to Klages's popularity during the 1920s. To challenge and frustrate the cultivated bourgeois was an honor, since it implied, he thought, that his writings were all the more subversive.

Beyond the social-bohemian dynamic, Klages's interest in George had an actual value for his own philosophical and psychological system. In his study *Stefan George* (1902), Klages used George's poetry and its assumptions to develop a new theory of appearance. At the core of the theory is a postromantic discussion of *Leben*, treated as George's great contribution to the arts. Even at this early stage, one can trace all

⁹⁸ Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 2007), p. 19.

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁰⁰ Petra Gehring, *Was ist Biomacht? Vom zweifelhaften Mehrwert des Lebens* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2006), p. 222 (emphases in original).

¹⁰¹ Agamben, *The Open*, p. 37.

the central topics that would form Klages's *Lebensphilosophie* as a whole: the absolute value of the image, the artistic creation, and the rejection of evolution, progress, and development. It is, to take a current cosmological term, the dark matter, scattered everywhere, that testifies to the assortment of universal phenomena. On top of George's poetic images Klages added his own philosophical classifications and measurements.

The book opens with a long explanation about physiognomy, starting with Johann Kaspar Lavater's (1741-1801) study of faces, to which Klages had dedicated a short article the previous year.¹⁰² As I will show in detail in my later chapters, physiognomy was used by Lavater (and his many followers) to interpret the human face as a combination of character traits. Klages went further, including physiognomy in a larger cluster of theories that treat the human body as the outer manifestation of an inner essence. He cited "characterology" (*Charakterologie* or *Charakterkunde*) and graphology as physiognomy's allies, though physiognomy was an early romantic science, graphology a late romantic science; characterology, or the theory of expressions, was Klages's own invention. Klages honored this historical series in his portrayal of George. During the period when he originated his ideas of *Lebensphilosophie*, and in the context of the George group, Klages developed his well-known trademarks: his philosophy of life, his reliance on physical expressions of the body and the face, and his willingness to politicize all of those in order to gain more personal power. Contesting the ideas of one of the best German poets of his time and a cult figure of many youth was an excellent strategy meant to win some popularity and recognition.

All that said, Klages made certain that this public challenge was constructed on the basis of philosophical principles and not personal rivalry. In the 1902 interpretation he rejected—in alliance with George—the idea of "development" and "progression," and he took seriously the task of interpreting George's poetic production. From the motto of the book to its conclusion, Klages followed George's poetics, only to make them subservient to his own methods.

The two parts of the book's motto are taken from the Jena romantics: Friedrich von Schelling's "heavenly music" in *Bruno* and Friedrich Holderlin's "movement of the heart" in *Hyperion*.¹⁰³ George, Klages declared in the first page of the essay proper, was "the only restorer of faith among German poets since romanticism." Klages saw the raw material that occasionally escaped from the collective unconscious as essentially visual and therefore present only implicitly in our language: "Only rarely would the unspiritual forces that motivate growth rise into the consciousness."¹⁰⁴ George's

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Samuel Weber, "Bare Life and Life in General," in *Gray Room* 46 (Winter 2012), p. 20. Sam Weber's article is an exceptionally precise analysis of the concept of "bare life." However, in contrast to my analysis of *Lebensphilosophie*, Weber's stress falls on the weight given to *life* and *death* within the antinomial relationship, in a post-Paulinian context, rather than the immanentization of death within life as a secularized form.

¹⁰⁴ "Schon beim stillen Nachsprecher dieser Worter durfte den Lesern und Leserinnen klar werden, dass die deutsche Volkerkunde seit 1945 ein terminologisches Problem hat." Thomas Hauschild, "Dem

poetics was depicted as a chthonic force of language that enabled the old to resurface and make itself apparent. Constructing his essay on the basis of an historical aesthetic explanation, Klages presented the historical movement that is revived in George as the movement between naturalism and imagism, or the active forming of the landscape via symbols and the “reality of images” (*Wirklichkeit der Bilder*). It is significant that the idea most identified with Klages and his revolutionary *Lebensphilosophie* was mentioned first in the analysis of George and as early as 1902. The context demonstrates the totality of imagism, shaped already in relation to the poetics of the group and utilized later for different purposes. As he explains in the opening pages to the book:

The reality of images: One can repeat here three claims made by George. First he says that his art stands in opposition to any school of thought, which “formed any false perception of reality [*einer falschen auffassung der wirklichkeit entsprang*].” Second, [that] “we see in every event, any time period only the means to reach an artistic excitement [*Wir sehen in jedem ereignis, jedem zeitlater nur ein m ittel kiinstlicher erregung*].” Third, “the value of poetry decides the form, not the meaning, or it would become mere erudition [*Den Wert der dichtung entscheidet nicht der sinn, sonst ware sie etwa weisheit, gelahrtheitsondern die Form*].”¹⁰⁵

If the reality of images takes over life and its language, there is no more open space between past and present, fact and imagination, the inner and the outer.

The reality of images was to prove the most important philosophical idea of Klages’s career. Although he returned to it obsessively, never again would he connect the idea with Stefan George. He hoped to show that the diffusion of reality and images showed the unity of aesthetic markers (symbols and images, the referential, speech acts, and so on) with the thing itself, galvanized by the gushing flow of time in the universe, or the coursing flow of blood through the human body. “The work of art itself,” he explained, “is affected by the influence of the time, [while] the world of things [*Sachwelt*] pales and dissolves in the unifying powerful reality. Life is no longer molded into meaning but pounds in the blood along with every ‘deep excitement in mass and sound.’”¹⁰⁶ For Klages, mass and sound were often juxtaposed with space and time in a sort of equation. The implication was that any hermeneutic of understanding would fail to grasp the transformation of the ecstatic rhythm of an endless flow into the actuality of *Leben*. Michael Grossheim, a disciple of Klages, wrote that for Klages (in contrast to Dilthey), “the life experience [*Lebenserfahrung*] is not the historical-cultural

lebendigen Geist,’ Warum die Geschichte der Volkerkunde im ‘Dritten Reich’ auch fur Nichtetnologen von Interesse sein kann,” in *Lebenslust und Fremdenfurcht, Ethnologie im Dritten Reich*, ed. Thomas Hauschild (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995), p. 22.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰⁶ “Die Kraft korperhaften Sehens und Erfassen lasst sich entfalten . . . Der Wille, aus klarer Erkenntnis das Eigene, das Lebendig-Eigene aus eigenem Willen zu wirken, scheint mir ein Kennzeichen unserer Gegenwart und mehr noch ein Anzeichen und Vorzeichen der Zukunft zu sein.” Hans Gunther, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, vol. 1 (Munich: Lehmann Verlag, 1939), p. 3.

experience.”¹⁰⁷ Klages’s elementary life forms (*Lebensformen*), according to Grossheim, “are not allowed to search for ‘analogies of the understanding of the one united life.’”¹⁰⁸ Analogy, for Klages, represented just another useless process of symbolization and conceptualization—another tool for the alienated middlebrow.

But why is this intricate—often muddled—metaphysic important here? The significance of Klages’s thinking cannot be comprehended in historical terms without the context of his thought and his relationship—implicit and explicit—to preexisting philosophies and aesthetics. In the case of Klages and his followers, the question of intellectual affiliation and reaction takes on a special urgency because they cultivated their aesthetics, they thought, within the arena of the Dionysian agon, in the field, running, hunted. All of their foes—Dilthey and his school, the neo-Kantians, the historicists, the formalists—would deny the reality of the underworld, and this underworld was rising up, against everyone, soon to drown the world. Thus, the existence of a deep ontological crisis could not be denied; it had to be acknowledged and fought against. Alas, epistemology had to pay the price: the “joy of naming” he was writing about in “Vom Schaffenden” in 1899 meant the creation of a new reality of images, turned into the voluntary act of self-un naming in the early 1910s. Klages turned from writing lyrical sonnets and poetic eulogies to a typology that recognized humans only in groups. According to Klages’s theory, George earned his fame at the expense of losing his individuality.

In his study of Stefan George, Klages suggested a change that he would repeat in different texts: “Symbols are [like] axes . . . Aesthetics . . . [is] the geometry of feelings. Plato erred in ‘positing beauty as an [unattainable] idea.’”¹⁰⁹ Only by returning to “the silver shells of primal time” could change take place.¹¹⁰ The poetic language of George and other romantic poets brings men closer to that primal image. We should learn from Pindar, Dante, Shakespeare, Holderlin, and George, says Klages, but no less should we learn from Galileo, Kepler, Botticelli, and Fra Angelico.¹¹¹ In other words, one should, Klages argues, attach the pure image-making with the careful study of the cosmos. George, he concluded, “must be understood as part of the lineage that also includes Goethe and Nietzsche,” thinkers whom Klages identified with an absolute comprehension, both artistic and scientific.¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ “Aus einem Zeitalter der Not heraus wollten viele Denker der 30er Jahre die Zeit als solche besiegen und sich auf ewig in einer heilen, erlosten Menschheit fortzeugen.” Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰⁸ “Der Gedanke der kraftvollen und lustvollen Eroberung der Zukunft, aber auch die Sorge um eine als ‘krank’ und bedroht empfundene Gegenwart ist Reich und Gunther, oder auch: Marcuse und Junger, Adorno und Klages gemeinsam. Gemeinsam ist vielen Denkern der 30er Jahre auch die Bindung ihres Denkens an Motive der Lebenslust . . . die Suche nach einem naturwuchsigem Ursprung, zu dem zurückzukehren gilt.” Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 43.

¹¹² Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einführung*, p. 31.

In George Klages was hoping to find the same “insomniac awareness” (*Schlafwanderliches Wesen*) of the earlier being (*Sein*).¹¹³ It is the restoration of the early Germanic style of unity, the Gothic style, which George helped to revive. Yet he was doing so—wrongly, says Klages—for the sake of a better future. Past, present, and future are merged in a poetic moment of creation.¹¹⁴ George used the right compass and still took the wrong direction. Klages’s book ends with a recommendation of George’s *Der Teppich des Lebens*, which Klages sees as filling the goblet of “blazing wine of the strongest life.”¹¹⁵ Klages’s interpretation does not end with approval, though; it ends with a question mark: “Is the poet moving toward the earlier exhilaration [*Rausch*] or does he turn to the rising path?”¹¹⁶ Klages’s question allowed him to cultivate his own version of life and the life jargon. His work on *Stefan George* allowed him to rework his fragments and ideas from the time into a coherent manifestation of a cosmic worldview that used ancient Germanic metaphors to chop away the superfluous, the non-German, that is, George himself, or his Jewish disciples.

7. The end of the world, 1904

In 1904 Klages published a short work of fiction entitled “Das Ende der Welt” (The end of the world) under the anagrammatic name Edward Gleska.¹¹⁷ A lyrical, poetic, and somewhat mystical work, it appears to have emerged from the same feelings he very often revealed in his letters to Franziska Reventlow, and it marks a time of both personal and collective transformation:

He had crossed the Elysian fields of night and neared the coasts of decline, . . . the doors of utter silence. A member of the flow [*Fluss*] of moribund [*totgeweihten*] things, . . . so has that of him which is human [*Menschenteil*] broken apart, so that no remains could be saved of the waves of silence: the craft of hope and longing . . . and thus the forest opened itself and he stood on the shores of the finality of his being [*Dasein*]. With one look, which rendered everything obvious, he saw the unified distances of the world and the abyss of decline [*die Weiten der Welt und den Abgrund des Niederganges*].¹¹⁸

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 40.

¹¹⁴ Mosse, *Masses and Man*, pp. 1, 15.

¹¹⁵ Currently, the best place to read Klages in English is the monumental work of translation done by John Claverley Cartney, an unidentifiable independent scholar whose name can be easily linked with some suspicious groups. See http://www.revilo-oliver.com/Writers/Klages/Ludwig_Klages.html and the anti-Semitic <http://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/index.html>.

¹¹⁶ Samuel Weber, *Benjamin’s-abilities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 66.

¹¹⁷ “The classification of man into racial types according to groups of traits and the study of the transmission of physical traits and predispositions through heredity is a completely legitimate scientific endeavor because a part of total human existence is undoubtedly of animal nature and can be isolated as such.” Eric Voegelin, *Race and State*, trans. Ruth Hein (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), p. 34.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 82.

No doubt the chronic insomnia from which Klages suffered terribly throughout his life contributed to the imagery of hopeless nocturnal wanderings. When one reads his travel reports, his letters, or his literary fantasies, the notion of a deep falling darkness or never-ending nights is always present. In a letter he sent much later to another wellknown *Lebensphilosoph* and the father of *Begriffsgeschichte* (history of concepts), Erich Rothacker, he reported: “As a result of a case of emphysema, I suffer from severe insomnia. For the past sixty-four years I have used every possible drug on the market—German, Swiss, American, and French, the strongest and the weakest, even homeopathic. All failed completely.”¹¹⁹

Klages’s sickness and his reliance on drugs—nothing exceptional in the circles in which he moved—explains only the most superficial reasons for his intensive interest in catastrophic downfall and the somber aspects of reality—or its image. As I shall show later, Klages knew how to exploit his illness and would deeply impress Walter Benjamin in the early 1920s with a theory of the state between dream and waking. In the early 1900s Klages’s voyage to the end of the night did not go beyond a metaphorical view of decline, not much different from the familiar fin-de-siecle atmosphere of a world rotten to the core and in need of revolutionary change. His main innovation was in attaching, even at this early stage, a strong immanent vocabulary of life that blurred the boundary between life and death, fighting not an actual enemy as an antagonist system of knowledge, but a *Geist* (spirit) that was inherently opposed to an independent reality of images and a poetic-creative world without boundaries.

8. Conclusion

The course Ludwig Klages made as a young man, from Hannover to Munich, from the petit bourgeois context of his father’s house to the bohemian artists of Munich, from chemistry to philosophy, and from his early admiration of Ibsen, Nietzsche, and George, to independence, depicts a strong personality that mirrors his surrounding as much as he contributes to it. Klages’s most apparent contribution was his *Lebensphilosophie* and his detailed classification of bodily types.

In spite of his close relationship with Jews since his youth, he always considered them outsiders. Part of his personal biography—which we must consider—contains the integration of anti-Semitism to his views of language, bodily expression, and finally his *Lebensphilosophie*. In terms of the history of anti-Semitism or the history of biopolitics, Klages’s anti-Semitism was not yet political during the early 1900s. His struggle to separate himself from Lessing, and later from Wolfskehl and George, forced him to gradually politicize it and give it a systematic and later a scientific form. During this

¹¹⁹ “Um die Auffassung des Gesprochen . . . Rede und Schrift aufgefasst als *hervorbrechender Lebensmoment* und zugleich als Tat, also nicht bloss als Dokument, sondern als active, aktuelle Ausserung des Lebens.” Ibid., p. 112 (emphasis in the original).

early stage it expressed an attempt to reorganize the world around him, more than it expressed a consistent worldview.

As we know from Foucault, “The notion of life is not a scientific concept; it has been an epistemological indicator of which the classifying, delimiting, and other functions had an effect on scientific discussions, and not on what they were talking about.”¹²⁰ “Biopolitics,” Roberto Esposito writes, after quoting this passage by Foucault, “doesn’t refer only or most prevalently to the way in which politics is captured— limited, compressed, and determined—by life, but also and above all by the way in which politics grasps, challenges, and penetrates life.”¹²¹ The jargon of life during the early 1900s tried to unpack the full potential of humanity before it was cultivated and rationalized. That is why *Lebensphilosophers* explored the ecstasy of cults, the ur-image, or the uncontrolled physiognomy of one’s face and the uncontrolled signs of one’s handwriting. Those are all storage bins of signs for an early image-body relation that is closer to nature and part of the immediate “life flow.” This relation, then, as part of an aesthetic-poetic corpus, is where we see the Jew as the mark of one’s boundary. For Klages, Lessing and Wolfskehl mark where this undercurrent stops.

In contrast to how they are currently depicted, the origins of biopolitics during the heyday of *Lebensphilosophie* are not necessarily “conservative.” There is nothing chauvinistic or patriarchic about the Georgian or Klagesian jargon of life. The opposite is true; George and Klages, Lessing and Wolfskehl sound often like postmodern radicals in their attack on patriarchy and “phallogocentrism,” a term invented by Bachofen and adapted by Klages for his own *Lebensphilosophie*. Walter Benjamin, writing in 1926 after reading about Bachofen, noted the similarity, contending that “a confrontation with Bachofen and Klages is unavoidable.”¹²² It is certainly so for those interested in Benjamin or his opponents, the Nazi *Lebensphilosophers*.

¹²⁰ Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister, Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2009), p. 72.

¹²¹ Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Munich: Duncker and Humblot, 1918).

¹²² Rudolf W. Meyer, “Bergson in Deutschland, Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Zeitauffassung,” in *Studien zum Zeitproblem in der Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts*, *Phänomenologische Forschungen* 13, ed. Ernst Wolfgang Orth (Munich: Verlag Karl Albert, 1982), vol. 13, pp. 10-89.

2. Living Experience, Expression, and Immediacy between 1895 and 1915

Du sagst *leben* laut und *sterben* leise Und wiederholtest immer wieder: *Sein*. Doch vor dem ersten Tode kam der Mord.

—Rainer Maria Rilke, *Das Buch vom Monchischen Leben*, 1899¹

1. Dilthey and the concept of *Erlebnis*

The wave of intellectual pessimism that swept through Europe at the start of the twentieth century does not explain the power of Klages's aesthetic system, so heavily entrenched in romanticism's natural symbolism. Here one can certainly concur with George Mosse's depiction: "For the romantics, nature was not cold and mechanical, but alive and spontaneous. It was indeed filled with a life force which corresponded to the emotions of man."² Yet this passage fails to capture the weight and magnitude of romanticism and the fervor Klages and his fellow *Lebensphilosophers* brought to it. The political theorist Hans Freyer viewed the nineteenth century as a long process of transformation that led from Holderlin to Kierkegaard and, finally, in the last decade of the nineteenth century, to Nietzsche. Instead of a romantic life force unfolding and realizing its own plan, Freyer saw it as a true revolution, in which philosophy unified "the earth and its world history [*Weltgeschichte*], . . . freeing men from their old life world [*Lebenswelt*] and grounding them in a new, more abstract sense, by empowering them on the basis of the organic mass."³ At the center of this revolution stands the inherent relation among the aesthetics of living forms, the body, and the politicization of this link in early modernism. Looking at the change with the eyes of a historian of science, one sees a similar process occurring at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, where a shift from the preromantic vitalism to the

¹ Book I of the History of the Peloponnesian War, Oxford text, edited by H. Stuart-Jones; translated by Arnold J. Toynbee.

² R. W. Hutchinson, Prehistoric Crete (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962).

³ Herodotus, Book I, chapters 56 to 58.

romantic *Naturphilosophie* and its stress on pure “life forces” was then philosophized as a deductive and “organic,” imagistic notion of life.⁴

The transformation created by the life sciences was not limited to the life force but extended to its role in history and politics. The individual body became a “sign” or a signifying system that was then seen as a representative in a much larger system, based on the “living experience” (*Erlebnis*). In my fourth chapter I will demonstrate how the process created modern disciplines such as graphology and characterology. Yet the crucial element behind both the philosophy and the physical sciences that recaptured the life force was, as Ute Planert showed, the classification and regulation of the body in its surrounding. The reconsideration of the body as “experiencing” or a “medium of expression” (*Ausdrucksmedium*) enabled, in turn, the rise of biopolitics. “The regulation techniques of ‘the bio-politics of population,’ as Foucault describes them,” writes Planert, “are the expression of the Janus-head of the ‘power to life’ [*Macht zum Leben*] as the disciplined training of the human body.”⁵ As will be shown in the last chapter of the book—dedicated to the biocentric circle Klages established in Leipzig during the mid-1920s—its main organ was titled “Janus,” and the intention behind it was to recapture a similar observation to the one Foucault makes, only from an opposite political end.

But before exploring biopolitics, let’s consider the process that prepared its rise, that is, the post-Diltheyish understanding of *living experience*, *expression*, and *immediacy*. By the end of the century, as Freyer and Planert demonstrate, the crowning romantic *Naturphilosophie*—image of the body and its expression—marked by the “immediacy of self-consciousness,” was translated into the more essential collective experience of history, people, or, in some cases, the cosmos and *Gesamterlebnis* (total experience).⁶ Historians such as Mosse, from the one end, or Nolte, from its opposite, either confused the history with its outcome (Mosse stressed the irrational myth leading to the right wing, while ignoring the genuine critique of historicism on the left wing) or reduced it to a narrow politics of the *Volk* (people) and its totalization (Nolte’s relativization of the racial element can be seen in his attempt to place Klages and Lessing, or Marx and Hitler, in the same boat), missing both revolutionary potential suggested by a radical critique of norms, on the one hand, and the gradual adaptation by racial policy makers, on the other. A careful historicization of the three concepts—*Erlebnis*, *Ausdruck*, and *Unmittelbarkeit*—then, is necessary for the understanding of this movement and its impact.

The later confusion of the historians stems from the path *Lebensphilosophie* itself took. In 1905 Wilhelm Dilthey forged the connections between *Erlebnis* and *Leben*,

⁴ Available in Ludwig Klages, *The Biocentric Worldview* (London: Arktos, 2013).

⁵ *Tuist* is a term coined by Klages. The distinction between *tuist* and *egoist* entails a recognition of the characterological distinction between those whose drives and affects are focused on the “you,” as opposed to those who are centered solely upon their own ego.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17. Esposito quotes from Rudolf Kjellen, *Grundriss zu einem System der Politik* (Leipzig: Rudolph Leipzig Hirzel, 1920), pp. 3-4.

insisting both were “purely epistemological,”⁷ in spite of the teleological structure they shared.⁸ In *Experience and Poetry* (1906),⁹ his most brilliant elucidation of this idea, the linkage was represented most compellingly in the concept of aesthetic experience, described by Hans-Georg Gadamer as “not just one kind of experience among others, but the essence of experience per se, . . . an *Erlebnis* removed from all connections with reality.”¹⁰

Shortly before his death, Dilthey told his friends:

Thus the theorem: thinking cannot retreat behind life. Life as mere appearance is a *contradictio in adjecto*, for it is in the process of living [*Lebensverlauf*], in growing out of the past and stretching into the future, where the realities lie that make up the effective context and value of our life. If behind life, which flows into past, present, and future, there was something timeless, then this would be an antecedent of life: then this antecedent would be the condition for the process of living in its entire context: this antecedent would be what we do not experience [*erleben*] and thus a mere realm of shadows [*Schattenreich*]. In my introductory lectures to philosophy there is probably no other theorem as effective as this.¹¹

Dilthey expressed his central idea in the following words: “The grounding concepts for all of the separate forms and systems that come from this concept [of life are] our living experience [*Erleben*], understanding [*Verstehen*], and expression [*Ausdruck*].”¹²

Wilhelm Dilthey did not predict the way his philosophy would be politicized. His philosophy overflowed the banks of academic philosophy, reaching a broad audience. As stated by the neo-Kantian Wilhelm Windelband, in a book Klages read carefully and annotated, “At the end of the nineteenth century the principal ideas moved from the epistemology [*Erkenntnistheorie*] to the ‘reality of the outer world,’ portrayed by the idealist consciousness that Dilthey brought to wider circles. [Dilthey’s arguments] affected how we thought about the basic experience [*Erfahrungsbasis*] of our reality consciousness.”¹³ Windelband, a moderate, liberal neo-Kantian, noticed how Dilthey

⁷ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 136. Hoche worked with another follower of Klages, the Jewish Lebensphilosopher Kurt Goldstein. He was also close to a central figure of the Klages circle, the psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn.

⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 3.

⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 2000).

¹⁰ Agamben “paulanized” Benjamin, Scholem, Taubes, and other German Jewish thinkers discussed in this book since his *Homo Sacer*. For the most coherent exploration of that philosophical move see Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹¹ Eric Santner, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), p. 13.

¹² Giorgio Agamben, “Absolute Immanence,” in *Potentialities*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 220.

¹³ Brian Massumi, “National Enterprise Emergency: Steps Toward an Ecology of Powers,” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 26:6 (November 2009), p. 170. I tried to explain the relevance of such readings

enabled the transformation of the discourse of life from a post-Kantian awareness to the objective but easily manipulated physical reality and its expression. More faithful Diltheyists explained *Erlebnis* in immanent structural terms, rather than comparing it to reality consciousness or external experience (*Erfahrung*). “The meaning of lived experience,” Michael Ermarth writes, “is not transcendent but is immanently constituted in the coherence of life itself.”¹⁴ Such immanence did not negate a structural emphasis. Take, for example, Jacob Owensby’s explanation: “Lived experience [*Erlebnis*] receives a more precise and less subjectivist definition than that found in the psychological writings and is defined structurally in relation to its objective expression . . . [E]ach lived experience is a ‘structural nexus’ whose components are representational, volitional and emotional acts.”¹⁵ One should not, however, assume that the structure of living experience works from the inside out, rather than the outside in of *Erfahrung*. Dilthey’s impact was tremendous: his notion of *Erlebnis* and his typology and psychology of *Weltanschauung* constituted much of the discourse of the new philosophy, based on images of existence.¹⁶ The new language and ideas spread so quickly that a decade later they were considered orthodoxy. In 1915 fifteen professors from Berlin gathered to lay an academic foundation for the new nationalism sparked by the war, and “[t]he beginning point of many [of their] speeches was the terminology of Dilthey’s *Erlebnis*.”¹⁷ Reality was measured by how one felt about it, and not for what it had to propose on its own terms. More disturbingly, it was measured against its service to the collective.

for a contemporary understanding of life in Nitzan Lebovic, “Life,” in *Maftakh: Lexical Review of Political Thought* 2 (2011): <http://mafteakh.tau.ac.il/en/issue-2e-winter-2011/life/> (accessed June 1, 2013).

¹⁴ Agamben comes close to it without making it a historical argument, when he points out Heidegger’s role as the mediator between two philosophical traditions. The first leads from Kant, via Husserl, to Heidegger and then Levinas and Derrida; the other leads from Spinoza, via Nietzsche, to Heidegger and then Foucault and Deleuze. In short, any examination of “the coming philosophy” should consider the 1920s’ debate about the role of life and immanence in Heidegger and his fellow critics of democracy, on the way to biopolitics and “immanentation.” *Ibid.*, p. 239.

¹⁵ “Diese Formung des Lebens in seinem ganzen Verlaufe durch den Tod ist bisher sozusagen etwas Bildhaftes.” Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1994), p. 107.

¹⁶ Simmel stresses here a temporal dimension of a being which turns *Sein* (being) into a particular presence. *Sosein* was used by different Lebensphilosophers, for example, Georg Simmel, Max Scheler, and Ludwig Klages. It is translated differently for every thinker, and sometimes, as various translations of Simmel prove, differently in different works of the same thinker. Simmel used the term repeatedly. See *ibid.*, p. 108. For another example of Simmel’s use of *Sosein* see the first page of his *Philosophy of Money*, which was translated as a “particular quality of being.” See Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 56. Then again, in his book about the history of sociology, David Frisby translated the same term when used by Max Scheler as “essence.” See David Frisby, *The Alienated Mind: The Sociology of Knowledge in Germany, 1918-1933* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 30.

¹⁷ Heinrich Rickert, *Die Philosophie des Lebens: Darstellung und Kritik der philosophischen Modestromungen unserer Zeit* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr Verlag, 1920).

Klages's ascendancy roughly coincided with the apotheosis of Wilhelm Dilthey, shortly before his death in 1911 and at the first explicit indications of a politicized and regulated experience and life. The elder philosopher had taught the younger generation of *Lebensphilosophers* a great deal, particularly the importance of empirical data in the service of any life force, conveyed both through Dilthey's own work in descriptive psychology and through Theodor Lipps's work in aesthetic perception. Lipps, who acknowledged Dilthey's influence, had been Klages's teacher in Munich. Though Klages frequently switched disciplines and methods, he labored to preserve a core of Diltheyan teachings as the root of his consistent message of unity and harmony, and he referred to Lipps's philosophy for the rest of his career. We will return to Lipps in our discussion of anti-Freudian psychology in the fourth chapter.

We have now a better grasp of how conditions allowed the creation of *Lebensphilosophie* and its politics shortly before World War I. But what exactly is this Diltheyish life? Dilthey is often considered the founder of *Lebensphilosophie*,¹⁸ and in his early texts he "subjected human expression mainly to a morphological description in terms of a biologically rooted notion of fixed types."¹⁹ Klages's own efforts—similar, in that respect, to direct students of Dilthey—could be described in close terms, since he attempted a unification of the typology and the duration of experience. Nevertheless, Klages's commitment to romanticism led him neither to Dilthey's historicism nor to Hegel's idealism. He was quite determined to find romantic-poetic alternatives to both and present them in a philosophical language.

The shaping of alternatives, however, did not preclude an intense preoccupation with those he tried to overcome. As part of the romantic project of "overcoming all boundaries," Klages tried to activate Dilthey's critique of Kantian epistemology and popularized many of his concepts, transforming them into a practical psychology of

¹⁸ Heinrich Rickert, *Unmittelbarkeit und Sinndeutung: Aufsatz zur Ausgestaltung des Systems der Philosophie* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1939), p. 57 (emphasis in original). The concept of immediacy, popularized by Nietzsche, had garnered great interest among *Lebensphilosophers* since the early 1900s. Yet not before the early 1920s could one attach it to any particular view of politics.

¹⁹ Georg Imdahl and David F. Krell are an exception to that rule; in their careful readings of Heidegger's early writings, both labor to demonstrate the close interest and impact of Heidegger's own editorial working and research of Dilthey's life philosophy. Heidegger's later rejection of *Lebensphilosophie* cannot disguise the impact it had on his interest in the living temporality of the *Dasein*. See David F. Krell, *Daheim Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), and Georg Imdahl, *Das Leben Verstehen, Heideggers formal anzeigende Hermeneutik in den frühen Freiburger Vorlesungen* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1997). A few intellectual historians paid close attention to Heidegger's interest in *Lebensphilosophie* from a different angle. Let me mention here only the most recent and excellent two volumes Peter Gordon published on Heidegger's proximity to Franz Rosenzweig, and the opponents of Ernst Cassirer and neo-Kantianism. See Peter E. Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and idem., *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

“types.”²⁰ Before 1914 Klages was busy translating such notions to his diagnostic work, yet after 1918 he moved to a philosophical discourse and to shaping his opposing and independent voice. In contrast to Dilthey, Klages saw the individual not only as an integrated and structural living form, but as a performance, or, to use his language, the *Erscheinung* (literally, appearance)—in other words, a living storage of signs that the appearance carries beyond structural relationships. His was one of the first expressions of a poststructuralist hermeneutics.

Klages was not alone in his effort to read Dilthey’s *Lebensphilosophie* beyond its own boundaries. Dilthey’s importance as a *Lebensphilosoph* is evident in his impact on both Husserl and Heidegger.²¹ Even more concretely, one views the formation of an actual *Lebensphilosophie* school. Georg Misch (1878-1965), a key philosopher of the first half of the twentieth century, was Dilthey’s chief student, as well as his son-in-law. Misch edited Dilthey’s collected writings and wrote much about him, becoming the head of the Dilthey school and propagating one of the most influential doctrines in twentieth-century Germany. Early on, Misch identified Dilthey as the founder of *Lebensphilosophie*, and in his introduction to Dilthey’s collected essays he spoke of “a positive philosophical tendency, which he [i.e., Dilthey] called *Lebensphilosophie*—‘the life determined to understand itself out of itself’—and applied scientifically.”²² Dilthey’s influence became so substantial in the late 1890s that his writings became part of the standard curriculum for all humanities degrees, influencing not only professional philosophers but also the more general philosophical and intellectual language of the early 1900s. In a letter to a friend, written July 24, 1919, Walter Benjamin noted that he had never read Dilthey’s popular *Das Erlebnis und die Dichtung* and that he had been quizzed about Dilthey’s theory of psychology in his final exams.²³ Yet a few years later Benjamin not only demonstrated a deep knowledge of Dilthey, he also considered his *Lebensphilosophie*—as described by Klages, Jung, and Bergson—to be the most important and accurate conceptualization of modern experience.²⁴

The three concepts so central to Dilthey’s understanding of life—living experience (*Erleben*), understanding (*Verstehen*), and expression (*Ausdruck*)—were also crucial to Klages’s later *Lebensphilosophie*. The two thinkers agreed about experiencing and expression, but they differed over understanding, which Dilthey tied to empathy.²⁵ To

²⁰ Victor Klemperer, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1966), p. 20. English translations often miss the importance of vocabulary to the essence (*Wesen*) of Nazi language.

²¹ Ibid., p. 31.

²² Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 5.

²³ Edward Ross Dickinson, “Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse about ‘Modernity,’” in *Central European History* 37:1 (2004): 1-38.

²⁴ “Das Hauptgewicht der nationalsozialistischen Sprachbeeinflussung liegt auf der neuen Sinngebung oft alter, bekannter Worte.” Manfred Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, inaugural dissertation submitted to the philosophy faculty of the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University of Greifswald (Greifswald: Hans Adler Buchdruckerei, 1935), p. 11.

²⁵ Boaz Neumann, *New German Critique* 85, Special Issue on Intellectuals (Winter 2002), 110.

avoid the humanist approach to understanding and empathy, Klages used the concept of the form. He believed that humans had to be deciphered according to their aesthetic image. (This approach would later be combined with that of Dilthey in Gestalt psychology, itself a progeny of Klages's philosophy and psychology, as acknowledged by its inventors.²⁶)

Otto Friedrich Bollnow, another Dilthey student and later an important exponent of *Lebensphilosophie*, warned that *Lebensphilosophie* could well become too popular and lead to undue power over the masses. Because of Dilthey's influence, *Lebensphilosophie*'s rather poetic and lofty mid-nineteenth-century form became, during the 1910s and 1920s, the source from which works of popular psychology emerged in a constant stream. In 1932, a bit too late to affect any change, Bollnow protested the wrong reception of Dilthey's *Philosophie des Lebens*: "The appearance of this volume seems especially important in a time in which concepts of type and *Weltanschauung* have so strongly determined thinking, not only in philosophy but also in the humanities, that one must speak of this as a danger . . . For although I view forms of human expression as expressive of typical elements of attitude, I have continually lost the immediate reference [*unmittelbaren Bezug*] to these forms."²⁷

A few years after his protest Bollnow himself would become a Klagesian. In a later study of *Lebensphilosophie* he portrayed Klages as the most important *Lebensphilosoph* after Dilthey and Bergson, noting that Klages's thinking about time owed a heavy debt to Bergson,²⁸ who had learned about "concrete time" and "real time" from Dilthey.²⁹ The heart of Dilthey's philosophy, according to Bollnow, was its notion of time: "The dependence of the past on the present is one of the more important contri-

²⁶ Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, p. 13.

²⁷ "Was heisst Leben? Leben heisst *kaempfen*! Schom *Heraklit* sagte: Der Kampf is der Vater aller Dinge, und Nietzsche beantwortete die Frage . . . so: 'Die Welt ist der Wille zur Macht und nichts ausserdem.' Wohin du auch schaust, ueberall findest du Kampf ums Dasein, Ringen um selbsterhaltung, Arterhaltung und Entwicklung . . . Sie vergessen, dass es den Menschen nur so Scheint, weil unser Denken beschraenkt ist in *Raum und Zeit*, weil wir nicht erkennen, was sich da in der *Ewigkeit* entwickeln und erloesen will . . . Der erste Schritt zu bewusstem Leben heisst: Erkenne dich selbst! In dir selbst, in deinem Rassenerbgut liegt der geheimnisvolle Wille deines Lebens." Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, vol. 4, article 24, "Weltanschauung, NS," p. 1. No further publication details are given; all emphases in the original. Karl Dietrich Bracher spoke of the "army of agitators" the Nazi trained in that context: Karl D. Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1969), p. 159. See also Goebbels's description of his propaganda success, based on "battalions of speakers," which he still insisted were a "mystical phenomenon" in Joseph Goebbels, *Der Angriff. Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1935), pp. 94-96.

²⁸ "Weil das Judentum mit den Gesetzen des Lebens ging, darum gab ihm das Leben recht, darum hat es heute eine weltbeherrschende Machtstellung ueber die arischen Volker erreicht." Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, p. 3.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-79*, trans. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 19.

butions of Dilthey's philosophy."³⁰ In other words, a philosophical line led from Dilthey through Bergson to Klages, and this line was focused on the philosophy of time.

Looking at this history of philosophy with some perspective, one notes that after Dilthey, two roads appeared. Theodor Lessing, Georg Simmel, and Georg Misch set out to correct Dilthey—and with him Hegel and Kant—by expanding *Lebensphilosophie* into a historical hermeneutics. This, in Klages's view, would imprison *Lebensphilosophie* in the academy.³¹ The other road, chosen by Klages and the eccentric Count Hermann Keyserling, founder of the popular "school of wisdom,"³² would pit *Lebensphilosophie* against history as a system of mythological hermeneutics. Klages fought all his life against *Weltgeschichte* (world history), the methodology underpinning German historicism, canonized by Hegel and practiced by such well-known historians as Barthold Georg Niebuhr, Theodor Mommsen, and Leopold von Ranke, the fathers of modern historicism. Klages held in high esteem those who took up the weapons of romanticism to do battle with historicism. In his 1920 introduction to *Mensch und Erde* (Man and earth), discussed later in this chapter, Klages preached: "Undeterred from the consecrated lies of world history [*Weltgeschichte*], [one] looks only at the ever-present drives."³³

2. Experiencing: Affair with a 12-year-old

The close relationship between *Erlebnis* and fundamentalist aestheticism can be gleaned from Klages's and his friends' language, expressing itself in radical and puritan terms when it came to the aesthetic mission. In a section of his *Nachlass* that Klages dated 1890-1891 are a few poems; one is entitled "Das Leben" (Life). Ostensibly a love poem, it is in fact a poem about the romantic understanding of time. Klages goes beyond individual passions to sketch the temporalization of the universe on the basis of a repetitive movement, the purest aesthetic form, for it leads nowhere and has no obvious message, other than itself. Its own *Erlebnis* is being extended into the cosmos as pure beauty.³⁴

The poem takes up a romantic theme treated in such works as Robert Browning's "Meeting at Night." "Separation, . . . Separating again, . . . and . . . return"—or the notion of repetition that is even more evident here than it was in Stefan George's poetry. If George strove to apply to his everyday life his ideas about artistic creation, archaic festivities, and sexual freedom, in Klages an ontological state of flow develops

³⁰ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 143.

³¹ Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus, and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 14.

³² Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 111.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

out of the theme and is projected onto the cosmos, only to return to the individual to guide his life.

In other poems Klages obsessively returns to the metaphor of the in-between state of consciousness, conveyed by vapor and heavy fog between the sea and the sky, the earth and the treetops. The value of comprehension is anchored in the unity of the One, an essence that is external to human perceptions of the real.

Klages did not separate the individual from the collective, or ur-beginnings from end times. From 1896 onward, he wrote a number of poems, gathered and titled “Runen” (runes), literally a reference to old Nordic alliterative dialects, but which he often also used as an allusion to “Ruinen” (ruins). These allusions convey the destruction of reality and, more than that, the destruction of signification as a whole. Light gives way to the long night of chaos; reason is destroyed with its names and comprehension. The modern world becomes a place devoid of interpretation and interpretability. In a place where nature has been destroyed by the polluting force of modernity, there is no more true signification: when “the fog rises, the world is far away.”³⁵ After reading the “Runen” poems, one is tempted to question the value of epistemology as a whole. The poetic image is that of a single survivor left after a dreadful destruction; all that remains is an abstract flow—not gods, not humans, but the principles of movement, which is to say, life. It is important to note, however, that Klages’s plea for a revival of life does not imply a reconstitution of a language of rights. This gap, the aesthete’s omission of politics, is noticeable in Klages’s poetry and prose. As we have seen, it eventually surfaces in his philosophy.

Klages’s *Nachlass* proves how important the images and conventions of romanticism were for his philosophy from its earliest stages. The romantic vocabulary is evident throughout, beyond any specific period and theme. Even after he had shifted to a more modernist notion of politics and action, Klages’s epistemological basis remained romantic, whereby intuition meant far more than intellect. But to trust in romanticism did not, in this case, entail a life of pure abstraction.

The mantle of romantic expression gave Klages license to indulge in behavior that would otherwise be considered unwholesome at best. For example, in 1895 he moved to a new apartment in Munich. His landlady, one Frau Bernhard, had three sons and a daughter, “through and through a child, but highly developed for her age.”³⁶ The impression this girl made on Klages was so powerful that he initiated a sexual affair with the 12-year-old, whom he dubbed “Putti.” The relationship was approved by her

³⁵ Vitalpolitik is grounded in the principle of growth or reduction that lies at the bottom of all competitive systems: economic, organic-physiological, or totalitarian. It assumes that politics, economics, society, and the individual all share the same form and image of the living body. It is exactly this shared body, or “synthesis of individuals,” according to Foucault, that allows the system to have “no explicit contract, no voluntary union, no renunciation of rights, and no delegation of natural rights to someone else. In short, there is no constitution of sovereignty by a sort of pact of subjection.” Ibid., pp. 242-243, 300.

³⁶ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 259.

mother, Frau Bernhard, whose hope that Klages would one day marry her daughter defied common sense. Sure enough, Klages kept Putti's admiration for him burning for almost two decades, without ever advancing beyond the purely sexual relationship he favored, a fact that even Klages's loyal disciple and authorized biographer could not deny.³⁷

To justify his actions, Klages quoted from Gottfried Keller's masterpiece, *Der grüne Heinrich* (Green Heinrich, 1854-1855),³⁸ that tells the story of a young Swiss boy laboring to fulfill his artistic vocation and to experience romantic love. Structured as a bildungsroman, the novel raises many questions about individual morality, nationalistic sentiments, and social awareness, all set against a romantic landscape full of artistic intuition. Heinrich, the protagonist, crosses the Swiss Alps to Munich, where, as Klages put it, "the aroma of Munich's soul infuses the form of adolescent working-class girls."³⁹ While we are likely to make allowances for a naive young man like Heinrich, it is surprising that Klages, whose letters to the countess Franziska zu Reventlow suggest a certain sexual maturity, saw fit to sleep with a young girl. But for Klages all talk of morality, in this context, was nonsense. What had romantic aesthetics to do with ethics? Klages's affair with Putti, his notion of sexuality, his own self-justification, reflect more on his philosophy than on his morality.

Poetry was the best form for expressing the complex imagery that flooded his mind. So Klages attached it linguistically to everything he wanted to honor. For example, movies had to be more than the mere play of images or a narrated vision. They had to become "movie poetry" (*Filmdichtung*), encompassing and celebrating life.⁴⁰ Poetry allowed Klages a literary style suitable to his *Lebensphilosophie*. Metaphors, biological or cosmological, allowed him to enfold and transcend the limitations of rationalism and science. He gradually applied a lyrical and somewhat anachronistic style to his philosophy. In a short fragment from 1900 he wrote, "Poeticizing as [a] form of living (*Lebensform*)—poeticizing as a way of ecstatic living (*Lebendigkeit*). The life of the poet is inner poeticizing. Poetic experience is magical language experience."⁴¹

³⁷ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 137.

³⁸ Foucault uses this term in *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 248.

³⁹ "It has been evident for a number of centuries how, in the general consciousness, the thought of death has become less omnipresent and less vivid . . . In the course of the nineteenth century, bourgeois society—by means of medical and social, private and public institutions—realized a secondary effect, which may have been its subconscious main purpose: to enable people to avoid the sight of the dying." Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Selected Writings*, vol. 3:1: 1935-1938 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 151.

⁴⁰ For a short but coherent description of Foucault's notion of biopower and biopolitics, see Chloe Taylor, "Biopower," in *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (Durham, NC: Acumen, 2011), p. 48.

⁴¹ "Heute, glaube ich, geht ein immer starker anwachsendes Raunen durch Millionen und aber Millionen Menschen Seelen . . . eines tiefen Wissens, dass wir in einer der grosten Zeiten und Weltenwende leben, in einer Epoche, die einen bis in die Wurzeln gehenden Umbruch nicht nur auf einigen Gebieten des Daseins, sondern für unser ganzes Lebensgefühl bedeutet." Alfred Rosenberg, "Der Kampf um die Weltanschauung," *Redenmateriel der NSDAP*, ed. Fritz Reinhardt, p. 5.

Klages's intuitive, quasi-scientific, amoral, and antilinear philosophy developed from this early commitment to the ideals of romantic poetry. Much of it had to do with a search for a direct and immediate relation between language (expression) and life (experiencing).

As one inspects Klages's career and philosophy, the connections between *Lebensphilosophie* and the quest for a "perfect language" become almost inescapable.⁴² The aestheticization of the One (meaning the cosmological language, not God), resonated with a number of esoteric approaches to truth: curtained monads, neoplatonic shadow plays, the long romantic nights of terrifying dreams followed by the short days of visions encouraged by pipes and draughts, or the eschatological narratives of catastrophe and revival. In pure aesthetic terms, Klages divided the world into clear dichotomies only to reattach them. If one takes life and death as a case in point, the unity of the poles would be located outside opposition; the cosmic looks at both as a phenomenon and characterizes the relationship between the two poles from the outside. For example, the relationship between the life-death opposites is one of absolute rejection and simultaneous integration. There is no life without death, and no death without life. Klages was researching such oppositions from both the outside (the cosmological) and the inside (*Erlebnis*). As Marshall Brown demonstrated, such configurations of polarity belong to the romantic tradition and the attempt to reach a point where "the center of time has opened."⁴³

Klages found such open thresholds not only in his own life, enabling him to justify a pedophilic tendency (as pure living experience), but also in the lives of others around him. Morality did not matter, nor did any sense of progress or any actual division of self and world. The implications, he admitted, could be severe: in the early 1900s few suspected what was to come in 1914 and after. Yet in a short fragment dated 1900—one could call it pessimistic—Klages described a present dominated by a strong feeling of absence and a process of decay and destruction. Under the title "Über die Spaltung der Substanz" (On the division of substance), Klages defined his aesthetic in terms of the gap inherent in any structural view.⁴⁴ His post-1914 *Lebensphilosophie* will rely on this early combination of two principles: the cosmological and the internal, the most extreme externality and the most internal integrality. One is the idea of repetition as a

⁴² The Reich's minister of education explained on January 15, 1935, that the first priority of the Reich was political education, and he went on to say that "allein die Biologie kann den Begriff der Rasse und Vererbung und die rassistischen Lebensgesetze von der Seite der Tatsachen-Forschung her zwingend entwickeln." *Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie 1: Schriften über Familie, Volk und Rasse* (Berlin: Zentralverlag der NSDAP/Fritz Eher Verlag, 1938), p. 7.

⁴³ "Fehlt es an einer solchen Erziehung, so entstehen 'Politiker,' deren Wesen und Gefahr keiner klarer durchschaut und gezeichnet hat als der Führer des neuen Deutschland, Adolf Hitler. Er hat auch in seiner eigenen Entwicklung ein unumstössliches Vorbild für solche politische Erziehung gegeben." Hans Gerber, ed., *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934), p. vi.

⁴⁴ "[D]ie Universität . . . muss vielmehr auch den Gehalt der persönlichen Überzeugung bilden." Ibid.

“cosmic” idea and its appearance in typological forms, or repetition contrasted to those events that take place along a linear scheme (for example, development, cause and effect, evolution). The other is the essentialism of the temporal threshold between life and death, organic and inorganic, and its integration into an inner sense of a divided One.⁴⁵ In his later work, during the early 1930s, Klages would utilize the aesthetics of thresholds—*Grenzqualität* (quality of thresholds)—to tie typological psychology with biology and both with mass politics.⁴⁶ As Walter Benjamin observed later, in a letter to Gershom Scholem, “I would never have imagined that the kind of clumsy metaphysical dualism that forms the basis of Klages’s book [*Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*] could ever be conjoined with really new and wide-ranging conceptions.”⁴⁷

3. Signifiers: Physiognomy and graphology

Another source of romantic inspiration for Klages was the physiognomer Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741-1801),⁴⁸ whose ideas influenced Dilthey’s typology, among others. Whereas Dilthey saw in physiognomy only a bookish tool for historical characterization—witness his description of Edward Gibbon’s face as emblematic of “the modern man”—Klages found physiognomy standing at the threshold between life and death, the internal and the external, as an essential signifier of eternal qualities.⁴⁹ For Klages, physiognomy stood close to graphology. Both systems mixed a set of empirical observations with philosophical conclusions. Based on such empirical collection of samples of handwriting and face types, Klages established in 1896 the Deutsche Graphologische Gesellschaft (German Graphology Association), with the physician Georg Meyer and the sculptor Hans Busse, the latter also the founder of the Institut für wissenschaftliche Graphologie two years prior to that. The three agreed on a set of concepts and an aesthetic position that interpreted the appearance of facial and graphological signs as the appearance of psychological drives. As Meyer wrote in the opening pages to his *Scientific Foundations of Graphology* (1901), “[Graphology]

⁴⁵ “Was aber ist es, was den immer wechselnden Strom des Lebens über die Erde hintreibt?” Ernst Lehmann, “Der Einfluss der Biologie auf unser Weltbild,” in *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934), p. 131.

⁴⁶ “Alle biologischen Erfahrungen sprechen dafür, dass dieses Prinzip eine überragende Rolle im Entwicklungsgeschehen spielt . . . Jedermann weiss nun aus den unzähligen traurigen Büchern der Gegenwart, dass unser deutsches Volk bei der immer starker zurückgehenden Geburtszahl diesem Grundanspruch der Selektionstheorie nicht mehr gerecht wird. Biopolitisch sind uns die Völker an unserer Ostgrenze durch ihre viel höhere Geburtszahl weitgehend überlegen.” Ibid., p. 138.

⁴⁷ “Kein Zweifel aber auch: Nicht nur in Nordamerika gibt es eine Negerfrage, nicht nur in aller Welt eine Judenfrage u.s.f.-in jedes deutsche Haus ist durch die Arbeit Hans Gunthers die Kenntnis gedrungen von der rassistischen Verschiedenheit innerhalb unseres Volkes.” Ibid., p. 139.

⁴⁸ Sheila Faith Weiss, “Pedagogy, Professionalism, and Politics: Biology Instruction during the Third Reich,” in *Science, Technology, and National Socialism*, ed. Monika Renneberg and Mark Weller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 189.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 193.

stands among those different means of expression [*Ausdrucksmittlen*] that demonstrate the unwilling appearance of expression (*unwillkürlichen Ausdruckserscheinungen*) . . . The psychodiagnostic purpose is to deliver the news of our fellow man's inner life (*Innenleben*) in a general and reliable way."⁵⁰

From physiognomy and its system of correspondences, Klages carved during the early 1900s the sciences of character, verbal expression, and handwriting—a range of hermeneutical systems based on unchanging signs in a universe of secret under-worlds. Most important to both physiognomy and graphology was the focus on the phenomenon as a medium between the inside and the outside, psychology and the world. As Conrad Wandrey, the George disciple and Fontane scholar, reflected in an essay about Klages's system, "The whole issue of psychology hangs on the question of whether one sees the meaning in the world of appearance (*Erscheinungswelt*), especially in the physiognomy which is supposed to reflect a person's inner core."⁵¹

The pseudoscience of physiognomy is understood today as a quintessentially romantic phenomenon, a set of connections between material phenomena and abstract aesthetic structures.⁵² In *A Science for the Soul: Occultism and the Genesis of the German Modern*, Corinna Treitel places physiognomy and graphology in the context of a postromantic attraction to irrationality and occultism: "Klages, a pioneer of applied psychology, was also a vocal proponent of scientific graphology, a field that had not yet shaken its occult roots."⁵³ As Treitel shows, the attraction was shared by thinkers from both left and right (she mentions Walter Benjamin and Hans Driesch as two other examples on the same page).

Klages identified his heritage with a rebellious system that overcame normative divisions: Lavater's exercises in the reading of faces, Carl Gustav Carus's study of landscapes, Johan Jakob Bachofen's physiognomy of historical symbols, and Eugen Dühring's science of race. Stereotypes, which are easily projected onto the body and the face, even against one's will, allowed Klages to finesse structures. They allowed him, paradoxically, an interpretative scheme free of such external concerns as nineteenth-century rationality. Gernot Bohme calls physiognomy the study of a "potential of impression" (*Eindruckspotential*).⁵⁴ This is not the study of the human face as the

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 188.

⁵¹ See James G. Lennox, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Biology: Studies in the Origins of Life Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 129.

⁵² Tobias Schneider has denied that Klages ever subscribed to Nazi anti-Semitism. See Schneider, "Ideologische Grabenkämpfe: Der Philosoph Ludwig Klages und der Nationalsozialismus 1933-1938," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 49:2 (2001): 275-294.

⁵³ Hannah Arendt came close to Klages's claim but with the opposite ideological conclusions; she recognized Aristotle as the creator of a Western *bios politikos*, which she tied to the concepts of *praxis* and *lexis* (speech), the cornerstones of modern democratic politics. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958), pp. 12, 25.

⁵⁴ Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, in *Samtliche Werke*, vol. 2 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1966), p. 866. This passage first appeared in a much shorter book entitled *Geist und Seele*, which Klages published in 1918; he integrated much of that book into *Der Geist* in 1929.

expression of character, but of the traces of character after its appearance, its action, or its performance. It is a science of the afterlife, the trace, the specter, grounded in the phenomenology of faces. Klages's 1901 essay on Lavater displaced the hub of his method from the life force, still tied to one's actions and thoughts, to the inherent organic qualities of the race. The romantic person became an "Aryan," even when outside Germany or debating Germanic signs of identification.

Eventually Klages concluded that its dramatic appearance had led the practice of physiognomy into a methodological dead end. He decided to reassign his cultural investments to graphology that struck him as more empirically defensible.⁵⁵ Helmut Lethen, a well-known theoretician in Germany, has commented, "Klages's ousting of the theatrical, masks and all elements of self-enactment, reminds us that unfalsified feeling and pure expression remain part of his relentlessly exclusivist fundamentalism, that he subjects all the same to an extreme formal discipline."⁵⁶ Klages chose graphology because it had an "individual notion of space" that was "not merely accidental."⁵⁷ In other words, even if it was based on irrational premises, it could still be systematized. In a comment on the theories of his teacher Theodor Lipps, Klages connected graphological "form" and the feeling of being alive (*Lebensgefühl*): "While one's own feeling of being alive either has a positive or negative relation to the life of forms, the impression [*Eindruck*] of these forms must free or disturb [*verstimmen*] us, according to Lipps's theory."⁵⁸ At the heart of being alive stands the living experience, unpredictable and not linear. What is grasped in handwriting, or the wrinkles marked on one's face, is related to this feeling of life, which is "a representative symbol of a line that *encircles* the body of the word and so *isolates* it in space."⁵⁹ This observation had a crucial impact on Klages's

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 867.

⁵⁶ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, Deutsche Literaturarchiv am Marbach (henceforth DLA), Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁵⁷ This was the same Bodeschule für Körperziehung München, in Schloss Nymphenburg, still known to many Bavarians: <http://www.bode-schule.de>.

⁵⁸ Bode summarized his philosophy as follows:

1. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind Bewegungen des ganzen Körpers. Niemals beobachten wir eine isolierte Bewegung (Prinzip der *Totalität*).

2. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen verlaufen rhythmische, d.h. sie nehmen ihren Ausgang von den grossen Körpermuskeln . . . (Prinzip der *Rhythmik*).

3. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind aufeinander abgestimmt, so dass bei geringstem Kraftaufwand die grösste Kraftwirkung erzielt wird. Dieser Abstimmung entspricht die Abstimmung im Formverhältnis der Körperteile zueinander (Prinzip der *Form*).

4. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit langsamen Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem entspannten Muskelzustand und münden wieder in diesen (Prinzip der *Entspannung* oder der *Schwere*).

5. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit schnellem Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem Gleichgewichtsverhältnis antagonistischer Muskelspannungen. Die Bewegung entsteht durch Spannung der einen Muskelgruppe und Entspannung der anderen (Prinzip der *Vorbereitung*).

Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁵⁹ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 127.

ideas about peoples, as well as on his ideas about space and time. By intuiting the “physiognomy of functions” (or “morphology of characters”), one grasped the key underlying the study of symbols, the hermeneutics of facial expressions and the expression of character in handwriting.⁶⁰ This was meant to be the ultimate German science, constructed on a different notion of space and time than other scientific systems that came from the Enlightenment or the Judeo-Christian tradition. From Klages’s perspective, if JudeoChristianity created the linearity of world history, as expressed in idealism and the modern state, he strived to reach the language of pure signs. Biblical linearity he considered a progressive abstraction and therefore corrupting, while a pure language was stable and imagistic, and therefore true. For Klages, there was a line connecting the traces of a biblical theology with the modern scientific systems and the Enlightenment. In that sense, Klages agreed with Hermann Cohen and other neo-Kantians of the early 1900s. Both neo-Kantians and *Lebensphilosophers* agreed that the Enlightenment was trying to change the relationship between the individual, the collective, and the law, in all its forms.⁶¹ The major difference was that neo-Kantians accepted and broadened it, whereas *Lebensphilosophers* rebelled against it. In between the two camps stood exceptional thinkers who were critical of neo-Kantianism, as well as of *Lebensphilosophie*. Walter Benjamin and Martin Heidegger are two opposing examples for the camp of “outsiders.”

In 1907-1908, Hans Eggert Schroder tells us, Hans Busse, Klages’s friend and co-editor, became so sick and depressed that Klages decided to cease publishing his journal, *Graphologische Monatshefte*. Instead he directed his energies into a “psychodiagnostic seminar” held in Munich. The seminar turned the romantic sciences Klages utilized into a system of diagnosis, giving them a practical and future-oriented allure. A good diagnosis could predict a person’s future action on the basis of his or her character and the unwilling or unconscious signs of one’s handwriting and face lines. Klages’s understanding of graphology and physiognomy was not only used to portray a temperament but also to describe the hidden drives behind it, both individual and collective. Germanness and Jewishness were seen as qualities expressed unwillingly by individuals who were forced by their own bodies into unconscious acts. Leaning back deep into the collective past, Klages predicted a close individual future.

In his summary of the work done during the early 1900s, Klages wrote, “The attempt to evaluate traces of an expression in physiognomy has been continued since Lavater . . . [T]he practical interest in human awareness via graphology or the physiognomy of movement [*Bewegungsphysiognomik*] did not gain credibility [up until my work] . . . [and] the attempt of the French to discuss the driven life [*Triebleben*] [in the context

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Hitlerrummel mit allem Tamtam eingesetzt.” Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, April 2, 1927, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 47.

of] ‘the civilized’ [*zivilisierten*] was absolutely groundless.”⁶² In other words, a deep motivation behind the formation of this science was Klages’s antiEnlightenment and anti-French standpoint.

If such ideas sound bizarre to contemporary ears, they did not to many interesting thinkers and artists of the early 1900s. Among those who attended the seminar were Ernst Glockner (1885-1934), the Stefan George disciple, historian of literature, correspondent of Thomas Mann, and partner to Ernst Bertram (1884-1957); Norbert von Hellingrath (1888-1916), a pioneering Holderlin scholar who was killed in the battle of Verdun at the age of 28; Rudolf Alexander Schroders, founder of the Insel publishing house; the famous philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883-1969); Walter Friedrich Otto (1874-1958), the great scholar of religion; the author Heinrich Steinitzer (1864-1945); Erich Rothacker (1888-1965), the *Lebensphilosoph*, theoretician of *Begriffsgeschichte* (history of concepts), and director of the Institute of Psychology at the University of Bonn; Elizabeth Forster-Nietzsche (1846-1935), who enthused to Oswald Spengler—the author of *The Decline of the West* (1918, 1922)—about the lectures;⁶³ and the great art historian Heinrich Wölfflin (1864-1945), who maintained a lively correspondence with Klages until his death. Among the many people who sought an acquaintance with Klages at the time were the neo-Kantian Max Dessoir (1867-1947) and the famous conductor Wilhelm Furtwangler (1886-1954), later to be identified with the Nazi regime.⁶⁴

Furthermore, the influence of Klages’s ideas on the sciences and philosophy was wider than this small group of intellectuals. At the same time he was giving his seminar in Munich, Klages worked on a lecture tour to introduce German audiences to characterology. The journey was reported widely in the newspapers, and Klages became an intellectual celebrity, his teachings the basis for a recognizable school. The lecture tour drew massive audiences by academic standards, and Klages did not hesitate to use popular techniques of “enchantment.” He was an early exploiter of projected images as accompaniment to scientific discourse, and his illustrative examples were drawn from mass culture. The Braunschweig newspaper ran a story about a Klages lecture in its “*neueste Nachrichten*” (Recent News) section on December 4, 1908: “Ludwig Klages spoke yesterday in Durerbund Braunschweig, to a completely packed auditorium, about temperament and character . . . As he explained it, character and personality are one—as Goethe already noticed . . . Talent is shaped in silence, as character is in the flow

⁶² Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, December 13, 1930, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 5. See also Erich von Ludendorff, *Weltkrieg droht auf deutschem Boden: Broschur* (Munich: Faksimile-Verlag, 1931).

⁶³ For the first, see the analysis of Laure Guilbert, *Danser avec le IIIe Reich: les danseurs modernes sous le nazisme* (Brussels: Complexe, 2000), p. 152. For the latter, see Rudolf Bode, *Angriff und Gestaltung* (Berlin: Widukind Verlag, 1939).

⁶⁴ “Das Ziel ist: Die . . . Bewegung hervorgehen zu lassen aus der Instinktiven Sicherheit in der Erzeugung natürlicher Bewegung, wie sie jedes Tier und auf jedes körperlich unverdorbenes Kind hat.” Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

of the world.”⁶⁵ It was especially the “flow” that directed one back to a system of signs that froze it and enabled the researcher to capture it. Connecting such secret worlds of “talent” to individual preferences of language and traits made a great impression on Klages’s listeners.

In a review she wrote in 1938 about Klages’s graphology, aimed at the English-speaking world, Thea Stein-Lewinson explained the system in the following way: “For Klages, handwriting is, above all, the ‘sediment of living,’ of character; it is a rhythmic movement condition, in which each single movement reflects the entire personality, the sum total of the writer’s intellectual, emotional, and physical tendencies. Handwriting is an agent of psychodiagnostics that can be used for the most varied purpose.”⁶⁶ What does it actually mean to tie character with graphology and psychodiagnostics? Stein-Lewinson clarifies: “The criteria which Klages uses for the interpretation of handwriting are regularity and harmony, the *Formniveau*, spaciousness, speed and pressure, width, slant and pastosity, forms of connection and degree of connection, copiousness and character of direction, initial emphasis, overlining and distribution of the movement, spacing of the writing as a whole and related features, also the indications of the so-called

‘acquired’ handwriting.”⁶⁷ There is not enough space here to explain how each criterion works, so let me focus on one of them, again from Stein-Lewinson’s excellent summary:

Another point of interest is the manner in which the principle of representation, the “guiding image,” effects handwriting—and its interpretation. Certain channels of expression for the impulse for representation are the conspicuous places in the writing field, such as the beginning of letters, paragraphs, and words; this is initial emphasis. Emphasis of the initial letters originates in a desire for self-estimation; in certain characters, it develops into a desire for greatness. The most favorable condition is a state of equilibrium between the self-confidence of a person and his self-estimation. In writing, this is expressed by a proportionate relationship between the width and the height of the initial letters, and the rest of the writing. The positive meaning of initial emphasis is the desire for significance; its negative meaning is vanity. The initial emphasis is the graphological indication of a driving force.

I should like to mention briefly at this point, that each graphological indication is in itself either an indication of the releasing of lifeforces or of the binding life-forces (i.e., releases: speed, spaciousness, irregularity, etc.; bonds: slowness, smallness, regularity, etc.).⁶⁸

Klages did not invent graphology; rather, he systematized it as a branch of *Lebensphilosophie*. Armin Schafer described recently the history leading the science

⁶⁵ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, p. 128.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, February 6, 1941, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8373, letter no. 17.

⁶⁸ For Bode and his role see also Tobias Schneider, “Ideologische Grabenkämpfe,” pp. 283-284.

of graphology to its modern appearance as an immanent and performative expression of life science: “Since the seventeenth century the written words have stood for the writer herself. One looked at the handwriting in order to find her origins, her secret wishes and high intentions.”⁶⁹ During the eighteenth century the handwriting brought “the expression of the man as a whole and reflected his soul like a mirror. For much of the nineteenth century, the handwriting was integrated to the life sciences and one begins to look at the handwriting for symptoms of illness, for brain malfunction, and nervous system. In this history of the psyche, the hand [itself] plays only a secondary role.”⁷⁰ The major role was given to the system of signs, independent of the individual will, even when it expressed it: “Graphology sees in the handwriting not the hand but ‘the signs of the human’ [*Zeichen des Menschen*].”⁷¹ Klages, in that respect, was one of the first to understand, as Schafer writes, that “the man writes with the whole of his moving body, not only with the right hand.”⁷² Much like a person’s face, handwriting expresses an essential inclination to the innermost

core of every human, uncontrolled and hardly free-willed, closer to the drives and instincts than to any cognitive capacity. The hand-written letters function that way as a system of psychological signs. Walter Benjamin was among the first to understand this potential of graphology as a semiotic system,—a map of the unconscious,—an idea he adopted from Klages, as he was criticizing him.⁷³

⁶⁹ “Denn theoretisch habe ich immer und immer betont, dass die einseitige Unterjochung des Körpers unter die Gewalt des Geistes, genannt ‘Körperherrschaft,’ die Gefahr einer Verflachung und Verneuerung des Seelischen in sich birgt, denn alle Zweckhaftigkeit ist zielstrebig und nur in einseitig eingegrenzten Bahnlängen vollzieht sich der ‘Störunglose’ Ablauf der Bewegung . . . Dieses verläuft aber nicht in zielstrebrigen Bahnen, sondern in rhythmischen! Und praktisch habe ich das Übermass der Zielstrebigkeit bekämpft, indem ich die Schwindung, jenes geheime Vibrieren, das den Menschen nicht nur mit dem Menschen, sondern auch mit aller Natur verbindet.” Rudolf Bode, “Körpererziehung und Kultur,” in *Der Rhythmus, Zeitschrift für gymnastische Erziehung Mitteilungen des Bodebundes* 5:3 (July-September 1927): 99.

⁷⁰ “[Die] höchste Offenbarung . . . zum Grundprinzip aller körperlichen Bildung machte und dessen Wiedererweckung als das eigentliche pädagogische Problem der Gegenwart aufstellte.” Ibid.

⁷¹ “Alle Bewegungen müssen sich von innen entladen als rhythmischgeformte, in dem Sinn, dass die Bewegung von einem Zentrum aus auf den ganzen Körper überstrahlt.” Rudolf Bode, “Die Bedeutung der körperlichen Bewegung für die Erneuerung der deutschen Kultur,” *Rhythmus* 13, pp. 286-293. See also Norbert Hopster and Ulrich Nassen, *Literatur und Erziehung im Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1983), p. 53.

⁷² “Unsere Aufgabe als Hochschullehrer ist es, sie zu gestalten: eine neue Erkenntnislehre, eine neue Ethik, die Wissenschaft der uns angemessenen totalen Lebensordnung unseres Volkes.” Hans Lohr, “Wesen und Sinn der nationalsozialistischen Akademie des NSD-Dozentenbundes der Christian-Albrechts-Universität,” in *Kieler Blätter*, no. 1 (1938): 40. Quoted in Monika Leske, *Philosophen im “Dritten Reich”, Studie zu Hochschulkund Philosophiebetrieben im faschistischen Deutschland* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1990), p. 81.

⁷³ “Sprache ist nicht bloss äussere Form, gute Sprache nicht Schmuck des Lebens, sondern Ausdruck der volkischen Denkform und Denkweise. Darum bedeutet Zucht der Sprache zugleich Zucht des Denkens und des Charakters.” Ernst Krieck, *Dichtung und Erziehung* (Leipzig: ArmanenVerlag, 1941), p. 147.

4. From expression to biopolitics

In his analysis of the Weimar republic, Helmut Lethen describes the strong influence Klages had on the language of the 1920s, as noted by such figures as the acclaimed theoretician of language, Karl Buhler (1879-1963). Lethen portrays the 1920s as the decade of a new objectivity (*neue Sachlichkeit*) marked by “a rhetoric of visible behavior, of physiognomy and pathology.”⁷⁴ Klages, in that respect, was seen as “the first consistent relativity theorist of expression,”⁷⁵ as Buhler put it, and as one who strived to achieve “pure expression” by asserting that, in Buhler’s words, “genuine expression takes place in a manner just as unmediated as changes in the physical digestive processes.”⁷⁶ What interests Lethen is not so much the purity of expression as its radicalization during the 1920s and its replacement by a language of gestures. The national socialists’ “barbaric” campaign evacuated the conventional space assigned to gesture and assaulted pure expression in favor of “pure action.” As Lethen describes it, “The proponents of fusion gather in the right wing . . . The logic of extremes dominates the literature of the avant-garde.”⁷⁷ At this stage, Klages had far more in common with the goals of this avant-garde than with those whom Lethen calls “barbaric.”

Klages interpreted the threats to a specific condition of thinking. His *Lebensphilosophie* is built holistically around a coherent linkage of symbolic forms, often biological metaphors—which Klages insisted on calling *Bilder*—images starting with the cell, its circulation in the blood, moving on to the human, man’s circulation in the community, and climaxing with a harmonious human collectivity in alignment with cosmological principles. A threat on one of the elements carried significant implications for the others. Time and movement were woven together. In his theoretical work on human character, *Prinzipien der Charakterologie* (1910), Klages preached this gospel: “The concept of the cell [is] a part of the totality of life. There are equivalencies between the cell and the soul, the soul as part of the inner life. The concept of the cell grew out of abstraction.”⁷⁸ Every part of the human face reflects the massive power of the planets. Everything is related to everything. No opposition frees itself from its metaphysical context.

More than a rhetoric of extremes, this is a rhetoric that tries to recapture the principles of repetition and movement in a certain “substitutive reversal” of all structures.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ “Die Sprachgesetz des Volkes . . . seiner besonderen *Lebensaufgaben* und seines eigentümlichen *Lebenssinns* kommt.” Ernst Krieck, *Die Wirklichkeit*, vol. 1 of *Volkisch-politische Anthropologie* (Leipzig: Armanen, 1936), p. 39 (emphases in the original).

⁷⁵ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 231, 238.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁷⁷ Ernst Cassirer, *Zur Metaphysik der symbolischen Formen, Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1995), p. 24.

⁷⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 26.

⁷⁹ Peter E. Gordon, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 75.

When warning his fellow Germans about annihilation, Klages was usually referring to the process of mechanization that destroys the symbolic values of nature. Neither political nor apolitical, he was an aesthete, but one who acted against all forms and figures. Forms were too constant and too rigid.

But Klages's notion of the cell and his historical analysis of images existed within a specific context of time and place. In Klages's words, "The impulse of psychological investigation is most active in that epoch of German spiritual life which is called the *romantic*."⁸⁰ For him, the German soul owed its greatest debt to Carus and Nietzsche—Carus for his theory of pictures and landscapes, Nietzsche for his "devaluation not only of ethics but, to an even greater extent, of intellect: for the first time in the known history of the world [*Weltgeschichte*] . . . the disposition of the biological value is scrutinized, without prejudice or favor, by the eye of spiritual hostility."⁸¹ In other words, during the early 1910s Klages started to see German culture itself as the expression of pure forms, images of the soul, a reflection of the cosmos. His holism was German not only because of geography and context, but because that which was German was quite close to the universe in its original form. This approach apprehended time within and denied the existence of progress even as it examined the past. Klages was politicizing and biologizing his own aesthetic principles.

In this context, one needs to invert Walter Benjamin's interpretation of fascism as the aestheticization of politics. If fascism followed some of Klages's ideas, as Nolte and others have argued, it is surely thanks to the (bio)politicization of aesthetic principles, applied to a human typology, and not the other way around. I will try to explain this by looking at the close ties between Klages and the youth movement, for it is there that Klages's ideas had their first clear politicization, both internal and external to Klages's own theory.

5. Klages at the Hohe Meissner, 1913

For Klages, the final turn from aesthetic creation to political realization took place around 1913. This was roughly when Klages decided to leave Germany. He soon found that he was not alone in his pessimism.

Beginning with a speech he wrote for the youths gathered at Hohe Meissner—the dramatic peak in the middle of Hessen—late in 1913, Ludwig Klages took a profound interest in the *Wandervogel* movement. This coalition of youth movements pleading for a return to nature, freedom, and emancipation from the norms of a declining bourgeoisie greatly influenced Klages. And, contrary to some scholarly evaluations, the liberal segments as well as the nationalistic segments of the youth movement immedi-

⁸⁰ Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 53.

⁸¹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 33, 39.

ately embraced Klages's ideas. For example, after reading the reports about Klages's text, in 1914 Walter Benjamin, then aged 22, traveled to Munich in order to invite Klages to lecture to his fellow Free German Students, the liberal branch of *Wandervogel*.⁸² The younger man found the elder one "forthcoming and polite."⁸³

Parallel to Klages's growing interest in politics and the youth movement, Theodor Lessing, Klages's childhood friend, became during the early 1900s an important educational reformer who dedicated—and ultimately sacrificed—his life to democratic reforms. In 1897 Lessing read *Emlohstobba*, a utopian novel written by the important pedagogue Hermann Lietz. The novel's titular school was based at Abbotsholme, an experimental school founded by the British reformer Cecil Reddie (1858-1932) in 1889 near Derby, England, and Lietz had been one of the school's first teachers. Lessing responded enthusiastically to Lietz's depiction of an ideal educational community, wrote to Lietz, and later joined the staff of his German experimental school, Haubinda, established in 1901. In his teaching Lessing wrought a synthesis of Kantian ideals, *Lebensphilosophie*, and a combination of idealism, modernity, and, especially, naturalism. Such curricular innovation was welcomed at Haubinda.⁸⁴ The school's curriculum included modern languages as well as the languages of antiquity, and the faculty taught crafts in order to produce fine carpenters, metalworkers, and other artisans.⁸⁵ Lessing's program emphasized the naturalistic ideals of the *Lebensreformbewegung* (the reform movement of life), such as attention to nature, the inculcation of simplicity and modesty, and great attention to crafts and sports. According to Lessing, the guiding figures for this system would be Rousseau, Nietzsche, and (surprisingly) Eugen Dühring.⁸⁶ Lessing and his associates considered the school and its program the most revolutionary German educational experiment of its time, and many who became notable thinkers passed through it. It was there that Walter Benjamin met and became a follower of Gustav Wyneken, the founder and leader of Free German Students. Lessing taught at the school until a racist comment from Lietz convinced him that Jews were not welcome.

Klages followed a path quite similar to that of his former friend. He associated with the chief German youth movement of the day, notable for its nationalistic and romantic qualities. *Wandervogel*, the original of the many youth organizations, was

⁸² Oliver A. I. Botar, "Raoul France and National Socialism: A Problematic Relationship," a paper given to the Fifth International Congress of Hungarian Studies, Jyväskylä, Finland, 2011, p. 8. I thank Professor Botar for sharing this unpublished paper with me.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁴ Rene Romain Roth, *Raoul H. France and the Doctrine of Life* (Bloomington, Ind.: First Books Library, 2000), p. 176. France is also known as the inventor of the concept of biotechnology, which he identified with "the study of living and life-like systems" (p. 109).

⁸⁵ Botar's paper traces the explicit references to France's work among the artistic avant-garde of the 1920s, among them well-known names such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Fritz Neumeyer, Mies van der Rohe, and El Lissitzky.

⁸⁶ Oliver A. I. Botar, "Defining Biocentrism," in *Biocentrism and Modernism*, ed. Oliver A. I. Botar and Isabel Wunsche (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 17-18.

founded by Karl Fischer in a back room in a western suburb of Berlin in 1901. It combined a “literary revolt against the repression of individual emotions and the canons of classicism” with patriotic ideals.⁸⁷ The first large meeting occurred on the Hohe Meissner, in October 1913, on the one-hundredth anniversary of Napoleon’s defeat in the Battle of the Nations. The organizers of the meeting aspired to unite all the youth groups. “Many leading figures of the day,” Walter Laqueur wrote, “declared their support for the Freideutsche youth, among them Gerhard Hauptmann and Gertrud Baumer, Ferdinand Avenarius and Friedrich Naumann . . . Others were more prolix, like Ludwig Klages, who filled eighteen pages with savage condemnation of the ideas of progress and reason as guiding principles of life.”⁸⁸ Describing Klages’s “considerable and pernicious influence on the youth movement for many years,” Laqueur singled out a disdain for morality and conscience, which he said “paved the way for fascist philosophy in many important respects.”⁸⁹ Many thinkers acclaimed by the members of the youth groups presented ideas that look suspiciously fascist when viewed from our current perspective. For example, Paul Natorp, the well-known neo-Kantian and pedagogue, was among the frequent contributors to the movement’s journals, often speaking and writing excitedly of Germany’s mission in the world, in using Darwinist metaphors to justify the politics of power. “The [German] youths need to learn,” he wrote, “that death and life are attached to each other, and that life is defined by its moments of great risk. Youth need to grow up to participate in the struggle of life [*Kampf des Lebens*].”⁹⁰

It took Klages a few years to appreciate the importance of these new developments. The youth movement was for him another expression of radical thinking, propelled into existence by the decline of the state. In 1913 Klages still thought about the movement as a vehicle for his philosophy, not as a political phenomenon. The speech he wrote for the meeting at Hohe Meissner, entitled “Mensch und Erde,”—later extended to a full book—can be seen as a turning point. There he expressed the necessity of working within a community organized by the principle of political action. Gradual advances toward politicization reflected a much wider perception of the collective and its relation

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 32.

⁸⁸ “Rosenberg contra Klages,” see John Claverely Cartney, web-page editor, “The Biocentric Metaphysics of Ludwig Klages” in <http://www.revilo-oliver.com> (accessed July 16, 2012), quoted in *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁸⁹ “Deshalb ist es kein Zufall, wenn auch unsere Einigung in das Jahr der nationalsozialistischen Erhebung fällt: Erst heute beginnt unsere praktische Wirksamkeit möglich und auch nötig zu werden . . . Der Schwerpunkt der NSDAP läuft wesentlich auf politischem Gebiet, die Ziele unseres Forschungskreises berühren die religiöse Sphäre. Infolge der gemeinsamen weltnanschaulichen Grundlage haben wir die Verpflichtung, die wirkliche Radikalität der nationalen Revolution dort zu wahren, wo der Politiker Vermittlungen sucht. Die staatliche Macht ist verpflichtet, dem kulturellen Aufbau Schutz zu gewahren, denn ohne ihn entbehrte sie ihres Inhaltes und überhaupt ihres Lebensrechtes.” Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Konv.: Prosa.

⁹⁰ Wolfgang Olshausen, “Ludwig Klages in Berlin, 1933,” unnumbered manuscript in the “Prosa” section, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages,

to politics, itself identified with modernity. In Thomas Mann's words: "The twentieth century is exploring the [concepts of] character and its propensities . . . [In contrast to the nineteenth century,] it is not pessimistic, skeptical, cynical, or ironic . . . It is more activist, voluntary, melioristic, political, and expressionistic."⁹¹ As historians of the German youth movement agree, the meeting at the Hohe Meissner failed in organizational terms, but nevertheless succeeded in creating an image of mobilization and politicization.⁹²

Though Klages was not present himself at the *Wandervogel* meeting on the Hohe Meissner, his address was delivered and eventually published in the celebrated *Festschrift of the Hohe Meissner* (1914).⁹³ In this address mourning the death of forests and deserts, Klages mentioned a "foreign race occupying Germany in the name of progress," but this implicit racial slur received far less attention than did his

⁹¹ On this group, see *Hestia: Jahrbuch der Klages-Gesellschaft 1967/1969* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1971). The work is described as "lectures on the theme of language and its importance in the work of Ludwig Klages" and includes articles by Hans Eggert Schroder, Albert Wellek, Heinz Alfred Mueller, Hans Kasdorf, Françoise Wiersma-Verschaffelt, and Otto Huth. On Hirt's research see also the court sitting at Nuremberg that took place July 29 to August 8, 1946, at <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/tgmwc/tgmwc-20/tgmwc-20-198-04.shtml>.

⁹² "(1) Der Mensch gehört den beiden Reichen des Lebens und des Geistes an. Folgt er den idealistischen oder materialistischen Gesetzen des Geistes, dient er der logozentrischen, -setzt er die Mächte des Lebens als letzten Wert, dient er der *biozentrischen* Weltanschauung. Durch diese Entscheidung wird die Substanz des Menschen in ihrer *Existenz* und in ihrer Entwicklung bestimmt. (2) Mit besonderer Absicht verwenden wir die von Ludwig Klages geprägten Begriffe. In Klages erblicken wir den bedeutendsten Verkünder einer *Lebensphilosophie*, deren Unterströmung in die vorchristliche, germanische Zeit reicht . . . Gewiss mögen uns unter den lebenden Philosophen auch andere Namen bedeutungsvoll geworden sein, -kein Name besitzt eine Leuchtkraft wie derjenige *Klages*'. (3) Nie werden wir den zivilisatorischen Verfall unserer Kultur durch den Einfluss von *pseudo-radikalen* . . . durch den Einfluss von Ressentimentsgetriebenen Politikern ertragen. (4) Die selbstgeschaffene Bergung innerhalb einer Kulturgemeinschaft verlangt, die sich auf eine feste Hierarchie der Lebenswerte gründet, d.h. Blut- und Landschaftszusammenhang als Wurzeln unsrer Existenz anerkennt, -und entscheidendes Vertrauen auf die letzten bildenden Mächte des *Menschen*: Das Wunder, die Liebe, das Vorbild gesetzt. (H. Prinzhorn gibt in seiner *Persönlichkeitspsychologie* [1932] die eindringlichste Zusammenfassung einer biozentrischen Wirklichkeitslehre vom Menschen.) (5) Als allgemein verbindliche *Methode* unserer Forschung kann das hinweisende oder symbolische Denken bezeichnet werden. In den Ergebnissen der *Charakterologie*, die vor allen auf diesen Erkenntnisweg angewiesen ist, erblicken wir die Bedingung für eine notwendige Gesundung unseres Wirklichkeitssinn es . . . Hierbei sind wir davon überzeugt, dass unsere wissenschaftlichen Möglichkeiten weniger im atomisierten Spezialistentum, als *zwischen* den Einzeldisziplinen liegen." "Der Arbeits-Kreis für biozentrische Forschung (AKBF)," in DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Prosa, unpublished manuscripts (all emphases in the original).

⁹³ "Für das ihm innewohnende Vermögen der Wandlung und Erneuerung. Endlich waren wir solcher Art Physiognomiker, aber in einem tieferen Sinne als dem bisher mit dem Worte durchweg verbundenen. Wir fragen nicht mehr in erster Linie: welcher Vorgang folgt auf welchen andern? Sondern wir fragen . . . welche Lebensregungen *erscheinen* in ihnen? . . . Beharrung bedeutet zugleich Wiederholung; und aufgrund der Annahme von *Widerholungen des Gleichen* wird die Welt vom Geiste rechnerisch bewältigt. Allein die Wirklichkeit geht nur über jede von der Rechnung erreichte Dezimele unendlich hinaus." Ludwig Klages to Carl Haebler, January 10, 1935, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61/5117, letter no. 1 (emphases in the original).

strident attack on progress. At the time, appeals to youth bolstered by nationalistic, communitarian, and even racist language were remarkably seen as apolitical: they were the plea of the revolutionary younger generation for action against the old system. Klaus Vondung agreed with this rebellious estimation, which he related to the unique apocalyptic mood in Germany: “As early as 1913, Ludwig Klages passionately denounced civilization’s progress, whose destructive effects everyone can see today . . . Klages viewed the destructive tendencies of technological progress not as a concomitant feature, . . . but as the central feature of Western Christian civilization, as the expression of its will to subdue the earth, . . . the destruction of what is essentially human.”⁹⁴

Laqueur describes another scene that conveys this clearly: “The Austrian comrades protested that it [i.e., the united youth movement] must insist on racial purity in its ranks . . . [A]fter that came this remarkable *non sequitur*—‘We regard with contempt all who call us “political.”’”⁹⁵ A professedly apolitical youth movement allied itself with aesthetics, a practical notion of everyday style and anarchism.⁹⁶

All this sounds quite confusing. Was the youth movement politicized or not? Was it mobilizing the youth? If so, how did it do so in the name of apoliticism? One way to think about the question is to understand that during that period the absolute outsider was the professional politician, the man who aspired to represent the system while the youth movement identified its own politics with a purist, nonpolitical collective interest. Frank Trommler, in his study of this period, sees the aestheticization of life piercing the hearts of German youths as they attempted to join the communal political movement of 1914.⁹⁷ This aesthetization, he explains, was achieved by developing a cult of youth whose mythical unity would resist any connection with the old institutions of the state, just as it abjured all things political. “In the Meissner celebration of 1913,” he writes, youth abandoned the old ideas about qualities inherently German in favor of “a new political and social relevance that was committed exclusively to informing society with an ideology, while insisting that it was utterly apolitical itself.”⁹⁸ The models were mostly literary, and many youths turned to the writings of Stefan George

⁹⁴ Christian Eckle, “Erbcharakterologische Zwillingsuntersuchungen,” in *Beiheft zur Zeitschrift angewandte Psychologie und Charakterkunde*, ed. Otto Klemm and Phillip Lersch (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth Verlag, 1939), p. 11.

⁹⁵ Julius Deussen, *Klages Kritik des Geistes, mit 7 Figuren und einer monographischen Bibliographie Ludwig Klages und einer Bibliographie der biozentrischen Literatur der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1934).

⁹⁶ A. Abbott, “German Science Begins to Cure Its Historical Amnesia,” *Nature* 403 (2000): 474–475; William E. Seidelman, “Science and Inhumanity: The Kaiser-Wilhelm/Max Planck Society,” *Not Now: An Electronic Journal* 2 (Winter 2000), <http://www.baycrest.org/journal/ifnot01w.html> (accessed February 12, 2013).

⁹⁷ Julius Deussen to Joachim Haupt, July 11, 1933, DLA, Nachlass Julius Deussen, doc. no. 7, file 6.

⁹⁸ Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 2007), p. 19.

and his coterie.⁹⁹ According to Trommler, the youth culture's radical aesthetization of society and politics broke with the everyday precepts of bourgeois civilization—and particularly bourgeois models of time—to set its epistemology on a foundation of images and symbols, not structures. One should carefully note and contextualize this change, because if true, it marked a new and revolutionary type of politics, a new model of *apolitical politics* that strived to change the very core of the political discourse on the basis of the totalization and identification of politics with life.

Klages's influence is most apparent exactly where an aestheticized notion of life meets a revolutionary form of politics, in the embrace of images and the rejection of structures. One youthful attendee of the Hohe Meissner gathering declared in 1925: "What made us a movement can be framed as images and symbols: to live without joining a world in which people are hungry, . . . in which there is violence and injustice. Our secret longing was and remained to take over political life, to struggle for it, thereby shaping the spirit of the world and controlling it. No party wanted us."¹⁰⁰ It was more than anything else the "enthusiasm of the youth that created the new ethos. In content it was divided into thousands of forms, sometimes pacifistic, sometimes nationalistic, sometimes conflicting and radically destructive. But the 'breakthrough' of the separated, the uninhabited stream of life [*Lebensstrom*] thrown into the forms of culture, was the ability to stand and support *all*."¹⁰¹ Is it possible that Klages's metaphysical *Lebensphilosophie* resonated more forcefully in the hearts of German youths than did the more conventional and normative thinking of Paul Natorp? Is it possible that a marginal, esoteric thinker would help to substantiate one of the most important discursive revolutions of the twentieth century?

Laqueur did not exaggerate in his assessment of the meeting at Hohe Meissner, which became one of the most important moments in the evolution of a new Germany. It was there that the notion of industrial progress was challenged most forcefully, and there that an imminent and radical change seemed most compellingly announced, almost without regard for questions of location, context, or possible implication. Richard Wolin describes it in similar terms: "Because of its provocative anticivilizational and ecological themes, [Klages's] lecture subsequently acquired canonical status among youth movement members. [As a result,] Benjamin visited Klages in Munich the next year and invited him to speak to the Berlin youth movement group (the Free Student Society) over which Benjamin presided."¹⁰²

Appropriately for this momentous occasion, "Mensch und Erde" was the first political tract Klages ever wrote. (In some ways, it was also his last.) It was acknowledged by the public and has been assigned a key place in the histories of the period. Many of the texts that emerged from the youth movement echo Klages's celebration of nature

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 25.

¹⁰⁰ Petra Gehring, *Was ist Biomacht? Vom zweifelhaften Mehrwert des Lebens* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2006), p. 222 (emphases in original).

¹⁰¹ Agamben, *The Open*, p. 37.

¹⁰² Ibid.

and condemnation of corrupting civilization, and they contrast the soul with the spirit. Hans Bluher, a political activist and historian of *Wandervogel*, picked up a derogatory term Klages repeated several times in his piece, *Zivilisationsgiirtel* (the modesty belt of civilization), and acknowledged “life as the key to all styles . . . the sign that permits one to see the whole notion of youth.”¹⁰³ Among those who assessed the significance of the youth movement in the formation of a more general political consciousness was August Messer, the *Lebensphilosoph* whose defense of Lessing was mentioned in the previous chapter. Messer considered the most urgent message of the youth movements to be *Lebensreform*, the admiration of nature and its symbols, the emphasis on the organic, the contempt for materialism and scientific rationalism.¹⁰⁴ The *Lebensreform* movement tried to organize and mobilize the youth for these ends. Despite the youth movement’s disavowal of political intentions, such intentions existed, often taking the form of “a plea for individual responsibility.”¹⁰⁵

6. Leaving Germany, 1914-15

In 1915, after two years of hesitation and at the age of 43, Ludwig Klages decided to leave Germany for good and move to Switzerland. In Kilchberg, a small community near Zurich, he rented two rooms in the house of one of his literary idols, the poet Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. The house was set on the crest of a hill, and from his windows Klages looked out on a typically romantic scene: the Zurich lake spread below him and the snowy Alps beyond. A few meters behind the house a long green valley beckoned Klages to the daylong strolls he loved and which he often described in letters during this idyllic period. Why did he retreat to this bucolic place?

Klages’s journey to Switzerland and his decision to settle there reflect two simultaneous decisions. His private correspondence shows that by 1913 he had decided to leave Germany because of what he saw as a precipitous cultural and social decline. At the same time he had grown fascinated by the thought of inhabiting a place that suited his romantic ideals, a land still untouched by the pollution of urbanization and mechanization. Juxtaposing those two decisions with Klages’s extravagant trumpeting of Germanic superiority suggests a more problematic relation than that proposed

¹⁰³ Samuel Weber, “Bare Life and Life in General,” in *Gray Room* 46 (Winter 2012), p. 20. Sam Weber’s article is an exceptionally precise analysis of the concept of “bare life.” However, in contrast to my analysis of *Lebensphilosophie*, Weber’s stress falls on the weight given to *life* and *death* within the antinomian relationship, in a post-Paulinian context, rather than the immanentization of death within life as a secularized form.

¹⁰⁴ “Schon beim stillen Nachsprecher dieser Worter durfte den Lesern und Leserinnen klar werden, dass die deutsche Volkerkunde seit 1945 ein terminologisches Problem hat.” Thomas Hauschild, “‘Dem lebendigen Geist,’ Warum die Geschichte der Volkerkunde im ‘Dritten Reich’ auch fur Nichtetnologen von Interesse sein kann,” in *Lebenslust und Fremdenfurcht, Ethnologie im Dritten Reich*, ed. Thomas Hauschild (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995), p. 22.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

by such historians as Ernst Nolte, who was eagerly trying to demonstrate Klages's Germanic extremism—along with Theodor Lessing's "Marxism"—as the intellectual opposition that ended with the rise of Hitler.¹⁰⁶ Nolte refers to Klages as an individual and active agent of radicalism, but as shown below, Klages's role was less personal than discursive. In contrast to how Nolte sees it, the outbreak of World War I in the summer of 1914 only accelerated Klages's plan to leave Germany and find refuge in Switzerland. This retreat was not coincidental; for the rest of his life, whenever Klages felt insecure when visiting Germany, he quickly left it in favor of the peaceful Swiss mountains, often while continuing to preach patriotism and heroism to his disciples and friends.

Nevertheless, this period did not leave Klages unscathed. In December 1914, after returning home for a few weeks, and at the end of a year he had spent soul searching and arguing with himself, Klages wrote to a friend that he was busy organizing his literary estate. Evidently he was preparing to leave Germany to start a new life.¹⁰⁷ In August 1915, as Germany was battling in the trenches of World War I, he received official military permission to leave the country because of a bronchial condition; he had no intention of returning and left almost all he had behind, including his estate, his sister and niece, friends and admirers.¹⁰⁸ Many of his friends were drafted into the army, volunteers defending the sacred *H eimat* (homeland). Some learned about Klages's departure only after returning from the war.

How could Klages, who had deserted the homeland when it was sorely challenged by war, come to serve as a figurehead for radical nationalism during the 1920s? Was Klages really the ideologue behind Hitler's transcendental views, as Ernst Nolte argues?

Surely Klages's own view of politics, very much in keeping with the *Lebensphilosophie* tradition, provides insights into the relationship between *Lebensphilosophie* and radical right-wing ideology. *Lebensphilosophie*, in turn, can serve as an exemplary case study of the rise of what Nolte identifies as the organic community and which Foucault would later identify as biopower, biohistory, and biopolitics, the underpinnings of modern politics in his theory.¹⁰⁹ Klages's own understanding of *life* did not freeze during this period; rather, it shifted from his early 1900s understanding of the concept in terms of aesthetic expression and revived mythologism to a set of demographic con-

¹⁰⁶ "Die Kraft körperhaften Sehens und Erfassen lässt sich entfalten . . . Der Wille, aus klarer Erkenntnis das Eigene, das Lebendig-Eigene aus eigenem Willen zu wirken, scheint mir ein Kennzeichen unserer Gegenwart und mehr noch ein Anzeichen und Vorzeichen der Zukunft zu sein." Hans Gunther, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, vol. 1 (Munich: Lehmann Verlag, 1939), p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ "Aus einem Zeitalter der Not heraus wollten viele Denker der 30er Jahre die Zeit als solche besiegen und sich auf ewig in einer heilen, erlösten Menschheit fortzeugen." Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰⁸ "Der Gedanke der kraftvollen und lustvollen Eroberung der Zukunft, aber auch die Sorge um eine als 'krank' und bedroht empfundene Gegenwart ist Reich und Gunther, oder auch: Marcuse und Junger, Adorno und Klages gemeinsam. Gemeinsam ist vielen Denkern der 30er Jahre auch die Bindung ihres Denkens an Motive der Lebenslust . . . die Suche nach einem naturwuchsigem Ursprung, zu dem zurückzukehren gilt." Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

siderations, in keeping with Foucault's claims regarding the change of the discourse during the late eighteenth century.¹¹⁰ His earlier conflicts with Lessing and Wolfskehl started to seem to Klages like fundamental collective conflicts over the meaning of life itself.

Klages's move and thought prove important in the context of *Lebensphilosophie* and its gradual politicization. The relocation meant that Klages had erected a boundary between two periods of his life, the first of which was now over. Crossing the border to Switzerland meant also crossing a disciplinary and discursive boundary. After a long and unsuccessful attempt to find a leading role among the bohemians, artists, and philosophers in Munich, using graphology as his principal tool, Klages changed to philosophy. During the new period, he would try to fuse ancient Germanic myths and new forms of graphology and characterology into a synthesis of the dead and the living as a philosophical system. His new *Lebenslehre* (doctrine of life), as he explained it in a letter written in July 1918, was his new "biological philosophy," a new voice that used the language of biology to enter the sealed world of both living and dead.¹¹¹

If Klages was for a time the crown prince of *Lebensphilosophie* (now united with biophilosophy), it was because of the various disciplines he connected to it: romantic cosmology, physiognomy, graphology, the science of expressions (*Ausdruckslehre*), characterology, and, finally, his metaphysics, as historians of philosophy and psychology have indicated.¹¹²

What sustained Klages's science was a passion for philosophical contemplation, not politics. The "pope of German graphology"¹¹³ left much of the practical work in that discipline to his sister, who wrote graphological analyses under his name for years.¹¹⁴ In Klages's philosophical worldview, the sciences, no matter how empirical, had no absolute truth value; they functioned merely as lists of signs, a hodgepodge of references to the essences that produced them. Klages's ideas were derived from a philosophy that presented itself as an intuitive form without structure, a system resentful of systems, an anti-idealist perception, itself deduced from a harmonious and well-ordered model of the universe, an optimistic notion of the whole linked to a world marked by chaos and decline. In short, Klages's sciences functioned to support aesthetic ideas, not enlightened scientific progress.

A chronological review of Klages's thinking about these sciences, from within his *Lebensphilosophie* perspective, will show how such a paradoxical system came into being. In outlining Klages's biography, my review moves from his discovery of aesthetic principles, heavily influenced by Stefan George's totality, to his acquisition of the relevant philosophical understanding, and, after World War I, his encounter with the romantic sciences focused on bodily signs, concluding with his purposeful politiciza-

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 43.

¹¹² Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einfuhrung*, p. 31.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 40.

¹¹⁴ Mosse, *Masses and Man*, pp. 1, 15.

tion of all of his intellectual achievements. This last stage arrived only during the late 1920s and early 1930s. Ernst Nolte associated Hitler and his predecessors—Klages and Nietzsche, Marx and Theodor Lessing—with the reaction to transcendental philosophy and *Weltgeschichte* (world history), yet in this chapter I argue that, although the popularization of *Lebensphilosophie* did indeed mark the rise of modern biopolitics, it rose as an aesthetic avant-garde, favoring a pure art of living or living style above any form of politics, or as its only expression. From this perspective, life *is* politics and every political act is the expression of life. The aesthetic radicalism Klages promoted was embedded in the Nazi rhetoric of life, as shown in the recurrent stress on the Nazi “life style” and its fusion of the private and the public into one total form.¹¹⁵ *Lebensphilosophie* insisted on the untimely, sometimes simultaneous, presence of ingenious symbols. In this sense, the continuity between the *Lebensphilosophers* and Hitler was one of vocabulary—in many cases of ideas as well—but not one of direct ideological implementation. The transformation of *Lebensphilosophie* into a racial and pro-Nazi vocabulary came only later, after the mid 1920s, but the basic temporal order was there already during the decade before the Nazis adapted it.

7. Conclusion

In his seminal work, *The Problem of Knowledge*, Ernst Cassirer describes the history of “organic forms” from Aristotle’s form to the modern concept of life, or “how the ‘outer’ and ‘inner’ conditions mutually respond to and determine each other,” to create a “biological universe.”¹¹⁶ In Cassirer’s history there is a necessary link between life and how we perceive it, as it is mediated through forms or *Urbild* (ur-images), so that “all that seems to us so self-evident disappears.”¹¹⁷ The process Cassirer describes has more than one possible outcome. In fact, it has many, one of which becomes the impact of biology on “the drama of political life.”¹¹⁸ Written in the summer and fall of 1940, Cassirer’s work grounded his scientific observations in a surprisingly open way: “What we call ‘life,’” the neo-Kantian Cassirer observes at the conclusion to the chapter, “is a

¹¹⁵ Currently, the best place to read Klages in English is the monumental work of translation done by John Claverley Cartney, an unidentifiable independent scholar whose name can be easily linked with some suspicious groups. See http://www.revilo-oliver.com/Writers/Klages/Ludwig_Klages_.html and the anti-Semitic http://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/index_.html.

¹¹⁶ Samuel Weber, *Benjamin’s-abilities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 66.

¹¹⁷ “The classification of man into racial types according to groups of traits and the study of the transmission of physical traits and predispositions through heredity is a completely legitimate scientific endeavor because a part of total human existence is undoubtedly of animal nature and can be isolated as such.” Eric Voegelin, *Race and State*, trans. Ruth Hein (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), p. 34.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

system arranged in hierarchic order.”¹¹⁹ The attempt to revolt against the order by mobilizing life and experience began with the nineteenth-century holistic rebellion against teleology and against “an older and traditional idea of purposiveness.”¹²⁰ It ended with the posthistoricist and postmetaphysical world of the early 1900s: “[M]etaphysics in its old dogmatic form could never rise again.”¹²¹

Accordingly, the long line drawn in this chapter—between Klages’s pre-1914 and post-1914 interest in *Erlebnis* and other living forms— suggests the gradual growth from aestheticism to philosophy, sciences, and politics, albeit an opposite one to Cassirer’s. The common ground for all three forms of expression is the concept of life and the radical tone that accompanies its use. This radicalism and its accompanying plea to immediacy and action became the leading element of *Lebensphilosophie*, no matter where it turned (as I will show in the following chapters). With it arose a form of apolitics that *Lebensphilosophers* identified with the rebelliousness of a living, nonrepresentative, ur-community.

Another historical line, this time chronological, leading from Lavater’s invention of the science of physiognomy to Klages’s set of bodily signs, character types, and racial stereotypes, suggests a historical phenomenon closely linked to the growing interest of politics in individual bodies. As a recent and well-researched book by Michael Hau suggests, this was not an accidental development, but part of a much larger shift in political rhetoric.¹²² Yet physiognomy, its later evolution into racial sciences, and the accommodation of different typologies into the state portray the political from its negation as an absence; it stresses the artificiality of norms but does not supply an alternative. For Klages life was the lack of rational order *before* it was created, but also *after* rationality and structure, a nostalgic recreation of the fundamental conditions of living. It is the extinguishing of the subject-object distinction in favor of the One. What this One is is never explained.

Finally, the process that led *Lebensphilosophie* in general and Ludwig Klages in particular from the Diltheyish empathic understanding to the youth rebellion against all forms of representation is the same process that led Klages to build philosophy on aesthetic principles, partially avant-garde, partially romantic. This dynamic was politicized in two different ways. First, there was a growing notion of the urgency and importance of the political, experienced by Klages himself. Second and more important, as our story proceeds into the 1920s and 1930s, there was the political use, the

¹¹⁹ “Um die Auffassung des Gesprochen . . . Rede und Schrift aufgefasst als *hervorbrechender Lebensmoment* und zugleich als Tat, also nicht bloss als Dokument, sondern als active, aktuelle Ausserung des Lebens.” Ibid., p. 112 (emphasis in the original).

¹²⁰ Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister, Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2009), p. 72.

¹²¹ Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Munich: Duncker and Humblot, 1918).

¹²² Rudolf W. Meyer, “Bergson in Deutschland, Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Zeitauffassung,” in *Studien zum Zeitproblem in der Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts*, *Phänomenologische Forschungen* 13, ed. Ernst Wolfgang Orth (Munich: Verlag Karl Albert, 1982), vol. 13, pp. 10-89.

politicization of Klages's ideas, at times against his will. A closer look at Klages's own language suggests an interesting development. In 1913 he applied the word *Vernichtung*, which means "annihilation," largely to a threat on nature,¹²³ but by 1930 *Vernichtung* was applied mostly to a threat on Germans and Germany.¹²⁴ The organic and ecological were drafted in the service of the nation and the race.

Klages has a certain relevance. The *Lebensreform* movement, Klages's championing of nature against industry,¹²⁵ and the youth movement's insistence on experiencing nature directly (*Erlebnis*) still have an important message for today's environmentalists. In *The Environmental Movement in Germany*, Raymond Dominick identifies the early 1900s as crucial to the rise of ecological consciousness. He asserts that the movement would eventually develop in two opposite directions, propelling the right-wing, reactionary *Heimat* ideology as well as the leftwing Green Party.¹²⁶ Gestalt psychology, created during the 1910s and referring often to Klagesian principles,¹²⁷ enjoyed tremendous popularity, and graphology became a popular form of personality assessment. *Lebensphilosophie* took over the popular communal discourse because it offered the only authority one could rely on: the horizontal, nonhierarchical experience of life.

¹²³ "Der Kosmos lebt, und alles Leben ist polarisiert nach Seele (Psyche) und Leib (Soma). Wo immer lebendiger Leib, da ist auch Seele; wo immer Seele, da ist auch lebendiger Leib. Die Seele ist der Sinn des Leibes, das Bild des Leibes die Erscheinung der Seele. Was immer erscheint, das hat einen Sinn; und jeder Sinn offenbart sich, indem er erscheint. Der Sinn wird erlebt innerlich, die Erscheinung ausserlich." Ludwig Klages, *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*, in *Samtliche Werke*, vol. 3 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1974), p. 390.

¹²⁴ "Der Nihilismus jedoch der Kantischen Formel lasst, wie wir sehen werden, den der Eleaten noch hinter sich!" Klages, *Der Geist*, vol. 1, p. 57. Two-and-a-half pages later Klages also identifies Kantianism with the "kapitalistischer Unternehmer," that is, capitalist enterprise. See *ibid.*, p. 60.

¹²⁵ Benjamin plays here with the Jewish bible and Goethe's *Faust* simultaneously. But *logos*, the word, its sense of beginning or end, are all embedded in his understanding of life as pure language, taken from the tradition that ends with Holderlin and George. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Selected Writings*, vol. 1: 1913-1926 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 260-261.

¹²⁶ "Schlagen wir in einem beliebigen Worterbuche, z.B. von Georges, nach. So finden wir unter dem Worte 'genius' das folgende: Genius, von gignere=zeugen, bezeichnet den uber die menschliche Natur waltenden Gott, der bei der Erzeugung und Geburt des Menschen wirkte, als sein Schutzgeist ihn durchs Leben begleitet und sein Schicksal bestimmte." Klages, *Der Geist*, vol. 2, p. 1278.

¹²⁷ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 348.

3. Ecstasy and Antihistoricism: Klages,

Benjamin, Baeumler, 1914-1926

Wir brauchen Historie, aber wir brauchen sie anders, als sie der verwohnte Mussigganger im Garten dees Wissens braucht.

—Friedrich Nietzsche, *Von Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*¹

As Germany's wartime atmosphere of violence and fear yielded to a hopeful season of revolutionary ideas in 1918, a new firestorm ignited postwar philosophy, burning inward. Germans had lost faith in all political systems, opening a wide gap that was quickly filled by revolutionaries of all kinds, prewar aesthetic revolutionaries among them. Within this context a high-ranking reactionary writer took an interest in a young Jewish philosopher, or, more precisely, a Nazi *Lebensphilosoph* took an interest in Walter Benjamin's own fascination with *Lebensphilosophie* as a tool to reach a total critique. This interest was registered in a still unpublished document that Alfred Baeumler, one of the key ideologues of the radical right wing, sent to Klages, while naming Benjamin as a mutual "foe."² (This document is analyzed in detail at the end of this chapter.) Baeumler's interest, negative as it may be, proves a direct response to the challenge of Benjamin's critique and a serious attempt to destroy it. At the center of this document, which may shed some light on an old debate concerning Benjamin's attraction to reactionary thinkers, as Gershom Scholem argued, stands the alternative counterhistory of the late romantic thinker Johann Jakob Bachofen.³ The context surrounding Benjamin's elaborate commentary on the subject reveals his interest in Bachofen's matriarchical, antiimperialist, anti-Roman, and anti-Prussian theory of history. Bachofen's theories, as we shall see, were revived by members of the George circle and figure prominently in Klages's own *Lebensphilosophie*.

While tracing the connections and disagreements among *Lebensphilosophers* and their internal conflicts, this chapter will also elaborate on the radical potential of *Lebensphilosophie* for both left and right political factions, and it will identify *Lebensphilosophie*'s key interest in an analysis of alternative temporal forms such as Nietzsche's principle of eternal recurrence.

¹ Book I of the History of the Peloponnesian War, Oxford text, edited by H. Stuart-Jones; translated by Arnold J. Toynbee.

² R. W. Hutchinson, Prehistoric Crete (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962).

³ Herodotus, Book I, chapters 56 to 58.

1. Lebensphilosophie in the early 1920s

“For the beautiful is nothing but the onset of that Terror we can scarcely endure, and we are fascinated because it calmly disdains to obliterate us,” wrote Rilke in his *Duino Elegies* (1911), describing a terror in which “each angel is terrifying.”⁴ As will be shown below, Rilke’s angel was the herald of history and of Chronos, father of Zeus. The rise of futurism from the ruins left by the First World War, the growing power of the new biopolitics, and *Erleben*, the aesthetic experiencing of “new life,” first articulated some years earlier, all encouraged and drew upon the heterogeneous and conflicting forces suppressed during the war years. *Lebensphilosophie* was drafted to the effort—but which effort? Strangely, one finds *Lebensphilosophers* united only in their plea for heterogeneity. The “most fashionable philosophy of the present,” as Heinrich Rickert bitterly titled his book in 1920,⁵ captured the interest of Ludwig Klages, the star *Lebensphilosopher*, Alfred Baeumler, the future representative of Nazi pedagogy, and Walter Benjamin, the most important Jewish intellectual of his time—all of whom contributed to the Bachofen debate from 1924 to 1926, marking a threshold in *Lebensphilosophie* that would conclude with an open break in the ranks.

In addition to the revolutions and counterrevolutions of the time, murders, mostly of left-wingers, took place routinely in the streets of every large German city. October and November 1918 brought the sailors’ mutiny in Kiel and the communist rebellion in Munich. The newly appointed democratic government responded to both of these uprisings by unleashing the *Freikorps*, as the right-wing militias were known.⁶ In January 1919 fierce fighting broke out in Berlin when radical right-wing activists and the *Freikorps* joined forces against the rebelling Spartacists, a group of left-wing Marxists and revolutionaries. Three days after the fighting ended, Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, leaders of the Spartacist organization, were abducted by the *Freikorps* and beaten to death. Suspected murderers often escaped conviction because of a hopelessly corrupt judicial system: many judges who had served over the course of the long war had come to believe that sometimes murder was both necessary and righteous—especially if it was the “murder of a pest” (*Schadlingsmord*).⁷ Even the assassins of Walter Rathenau, Germany’s Jewish foreign minister, received a shockingly light sentence: imprisoned in 1922, all were free again by 1930.

In this environment, *Lebensphilosophie* flourished. A mythological imagination was at work, connecting modern and primal existence: this was the only discourse that

⁴ Available in Ludwig Klages, *The Biocentric Worldview* (London: Arktos, 2013).

⁵ Tuist is a term coined by Klages. The distinction between tuist and egoist entails a recognition of the characterological distinction between those whose drives and affects are focused on the “you,” as opposed to those who are centered solely upon their own ego.

⁶ Ibid., p. 17. Esposito quotes from Rudolf Kjellen, *Grundriss zu einem System der Politik* (Leipzig: Rudolph Leipzig Hirzel, 1920), pp. 3-4.

⁷ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 136. Hoche worked with another follower of Klages, the Jewish *Lebensphilosopher* Kurt Goldstein. He was also close to a central figure of the Klages circle, the psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn.

fused a radical aesthetic with a radical politics, better known to have denied its own “politicism.” Although to us an “antipolitical *weltanschauung*” seems like a contradiction, the movement was committed to a pure or naked life (*blossen Leben*)—everything that seemed soiled, less than pure, was rejected. Life was understood as an immanent force, transcending any conceptualization, even of the arts. As a fragment from the literary estate of Georg Simmel—the father of sociology and one of the earliest *Lebensphilosophers*—illustrated: “It is silly to try to turn life into an artwork. Life has its norms embedded in it, [as] ideal requirements which could be realized only in living forms, not imported from art, which has its own [norms].”⁸

In other words, the discourse of *Lebensphilosophie* saw itself as an isolated and immanent phenomenon, outside of a natural bond with any one particular political party, or even outside of a conceptualization as such, refusing any singular political or artistic identifier.

Nevertheless, during the mid-1920s *Lebensphilosophers* started to see themselves as the voice of the present, their philosophy as a call to action (*Tat*). Many who had previously acted as cultural critics shifted from the safe towers of philosophical and esoteric writing to stormy political and social debates. This shift, in turn, convinced other rationalists, neo-Kantians among them, to explore *Lebensphilosophie* as a new avenue of radical action. Among those new converts was Alfred Baeumler, a central figure in the somber narrative told here because of his central role in the debate that involved both Ludwig Klages and Walter Benjamin.

Klages, Benjamin, and Baeumler promoted different perspectives on life: for us, they represent three radical experimenters with the “creative life” of their time, as Nietzsche and other *Lebensphilosophers* after him called it.⁹ As a post-Nietzschean phenomenon, this vocabulary of life and its three primary thinkers identified simultaneously with total aesthetics and critical politics. Klages himself was reluctant to serve immediate political considerations, but those who were interested in them often used his philosophy and name. The politicization and radicalization seemed to hover in the air. When Hans Freyer (1887-1963), the Leipzig sociologist and acclaimed cultural critic, published *Theorie des objektiven Geistes: Eine Einleitung in die Kulturphilosophie* (Theory of objective spirit: an introduction to cultural philosophy) he readily admitted his great debt to Klages and called for “organic action” on the basis of his philosophy:

[I]n the deliberate act . . . an involuntary, radiating manifestation of life, the entire unity of the life of the organism reaches interpretable expression . . . [The] most thoughtful, complete, and profound theory of expression that we have today [is] in the

⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 3.

⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 2000).

work of Ludwig Klages. His work grows out of a deeply applied metaphysics of life, of the mind and of history.¹⁰

Indeed, different *Lebensphilosophers* and those interested in the new discourse, Freyer among them, shared a deep interest in history, or, rather, counterhistory, and Freyer grounded his counterhistory—as Ernst Junger and other conservative revolutionaries did—in the “spectacularly aestheticized version of life.”¹¹ Unlike Klages, however, Freyer called explicitly for the politicization of *Lebensphilosophie*.¹²

At this stage, during the early and mid-1920s, radical political forms could have been detected first as radical manifestations of aesthetic forms shared by a large group of intellectuals from different political and philosophical schools. Deep beneath the radical aesthetics of *Lebensphilosophie* one finds an interest in alternative, nonlinear temporality and the ensuing counterhistory. In contrast to positivist historicity, *Lebensphilosophie* developed an intense interest in such forms as the Nietzschean eternal recurrence. *Handbuch der Philosophie*, a philosophical journal launched in 1926 by Alfred Baeumler and Manfred Schroter, championed *Lebensphilosophie*, transforming it into an established school with a pronounced, occasionally strident, nationalistic flavor. One of the central philosophical commitments of the journal and its editors was a fundamental aesthetics of time and space, such as Nietzsche’s idea of eternal recurrence, a perception of time based on the repetition of symbols and mythical narratives. For example, in the journal’s second issue, Hans Driesch (1867-1941), the acclaimed Leipzig biologist who contributed much to the modern forms of vitalism and *Lebensphilosophie*, discussed the history and praxis of eternal recurrence, tracing its roots to Anaxagoras, Epicurus, and Democritus.¹³ The essence of the concept, Driesch wrote—attacking his own scientific discipline—resided in its freedom to experience simultaneity and multiplicity, the great promise it held for integrating novel forms of philosophical thought into scientific representations: “The one becomes the many, and from the many we return to the one.”¹⁴ From the mid-1920s this approach stood at the center of what

¹⁰ Agamben “paulanized” Benjamin, Scholem, Taubes, and other German Jewish thinkers discussed in this book since his *Homo Sacer*. For the most coherent exploration of that philosophical move see Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹¹ Eric Santner, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), p. 13.

¹² Giorgio Agamben, “Absolute Immanence,” in *Potentialities*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 220.

¹³ Brian Massumi, “National Enterprise Emergency: Steps Toward an Ecology of Powers,” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 26:6 (November 2009), p. 170. I tried to explain the relevance of such readings for a contemporary understanding of life in Nitzan Lebovic, “Life,” in *Maftekh: Lexical Review of Political Thought* 2 (2011): <http://mafteakh.tau.ac.il/en/issue-2e-winter-2011/life/> (accessed June 1, 2013).

¹⁴ Agamben comes close to it without making it a historical argument, when he points out Heidegger’s role as the mediator between two philosophical traditions. The first leads from Kant, via Husserl, to Heidegger and then Levinas and Derrida; the other leads from Spinoza, via Nietzsche, to Heidegger and then Foucault and Deleuze. In short, any examination of “the coming philosophy” should consider

would become the heart of the Leipzig school of philosophical anthropology, formed by Driesch, Freyer, Hans Gehlen, and Hugo Fischer.¹⁵ Thanks to Driesch and Gehlen's contribution, assisted later by Max Scheler, this school became identified with an open and a more liberal form of *Lebensphilosophie*.¹⁶ Yet theirs was not the only school to be identified with *Lebensphilosophie*, or, for that matter, the most important school at the time. Possibly better known and certainly as important in the German 1920s was the circle and publishing house identified with a philosophy journal, *Die Tat* (The Action), and its leading figure, the publisher Eugen Diederichs (1867-1930).

Explicit references to Klages in Diederichs's *Die Tat* and implicit ones in *Handbuch der Philosophie* were adornments to his growing fame among the German right wing. Yet even Diederichs's circle and journal were slowly moving away from their previous cooperation with progressive or avant-garde thinkers such as Georg Simmel. During the early 1910s Diederichs and Simmel shared a strong interest in Bergson's *élan vital*, and the two are responsible for his germanization of Bergson's vitalism during the early 1910s.¹⁷ *Die Tat* was also one of the first journals to publish articles by Klages and his circle. The apparent confirmation of his grim prognostications about European civilization had ensured Klages's supremacy among postwar German conservatives, and his vehement rejection of Judeo-Christian ethics only heightened his popularity. What had been a small circle of admirers became a school, a *Kreis* (school of thought) trying to dig its way out of a devastated Europe "crushed by the black wheel which now is master over earth."¹⁸

During the later 1920s, when Germany suffered one crisis after another, Germans of every political stripe came to believe that an answer to the political crisis, to what Walter Benjamin called "the piling of wreckage upon wreckage," could be articulated only

the 1920s' debate about the role of life and immanence in Heidegger and his fellow critics of democracy, on the way to biopolitics and "immanentation." Ibid., p. 239.

¹⁵ "Diese Formung des Lebens in seinem ganzen Verlaufe durch den Tod ist bisher sozusagen etwas Bildhaftes." Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1994), p. 107.

¹⁶ Simmel stresses here a temporal dimension of a being which turns Sein (being) into a particular presence. Sosein was used by different Lebensphilosophers, for example, Georg Simmel, Max Scheler, and Ludwig Klages. It is translated differently for every thinker, and sometimes, as various translations of Simmel prove, differently in different works of the same thinker. Simmel used the term repeatedly. See *ibid.*, p. 108. For another example of Simmel's use of Sosein see the first page of his *Philosophy of Money*, which was translated as a "particular quality of being." See Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 56. Then again, in his book about the history of sociology, David Frisby translated the same term when used by Max Scheler as "essence." See David Frisby, *The Alienated Mind: The Sociology of Knowledge in Germany, 1918-1933* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 30.

¹⁷ Heinrich Rickert, *Die Philosophie des Lebens: Darstellung und Kritik der philosophischen Modestromungen unserer Zeit* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr Verlag, 1920).

¹⁸ Heinrich Rickert, *Unmittelbarkeit und Sinndeutung: Aufsatz zur Ausgestaltung des Systems der Philosophie* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1939), p. 57 (emphasis in original). The concept of immediacy, popularized by Nietzsche, had garnered great interest among *Lebensphilosophers* since the early 1900s. Yet not before the early 1920s could one attach it to any particular view of politics.

within the vocabulary of immediate and actual *Leben*.¹⁹ Leftist intellectuals proved incapable of harnessing the powerful concepts of *Lebensphilosophie* to a liberal philosophical program—the battle on this front was lost before it began. A philosophical-ideological vacuum, which the Social Democrats failed to fill, was soon occupied by the creations of *volkisch* thinkers. What finally integrated *Lebensphilosophie* with the political was the charismatic rhetoric of the One, the organic whole, the ideal number conveying both fullness and negation, the cyclical revival of the ancient that contradicts the notion of a beginning, middle, and end, of a gradual progression toward a catharsis. Ecstasy, catharsis—according to this philosophy they were there from the very start and required no narrative since they were sustained by the renewal of a mythical unity transcending all crises. The Bachofen debate of the mid-1920s is an excellent case study for the gradual radicalization and politicization of *Lebensphilosophie*.

2. Bachofen: Eros and the 1920s

Ludwig Klages, Alfred Baeumler, and Walter Benjamin all began with a shared vocabulary—*Leben*, *Erlebnis*, *Bild*, *Mythos*, and *Rausch* (life, living experience, image, myth, and ecstasy, respectively)—from which they drew sharply divergent conclusions about the power of renovation and *volkisch* mythology. As will be shown below, specific material proofs of the connection among the three thinkers open onto a new perspective of life philosophy, as well as onto their own legacies. I have

Figure 3.1 Ludwig Klages with his niece, Heidi Klages, ca. 1924. DLM: Nachlass Ludwig Klages.

in mind Klages's plea for a pure and untimely meditation on existence; Baeumler's political interpretation and implementation of Klages's anti-institutional and anti-authoritative aesthetic; and Benjamin's radicalization of *life*, with the use and abuse of history, tradition, and even messianism.

A major cultural figure of his time, Klages appeared frequently in the pages of the daily feuilletons, the cultural supplements of newspapers; he accepted invitations to

¹⁹ Georg Imdahl and David F. Krell are an exception to that rule; in their careful readings of Heidegger's early writings, both labor to demonstrate the close interest and impact of Heidegger's own editorial working and research of Dilthey's life philosophy. Heidegger's later rejection of *Lebensphilosophie* cannot disguise the impact it had on his interest in the living temporality of the *Dasein*. See David F. Krell, *Daheim Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), and Georg Imdahl, *Das Leben Verstehen, Heideggers formal anzeigende Hermeneutik in den frühen Freiburger Vorlesungen* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1997). A few intellectual historians paid close attention to Heidegger's interest in *Lebensphilosophie* from a different angle. Let me mention here only the most recent and excellent two volumes Peter Gordon published on Heidegger's proximity to Franz Rosenzweig, and the opponents of Ernst Cassirer and neo-Kantianism. See Peter E. Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and idem., *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

contribute articles for popular consumption and was often mentioned by other surveyors of the intellectual scene. It was his work on the concept of the eros, published in 1922, as well as his contributions to hugely popular pseudoscientific vogues (graphology and so forth), that elevated him to this position. Every publisher, it seemed, from the most radical right-wing to the most liberal, vied for his articles. For an example of just one newspaperman's zest for publishing Klages, we find that in June 1922 Siegfried Kracauer published sections of Klages's *Vom kosmogonischen Eros* in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* feuilleton, adding a short introduction focusing on Klages's innovative notion of *Urbilder*, or primal images.²⁰ In October 1924 Kracauer reviewed a talk Klages had given on the *Frankfurter Zeitung* radio hour.²¹

The attention accorded to Klages by the mass media, both reactionary and liberal, was sprinkled with stardust. His book on Nietzsche's psychology, published in 1924, made him a leading exegete, and his lengthy introduction to Carl Gustav Carus's *Psyche* (1926) earned him a position as a key interpreter of Carus's understanding of the unconscious.²² Yet there is little doubt that during this decade Klages's most important contribution to philosophy was the part he played in the revival of the late romantic interpreter of symbols, Johann Jakob Bachofen.

Klages collaborated with Carl Albrecht Bernoulli (1868-1937), the Basel theologian and philologist, on a new edition of Bachofen's complete works, a project begun after Klages sought out Bachofen's widow and was entrusted with the unpublished diaries Bachofen had kept during his travels in Greece. The huge project Klages and Bernoulli undertook turned Bachofen into a key Weimar figure and ignited the Bachofen discussion of the mid-1920s. His labors on Bachofen invigorated his own work on psychology, constructing a wider theoretical framework of language, history, and aesthetic theories. Radical notions of time helped integrate these various fields.

In 1919 Ludwig Klages wrote to Bernoulli, "What today is powerful, whether intellectually or politically, is not essential [*unwesentlich*], and what is essential has no power."²³ After a long complaint about the dispiriting times, Klages declared that the only antidote to the "dark, uncanny violence" spreading across the face of the earth was the philosophy of Johann Jakob Bachofen.²⁴ A few years later, in 1923, Klages wrote to Bernoulli about the importance of Bachofen's theory for the revival of authentic German culture, as well as for his own life: "My first priority is the reintroduction of Ba-

²⁰ Victor Klemperer, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1966), p. 20. English translations often miss the importance of vocabulary to the essence (*Wesen*) of Nazi language.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²² Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 5.

²³ Edward Ross Dickinson, "Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse about 'Modernity,'" in *Central European History* 37:1 (2004): 1-38.

²⁴ "Das Hauptgewicht der nationalsozialistischen Sprachbeeinflussung liegt auf der neuen Sinngebung oft alter, bekannter Worte." Manfred Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, inaugural dissertation submitted to the philosophy faculty of the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University of Greifswald (Greifswald: Hans Adler Buchdruckerei, 1935), p. 11.

choven's mysteries and metaphysics . . . My own findings, both the theory of awareness and the metaphysics, are based on Bachofen's philosophy."²⁵ The most intrinsic element of Bachofen's philosophy was his view of symbols and the accompanying notion of immediacy: "[Bachofen's] expression of *life* is the symbol, and the interpretation of the symbol is the myth . . . [The symbol] is, accordingly, the immediate wisdom [*unmittelbarer Weise*] of the visible powers of feelings and the higher intuition [*hoherer Ahnungen*]."²⁶ In Klages's mind such "immediate wisdom" and "higher intuition," the cosmological *Rhythmus*, might combat the devilish and uncanny powers of modernity: materialism, destruction, and degeneration. Therefore, immediacy, intuition, and impulse were all coded in opposition to spatial forms in an attempt to overcome space and matter.

Because Bachofen's great enterprise had been the reconciliation of symbols and reality, his work had great importance for any subsequent theorizing of images. Klages himself said that his own "reality of images" (*Wirklichkeit der Bilder*) had been inspired by Bachofen's example. By 1922 this inspiration had borne fruit, and Klages published *Vom kosmogonischen Eros* (On cosmogenic Eros) that opens with a warm dedication to Bachofen.²⁷ But drawing attention to Bachofen was not devoid of danger: "I know, for example, that the well-known Afrika-Frobenius [Leo Frobenius, the collector and publisher of African myths] was struck by the appearance of my Eros book. As early as the beginning of November he gave a lecture on Africa to a group of philosophers in Munich; he cited Bachofen as a great researcher."²⁸ The danger went beyond Klages's perennial fear that his ideas were being plagiarized by his competitors. In Klages's mind Frobenius was surely perverting Bachofen's ideas in the name of academic knowledge and understanding of progress, a wrongheaded Judeo-Christian concept. Such fervent apprehensions pique one's curiosity: Who was Bachofen and why did he become such a

²⁵ Boaz Neumann, *New German Critique* 85, Special Issue on Intellectuals (Winter 2002), 110.

²⁶ Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, p. 13.

²⁷ "Was heisst Leben? Leben heisst *kaempfen*! Schom *Heraklit* sagte: Der Kampf is der Vater aller Dinge, und Nietzsche beantwortete die Frage . . . so: 'Die Welt ist der Wille zur Macht und nichts ausserdem.' Wohin du auch schaut, ueberall findest du Kampf ums Dasein, Ringen um selbsterhaltung, Arterhaltung und Entwicklung . . . Sie vergessen, dass es den Menschen nur so Scheint, weil unser Denken beschraenkt ist in *Raum und Zeit*, weil wir nicht erkennen, was sich da in der *Ewigkeit* entwickeln und erloesen will . . . Der erste Schritt zu bewusstem Leben heisst: Erkenne dich selbst! In dir selbst, in deinem Rassenerbgut liegt der geheimnisvolle Wille deines Lebens." Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, vol. 4, article 24, "Weltanschauung, NS," p. 1. No further publication details are given; all emphases in the original. Karl Dietrich Bracher spoke of the "army of agitators" the Nazi trained in that context: Karl D. Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1969), p. 159. See also Goebbels's description of his propaganda success, based on "battalions of speakers," which he still insisted were a "mystical phenomenon" in Joseph Goebbels, *Der Angriff. Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1935), pp. 94-96.

²⁸ "Weil das Judentum mit den Gesetzen des Lebens ging, darum gab ihm das Leben recht, darum hat es heute eine weltbeherrschende Machtstellung ueber die arischen Volker erreicht." Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, p. 3.

key figure for *Lebensphilosophie* in the 1920s? How far did Klages take his interpretation of Bachofen? Was he faithful to Bachofen's ideas?

Johann Jakob Bachofen was born in Basel in 1815 and died there in 1887. He studied in Berlin under the well-known jurist and historian of law, Friedrich Karl von Savigny (1779-1861), mentor to the

Grimm brothers. As a student, Bachofen dreamed of writing an ambitious history of Roman law; he saw in Roman culture the symbolic clash between the pantheon borrowed from the Orient—the cults of Aphrodite, Demeter, and Dionysus—and a realm of reason whose initiates strove to build a world empire.²⁹ Bachofen believed that the cultures of both the Orient and the Occident originated with matriarchy, whereas he viewed patriarchy as a betrayal of the primal instincts of the Magna Mater (the magical and primordial “Great Mother”), who was cast aside in favor of an artificial and “logocentric” distinction between the mind and the soul. Following Bachofen, Klages would criticize—formulating a substantial term for the later *Deconstruction* of Jacques Derrida—the logocentric (*Logozentrismus*) vision of the West, that rational and microscopic view of the world that discarded the expression of emotions, the soul, and the primordial state of humanity and nature.³⁰

A bond between conservatism and radical critique is already apparent in Bachofen's reflections. After his first journey to Rome, in the mid-1840s, Bachofen wrote to his teacher, the acclaimed historian of Roman law Friedrich Carl von Savigny to describe his conversion: from a republican “who wished to hear no more of the seven kings, . . . an unbeliever who respected no tradition,” he had become a political conservative.³¹ Referring to his Roman sojourn, he said, “I see more and more that *one* law governs all things.”³² His essay on the symbolism of ancient funerary monuments was rejected and fiercely criticized by the academic community, as was his first work on matriarchy, *Mutterrecht* (Mother right), published in 1861. The poor reception of his books obliged Bachofen to resign his academic post; from that time onward he made his living as a judge. Decades after he died, Bachofen's books, never very widely read, were discovered by a few members of the Stefan George group. When Karl Wolfskehl showed these neglected works to Klages, he was immediately smitten. Klages in turn convinced Alfred Schuler—who showed real resistance at first—to read the books, and they became Schuler's guiding inspiration. The source of Schuler's obsession with Roman robes, or Schwabing's Roman feasts and the rumors about orgies, open feminine sexuality, or secret rituals, came out of Bachofen's principal critique of Roman Christianity and its Western, enlightened offspring.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-79*, trans. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 19.

³⁰ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 143.

³¹ Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus, and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 14.

³² Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 111.

For Bachofen, the source of all enlightenment was pre-Christian Rome, not Greece.³³ His focus lay less on the actual myth-making and more on its commemoration, ritualization, and symbolization. The primal moment for him came in the lost ancient cults of Cybele and Orpheus, whose practices were at odds with the principles underlying the modern power of the state. He refused to admit the centralizing authority of the modern state, but also refused to consider Hellenic democracy as an alternative. Instead of political solutions, he proposed an aesthetic solution because he was convinced that many ancient beliefs and mental habits survived in modern man, unextinguished by modern industrialization and technology. For example, he presented evidence that the attributes and worship of the Cybele cult had influenced the ancient Roman cults and subsequently had been transmitted unconsciously in afterimages (*Nachbild*) that had become part of Western cultural memory.³⁴ In 204 BCE a black stone worshipped as Cybele was brought to Rome and installed on the Palatine, which as a result became the center of all Roman cults, a crucial symbol of Roman imperial power. The Cybele stone was worshipped by the priests who served the Olympian gods and Caesar Elagabalus.³⁵ Elagabalus, also known as Heliogabalus, was the Roman sun god that Bachofen identified at the center of many Roman rituals, before Christianity and the transformation of the pagan “One” to a divine monotheistic entity that required the centralization of power in political and patriarchic terms. Bachofen, two decades before he met Nietzsche at Basel, had already explored the Orphic rituals of the prehistoric east as the precursor of the Dionysian rituals. The last, he argued, was suppressed by modern Western philosophy after Socrates and Plato. Most essential to all ancient myths were the concept of life, the myths of life and death, and the visual imagination of the world, the categorical division of all images into white and black, the living and the dead.³⁶ The world seemed to Bachofen an answer to the laws of “eternal becoming” (*ewigen Werden*), a reflecting image of the gradual transformation from brightness to darkness or from darkness to light.³⁷

After reading Bachofen, the George circle started to celebrate Elagabalus and the sun rituals to the point of obsession.³⁸ It was especially George himself and Alfred Schuler who promoted the ongoing carnival. These two men, both of whom were ho-

³³ Ibid., p. 12.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

³⁵ Vitalpolitik is grounded in the principle of growth or reduction that lies at the bottom of all competitive systems: economic, organic-physiological, or totalitarian. It assumes that politics, economics, society, and the individual all share the same form and image of the living body. It is exactly this shared body, or “synthesis of individuals,” according to Foucault, that allows the system to have “no explicit contract, no voluntary union, no renunciation of rights, and no delegation of natural rights to someone else. In short, there is no constitution of sovereignty by a sort of pact of subjection.” Ibid., pp. 242-243, 300.

³⁶ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 259.

³⁷ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 137.

³⁸ Foucault uses this term in *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 248.

mosexual, saw in Elagabalus an ancient model of sovereignty in which were united androgynous sexuality and an unbounded, pure, and arbitrary violence.

Klages took to the rituals reluctantly, if at all. The revival of pagan rituals enabled him to rethink the limits of his own cultural norms. At the center of all aesthetic, political, and sexual issues, according to Klages, was a dynamic threshold. This was the point between the poles that illuminated both sides of any given opposition—structure versus chaos, democracy versus tyranny, male versus female. According to Bachofen and his followers, only by overcoming the opposition itself could one overcome the decadent epistemology of the West; a revival of pre-Western civilization was a first step in that direction.

Klages's extensive work on Bachofen, from the late 1910s onward, made Bachofen a canonical figure. But whereas Klages adopted many of Bachofen's ideas about the aesthetics of culture, he heeded little the context within which those ideas originated. He overlooked, for example, Bachofen's firm Christian faith, the subject that would later become central to his disagreements with Baeumler. Klages was a stubborn misreader: he radicalized Bachofen's critique of the West, translating it into an anti-Christian, rather than anti-Catholic, credo that Bachofen would never have accepted. Still, Klages succeeded in making Bachofen necessary reading for opponents of historical causality. It was Bachofen's circular ontology of life symbols, brilliantly illuminated by Klages that interested true connoisseurs of history and collectors of anecdotes. Key thinkers of the 1920s, like Walter Benjamin, kept returning to him long after his death to explain and theorize their own time.

3. Klages—Bernoulli—Benjamin

Klages popularized Bachofen and made his philosophy of symbols relevant to the general German public. If he indeed was the first to make Bachofen a well-known figure among Weimar intellectuals as well,³⁹ then the "Bachofen renaissance" of the mid-1920s owes much to Klages.⁴⁰ Benjamin was evidently uneasy with a process he feared might simplify very complex arguments, but in time he conceded the penetration of Klages's insights and engaged them.⁴¹ Benjamin first mentioned Bachofen in a letter to Gershom

³⁹ "It has been evident for a number of centuries how, in the general consciousness, the thought of death has become less omnipresent and less vivid . . . In the course of the nineteenth century, bourgeois society—by means of medical and social, private and public institutions—realized a secondary effect, which may have been its subconscious main purpose: to enable people to avoid the sight of the dying." Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Selected Writings*, vol. 3:1: 1935-1938 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 151.

⁴⁰ For a short but coherent description of Foucault's notion of biopower and biopolitics, see Chloe Taylor, "Biopower," in *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (Durham, NC: Acumen, 2011), p. 48.

⁴¹ "Heute, glaube ich, geht ein immer starker anwachsendes Raunen durch Millionen und aber Millionen Menschen Seelen . . . eines tiefen Wissens, dass wir in einer der groesten Zeiten und Weltenwende leben, in einer Epoche, die einen bis in die Wurzeln gehenden Umbruch nicht nur auf einigen Gebieten

Scholem in September 1922, no doubt after having read Klages's *Vom kosmogenischen Eros* that had been published a few weeks previously.⁴² In a letter written in February 1923, Benjamin wrote to Klages to request a graphological analysis for a friend but went on to describe the great pleasure he had derived from Klages's book.⁴³ The attention paid to Bachofen's ideas in that book and to its evocation of collective consciousness and mythical time appears to have ignited Benjamin's interest. He featured Bachofen prominently in two essays; in the first, published in *Literarische Welt* in 1926, he critiques Bernoulli and Bachofen:

The book *Kosmogenie der Eros* by this great philosopher and anthropologist—a description which, despite Klages himself, I prefer to the inadequate term “psychologist”—is the first to refer authoritatively to Bachofen's ideas. His book depicts the system of natural and anthropological data that served as the subsoil of the classical cult which Bachofen identifies as the patriarchal religion of “Chthonism” (the cult of the earth and the dead).⁴⁴

Though the essays were ostensibly devoted to Bernoulli's book, Benjamin used them largely as foils for lauding Klages, whose work on Bachofen helped Benjamin to reframe his view of language, images, and life. In Bachofen's words, echoed in Benjamin's texts, “Human language is too feeble to convey all the thoughts aroused by the alteration of life and death and the sublime hopes of the initiate. Only the symbol and the related myth can meet this higher need.”⁴⁵

Eight years after his critique of Bernoulli's book, Benjamin, now exiled in France, published a far more careful analysis of Bachofen's biography and intellectual development, as well as of his legacy and the debates surrounding his revival. Now, in 1934, the mythic subversive potential has been realized, and Bachofen's “method” has been revealed as that which reloads the past with the power of the present: “[I]t consists in

des Daseins, sondern für unser ganzes Lebensgefühl bedeutet.” Alfred Rosenberg, “Der Kampf um die Weltanschauung,” *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, ed. Fritz Reinhardt, p. 5.

⁴² The Reich's minister of education explained on January 15, 1935, that the first priority of the Reich was political education, and he went on to say that “allein die Biologie kann den Begriff der Rasse und Vererbung und die rassistischen Lebensgesetze von der Seite der Tatsachen-Forschung her zwingend entwickeln.” *Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie 1: Schriften über Familie, Volk und Rasse* (Berlin: Zentralverlag der NSDAP/Fritz Eher Verlag, 1938), p. 7.

⁴³ “Fehlt es an einer solchen Erziehung, so entstehen ‘Politiker,’ deren Wesen und Gefahr keiner klarer durchschaut und gezeichnet hat als der Führer des neuen Deutschland, Adolf Hitler. Er hat auch in seiner eigenen Entwicklung ein unumstössliches Vorbild für solche politische Erziehung gegeben.” Hans Gerber, ed., *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934), p. vi.

⁴⁴ “[D]ie Universität . . . muss vielmehr auch den Gehalt der persönlichen Überzeugung bilden.” Ibid.

⁴⁵ “Was aber ist es, was den immer wechselnden Strom des Lebens über die Erde hintreibt?” Ernst Lehmann, “Der Einfluss der Biologie auf unser Weltbild,” in *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934), p. 131.

attributing to the symbol a basic role in ancient thought and life.”⁴⁶ After comparing Bachofen to Goethe and Nietzsche, Benjamin analyzes Bachofen’s place among the radicals:

For Bachofen, the revelation of the image as a message from the land of the dead was accompanied by that of the law as a terrestrial construction, one whose foundations, extending to unexplored depths underground, are formed by the usages and religious customs of the ancient world. The ground plan and indeed the style of this construction were well known, but no one so far had thought of studying its basement. That is what Bachofen set out to do in his magnum opus on matriarchy . . . The mysticism in which Bachofen’s theories culminated, as emphasized by Engels, has been taken to its extreme in the “rediscovery” of Bachofen—a process that has incorporated the clearest elements of the recent esotericism which signally informs German fascism.⁴⁷

Benjamin concludes his essay with a few passages about the George group and Klages:

With Klages, these theories emerged from the esoteric realm to claim a place in philosophy—something that would never have occurred to Bachofen. In *vom kosmogonischen Eros*, Klages sketches the natural and anthropological system of “chthonism.” By giving substance to the mythical elements of life, by snatching them from the oblivion in which they are sunk, says Klages, the philosopher gains access to “primal images” [*Urbilder*]. These images, although claiming to derive from the external world, are nonetheless quite unlike representations of it . . . It is a system that leads nowhere, losing itself in a menacing prophecy that chides humanity for having been led astray by the insinuations of the intellect. Despite its provocative and sinister side, however, this philosophy, through the subtlety of its analyses, the depth of its insights, and the level of its discourse, is infinitely superior to the adaptations of Bachofen attempted by the official exponents of German fascism. Baumler, for example, declares that only Bachofen’s metaphysics are worthy of attention, his historical research being all the more insignificant since even a “scientifically exact work on the origins of humanity . . . would have little to tell us.”⁴⁸

During Benjamin’s career the allusions to Bachofen are very consistent. From 1922 to 1934, references to Bachofen always contain the concept of myth and its contribution to a theory of history, language, and time, mostly seen from the perspective of an

⁴⁶ “Alle biologischen Erfahrungen sprechen dafür, dass dieses Prinzip eine uberragende Rolle im Entwicklungsgeschehen spielt . . . Jedermann weiss nun aus den unzähligen traurigen Büchern der Gegenwart, dass unser deutsches Volk bei der immer starker zuruckgehenden Geburtzahl diesem Grundanspruch der Selektionstheorie nicht mehr gerecht wird. Biopolitisch sind uns die Volker an unserer Ostgrenze durch ihre viel höhere Geburtzahl weitgehend überlegen.” Ibid., p. 138.

⁴⁷ “Kein Zweifel aber auch: Nicht nur in Nordamerika gibt es eine Negerfrage, nicht nur in aller Welt eine Judenfrage u.s.f.-in jedes deutsche Haus ist durch die Arbeit Hans Gunthers die Kenntnis gedrungen von der rassischen Verschiedenheit innerhalb unseres Volkes.” Ibid., p. 139.

⁴⁸ Sheila Faith Weiss, “Pedagogy, Professionalism, and Politics: Biology Instruction during the Third Reich,” in *Science, Technology, and National Socialism*, ed. Monika Renneberg and Mark Weller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 189.

absence, or a “destructive character,” characterizing Bachofen “in terms akin to those which he usually applied to himself.”⁴⁹

As an epilogue to this section, and before returning to the profascist interpretations of Bachofen, one should note that this was not the end of Benjamin’s interest in either Bachofen or Klages. Benjamin’s texts are suffused with allusions to Bachofen and very often to the Klagesian interpretation of his motives. For instance, in 1934, Benjamin named Bachofen as a key to the interpretation of Franz Kafka, no less.⁵⁰ Moreover, between 1935 and 1937 Benjamin tried to convince Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer to finance a book that would sketch a theory of the collective unconscious and fantasy, based on the writings of Klages and Carl Gustav Jung, but undoubtedly also extending the interest the two took in Bachofen. Whereas Adorno accepted the offer (the surviving letters hint that the original idea for the book may have been his), Horkheimer stoutly refused. In his response to Horkheimer, written in 1938, Benjamin acknowledged that Klages’s anti-Semitism put him in the same camp as the anti-Semitic but highly stylized author Louis-Ferdinand Celine, a suggestion that Benjamin may have seen Klages’s anti-Semitism as part of his aesthetic radicalism.⁵¹

The letter Benjamin sent to Horkheimer in March 1937 is the most instructive of this series. At the time, he still hoped to convince Horkheimer that the project had a much wider significance than Klages and Jung. Much like his reading in Bachofen, Benjamin emphasized here his commitment to an alternative science: He argued that such a book would advance the critique of pragmatic history, display the ability of cultural history to describe materialist phenomena, and demonstrate the utter failure of psychoanalysis to grasp this form of critique.⁵² Most crucial here is Benjamin’s attempt to transfer the revolutionary power of *Lebensphilosophie*’s radicalism to his cause as a “negative” power, that is, the source of a pure critique utterly different from the “positive” power of destructive wills. (For Benjamin, destruction meant something very different from what it meant for those Nazi post-Nietzscheans who aped the language of the *Übermensch* without internalizing the critical and ironic spirit—for instance, Alfred Baeumler.⁵³) Yet the intellectual enterprise that both Horkheimer and Scholem found terribly distasteful during the early 1930s continues to disturb many scholars in the present.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 193.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 188.

⁵¹ See James G. Lennox, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Biology: Studies in the Origins of Life Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 129.

⁵² Tobias Schneider has denied that Klages ever subscribed to Nazi anti-Semitism. See Schneider, “Ideologische Grabenkämpfe: Der Philosoph Ludwig Klages und der Nationalsozialismus 1933-1938,” in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 49:2 (2001): 275-294.

⁵³ Hannah Arendt came close to Klages’s claim but with the opposite ideological conclusions; she recognized Aristotle as the creator of a Western *bios politikos*, which she tied to the concepts of *praxis* and *lexis* (speech), the cornerstones of modern democratic politics. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958), pp. 12, 25.

4. Rausch: An ontology of images, 1922

In order to understand the conditions that led to the Bachofen debate during the mid-1920s, one has first to explain the obsession of Klages and his fellow *Lebensphilosophen* with *Rausch* (ecstasy). From Bachofen and Nietzsche to Freud, Klages, Benjamin, and Baeumler, resistance to norms and cultural conventions ensured avoidance of one-way streets and a linear temporality. One popular way to resist was through the focus on ecstasy. Falling back on Goethe and the romantics, Nietzsche took *Rausch* as one of his principal concepts, a thread that united all of his writing, beginning with the theory of Dionysian ecstasy versus Apollonian order in his *Birth of Tragedy* (1872) and still much in evidence in *The Twilight of the Gods* (1889), written in his final year of sanity.⁵⁴ If in the earlier work Nietzsche referred to *Rausch* as a principle of separation—"the separate artistic worlds of dream and *Rausch*, opposed in psychological terms, as between the Apollonian and Dionysian"⁵⁵—in the later work, *Rausch* is a key to the heroic storms of both Dionysus and Apollo, uniting them rather than separating them. In *The Twilight of the Gods*, Nietzsche wrote that "ecstasy is the outcome of all great desires, all strong passions; the ecstasy of the feast, of the arena, . . . the ecstasy of cruelty; the ecstasy of destruction; the ecstasy following upon certain meteorological influences, as for instance that of spring-time, or upon the use of narcotics."⁵⁶ The early romantics presented *Rausch* as the transgression of all limits separating humans from nature or the rest of the universe and focused on the individual experience, whereas the late romanticism epitomized by Nietzsche used the individual as a symbol of a cosmic unity (but not the human collective). For late romantics, *Rausch* swept away all thought of boundaries, even the idea that one might transgress boundaries through a conscious decision. According to Nietzsche, there was nothing conscious, so no choice, about transgression; rather, the forces of existence itself led back into the primordial, the animalistic roots, a prehistoric source, before the birth of modern civilization, before human pains and pleasures were first classified by Socrates and Plato.

In a fragment he had written in 1884 on eternal recurrence, Nietzsche had discussed *Rausch*.

To us, and to nobody else, an all-encompassing gaze is allowed, above all beyond and ignoring [any] end. This gives us a feeling [*Gefühl*] of enormous distance [*ungeheuren Weite*], but also of enormous emptiness [*ungeheuren Leere*] . . . In contrast to this feeling is *Rausch*, that sense that the world as a whole [*ganze Welt*] has been stuffed into us, that our suffering is the bliss of being full beyond repletion. Likewise, time takes on

⁵⁴ Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, in *Samtliche Werke*, vol. 2 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1966), p. 866. This passage first appeared in a much shorter book entitled *Geist und Seele*, which Klages published in 1918; he integrated much of that book into *Der Geist* in 1929.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 867.

⁵⁶ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, Deutsche Literaturarchiv am Marbach (henceforth DLA), Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

the most novel forms when *Rausch* is at the controls. We all know *Rausch*, whether as music or as self-blinding enthusiasm [*Schwarmerei*]; we know that the *Rausch* of tragedy is the cruelty of observation.⁵⁷

In 1895, according to Theodor Lessing's memoirs, Ludwig Klages confessed bitterly: "I [always] failed in love, sympathy, competence to [human] fervor, simple human warmth. For me only one yearning was left: *Rausch* [ecstasy]."⁵⁸ The term, popular in both Nietzsche's and Bachofen's philosophy of living forms, also became a key concept for the Bohemian artists in Schwabing.

Rausch was a popular term among the Schwabing Georgians, but especially for the two principal cosmotheists, Ludwig Klages and Alfred Schuler. It was especially Schuler, the other Bachofen enthusiast among the George circle, who transformed the concept for the purposes of the radical right wing.⁵⁹ Klages's contribution came in 1923, when he, Gustav Willibald Freytag, and Elsa Bruckmann assumed responsibility for the literary legacy of Alfred Schuler, who had never published a word. The interest in Schuler's mysticism was shared by a surprising number of adherents of *Lebensphilosophie*. Among others, Walter Benjamin expressed interest in Schuler and complained after learning that Klages inherited Schuler's *Nachlass*.⁶⁰ Working on Schuler's *Nachlass* doubtless reinforced the chthonic-cosmic perspective Klages had already absorbed from Bachofen. Black suns, cults of "blood beacons" (*Blutleuchte*), and Roman disguises were part of a fantastic world that proceeded according to a strange and imagistic clock. This perspective, and Klages's return to the primordial, made him the darling of the right-wing journals of the time. Like Schuler, Klages never affiliated himself with any political party, though he was certainly sympathetic to some radical groups that worked against the system as a whole. One finds an odd mixture of anar-

⁵⁷ This was the same Bodeschule für Körperziehung München, in Schloss Nymphenburg, still known to many Bavarians: <http://www.bode-schule.de>.

⁵⁸ Bode summarized his philosophy as follows:

1. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind Bewegungen des ganzen Körpers. Niemals beobachten wir eine isolierte Bewegung (Prinzip der *Totalität*).
2. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen verlaufen rhythmische, d.h. sie nehmen ihren Ausgang von den grossen Körpermuskeln . . . (Prinzip der *Rhythmik*).
3. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind aufeinander abgestimmt, so dass bei geringstem Kraftaufwand die grösste Kraftwirkung erzielt wird. Dieser Abstimmung entspricht die Abstimmung im Formverhältnis der Körperteile zueinander (Prinzip der *Form*).
4. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit langsamen Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem entspannten Muskelzustand und münden wieder in diesen (Prinzip der *Entspannung* oder der *Schwere*).
5. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit schnellem Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem Gleichgewichtsverhältnis antagonistischer Muskelspannungen. Die Bewegung entsteht durch Spannung der einen Muskelgruppe und Entspannung der anderen (Prinzip der *Vorbereitung*).

Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁵⁹ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 127.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

chism and reactionary order in his rare political comments of the early 1920s. He was rather singleminded and seems to have been willing to tolerate any political order, so long as it fostered the condition he saw as crucial to any sort of true understanding: *Rausch*.

Vom kosmogenischen Eros fell heavily back on the Nietzschean, Bachofenic, and cosmic adaptation of *Rausch* against social conventions. Its most important innovation was the fusion of Bachofen's neopagan *Rausch* with Nietzsche's eternal recurrence. The rebellion against norms had a very precise meaning, and Klages ascertained that his own contribution to the topic would not be confused with any of the other George followers, who were obsessed with the same concepts and past thinkers. One way to distinguish himself was by rejecting the application of sexuality to the rebellion. Unlike many other members of the George circle, and in contrast to some accusations, most notoriously by Alfred Baeumler, Klages did not identify *Rausch* with open sexuality, nor did he even like sexuality as a concept. (As one commentator argued, even during the heyday of sexual feasts, orgies, and bohemian rebellion, "Klages struck most observers as strikingly clean and honorable in erotic matters."⁶¹) Uniting his personal preferences with his philosophy, Klages attacked the Platonic concept of Eros and with it nothing less than the entire Platonic tradition, whose great crime was the eradication of the ancient cults of Orpheus and Dionysus. The exclusion of such cults implied the rationalization of the drives, or the externalization of sexuality, by separating it from other forms of *Rausch*. Klages tried to reunite and realign the gap, first made apparent in Bachofen's work.

The concept of *Rausch*, quite unimportant in Klages's earlier period, became the organizing principle of *Vom kosmogenischen Eros*.⁶² For Klages, *Rausch* is a state of utterly unmediated experience, basically a state of ecstasy. In contrast to the Platonic Eros, or the modern concepts of ego and id, it was a concept that resisted systems and structures. Klages opened his book with a key argument from Freud's *Totem and Taboo* (1912-1913) and *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921). Like Freud, Klages insisted that the distinction between love and Eros was basic to understanding a group's identity.⁶³ In more radical terms than Freud's distinction in *Civilization and Its Discontents*,

Klages presented Eros as opposed to the Platonic abstraction of love and the later Christian *Karitas* (charity, compassion), that is to say, *agape*, love of the poor, evangelic love, love of the neighbor—all of these he saw as different forms of manipulation. All

⁶¹ "Hitlerrummel mit allem Tamtam eingesetzt." Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, April 2, 1927, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 47.

⁶² Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, December 13, 1930, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 5. See also Erich von Ludendorff, *Weltkrieg droht auf deutschem Boden: Broschur* (Munich: Faksimile-Verlag, 1931).

⁶³ For the first, see the analysis of Laure Guilbert, *Danser avec le IIIe Reich: les danseurs modernes sous le nazisme* (Brussels: Complexe, 2000), p. 152. For the latter, see Rudolf Bode, *Angriff und Gestaltung* (Berlin: Widukind Verlag, 1939).

of those forms of love were opposed to the drives and intuitions that had dominated men's minds before the time of Christ. Eros (here equals *Rausch*) was identified with its pre-Platonic form, namely, a tribal rite, clearly recognizable in the state of trance that united the group in an unmitigated way. It was erotic, but it did not serve the libido. "It is this keen sensitivity," Klages wrote,

erotic in nature, to the unthinkable richness of colors, sounds, and smells, that conveys to us the wonders of Eros. In *Rausch* this wonder is fully realized, introducing the soul carrier to the essential image of the soul of the world . . . in his [i.e., the soul carrier's] eyes; only in the erotic *Rausch* does one achieve total emancipation.⁶⁴

To ground his theory, Klages quoted from many myths and archeological findings. The mythical lineage of Eros, he pointed out, was "taken from the cosmogenic, which focuses on Eros and ends in the mythical teaching of the Orphic, in which the most important is Chronos, whose time never matures [*nimmeralternde Zeit*]."⁶⁵ Here, a moment before the ancient world of images was eradicated by modern civilization, Chronos was the angel of time, not the angel of history. The distinction is that between ontology and epistemology, cosmology and the human *cogito*, eroticism (and *Rausch*) and the "mechanic" libido.

The most important aspect of *Vom kosmogenischen Eros* is its description of the relationship between the ancient cults and modern phenomena. Klages organized his presentation around two spatial concepts, *Fern* (distance) and *Nah* (nearness), both of which would be central to the theory of time—not space—which he articulated in his later work, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*.⁶⁶ In Greek mythology, Eros was the creator of the world: his epithet emphasized his nearness—*Eros der Nahe*.⁶⁷ As John McCole has pointed out, this vocabulary was the origin for Walter Benjamin's work on "tactical nearness," explicitly confronting Klages's nearness: "Benjamin recast Klages's pathic passivity of dreams as an inability to maintain perceptual distance."⁶⁸ Indeed, Klages concluded that in *Rausch* and in dreams, since Hellenic times, and "thanks to Eros, all gazes involved nearness."⁶⁹ In other words, the principle of Eros

⁶⁴ "Das Ziel ist: Die . . . Bewegung hervorgehen zu lassen aus der Instinktiven Sicherheit in der Erzeugung natürlicher Bewegung, wie sie jedes Tier und auf jedes körperlich unverdorbene Kind hat." Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁶⁵ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, p. 128.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, February 6, 1941, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8373, letter no. 17.

⁶⁸ For Bode and his role see also Tobias Schneider, "Ideologische Grabenkämpfe," pp. 283-284.

⁶⁹ "Denn theoretisch habe ich immer und immer betont, dass die einseitige Unterjochung des Körpers unter die Gewalt des Geistes, genannt 'Körperherrschaft,' die Gefahr einer Verflachung und Verneuerung des Seelischen in sich birgt, denn alle Zweckhaftigkeit ist zielstrebig und nur in einseitig eingeengten Bahnlängen vollzieht sich der 'Störunglose' Ablauf der Bewegung . . . Dieses verläuft aber nicht in zielstrebrigen Bahnen, sondern in rhythmischen! Und praktisch habe ich das Übermass der Zielstrebigkeit bekämpft, indem ich die Schwindung, jenes geheime Vibrieren, das den Menschen nicht nur mit dem Menschen, sondern auch mit aller Natur verbindet." Rudolf Bode, "Körpererziehung und Kultur," in *Der*

or the praxis of *Rausch* enabled the overcoming of the limits of space and erasing it. Klages's space did not refer to the Freudian psychoanalytical space, the one of ego and its attraction to other egos. Rather, space as the subcategory of movement in time (eternal and recurrent flow) expressed the body politic, much closer to the Foucauldian "body site."⁷⁰ *Rausch* and ancient cosmological Eros enabled one to acknowledge the political space and erase it simultaneously.

Endowing Eros and *Rausch* with the ability to form unconventional connections between time and space had both political and social effects. Take the concept of *oikos* (house), for example. The Greeks, who invented these conceptions, became—according to Klages— "conscious of *oikos*" (*Oikobewusstsein*), that is, conscious of the "economy of the house," the sociopolitical identity of the group.⁷¹ Klages pointed out that, in contrast to how we came to think of the household, the sources of modern economy and its expensive lust for all spheres—private and public—began in the *polis* before the spheres were separated, in its mythical notion of Eros and *Rausch*.⁷² The notion of *Rausch* did not separate the individual from the collective, the private from the public. It offered, beyond the living experience of individual ecstasy, a unity of time that connected people on a mythic-primordial basis.

Klages's notion of the *oikos* was a Bachofenic one. In his view, the earlier separation of the private and public spheres was the root of all evil, occupying the heart of Western metaphysics. Ancient images of body cults disappeared in the private household in the *polis*. All we were left with, according to Klages, were disturbed images of nucleus unity that only implied their earlier primordial origins. Only the Bachofenic unpacking of the image of the *oikos* permitted humanity to recognize those primordial images woven into the fabric of its everyday life and to link the birth of private and public into a first ur-image of the West. And here came the crux of the matter: In contrast to the private Greek household, "in ancient Germania, one used to wish the trees 'Good morning' every day, or one cordially informed them of the death of the master of the

Rhythmus, Zeitschrift für gymnastische Erziehung Mitteilungen des Bodebundes 5:3 (July-September 1927): 99.

⁷⁰ "[Die] höchste Offenbarung . . . zum Grundprinzip aller körperlichen Bildung machte und dessen Wiedererweckung als das eigentliche pädagogische Problem der Gegenwart aufstellte." Ibid.

⁷¹ "Alle Bewegungen müssen sich von innen entladen als rhythmischgeformte, in dem Sinn, dass die Bewegung von einem Zentrum aus auf den ganzen Körper überstrahlt." Rudolf Bode, "Die Bedeutung der körperlichen Bewegung für die Erneuerung der deutschen Kultur," *Rhythmus* 13, pp. 286-293. See also Norbert Hopster and Ulrich Nassen, *Literatur und Erziehung im Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1983), p. 53.

⁷² "Unsere Aufgabe als Hochschullehrer ist es, sie zu gestalten: eine neue Erkenntnislehre, eine neue Ethik, die Wissenschaft der uns artgemässen totalen Lebensordnung unseres Volkes." Hans Lohr, "Wesen und Sinn der nationalsozialistischen Akademie des NSD-Dozentenbundes der Christian-Albrechts-Universität," in *Kieler Blätter*, no. 1 (1938): 40. Quoted in Monika Leske, *Philosophen im "Dritten Reich", Studie zu Hochschulkund Philosophiebetrieben im faschistischen Deutschland* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1990), p. 81.

house.”⁷³ In other words, the private sphere extended into raw nature. Politics belonged to storytelling. Ancient Germania offered a vision that classical cultures had all but forgotten about and suppressed, even in the form of collective memory.

The primal images, the images of the household, of the primordial *Heimat* (homeland) made possible the flow of time. Eros, which the Greeks depicted as the drive (*Trieb*) to draw close, was transformed into a dynamic sketch of time, the “firestorm of dancing stars.”⁷⁴ Drives and primal images were only different names, in Klages’s eyes, for cosmological time.

5. Klages—Baeumler—Bachofen

Two years after the publication of his Eros book, in 1924, Klages collaborated with Bernoulli on *Johann Jakob Bachofen als Religionsforscher* (Johann Jakob Bachofen as a researcher of religion), in which passages from Bachofen’s writings were presented and critically examined.⁷⁵ In 1925 Bernoulli and Klages edited a new edition of Bachofen’s *Versuch über die Grabersymbolik der Alten* (Interpretation of ancient mortuary symbols), and in 1926 they published a collection of Bachofen’s writings under the title *Johann Jakob Bachofen: Urreligion und antike Symbole* (Johann Jakob Bachofen: Primal religion and ancient symbols). In one of his last letters to Bernoulli that year, Klages mentioned a newly published collection of Bachofen texts, one published by others, “a work born out of resentment, drawn up by the firm of Baeumler and Schroter, which deserves to be rapped on the edge of the knuckles.” Klages planned a thorough critique of this work but never followed through.⁷⁶ In his introduction to Bachofen’s *Grabersymbolik der Alten*, Klages had presented his own study of Eros as an extension of Bachofen’s terms and theories. Bachofen examined “the whole prehistory of the West from the perspective of the conflict between *matriarchy* and *patriarchy*,” said Klages, applauding Bachofen for retracing “the primal religion, whose social forms, whose legal concepts, whose morals, and whose depiction of the gods were contradicted by every conviction of those who championed rationality throughout the history of the world [*Weltgeschichte*]!”⁷⁷

It is not easy to historicize an absence, to construct a history of an intellectual movement that keeps referring to an invisible point of destruction and pure violence.

⁷³ “Sprache ist nicht bloss aussere Form, gute Sprache nicht Schmuck des Lebens, sondern Ausdruck der volkischen Denkform und Denkweise. Darum bedeutet Zucht der Sprache zugleich Zucht des Denkens und des Charakters.” Ernst Krieck, *Dichtung und Erziehung* (Leipzig: ArmanenVerlag, 1941), p. 147.

⁷⁴ “Die Sprachgesetz des Volkes . . . seiner besonderen *Lebensaufgaben* und seines eigentümlichen *Lebenssinns* kommt.” Ernst Krieck, *Die Wirklichkeit*, vol. 1 of *Volkisch-politische Anthropologie* (Leipzig: Armanen, 1936), p. 39 (emphases in the original).

⁷⁵ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 231, 238.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁷⁷ Ernst Cassirer, *Zur Metaphysik der symbolischen Formen, Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1995), p. 24.

But even absences have their own *Urgeschichte* (primordial history), and for Klages and Bachofen the source predated Western culture. Signs of what preceded the logic of the Greeks were buried in the destruction of Rome and in its ruins. Bachofen saw his past and his future embedded in a language of ruins, where death and fallen buildings were the best markers of great political power. This language of myths and ruins made Bachofen appealing for theoreticians of fascism. Wilhelm Reich, for example, repeated Bachofen's observations about mythical power and ruins in his *Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933): "Like the ruins of Rome, [modern monuments] suggest only that a necessary end is appointed to all things human . . . [T]hese ruins recall the strength rather than the weakness of mankind."⁷⁸ For Bachofen a vocabulary of traces and myths was embedded in the structural principle of oppositions, ideally presented in ancient myths. As Reich shows, such radical rethinking of the tradition changed the very understanding of life: "[The] product of a cultural period in which life had not yet broken away from the harmony of nature, it [life] shares with nature that unconscious lawfulness which is always lacking in the works of free reflection."⁷⁹ Bachofen's close readings of ancient symbols of myth and death, matriarchy and the cultural unconscious, made him a celebrated figure in the Weimar republic.

From the ranks of *Lebensphilosophers* two groups took up Bachofen in the 1920s and offered readings of his work that were sharply at odds. Ludwig Klages and Alfred Baeumler were identified as the leaders of the two camps.⁸⁰ Klages and Bernoulli read Bachofen through Klages's theory of images and the mystical writings of Schuler, and they were particularly interested in Bachofen's studies of prehistoric symbols and their value for a cultural critique. Klages saw Bachofen, as he did Nietzsche, as a critic of Western ethics who had subjected the JudeoChristian tradition to a radical challenge. Bachofen was an aesthete and a semiotician rather than a social or political thinker. In his introduction to *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*, the book that was dedicated to Bachofen, Klages announced clearly: "We are not pursuing any 'folklorist' goals, but, rather, so to speak, we are trying to protect an 'example from life,' [protecting it] from reality, mind you, and to enrich [it] with some drawn lines . . . [we] have laid the foundation: the theory of the reality of images [*die Lehre von der Wirklichkeit der Bilder*]."⁸¹

The Baeumler camp rejected Klages and Bernoulli's interpretation and inserted Bachofen's religious and political ideas into a historical context. As we can see when

⁷⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 26.

⁷⁹ Peter E. Gordon, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 75.

⁸⁰ Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 53.

⁸¹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 33, 39.

reviewing the details of his thought, Baeumler interpreted reality in more traditional terms, which he used in turn to criticize conventional norms.

Alfred Baeumler was born in 1887 in Neustadt, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Sudeten, to a deeply Catholic family.⁸² He studied in Bonn, Berlin, and Munich, first with the art historian Heinrich Wölfflin, and then with the philosophers Oswald Kulpe, Max Dessoir, and Alois Riehl. He arrived in Munich in the winter of 1908, shortly after the conflict between Klages and the George circle and during the heyday of Klages's psychodiagnostic seminars. Baeumler received his doctorate in Kantian philosophy in 1914 under the direction of Max Dessoir and Oswald Kulpe, two commentators on Kant and on folk psychology. Both were interested in experimental psychology: Dessoir took an active interest in Klages's seminars on "psychodiagnostics" during the early 1900s, and Kulpe gained experience in experimental and folk psychology while studying with Wilhelm Wundt.⁸³ While working on his dissertation, Baeumler was also on the staff of the *feuilleton* (cultural supplement) of the daily *Frankfurter Zeitung*, the same liberal supplement that Siegfried Kracauer would edit during the 1920s. After the outbreak of World War I Baeumler was drafted into the German army. He served from 1915 to 1918 as an infantryman and an officer, and later fought in the east with the *Freikorps*, refusing to put down his weapon even after the formal announcement of the German defeat. Between 1920 and 1922 he worked for the elitist Kantian journal *KantStudien*, directed at the time by the leading neo-Kantian and chairman of the Kant Society, Arthur Liebert.

How does one shift from Kant to Nazi philosophy? Reviving the prehistory of the philosophical principle, via Bachofen, could offer a possible answer. The timing of the change, as we shall see, fits as well. In May 1924 Baeumler submitted his *Habilitation*, a continuation of his dissertation about Kant, to the Technical University in Dresden, and received his first formal position as a professor at the pedagogical institute of the university. In 1926 he edited with Manfred Schroter—concurrent with their work on the *Handbuch der Philosophie* (1926-1934)—a collection of Bachofen's texts, published as *Der Mythos von Orient und Occident: Eine Metaphysik der alten Welt* (The myth of the Orient and Occident: A metaphysics of the ancient world). As Tilitzki describes it, Baeumler shifted from Bachofen to the nationalization of Nietzsche, and became well known due to his popular *Nietzsche, der Philosoph und Politiker*, that "broke with the Nietzsche tradition and, not without winning much critical attention, promoted a 'fascist' adaptation of the works."⁸⁴ Baeumler's lengthy introduction to Bachofen, over 200 pages long, made him a celebrated public intellectual in Germany; among those prais-

⁸² Oliver A. I. Botar, "Raoul France and National Socialism: A Problematic Relationship," a paper given to the Fifth International Congress of Hungarian Studies, Jyväskylä, Finland, 2011, p. 8. I thank Professor Botar for sharing this unpublished paper with me.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁴ Rene Romain Roth, *Raoul H. France and the Doctrine of Life* (Bloomington, Ind.: First Books Library, 2000), p. 176. France is also known as the inventor of the concept of biotechnology, which he identified with "the study of living and life-like systems" (p. 109).

ing him for the introduction was Thomas Mann.⁸⁵ In 1929 Baeumler was appointed a full professor of philosophy and pedagogy at Dresden University, where he would meet, among others, Victor Klemperer, and in 1931 he began assisting Alfred Rosenberg in shaping the new culture and ideology (Kampfbundes für deutsche Kultur, KfDK) of the Nazi party. Baeumler formally became a member of the Nazi party in 1933, and in 1934 he was appointed director of the Office of Science in Alfred Rosenberg's office. Among other things, in 1933 he wrote a report rejecting "the assumption that Klages has, in any way, prepared the way for National Socialism [as he argues]."⁸⁶

His mid-1920s analyses of Bachofen mark a turn in his career, moving from neo-Kantianism to *Lebensphilosophie*. This change was accompanied by a growing interest in politics and in the potential political uses of both history, which Baeumler identified with myth, and a certain simultaneity of past and present.

In many ways, Baeumler's interpretation of Bachofen—"the great mystery of life as the consciousness of the people is always present"—led to more radical political implications than did Klages's and Bernoulli's readings, but it relied on a more conventional methodology.⁸⁷ Baeumler's growing interest in Bachofen occurred the same year that he established his journal, the *Handbuch der Philosophie*. His carefully contextualized and highly analytical close readings used Bachofen's writings to polarize Western civilization between the Orient and the Occident. In Baeumler's view, Bachofen had described a clash of civilizations that influenced religion, race, and cultures. Baeumler's careful and scholastic interpretation often failed to strike the sparks that fly from the pages Klages and Bernoulli devoted to Bachofen, but it was much more coherent and organized. His chronology advanced and analyzed Bachofen's anthropological research of the death cult as a metaphysical system of presence and preservation that consecrated myths "as the power of the mood of death" [*Macht der Todesstimmung*].⁸⁸ "Bachofen," he wrote, "did not historicize the myth. Quite the contrary: he mythologized history."⁸⁹ A true depiction of history, according to this view, could not distance

⁸⁵ Botar's paper traces the explicit references to France's work among the artistic avant-garde of the 1920s, among them well-known names such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Fritz Neumeyer, Mies van der Rohe, and El Lissitzky.

⁸⁶ Oliver A. I. Botar, "Defining Biocentrism," in *Biocentrism and Modernism*, ed. Oliver A. I. Botar and Isabel Wunsche (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 17-18.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 32.

⁸⁸ "Rosenberg contra Klages," see John Claverely Cartney, web-page editor, "The Biocentric Metaphysics of Ludwig Klages" in <http://www.revilo-oliver.com> (accessed July 16, 2012), quoted in *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁸⁹ "Deshalb ist es kein Zufall, wenn auch unsere Einigung in das Jahr der nationalsozialistischen Erhebung fällt: Erst heute beginnt unsere praktische Wirksamkeit möglich und auch nötig zu werden . . . Der Schwerpunkt der NSDAP läuft wesentlich auf politischem Gebiet, die Ziele unseres Forschungskreises berühren die religiöse Sphäre. Infolge der gemeinsamen weltnanschaulichen Grundlage haben wir die Verpflichtung, die wirkliche Radikalität der nationalen Revolution dort zu wahren, wo der Politiker Vermittlungen sucht. Die staatliche Macht ist verpflichtet, dem kulturellen Aufbau Schutz zu gewahren, denn ohne ihn entbehrt sie ihres Inhaltes und überhaupt ihres Lebensrechtes." Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Konv.: Prosa.

the dead. When present in memory, they were more alive than any passive living being could be. German romanticism returned to Greece and Rome, Baeumler argued, in order to save the dead from oblivion.⁹⁰ Any countervailing attempt at depicting history would reflect “a cold scientific culture” that resists the mother “who gives life but also death—she is the embodiment of fate; the word ‘nature’ means to the romantics the same thing as fate.”⁹¹ Therefore, Bachofen’s myth “reflect[ed] the law of life” [*spiegelt ein Lebensgesetz*] and its constant exchange with the cult of the dead.⁹² This unity, in turn, “illustrates the experiences of the people [*Volkserlebnisse*] in light of its religious belief.”⁹³ Provoked by Klages’s strong anti-Christian reading of both Bachofen and Nietzsche, Baeumler’s project can be read, to a large extent, as an anti-Klagesian the-

⁹⁰ Wolfgang Olshausen, “Ludwig Klages in Berlin, 1933,” unnumbered manuscript in the “Prosa” section, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages,

⁹¹ On this group, see *Hestia: Jahrbuch der Klages-Gesellschaft 1967/1969* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1971). The work is described as “lectures on the theme of language and its importance in the work of Ludwig Klages” and includes articles by Hans Eggert Schroder, Albert Wellek, Heinz Alfred Mueller, Hans Kasdorf, Francoise Wiersma-Verschaffelt, and Otto Huth. On Hirt’s research see also the court sitting at Nuremberg that took place July 29 to August 8, 1946, at <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/tgmwc/tgmwc-20/tgmwc-20-198-04.shtml>.

⁹² “(1) Der Mensch gehört den beiden Reichen des Lebens und des Geistes an. Folgt er den idealistischen oder materialistischen Gesetzen des Geistes, dient er der logozentrischen, -setzt er die Mächte des Lebens als letzten Wert, dient er der *biozentrischen* Weltanschauung. Durch diese Entscheidung wird die Substanz des Menschen in ihrer *Existenz* und in ihrer Entwicklung bestimmt. (2) Mit besonderer Absicht verwenden wir die von Ludwig Klages geprägten Begriffe. In Klages erblicken wir den bedeutendsten Verkünder einer *Lebensphilosophie*, deren Unterströmung in die vorchristliche, germanische Zeit reicht . . . Gewiss mögen uns unter den lebenden Philosophen auch andere Namen bedeutungsvoll geworden sein, -kein Name besitzt eine Leuchtkraft wie derjenige *Klages*’. (3) Nie werden wir den zivilisatorischen Verfall unserer Kultur durch den Einfluss von *pseudo-radikalen* . . . durch den Einfluss von Ressentimentsgetriebenen Politikern ertragen. (4) Die selbstgeschaffene Bergung innerhalb einer Kulturgemeinschaft verlangt, die sich auf eine feste Hierarchie der Lebenswerte gründet, d.h. Blut- und Landschaftszusammenhang als Wurzeln unsrer Existenz anerkennt, -und entscheidendes Vertrauen auf die letzten bildenden Mächte des *Menschen*: Das Wunder, die Liebe, das Vorbild gesetzt. (H. Prinzhorn gibt in seiner *Persönlichkeitspsychologie* [1932] die eindringlichste Zusammenfassung einer biozentrischen Wirklichkeitslehre vom Menschen.) (5) Als allgemein verbindliche *Methode* unserer Forschung kann das hinweisende oder symbolische Denken bezeichnet werden. In den Ergebnissen der *Charakterologie*, die vor allen auf diesen Erkenntnisweg angewiesen ist, erblicken wir die Bedingung für eine notwendige Gesundung unseres Wirklichkeitssinn es . . . Hierbei sind wir davon überzeugt, dass unsere wissenschaftlichen Möglichkeiten weniger im atomisierten Spezialistentum, als *zwischen* den Einzeldisziplinen liegen.” “Der Arbeits-Kreis für biozentrische Forschung (AKBF),” in DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Prosa, unpublished manuscripts (all emphases in the original).

⁹³ “Für das ihm innewohnende Vermögen der Wandlung und Erneuerung. Endlich waren wir solcher Art Physiognomiker, aber in einem tieferen Sinne als dem bisher mit dem Worte durchweg verbundenen. Wir fragen nicht mehr in erster Linie: welcher Vorgang folgt auf welchen andern? Sondern wir fragen . . . welche Lebensregungen *erscheinen* in ihnen? . . . Beharrung bedeutet zugleich Wiederholung; und aufgrund der Annahme von *Widerholungen des Gleichen* wird die Welt vom Geiste rechnerisch bewältigt. Allein die Wirklichkeit geht nur über jede von der Rechnung erreichte Dezimele unendlich hinaus.” Ludwig Klages to Carl Haebler, January 10, 1935, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61/5117, letter no. 1 (emphases in the original).

sis. Baeumler expresses his resistance to Klages in different forms, mocking all “erotic cosmologies” as overtly aestheticized euphemisms for religious contents. At the end of Baeumler’s long introduction to the book, he expresses his strong resistance in two of the most detailed footnotes:

Bernoulli’s book on Bachofen, because of his inspiration and flowing collection of material not unsympathetic, is in all essential matters an extension and reflection of the Klagesian misinterpretation . . . Klages interprets the idea of motherhood as the development of the mother from the female, the egg from the mother, and the living cell from the egg . . . Modern interpretation can be characterized by this marked descent from the sphere of historical-religious symbols into an area of “biological” and “sexual” problems! Bachofen sees nothing remotely sexual in motherhood because he has always located the mother within the female and the female within the mother.⁹⁴

6. Why Bachofen? Bios, myth, and Rausch

Bachofen’s ideas possess many of the traits that Hannah Arendt later identified with totalitarian systems, most significantly the components of *bios* and life: “the individual life, a pu>g [bios] with a recognizable life-story from birth to death, rises out of biological life, Zorq [z6e].”⁹⁵ Arendt emphasizes the open nature of totality and action, the essential tools of all totalitarian systems—first and foremost, a terminology (life and death, existence and elimination) and its accompanying timeline (bursting out of terrestrial life and death to a preexisting moment of unity).⁹⁶ Arendt’s pre-Foucauldian observation, intellectually alluring but more intuitive than systematic, needs to be better situated within the context and vocabulary of the system she was observing. Benjamin, Klages, and Baeumler were able to give it a more distinctive face when referring to Bachofen during the 1920s. All three were following the most fundamental opposition of existence, life and death, in order to radicalize it and then reload it—once radicalized—back into the everyday life.

Bachofen’s theory, Benjamin commented, was a radical attempt to aestheticize life through the ancient principle of the “alternation between bright and dark colors, which expresses the constant transition from darkness to light and from death to life. This alternation shows us that tellurium-like creation is the result of an eternal becoming

⁹⁴ Christian Eckle, “Erbcharakterologische Zwillingsuntersuchungen,” in *Beiheft zur Zeitschrift angewandte Psychologie und Charakterkunde*, ed. Otto Klemm and Phillip Lersch (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth Verlag, 1939), p. 11.

⁹⁵ Julius Deussen, *Klages Kritik des Geistes, mit 7 Figuren und einer monographischen Bibliographie Ludwig Klages und einer Bibliographie der biozentrischen Literatur der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1934).

⁹⁶ A. Abbott, “German Science Begins to Cure Its Historical Amnesia,” *Nature* 403 (2000): 474–475; William E. Seidelman, “Science and Inhumanity: The Kaiser-Wilhelm/Max Planck Society,” *Not Now: An Electronic Journal* 2 (Winter 2000), <http://www.baycrest.org/journal/ifnot01w.html> (accessed February 12, 2013).

and decay, as its never-ending movement between two opposite poles.”⁹⁷ Benjamin saw Bachofen as one of those who had succeeded “in isolating [historical] symbols . . . and through them penetrating to the depths of primal religions and cults,” developing the notion of internal *Rausch* (ecstasy, enthusiasm) so important to Benjamin during the mid-1920s.⁹⁸ As Klages taught in his *Cosmogenic Eros*, reconstituting a notion of life on the basis of Bachofen’s *Rausch* would enable the reconfiguration of time and space in modernity. Both Benjamin and Baeumler followed that advice, striving to reach as radical a result as possible. But how does Bachofen create the condition of possibility for this extreme challenge?

Bachofen felt that in order to grasp the organic and biological nature of being (*Dasein*), one had to eliminate the modern dichotomy between history and myth, external rationalization and internal intuition: “[T]oday’s historical research in its one-dimensionality excludes everything but the determination of events, personalities, and temporal relations [*Zeitverhältnisse*], and it has set up an opposition between historical and mythical time that rejects a deeper and contextual understanding. Whenever we engage with history, the conditions of the earlier *Dasein* are asserted: the absence of a beginning in favor of a continuation, the absence of a pure cause in favor of an effect.”⁹⁹ History, in other words, suppresses only the *beginning*, the legendary origins of life, and ignores its own preconditions and presumptions, its earlier *Dasein*. If true, then history is much better in touching death than life.

Bachofen anticipated the modern antihistoricism and return of mythical symbolism, generally expressed in terms of dichotomies. After unearthing a radical structuralism, he eradicated it. Although essentially conservative, he contributed to the idea of a new historical dialectic by criticizing the linearity of historicism. (As Benjamin emphasized, Friedrich Engels had acknowledged Bachofen’s strong influence.¹⁰⁰) Bachofen’s research focused on the pre-Christian funerary cults, and he insisted on a fundamental change in the perception of primordial life and death after Christ. According to Benjamin, Bachofen tried to show how modern metaphysics and its political incarnation labored to suppress primal forces.¹⁰¹ An alternative, from that perspective, would be the recalibration of the whole relationship between the two poles and their temporal order and organization (the relation of body to time, as Bergson calls it).¹⁰²

Classic historiography of German nationalism has traditionally drawn lines that link late romantic aestheticism with twentieth-century nationalism.¹⁰³ Yet those inspired by

⁹⁷ Julius Deussen to Joachim Haupt, July 11, 1933, DLA, Nachlass Julius Deussen, doc. no. 7, file 6.

⁹⁸ Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 2007), p. 19.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁰ Petra Gehring, *Was ist Biomacht? Vom zweifelhaften Mehrwert des Lebens* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2006), p. 222 (emphases in original).

¹⁰¹ Agamben, *The Open*, p. 37.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

¹⁰³ Samuel Weber, “Bare Life and Life in General,” in *Gray Room* 46 (Winter 2012), p. 20. Sam Weber’s article is an exceptionally precise analysis of the concept of “bare life.” However, in contrast to

late mythical thinking, as shown in the case of Bachofen's followers, were drawn to it often because of its opposition to authoritarian views. Bachofen had boldly declared his opposition to the Prussian state and its accompanying institutions, particularly the legal system and schools, whose jurists and faculty members he identified as the state's servants. As an alternative to the decadence of Prussian rationalism and its vaunted technology, Bachofen praised ancient Rome.¹⁰⁴ All of the attributes of the Prussian state that Bachofen most disliked were embodied in a single figure. As Lionel Gossman and Andreas Cesana have shown, from the publication of his *Roman History* in 1854 Theodor Mommsen "was the object of the passionate and enduring hatred" of Bachofen, who saw him as "the fawning servant of power."¹⁰⁵ Nietzsche, who became acquainted with Bachofen during his time in Basel, joined him in his resistance to historicism in general, and to Mommsen and the Prussian system in particular.¹⁰⁶

Hence, for those who imagine that a conservative tradition leading from myths through romanticism into a modern nationalist ideology came to exist in linear fashion, the Bachofen-Nietzsche-Klages perspective presents an enigma. How to explain a rejection of the state and a critique of the dominant culture (historical, social, and political) that led to a vocabulary of limitless power? The question hurls us back to Klages.

In a series of unpublished lectures dedicated to Bachofen and delivered from the early 1920s to the early 1930s, Klages presented Bachofen as a radical theoretician of historical time.¹⁰⁷ Both Benjamin and Baeumler followed this emphasis, even if each construed it according to his own social or political views. Klages believed that Bachofen's determination to historicize the mother cult, and its attendant cultural habits, grew out of a desire to question modernity in general and nineteenth-century historicism in particular. Pre-Christian cultures, according to this view, had not been condemned to view life through the distorting prism of historical chronology. In Bachofen's matriarchal society, women had no commitment to the family structure nor

my analysis of *Lebensphilosophie*, Weber's stress falls on the weight given to *life* and *death* within the antinomian relationship, in a post-Paulinian context, rather than the immanentization of death within life as a secularized form.

¹⁰⁴ "Schon beim stillen Nachsprecher dieser Worter durfte den Lesern und Leserinnen klar werden, dass die deutsche Volkerkunde seit 1945 ein terminologisches Problem hat." Thomas Hauschild, "'Dem lebendigen Geist,' Warum die Geschichte der Volkerkunde im 'Dritten Reich' auch fur Nichtethnologen von Interesse sein kann," in *Lebenslust und Fremdenfurcht, Ethnologie im Dritten Reich*, ed. Thomas Hauschild (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995), p. 22.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁰⁶ "Die Kraft korperhaften Sehens und Erfassen lasst sich entfalten . . . Der Wille, aus klarer Erkenntnis das Eigene, das Lebendig-Eigene aus eigenem Willen zu wirken, scheint mir ein Kennzeichen unserer Gegenwart und mehr noch ein Anzeichen und Vorzeichen der Zukunft zu sein." Hans Gunther, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, vol. 1 (Munich: Lehmann Verlag, 1939), p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ "Aus einem Zeitalter der Not heraus wollten viele Denker der 30er Jahre die Zeit als solche besiegen und sich auf ewig in einer heilen, erlosten Menschheit fortzeugen." Ibid., p. 19.

to any social institution larger than the biological unit of reproduction. They were permitted to marry more than one man and even to marry their husband's brother.

The authority of men, by contrast, brought only harm, namely, Western morality and linearity. Addressing a topic that was close to his heart and his life, Klages commented, "The father is not recognized [as an authority] and the concept of fatherhood is a mere fiction."¹⁰⁸ A social system different from that of the modern era could only exist when ideas about time also differed markedly from those of the twentieth century; to Klages, who himself wrote a *Kritik der Kritik*, "Bachofen saw history as a process of criticizing the critique."¹⁰⁹ In Klages's reading of Bachofen, history was something very different from life, even opposed to life, a negative view that needed to be eradicated. The proof was that potency [*Potenz*], the result of active life, "falls victim to history."¹¹⁰ During a time when it was widely assumed that history and progress were inextricably linked, Bachofen dissented (according to Klages), seeing history in terms of the human heart, symbol, image, or an inclination toward the creation of narratives: "The real and ideal elements of tradition are not contiguous, but rather lie within each other . . . so that never a real, but only a spiritual, truth can be attained for the history of the past." This, Klages summarized, "is not the historical truth, but the myth."¹¹¹ Klages differentiated positive critics (Bachofen, Nietzsche) from negative critics (modern analysts). Whereas the former tried to radicalize current and past reality in order to find its soul, memory, and the accompanying hermeneutic principle, the latter tried to rationalize the near past, and in that way distance itself from its own dead. Bachofen showed, in contrast, that in the Orphic tradition the tendency to think in terms of the future was the consecration of death.

The cult of the past is that of the dead, . . . and here I come to the crucial point: it is the cult of eternity . . . On both sides of death lies a zone of changeless being . . . and in the eternity confirmed by death . . . It is the early heathen. For this, eternity lies in life, and not beyond life on the level of being.¹¹²

Klages's rehabilitation of Bachofen (and Carus, as will be shown in the next chapter) made him the champion of lost romantic souls and a modern interpreter of counternarratives. If he also championed Nietzsche it was to present him as the true discoverer of the unconscious and an heir to late romanticism.¹¹³ Klages elevated these figures in order to lower the status of Freud, or other modern and progressive thinkers, whose rational and technical narrative rudely divorced spirit from soul. Truth had taken a

¹⁰⁸ "Der Gedanke der kraftvollen und lustvollen Eroberung der Zukunft, aber auch die Sorge um eine als 'krank' und bedroht empfundene Gegenwart ist Reich und Gunther, oder auch: Marcuse und Junger, Adorno und Klages gemeinsam. Gemeinsam ist vielen Denkern der 30er Jahre auch die Bindung ihres Denkens an Motive der Lebenslust . . . die Suche nach einem naturwuchsigem Ursprung, zu dem zurückzukehren gilt." Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 43.

¹¹² Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einführung*, p. 31.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 40.

long sabbatical after the deaths of Bachofen and Nietzsche, Klages argued, but the sabbatical was over, and it was time to get back to work. The dark and heavy shields that had long concealed the *Urgeschichte* (primordial history) of modernity had fallen.

7. Politicizing Bachofen: The Bachofen Debate, 1925-1926

In 1925, while Klages and Bernoulli issued their *Bachofenia*, the two camps—the Klages camp and the Baeumler camp—started a debate that would become crucial for those interested in *Lebensphilosophie* in general and its Nazification in particular. The origins of the most important confrontation over Bachofen’s ideas are described in a letter Klages wrote to Rudolf Bode in 1925.¹¹⁴ He complained about the upcoming plans of Munich’s most prominent publishing house, Beck’sche Verlag (now called C. H. Beck), to stimulate a public discussion of Bachofen’s theories by inviting three well-known intellectuals to respond to the recent revival of Bachofen: Manfred Schroter, a cultural philosopher from Leipzig and a personal friend and close collaborator of Baeumler;¹¹⁵ Oswald Spengler, the popular author of *The Decline of the West*; and Leo Frobenius, the collector and publisher of African myths.

Baeumler and Klages knew about each other even before their interpretations of Bachofen collided. During the 1910s, the right-wing salon of Elsa Bruckmann drew together many who belonged to the George group, including the cosmics Klages and Schuler. The Bruckmanns later lent their living room and funding to the Nazi cause. Elsa Bruckmann became known as a Hitler admirer even before the Munich putsch, and she visited him after his jailing, carrying books and food to him. After his appointment as a chancellor, Hitler rewarded the couple’s loyalty with a Mercedes.¹¹⁶ Recognizing early that he might have competitors in the Bachofen field, Klages had written to Hugo Bruckmann in 1923, criticizing the intention of the Beck’sche publisher to let Baeumler and Schroter touch his Bachofen. He sent a similar complaint to his admirer, the gymnastics and rhythmic theoretician Rudolf Bode, and told him that “while Schroter tended to indulge in name-dropping,” dealing with Bachofen “requires one to have his own keys to the texts, or one will never find a coherent path.”¹¹⁷ The Bruckmanns had

¹¹⁴ Mosse, *Masses and Man*, pp. 1, 15.

¹¹⁵ Currently, the best place to read Klages in English is the monumental work of translation done by John Claverley Cartney, an unidentifiable independent scholar whose name can be easily linked with some suspicious groups. See http://www.revilo-oliver.com/Writers/Klages/Ludwig_Klages.html and the anti-Semitic <http://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/index.html>.

¹¹⁶ Samuel Weber, *Benjamin’s-abilities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 66.

¹¹⁷ “The classification of man into racial types according to groups of traits and the study of the transmission of physical traits and predispositions through heredity is a completely legitimate scientific endeavor because a part of total human existence is undoubtedly of animal nature and can be isolated as such.” Eric Voegelin, *Race and State*, trans. Ruth Hein (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), p. 34.

probably met Baeumler after the publication of *Der Mythos von Orient und Occident* (1926), and it was they who introduced him to the Nazi elite, including Hitler himself.¹¹⁸

As the head of the institute for political pedagogy, Baeumler's position at Berlin University was certainly of service to the Nazi party. But so was Klages's, in spite of his distance. During the early years of the Nazi regime, Klages was repeatedly invited to lecture at Berlin University, as well as at the Lessing Hochschule, to discuss his work about *Lebensphilosophie*, graphology, and characterology.¹¹⁹ Interestingly, Klages was one of the first thinkers invited by Alfred Rosenberg to lecture in Berlin after the 1933 victory and the appointment of Hitler.¹²⁰ Apparently, the distance was not as wide as Klages seemed to imagine it sometimes. After all, Rosenberg dedicated whole pages to contemplation of Bachofen's relevance to the racial policy of the Nazi Reich, while debating the "many unhealthy thinkers [who] have taken his [Bachofen's] extravagant fantasies" as a suitable challenge for the Aryan race. Rosenberg was especially troubled that "present day feminism—without the author wishing it—has found in Bachofen a glorification of its nature."¹²¹

Bachofen was for Baeumler a possible tool for reviving the longforgotten mythic power of the German race. His *Mythos von Orient und Occident* of 1926 aligned him with those opponents of both Kantian ethics and historicism. Like Bachofen and Nietzsche before him, Baeumler used Theodor Mommsen as a representative of scientific historicization and protested: "Mommsen sees it all as the present, a prosaic nearness, a critique. One overestimates the fact that Ranke and Mommsen belonged to the scientific-critical branch of the new school of historical writing."¹²² The antihistoricist echo generated strong feedback. That same year, Baeumler published several articles about Bachofen; one was republished in his intellectual history of Germanness.¹²³ In 1929 he published "Korrekturen: Bachofen und Nietzsche," a comparative study of Bachofen and Nietzsche. At the center of Baeumler's later interest in Bachofen was his discussion of the mythic ontology of time, fuel for Baeumler's attacks on the Jewish

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 82.

¹¹⁹ "Um die Auffassung des Gesprochen . . . Rede und Schrift aufgefasst als *hervorbrechender Lebensmoment* und zugleich als Tat, also nicht bloss als Dokument, sondern als active, aktuelle Ausserung des Lebens." Ibid., p. 112 (emphasis in the original).

¹²⁰ Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister, Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2009), p. 72.

¹²¹ Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Munich: Duncker and Humblot, 1918).

¹²² Rudolf W. Meyer, "Bergson in Deutschland, Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Zeitauffassung," in *Studien zum Zeitproblem in der Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Phanomenologische Forschungen 13, ed. Ernst Wolfgang Orth (Munich: Verlag Karl Albert, 1982), vol. 13, pp. 10-89.

¹²³ "Der Kosmos lebt, und alles Leben ist polarisiert nach Seele (Psyche) und Leib (Soma). Wo immer lebendiger Leib, da ist auch Seele; wo immer Seele, da ist auch lebendiger Leib. Die Seele ist der Sinn des Leibes, das Bild des Leibes die Erscheinung der Seele. Was immer erscheint, das hat einen Sinn; und jeder Sinn offenbart sich, indem er erscheint. Der Sinn wird erlebt innerlich, die Erscheinung ausserlich." Ludwig Klages, *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*, in *Samtliche Werke*, vol. 3 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1974), p. 390.

science of psychoanalysis. Myth, he claimed, was essentially an “absent chronology.” As a heuristic device, Baeumler contrasted the thinking of Bachofen, referred to as “the prophet,” with that of a foil identified only as “the psychologist”—clearly Freud. “[Bachofen] gazed into the depths of pre-time [*Vorzeit*]. Fearful yet craving, the psychologist sets his sights on his own time and the proximate [*umgebenden*] times of preceding centuries . . . Whoever risks his own life, whoever must undertake a great act, he must forget all psychology.”¹²⁴ For Baeumler the revival of myths and their time structure stimulated a *vita activa* that transcended linear time and all epistemology. In a fragment probably composed during the second half of the 1950s, Baeumler talks about an explicit negative ontology and temporality, characterizing time as

always uncreative, plural, and alive . . . How can one unite the linear, the circular, and the repetitious? There is only one “sign” for time . . . namely, its irreversibility in the process of time . . . When one thinks in a historical way, one perceives time in a superficial way.¹²⁵

Like Klages before him, Baeumler recognized that Bachofen’s antipathy to history and to psychology stemmed from a deep resistance to sequence and linearity. But Baeumler believed in the pressing need to act and change within time, and eventually he set out to apply Bachofen and Nietzsche’s prehistoric language of symbols to the political realm.

If for Klages time could be understood only in terms of an “experienced happening” (*Geschehen*) that typically involved dreams or the use of drugs, as mentioned in chapter 1, for Baeumler action, and not time, was the main agent of reform and radical change. Yet the perception of a mythical and a total aestheticized time occurs in both Klages and Baeumler. Baeumler’s concern was that man’s new consciousness of time had destroyed much of his ability to act. Klages’s worry was the opposite, namely, how to sleep better. Klages concluded his philosophy of time with a retreat to the isolation of the dreamland of images. Baeumler wanted to realize his dreams in the world.

In contrast to Klages, Baeumler did not shrink from defending those philosophers whose views and pleas were close to his. For example, Baeumler (and Schroter) defended Spengler’s thesis of cycles in human history when he was attacked in the 1920s by many academic philosophers and historians who saw him as a simplifier and popularizer.¹²⁶ Baeumler’s action implied a greater willingness to place ideas in the service

¹²⁴ “Der Nihilismus jedoch der Kantischen Formel lasst, wie wir sehen werden, den der Eleaten noch hinter sich!” Klages, *Der Geist*, vol. 1, p. 57. Two-and-a-half pages later Klages also identifies Kantianism with the “kapitalistischer Unternehmer,” that is, capitalist enterprise. See *ibid.*, p. 60.

¹²⁵ Benjamin plays here with the Jewish bible and Goethe’s *Faust* simultaneously. But *logos*, the word, its sense of beginning or end, are all embedded in his understanding of life as pure language, taken from the tradition that ends with Holderlin and George. Walter Benjamin, “The Task of the Translator,” in *Selected Writings*, vol. 1: 1913-1926 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 260-261.

¹²⁶ “Schlagen wir in einem beliebigen Worterbuche, z.B. von Georges, nach. So finden wir unter dem Worte ‘genius’ das folgende: Genius, von gignere=zeugen, bezeichnet den uber die menschliche Natur waltenden Gott, der bei der Erzeugung und Geburt des Menschen wirkte, als sein Schutzgeist ihn durchs Leben begleitet und sein Schicksal bestimmte.” Klages, *Der Geist*, vol. 2, p. 1278.

of political ideologies. As one educated in the historicist school, Baeumler tried to explain how romanticism in general, and Bachofen in particular, could serve the new *volkisch* Germany:

When the romantic narrates history, the deeds of kings attested in documents are not important to him; rather, he writes the inner history of a time and a people, the history that reveals itself to an eye that knows how to read the signs that have been passed down. This history, which speaks in symbols, knows only large periods of time; the feeling of life of a people changes slowly.¹²⁷

What Baeumler strived for was explosive change, a quick and shocking revolution of the cultural and national spirit. Myth was essential in this respect: the function of the past was to serve the action of the present. In his inaugural address on the day of the book burning, Baeumler explained “that National Socialism cannot be understood from the intellectual positions of the past . . . History knows no ‘back.’”¹²⁸ *Lebensphilosophie*, the ideal philosophical battleground, quickly extended its vocabulary to all aspects of life.

Lebensphilosophie in general, and the admiration of Bachofen in particular, illustrate an affinity between Baeumler and Klages even as they point up some differences. For Klages would never have accepted Baeumler’s heavy emphasis on action.

Such similarities and differences are more apparent in the two men’s political comments, particularly in relation to Walter Benjamin. In a letter Alfred Baeumler sent to Carl Albrecht Bernoulli, in May 1926, he insisted that a shared foe implied a convergence:

The contrast between your interpretation of Bachofen and ours is a contrast that lies completely beyond the usual understanding of those objects that Bachofen dealt with. The number of philistines is so large and powerful and that of the antiphilistines so small that it would be deplorable when those few and firm opponents of *bourgeois* prejudices make their struggle more difficult by using polemics. The final decision has not yet been taken on the contrast between your Bachofen interpretation and mine . . . Our enemy is probably both one and the same.¹²⁹

Along with his letter, Baeumler included a copy of the essay on Klages, Bernoulli, and Bachofen that Walter Benjamin had published in

Literarische Welt. As mentioned above, Benjamin’s essay not only put all the attention on Klages—“This enterprise is all the more productive since it attempts to grapple with Klages”—but beyond it, Benjamin stressed, like Klages, the retroactive reloading of Bachofen’s theory with the power of radical modern thinking and “certain elements he calls ‘images.’”¹³⁰

¹²⁷ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 348.

¹²⁸ “Wie viele Begriffe und Gefühle hat sie [die Sprache des Nazismus] geschadet und vergiftet!” Klemperer, *LTI*, p. 10.

¹²⁹ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 238-239.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

Baeumler drew a large “X” on the words of Benjamin’s encomium. *His* Bachofen served a militant and a mythic radicalization of such “chthonic powers” in the battlefield.

8. Conclusion

During the 1920s *Lebensphilosophie* became a political philosophy that resisted all political systems. It used its radical potential, as one neoKantian critic put it, “to overcome every element of thinking that has served philosophers up to now.”¹³¹ Adorno’s perspective was a bit different. He explained the unification of *Lebensphilosophie* and fascist ideology in terms of a shared fascination with “the life style of belated bohemians, . . . a hotbed of that spirituality whose protest against the rationalism of the schools led . . . more swiftly to Fascism than possibly even the spiritless system of old Rickert.” What gave it voice was “the law that lurks tacitly behind all the works on the Cosmogenic Eros and kindred mysteries.”¹³² But not even Adorno bothered to supply more than a cultural description of the phenomenon. *Lebensphilosophie* issued a call for the revival of the primordial, to be accomplished by hastening time, by mythologizing the future, which Klages insisted was a non-time. Because they both accepted that this radicalized time could be placed in the service of politics—Klages reluctantly, Baeumler actively—both men can be seen as affirmative thinkers, though they worked from opposite positions. Benjamin, however, was a critic who worked from within, counting more on subversion than on a frontal attack.¹³³

For *Lebensphilosophie*, the difference between Klages and Baeumler is a telling one, a gap large enough to envelop every twentieth-century theory of totalitarianism, but it has been neglected because of the general contempt postwar historians and philosophers had for rightwing theories. Both Klages and Baeumler were trying to unite a new aesthetic with an old political view of the *volk*, and they shared an aspiration for the *total weltanschauung*, an *aesthetic* view that had to be politicized in order to be realized. Klages produced a wacky aesthetic that Baeumler—and Nazi ideology with him—rejected in favor of action (*Tat*).

In contrast, as late as 1931, Klages resisted any attempt to identify him with a single political stand, or for that matter with the principle of politics per se. In a letter written that year, he complained that the journal *Die Tat*—which celebrated the philosophy of pure action and supported *Lebensphilosophie* for the previous 20 years—had “reduced itself to the merely political.”¹³⁴ Still, he did not seem to have hesitated to place articles there. Baeumler, on his end, kept attacking Klages until—as will be explained in the next chapters—he convinced Alfred Rosenberg to declare a formal war on the Klages’s

¹³¹ Junger, *Der Arbeiter*, p. 45. See also Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, p. 74.

¹³² *Ibid.*

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

circle. As Bernard Rust (1883-1945), the Prussian minister of culture in 1933 and later the minister of science, education, and culture of the Third Reich, explained in an article he published in the Nazi daily *Völkischer Beobachter* on May 27, 1933, “Klages and Baeumler are now both called for [*berufen*] at the University of Berlin . . . In order to fence out some decisions, that will be applied beyond philosophy.”¹³⁵

Amid the ruins of German critical philosophy, Benjamin stands between the two “fathers of fascism” as the bearer of the torch of ethical and political responsibility. His fascination with Klagesian radical aesthetics was grounded in his own vision of saving fallen angels from the oblivion of linear historicity. Klages was not opposed to the idea, or he would have cut his ties to Benjamin. Baeumler, in contrast, could not have been more hostile.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

4. Alternative Subject: Anti-Freudianism and Charakterologie, 1919-1929

The immediate period after the end of the First World War saw the growing emphasis on social and political psychology, to a large extent due to the growing relevance of life philosophy, depth psychology, and mass psychology. Freud published his *Massenpsychologie und Ich-Analyse* in 1921 (translated the following year by Freud's disciple James Strachey as *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*), the same year Edward Spranger (1882-1963) published his *Lebensformen* (Life forms)¹ and Ludwig Klages published his *Vom Wesen des Bewusstseins* (From the essence of consciousness)²—that attacked the Freudian division of individual conscious and unconscious. The three thinkers commented, from opposite perspectives, on the same tradition and sources of influence, reintegrating the impact of Gustave Le Bon's mass psychology, Friedrich Nietzsche's depth psychology, and Wilhelm Wundt and Wilhelm Dilthey's experimental psychology, folk psychology, and life forms. To illustrate how tight this discursive circle was, during the first two decades of the twentieth century it is sufficient to note that Le Bon's first translator to German (of his *Psychologie der Massen*, 1911), Rudolf Eisner, was a disciple of Wundt, and a close collaborator of Wilhelm Dilthey and Georg Simmel, a philosopher who contributed to *Lebensphilosophie*, group or mass psychology, and later the group forming the history of concepts (*Begriffsgeschichte*).³ All of these movements were taken very seriously by *Lebensphilosophers* and applied by such thinkers as Ludwig Klages. As mentioned in previous chapters, the impact of *Lebensphilosophie* on such interests, concepts, and methods disappeared after World War II, or, worse, completely identified with fascism. As will be shown below, such anachronisms missed the great revolutionary potential *Lebensphilosophie* held not only for the extra-parliamentary reactionaries, but also for the rebellious progressivists. Mitchell G. Ash's work, now a classic in this field, has already pointed out the intricate political relationship that supported the reception of Gestalt Psychology.⁴

¹ Book I of the History of the Peloponnesian War, Oxford text, edited by H. Stuart-Jones; translated by Arnold J. Toynbee.

² R. W. Hutchinson, Prehistoric Crete (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962).

³ Herodotus, Book I, chapters 56 to 58.

⁴ Available in Ludwig Klages, The Biocentric Worldview (London: Arktos, 2013).

Post World War II history—until the 1980s—missed not only the revolutionary potential of the pre-War psychology but also its chronology and development. As Ash and others have shown during the past two decades, during the early 1920s German psychology was politicized and much of its politicization had to do with the growing impact of *Lebensphilosophie* or related anti-Freudian analyses. During the prewar years an antibourgeois and antipatriarchic rebellion was affiliated in those works with a nationalist plea for a collective unconsciousness. Different attempts to separate the two elements failed in political terms; Freud himself commented critically about Le Bon's interpretation in the second chapter of his *Group Psychology*, but his own school of psychoanalysis was heavily criticized in Germany. Further attempts did not break the spell. The growing interaction between psychology and radical politics did not escape Freud's own school: Wilhelm Reich (1897-1957), who was close to Freud during the 1920s, wrote *Die Massenpsychologie des Faschismus* (The Mass Psychology of Fascism, 1933), which reframed Le Bon's concept in relation to "German imperialism." It was attacked immediately by the Nazi *Vo Ikischer Beobachter*, and Reich fled Germany back to Vienna and from there, in 1939, to the United States.⁵ Reich's advice to think seriously about Bachofen and his critique of patriarchy, in 1933, was perceived—correctly in his case—to represent a post-Marxist, post-Engelsian critique of Nazi authoritarianism. It is interesting to note that Reich used terms identified with *Lebensphilosophie* already in his first two works, equating the "orgastic potency" to both the Freudian libido and *Lebensphilosophie's* experience (*Erlebnis*) or ecstasy (*Rausch*). As discussed in the previous chapter, such concepts were closely related to Klages's work on nineteenth century thinkers such as J.J.Bachofen. As demonstrated in this chapter, Klages's analyses and revival of Carl Gustav Carus and Friedrich Nietzsche as two contesters of Freud, helped to transform and politicize the pre-Nazi and Nazi psychology.

Klages's new work utilized Bachofen's matriarchy and made *logocentrism* a popular term hurled against all transparent Western forms of positivist analysis, patriarchalism, and materialism. He identified all of those with Freud's psychoanalysis and a general decline into the pitholes of "logocentrism." As he pleaded in the last part of his *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (Spirit as the adversary of the soul, 1932), "One has to recover, in any possible way, from the blinding [effect of] logocentrism."⁶ The West and its values became a synonym for cultural decline. Klages's message, already popular before 1914, now became the battle cry of a new postwar generation, at this point (pre-1933) not yet cleansed of its antiliberal rebelliousness.

Before returning to psychology, let me mention two literary threads that utilized the same nexus between psychology and pessimist politics, via characterology and

⁵ Tuist is a term coined by Klages. The distinction between tuist and egoist entails a recognition of the characterological distinction between those whose drives and affects are focused on the "you," as opposed to those who are centered solely upon their own ego.

⁶ Ibid., p. 17. Esposito quotes from Rudolf Kjellen, *Grundriss zu einem System der Politik* (Leipzig: Rudolph Leipzig Hirzel, 1920), pp. 3-4.

mass-psychology. When Robert Musil tried to summarize this new conception of elitist cultural pessimism in *The Man without Qualities* (1929), written during and about the 1920s, it was by no mere chance that he based one of his central figures on Klages and his anti-Freudian theories of character.⁷ The rise of an anti-Freudian psychology based on organic forms and replicated qualities is accompanied in the book by a critique of the “urban mechanization” and “the strange, dispersed arithmetic of time.”⁸ Katherine Arens demonstrates that Arthur Schnitzler and Otto Weininger were interested in a similar anti-Freudian characterology of “qualities” when she writes, “[Schnitzler’s] approach signals more than an anthropological or even a psychoanalytical analysis, for Schnitzler bases his work on a picture of the total man in culture: the fundamental constitution or predispositions of man [*Geistesvergassung*], his specific gifts [*Begabungen*], and his moods or ‘states of the soul’ [*Seelenzustände*].”⁹

The impact and seriousness of anti-Freudian psychology was generally ignored after 1945. As the historian of psychology Ulfried Geuter demonstrated, the politicization of German psychology was generally ignored until the 1980s.¹⁰ If true, it is a surprising fact for such a sophisticated and historically oriented research. What could be the reason for such a long delay? Once historicized it is clear that German psychology should be regarded in relation to politics, in fact—as early as the 1920s dispute about mass psychology.¹¹ At the center of the dispute was a serious debate about the relevancy of psychoanalysis as a collective system. What brought a stark change to psychoanalysis during the 1920s was also the reason for its crisis, as Erich Fromm declared in his book *Crisis of Psychoanalysis* (1970), in which he looks retrospectively at the psychology of the 1920s. Psychoanalysis had not paid enough attention to the rise of the “Aryan unconscious,” as Jung described it in a radio interview in 1933, accusing Freud of “not understanding the Germanic psyche any more than his Germanic followers.”¹² Its apoliticism led many intellectuals from both inside psychoanalysis— Wilhelm Reich, Otto Fenichel, Otto Gross, and even Erich Fromm are a case in point—and from outside to call for a change. The alternative— for both left and right—would be taken from

⁷ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 136. Hoche worked with another follower of Klages, the Jewish Lebensphilosopher Kurt Goldstein. He was also close to a central figure of the Klages circle, the psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn.

⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 3.

⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 2000).

¹⁰ Agamben “paulanized” Benjamin, Scholem, Taubes, and other German-Jewish thinkers discussed in this book since his *Homo Sacer*. For the most coherent exploration of that philosophical move see Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹¹ Eric Santner, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), p. 13.

¹² Giorgio Agamben, “Absolute Immanence,” in *Potentialities*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 220.

a Nietzschean “depth psychology” (*Tiefenpsychologie*), which bore such phenomena as Klages’s characterology and science of expression. Jacob Golomb argues that the principal aim of depth psychology was “to evoke a mood of deep suspicion and distrust towards metaphysics (and other dogmatic views as well),”¹³ mainly by placing the concept of power at the center of psychological method. “It follows that the specific object of the psychologist’s task is power and its appearance in culture and history. We can say,” Golomb concludes, “that Nietzsche-as-psychologist is actually a philosopher dealing with power and its exhibitions. And thus, Nietzsche’s ‘new psychology’ that—unlike others—dared ‘to descend into the depths,’ became what he called the doctrine of the development of the will to power.”¹⁴

In the mid-1920s Klages already saw himself as the father of a new anti-Freudian tradition that was heavily grounded in the Nietzschean depth psychology. Steven Aschheim describes the Nietzsche-Klages axis in the following terms:

For Klages, Nietzsche’s psychological achievement was the demarcation of the battleground between Yahweh’s ascetic priests and the orgiasts of Dionysus; his psychological sensitivity provided extraordinary illumination pursued through his relentlessly honest selfknowledge and unmasking [*Enttauschungstechnik*] . . . For Klages, the aggressive and consumptive will to power was “de-eroticized sexuality”; Nietzsche’s individualist insistence on self-overcoming was an act of *Geist* in disguise, derived from precisely the Socratism and Christianity which he was supposed to have abhorred. The will to power was the agent of an abstracted and aggressive mind, of capitalism and socialism that cut people off from their natural, earthly roots.¹⁵

In short, Klages had already marked the path taken later by Martin Heidegger in his 1930s lectures on Nietzsche as the “last metaphysician.”¹⁶ Werner Bohleber points out

¹³ Brian Massumi, “National Enterprise Emergency: Steps Toward an Ecology of Powers,” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 26:6 (November 2009), p. 170. I tried to explain the relevance of such readings for a contemporary understanding of life in Nitzan Lebovic, “Life,” in *Maftekh: Lexical Review of Political Thought* 2 (2011): <http://maftekh.tau.ac.il/en/issue-2e-winter-2011/life/> (accessed June 1, 2013).

¹⁴ Agamben comes close to it without making it a historical argument, when he points out Heidegger’s role as the mediator between two philosophical traditions. The first leads from Kant, via Husserl, to Heidegger and then Levinas and Derrida; the other leads from Spinoza, via Nietzsche, to Heidegger and then Foucault and Deleuze. In short, any examination of “the coming philosophy” should consider the 1920s’ debate about the role of life and immanence in Heidegger and his fellow critics of democracy, on the way to biopolitics and “immanimation.” *Ibid.*, p. 239.

¹⁵ “Diese Formung des Lebens in seinem ganzen Verlaufe durch den Tod ist bisher sozusagen etwas Bildhaftes.” Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1994), p. 107.

¹⁶ Simmel stresses here a temporal dimension of a being which turns *Sein* (being) into a particular presence. *Sosein* was used by different Lebensphilosophers, for example, Georg Simmel, Max Scheler, and Ludwig Klages. It is translated differently for every thinker, and sometimes, as various translations of Simmel prove, differently in different works of the same thinker. Simmel used the term repeatedly. See *ibid.*, p. 108. For another example of Simmel’s use of *Sosein* see the first page of his *Philosophy of Money*, which was translated as a “particular quality of being.” See Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of*

the historical roots of the strongest anti-Freudian current in German psychology, especially the part of it that was identified with depth psychology. According to Bohleber, Richard Noll, Mitchell G. Ash, and other critical historians of German psychology,¹⁷ a historical line leads from early nineteenth-century antiKantian psychology to depth psychology and from there to different anti-Freudian approaches. Bohleber traces a path that starts with Carus and Bachofen, passes through Nietzsche, and ends with Klages and finally Jung. According to Bohleber's thesis, this approach "would refuse to accept any rift opening between science and life, a *Lebensphilosophie* (e.g., Ludwig Klages's) and Husserl's phenomenology."¹⁸ As I mentioned in the previous chapter, between 1935 and 1937 Walter Benjamin had offered to write about Klages and Jung from a similar perspective. As will be mentioned in this one, it is not coincidental that a majority of historians of psychology found themselves forced to investigate theories of language and a uniquely German understanding of life alongside their psychological research. Even if suppressed nowadays, during the early 1900s psychology had much to do with philosophy, biology, and ethnology or race sciences.¹⁹

In this counterhistory of psychology and psychoanalysis, Klages is an exception. Although not the most lucid psychologist or philosopher of the soul—not even the most interesting one—he was nevertheless the one responsible for the evocation of this lineage and much of its vocabulary, regenerating its influence in the political and philosophical discourses of the 1920s.

A careful historicization would show that *Lebensphilosophie*—and Klages's role within it—created an opportunity for both psychology and politics simultaneously:

Money, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 56. Then again, in his book about the history of sociology, David Frisby translated the same term when used by Max Scheler as "essence." See David Frisby, *The Alienated Mind: The Sociology of Knowledge in Germany, 1918-1933* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 30.

¹⁷ Heinrich Rickert, *Die Philosophie des Lebens: Darstellung und Kritik der philosophischen Modestromungen unserer Zeit* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr Verlag, 1920).

¹⁸ Heinrich Rickert, *Unmittelbarkeit und Sinnbedeutung: Aufsatze zur Ausgestaltung des Systems der Philosophie* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1939), p. 57 (emphasis in original). The concept of immediacy, popularized by Nietzsche, had garnered great interest among *Lebensphilosophers* since the early 1900s. Yet not before the early 1920s could one attach it to any particular view of politics.

¹⁹ Georg Imdahl and David F. Krell are an exception to that rule; in their careful readings of Heidegger's early writings, both labor to demonstrate the close interest and impact of Heidegger's own editorial working and research of Dilthey's life philosophy. Heidegger's later rejection of *Lebensphilosophie* cannot disguise the impact it had on his interest in the living temporality of the *Dasein*. See David F. Krell, *Daheim Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), and Georg Imdahl, *Das Leben Verstehen, Heideggers formal anzeigende Hermeneutik in den frühen Freiburger Vorlesungen* (Wurzburg: Konigshausen and Neumann, 1997). A few intellectual historians paid close attention to Heidegger's interest in *Lebensphilosophie* from a different angle. Let me mention here only the most recent and excellent two volumes Peter Gordon published on Heidegger's proximity to Franz Rosenzweig, and the opponents of Ernst Cassirer and neo-Kantianism. See Peter E. Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and idem., *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

a new vocabulary that declared war on all narratives of progression, offered a serious alternative to opponents of Freud (even within the psychoanalytical movement), provided a method of character study that starts its analysis not from the subject but from its factual “appearance” or “expression,” and refused all presumptions about self-development by identifying a certain inherent quality in individuals that binds them to their illusive “development.” This chapter, then, tells the story of opposition between a life typology (*Characterologie* and *Tiefenpsychologie*) and psychoanalysis and how its role as a byproduct of two different notions of life and inner time translated during the mid-1920s to both psychological (individual) and political (collective) discourses. Here again, one sees a gradual process of politicization that leads from the early nineteenth century’s shared origin in psychophysics through the discovery of the unconscious to the different versions of late-nineteenth-century typological psychology and up to the 1920s’ unity of individual cells and collective souls.

1. Bachofen versus Freud

In the second chapter of his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud analyzed and criticized Gustave Le Bon’s false identity of individual and mass or group psychology.²⁰ Freud opened his chapter with a quote, repeating Le Bon’s argument regarding the coming together of individual and collective traits: “The psychological group is a provisional being formed of heterogeneous elements, which for a moment are combined, exactly as the cells which constitute a living body form by their reunion a new being which displays characteristics very different from those possessed by each of the cells singly.”²¹ Freud then continued to criticize Le Bon, who had failed to account for the origin of the group’s bond: “If the individuals in the group are combined into a unity, there must surely be something to unite them, and this bond might be precisely the thing that is characteristic of a group. But Le Bon does not answer this question; he goes on to consider the change which the individual undergoes when in a group and describes it in terms which harmonize well with the fundamental postulates of our own depth psychology.”²² Interestingly, Klages would make similar claims concerning Freud’s interpretation of the self, but from the perspective of the collective, and then move on to force Freud’s Judaism on Freud’s method of reading and analysis. But first a few words about the background that leads Klages to this frontal conflict with psychoanalysis.

Klages studied applied psychology with his mentor in Munich, Theodor Lipps, himself identified with experimental psychology and psychophysics. Lipps’s phenomenolog-

²⁰ Victor Klemperer, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1966), p. 20. English translations often miss the importance of vocabulary to the essence (*Wesen*) of Nazi language.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²² Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 5.

ical reading of psychological characteristics, and especially his emphasis on the need to back observations in empirical data, deeply impressed Klages. Klages continued, then, to produce a theory of expression and bodily signs that extended Nietzsche's fusion of psychology and philosophy while minimizing its stress on the will. After he left Germany for Switzerland, Klages moved deeper into the philosophical discourse and left most of his graphological and psychological work to his sister, whom he trained and supervised, taking regular trips to Munich to examine her work.²³ While leaving most of his earlier psychological work behind, Klages never left psychology as a philosophical subject and in Switzerland examined it from the perspective of an anti-Freudian *Lebensphilosoph*.

Freud's answer to Le Bon, which Klages most probably learned while writing his own Eros book, was to draft the principle of *sublimation* as a critical commentary on both the church and the father principle. Freud, who had already referred to Bachofen in *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and in his correspondence with Jung,²⁴ was undoubtedly commenting in his "postscript" on Bachofen's theory as a critical argument against Le Bon and a shared critique of both "sublimating" institutions—Christianity and patriarchy, ideal love and the army. He wrote, "It is obvious that a soldier takes his superior, that is, really, the leader of the army, as his ideal, while he identifies himself with his equals, and derives from this community of their egos the obligations which comradeship implies."²⁵ Freud immediately extended this structural relation to Christianity: "Every Christian loves Christ as his ideal and feels himself united with all other Christians by the tie of identification."²⁶ Freud then synthesized both Christianity and patriarchy with a shared critical view that brought in Bachofen's matriarchy as an alternative: "[W]e must return for a moment to the idea of the scientific myth of the father of the primal horde. He was later on exalted into the creator of the world, and with justice, for he had produced all the sons who composed the first group. He was the ideal of each one of them, at once feared and honoured, a fact which led later to the idea of taboo . . . As a compensation . . . he may at that time have acknowledged the mother deities, whose priests were castrated for the mother's protection."²⁷ Freud then

²³ Edward Ross Dickinson, "Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse about 'Modernity,'" in *Central European History* 37:1 (2004): 1-38.

²⁴ "Das Hauptgewicht der nationalsozialistischen Sprachbeeinflussung liegt auf der neuen Sinngebung oft alter, bekannter Worte." Manfred Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, inaugural dissertation submitted to the philosophy faculty of the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University of Greifswald (Greifswald: Hans Adler Buchdruckerei, 1935), p. 11.

²⁵ Boaz Neumann, *New German Critique* 85, Special Issue on Intellectuals (Winter 2002), 110.

²⁶ Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, p. 13.

²⁷ "Was heisst Leben? Leben heisst *kaempfen*! Schom *Heraklit* sagte: Der Kampf is der Vater aller Dinge, und Nietzsche beantwortete die Frage . . . so: 'Die Welt ist der Wille zur Macht und nichts ausserdem.' Wohin du auch schaust, ueberall findest du Kampf ums Dasein, Ringen um selbsterhaltung, Arterhaltung und Entwicklung . . . Sie vergessen, dass es den Menschen nur so Scheint, weil unser Denken beschaenkt ist in *Raum und Zeit*, weil wir nicht erkennen, was sich da in der *Ewigkeit* entwickeln und erloesen will . . . Der erste Schritt zu bewusstem Leben heisst: Erkenne dich selbst! In dir selbst, in

added, “[I]t was then, perhaps, that some individual, in the exigency of his longing, may have been moved to free himself from the group and take over the father’s part. He who did this was the first epic poet; . . . he invented the heroic myth.”²⁸ Bachofen, we should recall, had mourned the death of heroism with Mommsen and historicism, or Hegel and idealism, stressing that a whole ancient culture was erased with the rise of patriarchy, but had called for a new generation to return to this mythological world: “The story,” Bachofen wrote about one of his many carefully selected myths, “recognizes the higher divinity of the paternal principle, but at the same time suggests that the heroic youth who strode swiftly across the stage before the astonished eyes of two worlds could not lastingly subject the feminine principle, which he was condemned to acknowledge at every step . . . Mankind owes the enduring victory of paternity to the Roman political idea, which gave it a strict juridical form and consequently enabled it to develop in all spheres of existence; it made this principle the foundation of all life and safeguarded it against the decadence of religion, the corruption of manners, and a popular return to matriarchal views.”²⁹

Setting psychoanalysis firmly within deep mythical and biological instincts expressed an adversarial relationship: From the perspective of *Lebensphilosophie* and its *volkish* psychology, psychoanalysis was still assuming the wrong order of events, mental and physical, individual and collective. Freud’s insistence on the libido as a fundamental explanation for the unconscious—“psychoanalysis . . . has no difficulty in showing that the sexual ties of the earliest years of childhood also persist . . . [in tender feelings as] the successor to a completely ‘sensual’ object tie with the person in question or rather with that person’s prototype (or imago)”³⁰—was falsifying the order of becoming and alluded to lucid beginnings (primal scene, anxiety) and ends (curing, healing) that did not exist in reality. What *Lebensphilosophie* and existential philosophy offered instead was openness to structure and its time line. Musil scholars explain how Musil built on Klages’s arguments against

deinem Rassenerbgut liegt der geheimnisvolle Wille deines Lebens.” Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, vol. 4, article 24, “Weltanschauung, NS,” p. 1. No further publication details are given; all emphases in the original. Karl Dietrich Bracher spoke of the “army of agitators” the Nazi trained in that context: Karl D. Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1969), p. 159. See also Goebbels’s description of his propaganda success, based on “battalions of speakers,” which he still insisted were a “mystical phenomenon” in Joseph Goebbels, *Der Angriff. Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1935), pp. 94-96.

²⁸ “Weil das Judentum mit den Gesetzen des Lebens ging, darum gab ihm das Leben recht, darum hat es heute eine weltbeherrschende Machtstellung ueber die arischen Volker erreicht.” Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, p. 3.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-79*, trans. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 19.

³⁰ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 143.

psychoanalysis as “dispersed” or “de-eroticized” (*ent-erotisierte Sexus*) and image-oriented.³¹ That is the essence, writes Heinz-Peter Preussen, of Klages’s Eros of distance (*Eros der Ferne*) and of his principle of transformation, as explained in his *From the Essence of Consciousness*: “The gaze transforms the gazed” [*Das Schauen verwandel(t) den Schauenden*].³² In spite of his attempt to distance himself from a supposed simplistic methodology and reductive system, Klages did not shy away from swift and crude judgments that traced the intellectual roots of Freud’s “failure” in the nineteenth-century “psycho-physics” and the Nietzschean will. “In the history of ideas,” he wrote, “so-called psychoanalysis (or disintegration of the soul [*Seelenauflösung*]) is the unbelievable bastard of a failed marriage [*Missheirat*] between Herbart’s atomism and Nietzsche’s philosophy of self-deception. Admittedly, the resulting creature is a failure that carries traces from certain influences of relatively exotic origin, e.g., in the form of the theory that the entire human being, actually the entire world, is sex [*Sexus*].”³³ Klages’s language leaves little doubt: Freud’s stress on a material sexuality and simultaneously on the universal structuralism of its complexes was creating—in his view—a sickly chimera.

The principal resistance to Freud, one notes, was based on his focus on agency, as embodied by nineteenth-century scientific atomism and the Nietzschean emphasis on the will. *Lebensphilosophie* replaced it with instincts, artistic genius, and the imagistic and collective emotions; it stipulated consciousness with a “speaking I,” or “the disappearance of the subject,” to recall Bohrer’s observation concerning the “biologization of the 1920s,” which would make agency utterly superfluous, if not damaging, in favor of “an imaginative I in a collective time.”³⁴

Klages’s characterology took an alternative and very German course to Freud’s architectonic and universal narrative of the ego. According to one interpreter, it followed a unique—albeit reductive—mixture of Diltheyian typology, which creates an analogical relation between the subject and his surrounding, and Husserlian phenomenology.³⁵ Since Klages never referred to Husserl and did everything possible to avoid phenomenology, a more accurate description of the combination would be a mix of Diltheyish typology, a Nietzschean emphasis on *Rausch* (ecstasy), and Wilhelm Wundt’s social psychology, which Kurt Danziger explains this way: “What the psychologist was trying

³¹ Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus, and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 14.

³² Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 111.

³³ Ibid., p. 12.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

³⁵ Vitalpolitik is grounded in the principle of growth or reduction that lies at the bottom of all competitive systems: economic, organic-physiological, or totalitarian. It assumes that politics, economics, society, and the individual all share the same form and image of the living body. It is exactly this shared body, or “synthesis of individuals,” according to Foucault, that allows the system to have “no explicit contract, no voluntary union, no renunciation of rights, and no delegation of natural rights to someone else. In short, there is no constitution of sovereignty by a sort of pact of subjection.” Ibid., pp. 242-243, 300.

to get at were processes going on within individual minds that were, however, replicated in all (normal, adult) minds.”³⁶ Mitchell G. Ash identified this worldview as “the dynamic flow of interrelationship between the ‘totality of human nature’ and the world Dilthey called simply ‘life’ or ‘life itself.’”³⁷

In aesthetic terms, Klages’s psychology was assuming the simultaneity of distance and its erasure, the existence of oppositions and their eradication. For example, Klages argued that all homogeneous unities—such as a soul—exist already in nature, not in human cognition, and should be understood as such. One can only experience human qualities, typifying or defining them, but not analyzing them. “Every sign of expression can be interpreted characterologically in two ways: as an affirmation of qualities that facilitate powers [*Krafte*] or as an absence of polarized powers [*polarer Krafte*]. The choice occurs on the basis of the content of life: the richer this content is, the stronger the call for affirmation; the more impoverished, the stronger is the call for negation.” The purpose of characterology, then, is to support not only the individual, but to “search for law and order and to let the sensual uniqueness of every appearance [*Erscheinung*] have its full impact on us. As such it reveals to us, following our own measures of fullness, the level of its *Formniveau* as the symbol of its participation in the rhythm of life.”³⁸ The use of the concept of *Formniveau* (form level), one of Klages’s popular neologisms in his graphological research, was meant to remind the readers of the layered empirical system of signs in graphology that ties together individual and collective, particular and general.³⁹ This system opened a space of interpretation that was supposed to estimate a level of harmony, style, originality, and beauty in one’s handwriting but did not give specific coordinates for measurement or hierarchy. The handwriting presents both an expression of an individual soul and the collective cultural atmosphere around it. Nietzsche’s and Bismarck’s genius, according to Klages, can be recognized in both their individual characteristics and a general collective soul that surrounded their creative power and supported it. There are no clear boundaries that separate the individual as independent entity.

Hence, to understand the vital “I,” one needs not the Freudian, vertical, and three-layered structure or its conscious intellectual agency, which Freud is willing to radicalize to an absolute term when he writes about “the individual in the group” that “his emotions become extraordinarily intensified, while his intellectual ability becomes

³⁶ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 259.

³⁷ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 137.

³⁸ Foucault uses this term in *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 248.

³⁹ “It has been evident for a number of centuries how, in the general consciousness, the thought of death has become less omnipresent and less vivid . . . In the course of the nineteenth century, bourgeois society—by means of medical and social, private and public institutions—realized a secondary effect, which may have been its subconscious main purpose: to enable people to avoid the sight of the dying.” Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller,” in *Selected Writings*, vol. 3:1: 1935-1938 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 151.

markedly reduced.”⁴⁰ Rather, contends Klages, we need a horizontal self of multiple and simultaneous intuitive parts. If seen as two opposing graphs, then layers in the Freudian schema are moving up and down the archeology of the self; the second, the *Lebensphilosophers*, assumes only a correlation of images or a lack of one. Klages compares the Freudian ego with the principle of the intellect (*Geist*) and with “a universal rule of . . . united ego and logos,” which in turn take “primordial forces, under the tyranny of form” and which take over the very “ethical autonomy of the individual.”⁴¹ Here, as in other places, Klages not only exposed his own fallacies, but in fact missed the radical social potential of life philosophy itself; the alternative to a fusion of spirit and self was not one of essentialist “biologization” versus Freud’s “dictatorship” of form, but a translation of the self to its surrounding power relations, first noticed by Bachofen’s critique of patriarchy and Nietzschean depth psychology. Wilhelm Reich and other critics of psychoanalysis, since Otto Gross’s fling with psychoanalysis during the early 1910s, were able to explore the radical implications of this late-nineteenth-century critique of idealism and Logos in more precise terms; in order to do so, however, they needed Bachofen, and not least, Klages’s analysis of Bachofen’s work. As Martin Green described it in *The Von Richthofen Sisters*:

Turning to history, we see a striking likeness between Klages and Gross in their joint hatred of Moses and the prophets, Plato, and Aristotle, all of whom they see equally as betrayers of soul to mind . . . Indeed the authority they most preferred to cite was not Nietzsche but Bachofen, whom no one could accuse of social brutality. Their joint reading of him was their great intellectual adventure. Klages first came across him in 1900, shut himself up alone for five weeks to study him, and emerged feeling a new man.⁴²

On August 14, 1923, in a letter to Carl Albrecht Bernoulli, his colleague on the Bachofen books and an exponent of Nietzsche,⁴³ Ludwig Klages proposed that Bernoulli compare psychoanalysis to late romantic psychology, in favor of the latter. Klages

⁴⁰ For a short but coherent description of Foucault’s notion of biopower and biopolitics, see Chloe Taylor, “Biopower,” in *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (Durham, NC: Acumen, 2011), p. 48.

⁴¹ “Heute, glaube ich, geht ein immer starker anwachsendes Raunen durch Millionen und aber Millionen Menschen Seelen . . . eines tiefen Wissens, dass wir in einer der grosten Zeiten und Weltenwende leben, in einer Epoche, die einen bis in die Wurzeln gehenden Umbruch nicht nur auf einigen Gebieten des Daseins, sondern fur unser ganzes Lebensgefühl bedeutet.” Alfred Rosenberg, “Der Kampf um die Weltanschauung,” *Redenmateriel der NSDAP*, ed. Fritz Reinhardt, p. 5.

⁴² The Reich’s minister of education explained on January 15, 1935, that the first priority of the Reich was political education, and he went on to say that “allein die Biologie kann den Begriff der Rasse und Vererbung und die rassischen Lebensgesetze von der Seite der Tatsachen-Forschung her zwingend entwickeln.” *Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie 1: Schriften uber Familie, Volk und Rasse* (Berlin: Zentralverlag der NSDAP/Fritz Eher Verlag, 1938), p. 7.

⁴³ “Fehlt es an einer solchen Erziehung, so entstehen ‘Politiker,’ deren Wesen und Gefahr keiner klarer durchschaut und gezeichnet hat als der Fuhrer des neuen Deutschland, Adolf Hitler. Er hat auch in seiner eigenen Entwicklung ein unumstossliches Vorbild fur solche politische Erziehung gegeben.” Hans Gerber, ed., *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934), p. vi.

urged him to radicalize the contrast to the Freudian humanistic *Geist* (spirit, intellect) to “make it more polemical.” If Bernoulli turned to the philosophy of Bachofen, wrote Klages, he would find the antidote to all “mechanistic” depictions of the soul.⁴⁴ Nearly ten years later Klages would repeat again and again the same equation, while opposing spirit (*Geist*) and soul (*Seele*) and emphasizing that “[a]ll knowledge of life is dispersed in soul and image. [Yet] both soul and image are impenetrable.”⁴⁵ The implication was, naturally, that all work of the spirit or intellect was in danger of drawing humanity to “a total annihilation.” Occasionally explicitly, habitually implicitly, Klages discerned an “I” (*Ich*) and a “whole life” (*Lebensganz*) that collided directly with Freud’s “Judaic staging [*Judaiszenierung*], the so-called science of psychoanalysis,”⁴⁶ and the structure of the Oedipus complex that “would block all possible active process of naming [*Benennung*] reality.”⁴⁷ In his view, modern notions of the soul were leading away from late romantic experimental psychology of literal names, types, and characters, enforcing a set of categories from the outside.

In his introduction to Klages’s collected works about *Charakterologie*, Hans Eggert Schroder, Klages’s disciple and biographer, admitted that a large section of Klages’s effort was dedicated to contrasting and destroying “the schooled psychology [*Schulpsychologie*] of the period that lasted between 1900 and 1925.”⁴⁸ Schroder, who would later cleanse the Klages literary estate from all signs of anti-Semitism, was cautious not to name Freud as his master’s nemesis. Although Klages was not alone in his resistance to psychoanalysis, his influence reached a variety of fields and disciplines. As his correspondence from the time shows, many physicians, psychiatrists, and physiologists were highly interested in his work and often saw it as empirically a good fit for integrating into their own practice, especially when resisting psychoanalysis themselves.

In this way, for example, the acclaimed psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn (1886-1933), who published *Bildnerei der Geisteskranken* (Artistry of the mentally ill, 1922), came to know Klages and to preach his theory around the world. Prinzhorn’s books, influential in both Germany and the United States, developed a whole new psychiatry that evinced

⁴⁴ “[D]ie Universitat . . . muss vielmehr auch den Gehalt der persönlichen Überzeugung bilden.” Ibid.

⁴⁵ “Was aber ist es, was den immer wechselnden Strom des Lebens über die Erde hintreibt?” Ernst Lehmann, “Der Einfluss der Biologie auf unser Weltbild,” in *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934), p. 131.

⁴⁶ “Alle biologischen Erfahrungen sprechen dafür, dass dieses Prinzip eine überragende Rolle im Entwicklungsgeschehen spielt . . . Jedermann weiss nun aus den unzähligen traurigen Büchern der Gegenwart, dass unser deutsches Volk bei der immer starker zurückgehenden Geburtszahl diesem Grundsatz der Selektionstheorie nicht mehr gerecht wird. Biopolitisch sind uns die Völker an unserer Ostgrenze durch ihre viel höhere Geburtszahl weitgehend überlegen.” Ibid., p. 138.

⁴⁷ “Kein Zweifel aber auch: Nicht nur in Nordamerika gibt es eine Negerfrage, nicht nur in aller Welt eine Judenfrage u.s.f.-in jedes deutsche Haus ist durch die Arbeit Hans Gunthers die Kenntnis gedrungen von der rassistischen Verschiedenheit innerhalb unseres Volkes.” Ibid., p. 139.

⁴⁸ Sheila Faith Weiss, “Pedagogy, Professionalism, and Politics: Biology Instruction during the Third Reich,” in *Science, Technology, and National Socialism*, ed. Monika Renneberg and Mark Weller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 189.

a post-Nietzschean and a Klagesian break with the usual boundaries between the normal and the pathological, in which the principal interpretative tools included an emphasis on a neutral and nonjudgmental phenomenological approach, one based on Klages's "nature of configuration" and eidetic images.⁴⁹

As a result of Klages's countless ties with the medical and psychiatric institutions in Germany (Prinzhorn had a stronghold in Heidelberg, Schroder and others in Leipzig and later in Berlin), Austria (Philip Lersch and his school of psychology in Vienna where Klages was cited frequently), and Switzerland (where Klages had his own students and a close relationship with the circle of Paul Habermas, among others), many of his concepts—psychological, metaphysical, aesthetic—were standardized. Moreover, Klages and his circle were among the first to identify certain aesthetic schools, expressionism and naturalism, for example, with psychiatric diagnostic and empirical tools, which would be used later for the Nazi cultural attacks on "degenerate art."

The heart of their vocabulary came from an explicit anti-Freudian approach. The wealth of voices echoing Klages is overwhelming, and those voices reach deep into the "schooled psychology" circles. For example, Edgar Michaelis, a well-known critic of Freud, echoed Klages's use of Carl Gustav Carus against Freud as a proof that psychoanalysis was indeed "a psychology without a soul."⁵⁰

In his work on the reception of psychoanalysis, Anthony Kauders demonstrates that different members of the Klages circle were leading the antipsychoanalysis critique during the late 1920s and early 1930s, and their presence in this field cannot be ignored. In 1929, when Freud was considered for the Goethe Prize in Frankfurt, not only was Ludwig Klages a competing candidate for the prize, but a member of the Klages circle, the journalist Werner Deubel (1894-1949), was leading the rejection of Freud's candidacy. According to Kauders, "Werner Deubel, representative of the Frankfurt press association and student of Ludwig Klages, advanced a more fundamental critique. Freud's treatment of the unconscious was deficient, he opined, in that it resembled a 'rational darkness' in which humans existed under the same conditions as under reason itself."⁵¹ Furthermore, before and after Freud's winning the Goethe Prize the following year, the leader of the anti-Freudian attack was Hans Prinzhorn. In his open critique of Freud during the mid and late 1920s, including his "Krisis in der Psychoanalyse" (Crisis in psychoanalysis, 1928), "Prinzhorn rejected Freud's conception of the id as a 'rationalized system,' the nature of which was 'craftier' and 'more determined' than the goings-on in the brain of a shady lawyer."⁵² Prinzhorn rejected psychoanalysis in favor of "life that confronts us in all of its animated varieties" and "the special 'power

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 193.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 188.

⁵¹ See James G. Lennox, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Biology: Studies in the Origins of Life Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 129.

⁵² Tobias Schneider has denied that Klages ever subscribed to Nazi anti-Semitism. See Schneider, "Ideologische Grabenkämpfe: Der Philosoph Ludwig Klages und der Nationalsozialismus 1933-1938," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 49:2 (2001): 275-294.

of life.’’⁵³ In the context of the late 1920s and early 1930s, indeed, the attack on Freud reflected a broad process in the making. As Kauders concludes, “[M]ore and more Germans turned away from liberalism and opted for the extreme left and right.”⁵⁴

The process also extended into unexpected territories, such as “a return to Wilhelm Dilthey as well as [to] the growth of characterology.”⁵⁵ In his seminal work on the history of Gestalt psychology, Mitchell Ash describes it this way: “From outside the university came yet another challenge, from proponents of so-called ‘scientific graphology’ and ‘characterology,’ led by Ludwig Klages. With the help of handwriting analysis, Klages and his followers claimed to discover people’s true inner lives behind their ‘masks of courtesy.’”⁵⁶ As the historians of psychology demonstrate, anti-Freudian life philosophers remained loyal to a small set of key references, among them Dilthey, Nietzsche, and Bachofen, the latter a popular allusion during the 1920s, mostly due to Klages and his disciples.

Again we see here that Klages’s psychology demonstrates *Lebensphilosophie*’s radical potential. A subversive intellectual path—one that was suppressed after 1945—was common in the work of radical conservatives and progressives before the rise of Nazism. Wilhelm Reich, an active communist, criticized Freudian psychoanalysis as insufficient when it comes to cultural and political phenomena. In contrast, his own research—heavily influenced by Bachofen and Klages—analyzed the present from the perspective of Eros (*The Function of the Orgasm*, 1927) and character analysis (Character analysis, 1933).⁵⁷ Both works criticized the German bias toward a patriarchic and authoritative figure, on the one hand, and the tradition stemming from Gustave Le Bon’s *La psychologie des foules* (1895), on the other hand. In 1927 Reich wrote:

Since the emergence of patriarchy, the natural pleasure of work and activity has been replaced by compulsive duty. The average structure of masses of people has been transformed into a distorted structure marked by impotence and fear of life . . . [T]his distorted structure not only forms the psychological basis of authoritarian dictatorship, it enables these dictatorships to justify themselves by pointing to human attitudes such as irresponsibility and childishness.⁵⁸

⁵³ Hannah Arendt came close to Klages’s claim but with the opposite ideological conclusions; she recognized Aristotle as the creator of a Western *bios politikos*, which she tied to the concepts of *praxis* and *lexis* (speech), the cornerstones of modern democratic politics. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958), pp. 12, 25.

⁵⁴ Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, in *Samtliche Werke*, vol. 2 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1966), p. 866. This passage first appeared in a much shorter book entitled *Geist und Seele*, which Klages published in 1918; he integrated much of that book into *Der Geist* in 1929.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 867.

⁵⁶ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, Deutsche Literaturarchiv am Marbach (henceforth DLA), Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁵⁷ This was the same Bodeschule für Körperziehung München, in Schloss Nymphenburg, still known to many Bavarians: <http://www.bode-schule.de>.

⁵⁸ Bode summarized his philosophy as follows:

The two works prefigured Reich's more comprehensive integration of a Bachofenic theory in his *Mass Psychology of Fascism* (1933). In this work Reich described those who were to succumb to the power of fascist patriarchalism, "from Social Democracy and the liberal center parties," to be, "without exception, revolutionary minded masses who were either nonpolitical or politically undecided prior to this."⁵⁹ His analysis of this cultural revolution relied on the "sex economy" of fascist patriarchalism, but also emphasized how much Bachofen suits both the communist as well as the fascist thinkers:

Matriarchy, which is a historically demonstrated system, is not only in accord with the organization of natural work democracy, but also with the society organized on a natural, sex-economic basis. Patriarchy, on the other hand, not only has an authoritarian economy, its sexeconomic organization is catastrophic . . . It was for this reason that Bachofen's findings threatened to make hay of tradition.⁶⁰

It is curious that Reich advanced his argument via a comparison between Nazi ideology and Bachofen's matriarchy, commenting about the reactionary philosopher of life, Alfred Rosenberg, and his "ethnology" that "favor[ed] the patriarchal theory" against matriarchy. Reich put it succinctly:

Patriarchy . . . has not only an authoritarian economic organization, but also a catastrophically chaotic sex-economic organization. The church—far beyond the period of monopolization of science—continued to keep alive the metaphysical thesis of the "ethical nature of man," his inherent monogamy, etc. For this reason, Bachofen's findings threatened to turn everything upside down. The amazing thing about the sexual organization of matriarchy was not its completely different blood relationships but its natural selfregulation of sexual life. Its real basis was the absence of private ownership of the social means of production, as shown by Morgan and Engels. Rosenberg, as a fascist ideologist, must deny the historical fact of the origin of ancient Greek culture in matriarchal forms of culture . . . Fascist ideology (in contrast to Christian ideol-

1. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind Bewegungen des ganzen Körpers. Niemals beobachten wir eine isolierte Bewegung (Prinzip der *Totalität*).

2. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen verlaufen rhythmische, d.h. sie nehmen ihren Ausgang von den grossen Körpermuskeln . . . (Prinzip der *Rhythmik*).

3. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind aufeinander abgestimmt, so dass bei geringstem Kraftaufwand die grosste Krafwirkung erzielt wird. Dieser Abstimmung entspricht die Abstimmung im Formverhältnis der Körperteile zueinander (Prinzip der *Form*).

4. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit langsamen Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem entspannten Muskelzustand und münden wieder in diesen (Prinzip der *Entspannung* oder der *Schwere*).

5. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit schnellem Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem Gleichgewichtsverhältnis antagonistischer Muskelspannungen. Die Bewegung entsteht durch Spannung der einen Muskelgruppe und Entspannung der anderen (Prinzip der *Vorbereitung*).

Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁵⁹ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 127.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

ogy) separates human orgasmic longing from the structure created by the authoritarian patriarchy and assigns it to various races.⁶¹

Wilhelm Reich was not the only popular name among those critics of Freudian psychoanalysis who adopted Bachofen as their guide. In fact, the impact of Bachofen's critique—as mediated by Klages—was so strong that one finds it decades later in Erich Fromm's *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis* that dismisses Freud's neurotic ego when arguing that old libido psychology should be replaced by the rebellious, romantic psychology of Bachofen. Fromm wonders what gives Bachofen's psychology its overarching and transpolitical power and answers by relating the Bachofenic matriarchy—implying also his critique of phallocentrism—to a universal biological fact, while applying patriarchy to the limited institutional interest or an individual self. In Bachofen's words, "Maternity pertains to the physical side of man, the only thing he shares with the animals; the paternal-spiritual principle belongs to him alone."⁶² Moreover, it is the "maternity that links humanity to nature, the cosmos, and it is maternity that truly strives for justice on the basis of equality."⁶³ Bachofen proved open to a whole new spectrum of interpretation. Klages, Fromm shows, chose to see Bachofen from the perspective of antirationality and anti-intellectuality, playing down Bachofen's protestant belief and emphasizing his resistance to idealism.⁶⁴ Alfred Baeumler, in contrast, saw in Bachofen only the patriotic perspective. Fromm rejects both of their views and instead, like Walter Benjamin, adopts Engels's view, which sees Bachofen as a critic of the patriarchic centralized institution. Bachofen's idea of maternity, Fromm writes, "brings to light psychic structures that are wholly different from those observed in our society; at the same time it throws new light on the 'patricentric' principle."⁶⁵

Fromm and Reich were not alone in turning elements of Bachofen's matriarchalism against established culture. In the following pages I discuss in detail Walter Benjamin's close reading of Klages as well as their correspondence, and I point at Emil Utitz and Salomon Friedrich

⁶¹ "Hitlerrummel mit allem Tamtam eingesetzt." Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, April 2, 1927, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 47.

⁶² Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, December 13, 1930, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 5. See also Erich von Ludendorff, *Weltkrieg droht auf deutschem Boden: Broschur* (Munich: Faksimile-Verlag, 1931).

⁶³ For the first, see the analysis of Laure Guilbert, *Danser avec le IIIe Reich: les danseurs modernes sous le nazisme* (Brussels: Complexe, 2000), p. 152. For the latter, see Rudolf Bode, *Angriff und Gestaltung* (Berlin: Widukind Verlag, 1939).

⁶⁴ "Das Ziel ist: Die . . . Bewegung hervorgehen zu lassen aus der Instinktiven Sicherheit in der Erzeugung natürlicher Bewegung, wie sie jedes Tier und auf jedes körperlich unverdorben Kind hat." Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁶⁵ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, p. 128.

Rothschild's further development of Klagesian Jewish characterology.⁶⁶ But before I explore the shocking reception of Klages's characterology, I explore its general background and context and how it developed into two opposite yet concurrent paths.

2. The type

Richard T. Gray's recent history of physiognomy supplies a clear and illustrative history of the roots of *Charakterologie* or anti-Freudian psychology and its ties to modern race theory.⁶⁷ After acknowledging Johann Kaspar Lavater's major role in physiognomy and "his most prominent nineteenth-century German successor, the naturalist and psychologist Carl Gustav Carus,"⁶⁸ Gray describes the two anti-idealists as the principal inspiration for the twentieth-century "marriage of physiognomics and German *Lebensphilosophie*" that he identifies as "pre-fascist, often proto-fascist."⁶⁹ During the early 1900s, writes Gray, Lavater and Carus represented a late-romantic, post-Nietzschean form of psychology, and during the 1920s they became the principal enemies of psychoanalysis. As Anthony Kauders puts it, from the perspective of Freudian psychology, "In theory, the response to psychoanalysis could have reflected the double nature of Freud's theory. For those who assaulted the 'rationalist spirit' could have embraced the psychoanalytic 'discovery' of the unconscious. And those who repudiated the many manifestations of *Lebensphilosophie* could have appealed to the enlightened nature of Freud's project."⁷⁰

Klages's *Prinzipien der Charakterologie (Principles of characterology)*, first published in 1910 but better known during the 1920s, serves here as a case study. As Gray points out,

[A]fter providing a long explanation as to why the "meaning" of psychology lies in "viewing the phenomenon *symbolically*," Klages claims: "with this turn [that is, to the symbolism] we return once more to the importance for psychology of the visual point

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, February 6, 1941, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8373, letter no. 17.

⁶⁸ For Bode and his role see also Tobias Schneider, "Ideologische Grabenkämpfe," pp. 283-284.

⁶⁹ "Denn theoretisch habe ich immer und immer betont, dass die einseitige Unterjochung des Körpers unter die Gewalt des Geistes, genannt 'Körperherrschaft,' die Gefahr einer Verflachung und Vernegerung des Seelischen in sich birgt, denn alle Zweckhaftigkeit ist zielstrebig und nur in einseitig eingeeengten Bahnlängen vollzieht sich der 'Störunglose' Ablauf der Bewegung . . . Dieses verläuft aber nicht in zielstrebigsten Bahnen, sondern in rhythmischen! Und praktisch habe ich das Übermass der Zielstrebigkeit bekämpft, indem ich die Schwindung, jenes geheime Vibrieren, das den Menschen nicht nur mit dem Menschen, sondern auch mit aller Natur verbindet." Rudolf Bode, "Körpererziehung und Kultur," in *Der Rhythmus, Zeitschrift für gymnastische Erziehung Mitteilungen des Bodebundes* 5:3 (July-September 1927): 99.

⁷⁰ "[Die] höchste Offenbarung . . . zum Grundprinzip aller körperlichen Bildung machte und dessen Wiedererweckung als das eigentliche pädagogische Problem der Gegenwart aufstellte." Ibid.

of departure. As defined here, psychology is understood primarily as morphology, a theory about the form of the psychic ‘organization.’”⁷¹

The advantage of historicizing such seemingly marginal preracial theories is that it allows one to differentiate much more accurately between the subdisciplines and their ties to a certain *weltanschauung*. “Psychology in Klages’s sense subsumes characterology, graphology, and the science of expression as distinct subdisciplines,” and in its broader conception it is understood as “semiotics of the physical world,” which point at the “body as communicative medium of the soul”⁷² and the structural principle of the individual as a “*Leitbild*, his or her exemplary or guiding image.”⁷³ Gray is correct in his observation concerning the mediality of the body in Klages’s theory, but wrong when he understands this medium in structural terms. Gray defines the type (*Typus*) in Klages’s *Lebensphilosophie* as a deduced rule: “[The type that is] governing this structural transformation determines what is ‘characteristic.’”⁷⁴ But Klages used the type on an analogical basis, as an *Urbild* (ur-image) that marked a convergence between the primordial and the recent and that was reproduced within any structure. Hence, it was altering the form from the inside and not forced from the top. The *Typus* was marking a threshold between suppressed recollections in the unconscious (the primordial Eros, for example, was suppressed by the later Logos) and their unacknowledged impact on one’s face, body, and living instinct, at any given moment. The typical meets the individual at those sites of struggle with, or acceptance of, such primordial forces. It does not govern more than it is governed itself. There is no linear relation, no realization, here. Klages’s psychology was an explicit attack on Freud, but it was also an attack on the Kantian metaphysics he thought he identified behind it.

⁷¹ “Alle Bewegungen müssen sich von innen entladen als rhythmischgeformte, in dem Sinn, dass die Bewegung von einem Zentrum aus auf den ganzen Körper überstrahlt.” Rudolf Bode, “Die Bedeutung der körperlichen Bewegung für die Erneuerung der deutschen Kultur,” *Rhythmus* 13, pp. 286-293. See also Norbert Hopster and Ulrich Nassen, *Literatur und Erziehung im Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1983), p. 53.

⁷² “Unsere Aufgabe als Hochschullehrer ist es, sie zu gestalten: eine neue Erkenntnislehre, eine neue Ethik, die Wissenschaft der uns artgemässen totalen Lebensordnung unseres Volkes.” Hans Lohr, “Wesen und Sinn der nationalsozialistischen Akademie des NSD-Dozentenbundes der Christian-Albrechts-Universität,” in *Kieler Blätter*, no. 1 (1938): 40. Quoted in Monika Leske, *Philosophen im “Dritten Reich”, Studie zu Hochschulkund Philosophiebetrieben im faschistischen Deutschland* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1990), p. 81.

⁷³ “Sprache ist nicht bloss äussere Form, gute Sprache nicht Schmuck des Lebens, sondern Ausdruck der volkischen Denkform und Denkweise. Darum bedeutet Zucht der Sprache zugleich Zucht des Denkens und des Charakters.” Ernst Krieck, *Dichtung und Erziehung* (Leipzig: ArmanenVerlag, 1941), p. 147.

⁷⁴ “Die Sprachgesetz des Volkes . . . seiner besonderen *Lebensaufgaben* und seines eigentümlichen *Lebenssinns* kommt.” Ernst Krieck, *Die Wirklichkeit*, vol. 1 of *Volkisch-politische Anthropologie* (Leipzig: Armanen, 1936), p. 39 (emphases in the original).

3. Principles of characterology

When Klages started working on characterology in the early 1910s, very few theories had been developed in this field. But in the mid-1920s, when Klages was at the peak of his fame, his characterology was considered a principal inspiration to different schools, among them Gestalt psychology.⁷⁵ By the end of the decade, the number of publications about those new sciences had multiplied by the thousands, and their authors seemed to offer the most innovative and radical voices in psychology and psychiatry. As Kurt Danziger shows, during the 1910s and 1920s the ratio of published group psychology works to individual psychology works was 2:1, the majority of such essays grounded in a typology of one sort or another. The percentage was even higher in the United States, where group psychology was occupying about 80 percent of the professional publications.⁷⁶ The uniqueness of the German work in group psychology, however, was its often-mentioned relation to *Lebensphilosophie*. As many psychological and psychiatric publications of the 1930s illustrate, Klages's psychology of life was essential for the depth psychology of the time, for the different typological classifications of groups, and for a general attempt to relate individual psychology to human drives, instincts, and the fascist cult of death.

The close contact between life and death stood at the heart of Klages's psychology. The way an individual or a group treated the life-death axis formed its whole sense of living, character, and expression. What is the relationship all about? Klages's characterology demonstrates how the community, especially a myth-oriented one, allows one to overcome the regular boundaries between life and death. According to Klages, death is not the end point, nor a solution to the riddle of life, but a constant point of reference, like heart beats or the short intervals between them, the presence of absence in one's life, a true universal language. "Bachofen discovered," he wrote, "[that] the rebirth of the life of the gods is created when one god sacrifices another. Immortality, which the Pelasgians believed in, makes death the condition of life. It renews the essence. Every appearance is the rejuvenated image of something past, that is to say, life circles back into itself. Immortality, as the Pelasgian people believe."⁷⁷ Klages, then, drew a line that links his ontology of images with prehistory on one end of the line and to modern collective memory on the other; he also linked Bachofen to himself, as the two philosophers of this ontological temporality.

This, Klages argued, is the time of life (*Lebenszeit*), which he tied to the shape and roots of a community. If life is always the wholeness (*Ganzheit*) of movement, time here is the movement of movement, the thinking of thinking, illustrated by its never-endingness that represents the *aporia* of life. *Lebensphilosophie* does not try to resolve this *aporia*, but to describe it, classify it according to types, and possibly to radicalize

⁷⁵ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 231, 238.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁷⁷ Ernst Cassirer, *Zur Metaphysik der symbolischen Formen, Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1995), p. 24.

it from the perspective of the group. This attempt is the reason for the totalizing of experience: life as a whole must reach for the extreme to understand its limits and to transcend them. Life, much like an identity, must be there in order to be transcended.

Let me unpack this internal paradox a little. When Klages thought about typical personal characteristics, it was always with those ideas of radicalization of emotion: “*Rage* is directed toward annihilation; *stupor* toward orientation; *inclination* toward unity; *happiness* toward delight; *fear* toward fleeing.”⁷⁸ The end point is a total experience (*Erlebnis*) and an ability to grasp a certain wholeness. The path leads back to the inside, rather than to a realization or activation in the world, which is how a neo-Kantian sees it. Where these emotions meet reality is almost of no interest to characterologists, unless the outside changes the inner structure and experience of the individual. The reason, Klages claimed, is that the drives could be seen only in space or in movement, “by their orientation [*Richtung*] . . . toward their designed aim.”⁷⁹ Yet the very existence of a plan does not mean a necessity or a teleological course. The question of fulfillment or lack of it is, as he noted, more important as an indication to the process of signification and the particular emotion behind it.⁸⁰

From a psychological perspective, a character is to be deciphered by the traces it leaves behind or by the absence of traces, not its archive of successes and failures, which would presume life as an evolutionary course, which he accused psychoanalysis of adapting to.⁸¹ The classification of such facial traces starts from the type—a communal shared form of expression—and only then dives deeper into the individual expression as a necessary variation on a basic theme or line.

Since the early and mid-1920s, politics enters exactly here, where Klages started to identify evolution with progress, and both with the resistance to the soul and to life: “The idea of development [*Entwicklung*],” he wrote, “can be broken down into laws without a remainder.”⁸² In a dramatic stroke Klages linked science, politics, and psychology into one idea: “The science of the character,” he wrote, “means the characters of organic *Einzelwesen*, which one calls ‘individuals’ [*Individuen*], to use a foreign word. *Individuum* comes from *in-* ‘un’ and *dividuum* ‘divisible,’ and literally means ‘indivisible’ (*das Unteilbare* or in Greek *a tomon*). This presents a close look into the language.”⁸³ Through this etymological exercise, Klages demonstrated that the role

⁷⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 26.

⁷⁹ Peter E. Gordon, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 75.

⁸⁰ Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 53.

⁸¹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 33, 39.

⁸² Oliver A. I. Botar, “Raoul France and National Socialism: A Problematic Relationship,” a paper given to the Fifth International Congress of Hungarian Studies, Jyväskylä, Finland, 2011, p. 8. I thank Professor Botar for sharing this unpublished paper with me.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

of the characterologist is to restructure the whole relationship between the individual and the group, space and time, inner and outer reality. Hence, in contrast to how characterology is usually described, the purpose of the 1920s characterology was a revolutionary one in every possible way.⁸⁴

Central to characterology was the stability of identity, which Klages never questioned. Yet the characterological understanding of *i dentity* lacks a normal mediation of consciousness. Rather, it is grounded in a transhistorical set of aesthetic categories based on nature itself. “[J]ust as nature manifests opposites and polarities as expressions of identity, and just as the real and the ideal are merged in the Absolute,” wrote Klages, “so the organism contains the two polar principles of gravity and light (substance and movement), . . . which would yield total identity, where all differences would be obliterated.”⁸⁵ In the mid-1920s Klages abandoned the more specific empirical texts of the 1910s and explored their philosophical implications. Then already famous in Germany for his role in graphology, Klages continued to use his research in graphology to elaborate a theory of signs and aesthetics, which he was constructing on a literal-phenomenological understanding of the cosmos. “The first appearance of a sign,” he wrote, “is the appearance of a human face [i.e., the mother’s, above the baby’s eyes].”⁸⁶ This is where the baby learns his first conditions of character, based often on forms of resistance and affiliating an individual microcosm with external conditions perceived as a cosmic potential.⁸⁷ This is also where humanity learns intuitively the physiognomical types and expressions of feelings. The baby knows how to identify anger and fear way before he or she knows what they mean, so no interpretative agency is needed. Physiognomy, like our personality, is an intuitive practice. Following Bachofen and Nietzsche, Klages tried to find a hermeneutic retreat to the primal form—the child and the mother for every individual, the myth and collective symbols for the group, what Jung would later call the archetypes. When Klages compares those ur-images to the “sick” intellectual forms—Jewish, Christian, often homosexual—he always links them to an unstable notion of identity and an image of identity: “The hysterical type”—his code name for the “sick” intellectual forms mentioned above—“means the instability of instinctive life [*Tribsleben*] . . . [Its] image has no power, no rhythm, and no center.”⁸⁸

⁸⁴ Rene Romain Roth, *Raoul H. France and the Doctrine of Life* (Bloomington, Ind.: First Books Library, 2000), p. 176. France is also known as the inventor of the concept of biotechnology, which he identified with “the study of living and life-like systems” (p. 109).

⁸⁵ Botar’s paper traces the explicit references to France’s work among the artistic avant-garde of the 1920s, among them well-known names such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Fritz Neumeyer, Mies van der Rohe, and El Lissitzky.

⁸⁶ Oliver A. I. Botar, “Defining Biocentrism,” in *Biocentrism and Modernism*, ed. Oliver A. I. Botar and Isabel Wunsche (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 17–18.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁸⁸ “Rosenberg contra Klages,” see John Claverely Cartney, web-page editor, “The Biocentric Metaphysics of Ludwig Klages” in <http://www.revilo-oliver.com> (accessed July 16, 2012), quoted in *ibid.*, p. 30.

It is no wonder that Klages's psychology appealed to fascists. The central organ of Nazi psychology, the *Zeitschrift für angewandte Psychologie*, quoted Klages and relied on Klagesian typology as one of its canonical references. As I will show in chapter 6, during the late 1930s Klages and his school actively helped the Nazi regime in different ways, mostly based on his graphological and characterological research. For our purpose, in this chapter, it is essential to see not only where this discourse ended, but also where it began.

4. The dreams of an anti-Kantian: Ernst Platner

The characterological discourse belongs to the 1920s' impractical and antiKantian philosophy, wearing—within the limits of the psychological field—the robe of anti-Freudianism. “[S]ince Kant no small credit was taken for a renunciation of metaphysical desires,” wrote Klages. The object of modern psychology and psychoanalysis “is not man, but rational man, i.e., a being which can think logically and act in a utilitarian way. The mainspring of its investigation is not an interest in life . . . but in the capacity for thinking and willing, which is that of logic.”⁸⁹ Klages's characterology strove to renew a state of juvenile experience, total and timeless, or a dreamy state of hallucination. For that purpose, it regressed all the way back to the late 1800s and the beginning of romantic psychology.

In his biography of Klages, Hans Eggert Schroder claimed to have asked his master about the origins of his *Traumbewusstsein* (dream consciousness). In response, recalled Schroder, Klages named as his inspiration the book Emil Platner published in 1796, entitled *Philosophische Aphorismen*.⁹⁰ This was certainly a mistake, though a forgivable one; Klages must have meant the book with the same title that *Ernst* Platner published three years earlier. Platner was one of the founders of a popular, romantic strand of *Lebensphilosophie*, a critic of Kant, and the father of “pragmatic history.”

The first wave of resistance to Kant's philosophy took place during the early 1790s. Johan van der Zande has said of these writers that they were “bad Kantians” but not necessarily “bad popular philosophers.”⁹¹ Popular philosophers relied heavily on

⁸⁹ “Deshalb ist es kein Zufall, wenn auch unsere Einigung in das Jahr der nationalsozialistischen Erhebung fällt: Erst heute beginnt unsere praktische Wirksamkeit möglich und auch nötig zu werden . . . Der Schwerpunkt der NSDAP läuft wesentlich auf politischem Gebiet, die Ziele unseres Forschungskreises berühren die religiöse Sphäre. Infolge der gemeinsamen weltnanschaulichen Grundlage haben wir die Verpflichtung, die wirkliche Radikalität der nationalen Revolution dort zu wahren, wo der Politiker Vermittlungen sucht. Die staatliche Macht ist verpflichtet, dem kulturellen Aufbau Schutz zu gewahren, denn ohne ihn entbehrte sie ihres Inhaltes und überhaupt ihres Lebensrechtes.” Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Konv.: Prosa.

⁹⁰ Wolfgang Olshausen, “Ludwig Klages in Berlin, 1933,” unnumbered manuscript in the “Prosa” section, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages,

⁹¹ On this group, see *Hestia: Jahrbuch der Klages-Gesellschaft 1967/1969* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1971). The work is described as “lectures on the theme of language and its importance in the work of

rhetoric and on the Socratic dialogue, rather than the scholarly philosophical jargon that was Kant's bread and butter. According to van der Zande, the founder of this amorphous movement, Johann August Ernesti, demanded in 1754 the return of *Lebensphilosophie* to the universities and specifically the philosophy faculties. Johann Georg Heinrich Feder (1740-1821) established an even closer connection between the "philosophy of life" and a "philosophy of action" in 1782. Founded as "a protest in the name of 'life'" against modern science and universalism, this philosophy of life assigned to the "science of man" the ability to explain the other empirical sciences.⁹²

Platner's 1793 *Philosophical Aphorisms* was an enthusiastic response to Ernesti (Platner's foster-father), a plea for the use of language and its tools of representation for functions other than functionalist communication. This idea was grounded in "a strong belief in the correspondence between words (*verba*), and subject matter (*res*), and both in relationship to the audience."⁹³ Platner saw language not as Western philosophers had since Plato and Aristotle—namely, as a higher phenomenon, abstract

Ludwig Klages" and includes articles by Hans Eggert Schroder, Albert Wellek, Heinz Alfred Mueller, Hans Kasdorf, Françoise Wiersma-Verschaffelt, and Otto Huth. On Hirt's research see also the court sitting at Nuremberg that took place July 29 to August 8, 1946, at <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/tgmwc/tgmwc-20/tgmwc-20-198-04.shtml>.

⁹² "(1) Der Mensch gehört den beiden Reichen des Lebens und des Geistes an. Folgt er den idealistischen oder materialistischen Gesetzen des Geistes, dient er der logozentrischen, -setzt er die Mächte des Lebens als letzten Wert, dient er der *biozentrischen* Weltanschauung. Durch diese Entscheidung wird die Substanz des Menschen in ihrer *Existenz* und in ihrer Entwicklung bestimmt. (2) Mit besonderer Absicht verwenden wir die von Ludwig Klages geprägten Begriffe. In Klages erblicken wir den bedeutendsten Verkünder einer *Lebensphilosophie*, deren Unterströmung in die vorchristliche, germanische Zeit reicht . . . Gewiss mögen uns unter den lebenden Philosophen auch andere Namen bedeutungsvoll geworden sein, -kein Name besitzt eine Leuchtkraft wie derjenige *Klages*'. (3) Nie werden wir den zivilisatorischen Verfall unserer Kultur durch den Einfluss von *pseudo-radikalen* . . . durch den Einfluss von Ressentimentsgetriebenen Politikern ertragen. (4) Die selbstgeschaffene Bergung innerhalb einer Kulturgemeinschaft verlangt, die sich auf eine feste Hierarchie der Lebenswerte gründet, d.h. Blut- und Landschaftszusammenhang als Wurzeln unsrer Existenz anerkennt, -und entscheidendes Vertrauen auf die letzten bildenden Mächte des *Menschen*: Das Wunder, die Liebe, das Vorbild gesetzt. (H. Prinzhorn gibt in seiner *Persönlichkeitspsychologie* [1932] die eindringlichste Zusammenfassung einer biozentrischen Wirklichkeitslehre vom Menschen.) (5) Als allgemein verbindliche *Methode* unserer Forschung kann das hinweisende oder symbolische Denken bezeichnet werden. In den Ergebnissen der *Charakterologie*, die vor allen auf diesen Erkenntnisweg angewiesen ist, erblicken wir die Bedingung für eine notwendige Gesundung unseres Wirklichkeitssinn es . . . Hierbei sind wir davon überzeugt, dass unsere wissenschaftlichen Möglichkeiten weniger im atomisierten Spezialistentum, als *zwischen* den Einzeldisziplinen liegen." "Der Arbeits-Kreis für biozentrische Forschung (AKBF)," in DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Prosa, unpublished manuscripts (all emphases in the original).

⁹³ "Für das ihm innewohnende Vermögen der Wandlung und Erneuerung. Endlich waren wir solcher Art Physiognomiker, aber in einem tieferen Sinne als dem bisher mit dem Worte durchweg verbundenen. Wir fragen nicht mehr in erster Linie: welcher Vorgang folgt auf welchen andern? Sondern wir fragen . . . welche Lebensregungen *erscheinen* in ihnen? . . . Beharrung bedeutet zugleich Wiederholung; und aufgrund der Annahme von *Widerholungen des Gleichen* wird die Welt vom Geiste rechnerisch bewältigt. Allein die Wirklichkeit geht nur über jede von der Rechnung erreichte Dezimele unendlich hinaus." Ludwig Klages to Carl Haebler, January 10, 1935, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61/5117, letter no. 1 (emphases in the original).

and conceptual—but as something embedded in both everydayness and the history of human communities, not functionalist but still universal. There was nothing *a priori* in language, nor was it reserved for the realm of enlightened philosophizing. Platner found Kant’s abstract discourse unapproachable: “In the beginning, philosophizing only about philosophy: that marks the end of all selfsatisfied thought [*Selbstgenugsamkeit*].”⁹⁴ Like Ernesti, Platner wanted to simplify the aims of philosophy; he thought Kant’s ideas ought to be rendered more approachable, less encumbered by a specialized lexicon and more relevant to the mundane world.

At the center of his philosophical enterprise, Platner placed the key concept of representation, which he called “pragmatic” and “realistic.” But since Platner’s pragmatic realm included visions, the facts of the soul, it did not strictly correspond to the world as it is empirically described. Johann Gottlieb Fichte, who had likely been a student of Platner in Leipzig, explored this gap, in his *Lectures on Logic and Metaphysics* (1794-1802; supplemented in 1812), which amounted to a devastating critique of Platner’s opposition to Kant. Fichte’s idealist adumbration of the “I” that constructs others as the “not I” eventually became, as shown in the following pages, one of Klages’s targets. The pragmatists’ idea that the self came into existence through a series of reactions against others caused an academic uproar and convinced Fichte to shift to “genetic description,” a more linguistically grounded approach later exploited by Husserl.⁹⁵

Although Kant exerted a tremendous influence on Fichte and the phenomenologists of the 1920s, Platner came from the opposite direction. His theory of psychology was grounded in the tradition identified with the Leipzig school, which included such names as Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716), Christian Wolff (1679-1754), and, later, Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), the father of modern German folk psychology who was often referred to as the German William James. Later affiliates with this school of thought include Hans Driesch, the father of biological philosophy, during the 1910s and 1920s. Kant viewed humans from an ethical and rational perspective—all humans were free agents, judging and deciding for themselves—yet Platner’s aphorisms described humans as composed of a given and a reaction, and human actions were seen in terms of their relation to their environment or surroundings (*Umwelt*), a concept that would be revived by vitalist biology during the early 1920s. Platner was among the first writers to assign a specific consciousness to the dream state, a fundamentally different idea from the Cartesian view of dreaming as beyond the philosophical boundary of reality. “Without this constant contribution of thought, and through the lone influence of those laws,” wrote Platner, “the soul would contribute nothing to the thought process; it would be an afflicted spectator of the game of the imagination and the succession of

⁹⁴ Christian Eckle, “Erbcharakterologische Zwillingsuntersuchungen,” in *Beiheft zur Zeitschrift angewandte Psychologie und Charakterkunde*, ed. Otto Klemm and Phillip Lersch (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth Verlag, 1939), p. 11.

⁹⁵ Julius Deussen, *Klages Kritik des Geistes, mit 7 Figuren und einer monographischen Bibliographie Ludwig Klages und einer Bibliographie der biozentrischen Literatur der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1934).

images awakened therein. This is really what happens in dreams and in related states; it is also [what happens] in young children and quite likely in animals.”⁹⁶

Unlike Kant, Platner defined time as “the art of presentation, according to which things appear [*erscheinen*] and are considered as being[s] [*sayend*] that exist at the same moment. As long as time is the basic concept, an attribute of all meaningful presentation, . . . it does not permit anything to be categorized as outside of experience [*Erfahrung*].”⁹⁷ If Kant saw *Erfahrung* as complete unto itself, for Platner it was but one reflection of reality. In her research of the origins of popular *Lebensphilosophie* at the end of the eighteenth century, Gudrun KuhneBertram demonstrates that Platner was only a representative of a much

larger movement of a “*Biosophie*,” (biophilosophy) that identified the resistance to Kantianism and “scholasticism” or “schooled philosophy” [*Schulphilosophie*] with immediacy, “the results of experience,” and the “*Urbild* of humanity.”⁹⁸

5. Dream time

A short while after finishing his *Prinzipien der Charakterologie*, Klages moved to an explicit discussion of the philosophy behind it. The concept of *Rausch* (ecstasy, intoxication) is a good example for the inherent ties that unite *Lebensphilosophie* and *Charakterologie*; it appears first in a section of *Von Traumbewusstsein* (On dream consciousness),⁹⁹ the theory of dreams that occupied him for much of 1914. In response to both Freud’s detective work and the Nietzschean *Übermensch* (superman), Klages blurred the boundaries between dreams and reality and explained how dreams served as the total expression of emotions and sensations of the world. Dreams have an alternative and primordial sense of reality that rational people have lost. The only lived experience of this primordial notion of time is in either *Rausch* or the timeless state of the child. In a long digression on William James, the father of American pragmatism, Klages praised James’s insights into childhood intuition as the ideal type of understanding.¹⁰⁰ Childhood, which lacks an exact notion of time and space, was for Klages the absolute “dream time,” a time of total repetition and the possibility of true ecstasy.

Without a clear notion of a beginning or an end, dreaming is the result of a multiplicity and simultaneity of worlds. It cannot be intellectually understood and must

⁹⁶ A. Abbott, “German Science Begins to Cure Its Historical Amnesia,” *Nature* 403 (2000): 474-475; William E. Seidelman, “Science and Inhumanity: The Kaiser-Wilhelm/Max Planck Society,” *Not Now: An Electronic Journal* 2 (Winter 2000), <http://www.baycrest.org/journal/ifnot01w.html> (accessed February 12, 2013).

⁹⁷ Julius Deussen to Joachim Haupt, July 11, 1933, DLA, Nachlass Julius Deussen, doc. no. 7, file 6.

⁹⁸ Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 2007), p. 19.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁰⁰ Petra Gehring, *Was ist Biomacht? Vom zweifelhaften Mehrwert des Lebens* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2006), p. 222 (emphases in original).

be experienced. If it sounds all too vague, one has only to recall the language of rave culture and dance clubs since the early 1990s.¹⁰¹

In *Walter Benjamin and the Antinomies of Tradition* John McCole explains Klages's—and Benjamin's following him—interest in dream consciousness in the following way.

To begin with, dream consciousness lifts the separation between the subject and object of perception, between the ego and things. The fleetingness of appearances in dream moods corresponds to a “restless mutability of all images” in dreams themselves. Dream reality has a “protean character” similar to the “mythic art of metamorphosis” in which figures flow and blend into one another . . . As the barriers between subject and object go down, the separation between “here” and “there” in space loses its force along with the distance between “now” and “then” in time. What replaces them is a “perpetual present with a boundlessly mobile now-point” and a “boundlessly mobile here.”¹⁰²

According to McCole's acclaimed work, Benjamin's fascination with Klages was kindled by this theory of dream consciousness and *Rausch*, and it stands behind much of Benjamin's career, from his dissertation to the works of the early 1920s, the essay on surrealism in 1929—“Benjamin's reckoning [has] been directed at a figure behind Aragon . . . [T]hat figure was Ludwig Klages”¹⁰³—and up to his preparation for the writing of the *Arcades*, his last unfinished piece, reviving itself the earlier critique from 1929 and the accusation that the surrealists “harbored an inadequate notion of the nature of intoxication.”¹⁰⁴ What made this work so powerful for Walter Benjamin?

The construction of dreams, Klages explained in 1914, is utterly divorced from conscious mental operations. Rather, it is a byproduct of the bodily tasks that reflect the functioning of the universe itself and a sense of primordial time that knew no differences, or *things*, and was characterized by constant movement and the fluid world of dreams. He wrote, “We meet at this point all the great mythologies, which are infatuated with the indecisive, the fantastic, and the demonic.”¹⁰⁵ One wonders if, by including the indecisive, Klages was trying to emphasize the open hermeneutical potential of the body.

¹⁰¹ Agamben, *The Open*, p. 37.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Samuel Weber, “Bare Life and Life in General,” in *Gray Room* 46 (Winter 2012), p. 20. Sam Weber's article is an exceptionally precise analysis of the concept of “bare life.” However, in contrast to my analysis of *Lebensphilosophie*, Weber's stress falls on the weight given to *life* and *death* within the antinomian relationship, in a post-Paulinian context, rather than the immanentization of death within life as a secularized form.

¹⁰⁴ “Schon beim stillen Nachsprecher dieser Worter durfte den Lesern und Leserinnen klar werden, dass die deutsche Volkerkunde seit 1945 ein terminologisches Problem hat.” Thomas Hauschild, “‘Dem lebendigen Geist,’ Warum die Geschichte der Volkerkunde im ‘Dritten Reich’ auch fur Nichtethnologen von Interesse sein kann,” in *Lebenslust und Fremdenfurcht, Ethnologie im Dritten Reich*, ed. Thomas Hauschild (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995), p. 22.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

Part 2 of *Von Traumbewusstsein*, published in 1919, was a further elaboration of the arguments presented in Part 1 but focusing more on the emotional effects of dreams. Taken as a whole, the essay is an apology for extending the boundaries of consciousness to accommodate the realm of dreams, a strong challenge to Kant (and Freud following him).

Klages's text implied a long philosophical tradition even as it reframed that tradition in a new and radical way, as a counternarrative to traditional romanticism. When *Von Traumbewusstsein* appeared in a special edition in 1952, Klages wrote an introduction in which he announced—in his typically pompous way—that the essay “summarizes no less than two thousand years of the philosophy of dreams.”¹⁰⁶

The dream is the rearrangement of the occurrence and its symbols, but now in an unconventional sequence of images, something quite different from the linearity of Freudian structures. Klages developed at this point a theory of phantasmagoria: “The boldest phantasms of the dream, so we are told, are separated into image elements [*Bildelemente*].”¹⁰⁷ Images, unlike narratives, cannot be completely explained and deciphered, nor forced into a historical narrative of explanation. Rather, it is the image that shapes history retroactively. This argument is why Klages started to emphasize the “reality of images” above all other perceptions of reality; the image became the basic ontological unit. The ancient power of ur-images, or of dreams, makes itself apparent in conscious reality through poetry and artistic creation: “[Art is made] not from actual experience [*Erfahrung*] . . . but from [the reflection of] ancient forms.”¹⁰⁸ After a general discussion of the nature of dreams, Klages inspected a series of passages from Gottfried Keller's *Green Heinrich*, a lateromantic novel that had long fascinated him (see chapter 2). This novel, he argued, was the best example of an artistic form that operated as “the annihilator of time” (*Vernichtiger der Zeit*) in its linear formulations, and that preserved “the stream of time” (*Verfluss der Zeit*) in its multidirectionality.¹⁰⁹ This idea is the heart of Klages's essay and the center of his phantasmagorial method of the *reality of images*.

Indeed, such ideas can be found in any of Benjamin's texts. One finds a surprisingly close reading of images as the raw material of experience and history in Walter Benjamin's *Theses on the Concept of History* (1940): “The truth will not run away from

¹⁰⁶ “Die Kraft körperhaften Sehens und Erfassen lässt sich entfalten . . . Der Wille, aus klarer Erkenntnis das Eigene, das Lebendig-Eigene aus eigenem Willen zu wirken, scheint mir ein Kennzeichen unserer Gegenwart und mehr noch ein Anzeichen und Vorzeichen der Zukunft zu sein.” Hans Gunther, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, vol. 1 (Munich: Lehmann Verlag, 1939), p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ “Aus einem Zeitalter der Not heraus wollten viele Denker der 30er Jahre die Zeit als solche besiegen und sich auf ewig in einer heilen, erlösten Menschheit fortzeugen.” Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰⁸ “Der Gedanke der kraftvollen und lustvollen Eroberung der Zukunft, aber auch die Sorge um eine als ‘krank’ und bedroht empfundene Gegenwart ist Reich und Gunther, oder auch: Marcuse und Junger, Adorno und Klages gemeinsam. Gemeinsam ist vielen Denkern der 30er Jahre auch die Bindung ihres Denkens an Motive der Lebenslust . . . die Suche nach einem naturwuchsigem Ursprung, zu dem zurückzukehren gilt.” Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

us': this statement by Gottfried Keller indicates exactly that point in historicism's image of history where the image is pierced by historical materialism. For it is an irretrievable image of the past which threatens to disappear in any present that does not recognize itself as intended in that image."¹¹⁰

The creative power of images led Klages to a new formulation of the phantasm experienced in dreaming, a central concept for his essay and later for Walter Benjamin's writings.¹¹¹ As Michael Jennings reminds us, "the notion of phantasmagoria is tied to notions of elective psychology, a position Benjamin increasingly came to associate with protofascist writers such as Ludwig Klages and Carl Jung."¹¹² Werner Fuld drives the point home with his estimation that "[w]hat Benjamin liked in [Klages's] cosmological Eros [and the dream work which Fuld did not know about] was the rejection of Freud's theory; in a seminar in the winter semester of 1917-18, he criticized Freud using harsh words."¹¹³ Klages's work enabled Benjamin to position images as a counterforce to events and continuity of idealist historicism. Benjamin's theory of phantasmagoria, Margaret Cohen shows, owed to his understanding of dreams, which she affiliates, wrongly, with Freud. According to Cohen, "one plausible etymology for phantasmagoria is *phantasma agoreuein*, the ghosts of the public place or marketplace."¹¹⁴ Benjamin's historian, she contends, is a collector of images, mostly organized around social types, who works "as dialectical materialist, as Surrealist rag-picker, as Freudian dream interpreter . . . [T]hese images or phantasmagoria were not associated with a particular genre, media, or practice but rather scattered throughout what we have seen Benjamin call a 'thousand configurations of life.'"¹¹⁵

In accordance with Benjamin's stress on the phantasmagoric spectral quality of "an integral part of the dialectical image through which the past manifests itself in the present,"¹¹⁶ Klages's 1952 preface to *Vom Traumbewusstsein*, explained: "My description shows that the dream space [*Traumraum*] diverges from the waking space [*Wachraum*], and dream time [*Traumzeit*] from the waking time [*Wachzeit*]: dream space and dream time develop and ground the different cognitive signs [*Kennzeichen*]. Only once this assumption has been made can one truly understand the meaning of the dream."¹¹⁷ Plagued by insomnia for much of his life, Klages was referring here to

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 43.

¹¹² Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einfuhrung*, p. 31.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 40.

¹¹⁴ Mosse, *Masses and Man*, pp. 1, 15.

¹¹⁵ Currently, the best place to read Klages in English is the monumental work of translation done by John Claverley Cartney, an unidentifiable independent scholar whose name can be easily linked with some suspicious groups. See http://www.revilo-oliver.com/Writers/Klages/Ludwig_Klages_.html and the anti-Semitic http://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/index_.html.

¹¹⁶ Samuel Weber, *Benjamin's-abilities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 66.

¹¹⁷ "The classification of man into racial types according to groups of traits and the study of the transmission of physical traits and predispositions through heredity is a completely legitimate scientific endeavor because a part of total human existence is undoubtedly of animal nature and can be isolated

what was for him a nightly situation. His own dream time tended to be quite brief, as mentioned in chapter 1. Could his interest in *Rausch* have been the result of sleep deprivation, a physical phenomenon? Whatever the physical explanation, Klages made it a *weltanschauung* and a theory.

6. Walter Benjamin's reading in *Traumbewusstsein*

Psychoanalysis, as a reductive process, stood in sorry contrast to the creative power of *Rausch* and *Erlebnis* (ecstasy and living experience), especially because of the Freudian "unfortunate title of the Oedipus complex."¹¹⁸ This idea appealed to revolutionary thinkers like Benjamin.¹¹⁹ For him, Klages's theories were another window opened onto the "primal past." "In the dream in which each epoch entertains images of its successor," he wrote, "the latter appears wedded to elements of primal history [*Urgeschichte*]¹²⁰—that is, to elements of a classless society. And the experiences of such a society—as stored in the unconscious of the collective—engenders, through interpenetration with what is new, the utopian that has left its trace in a thousand configurations of life, from enduring edifices to passing fashions."¹²⁰ There is little doubt that Benjamin first encountered the concepts of *Rausch* and nonlinear dream images, both vital to his phantasmagoria, in *Von Traumbewusstsein*. He obviously took a particular interest in the essay, since he wrote to Klages late in 1920 to inquire about the promised second part.¹²¹ Klages's reply, unpublished until now, harks back to their first meeting in 1914. In his reply Klages not only offered Benjamin the reading he was inquiring about and other references, he also indirectly suggested a meeting in Berlin later that year.¹²² There is no evidence that the two men met at that time, but the correspondence continued. Not many Benjamin experts have paid attention to this extraordinary connection that lasted for almost 20 years and contributed a great deal to Benjamin's vocabulary if not his analysis.¹²³ John McCole, one of the few who placed this relation-

as such." Eric Voegelin, *Race and State*, trans. Ruth Hein (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), p. 34.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 82.

¹¹⁹ "Um die Auffassung des Gesprochen . . . Rede und Schrift aufgefasst als *hervorbrechender Lebensmoment* und zugleich als Tat, also nicht bloss als Dokument, sondern als active, aktuelle Ausserung des Lebens." Ibid., p. 112 (emphasis in the original).

¹²⁰ Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister, Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2009), p. 72.

¹²¹ Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Munich: Duncker and Humblot, 1918).

¹²² Rudolf W. Meyer, "Bergson in Deutschland, Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Zeitauffassung," in *Studien zum Zeitproblem in der Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts*, *Phänomenologische Forschungen* 13, ed. Ernst Wolfgang Orth (Munich: Verlag Karl Albert, 1982), vol. 13, pp. 10-89.

¹²³ "Der Kosmos lebt, und alles Leben ist polarisiert nach Seele (Psyche) und Leib (Soma). Wo immer lebendiger Leib, da ist auch Seele; wo immer Seele, da ist auch lebendiger Leib. Die Seele ist der Sinn des Leibes, das Bild des Leibes die Erscheinung der Seele. Was immer erscheint, das hat einen Sinn; und

ship at the heart of Benjamin's theory of dreams, images, and history, explained it in Benjamin's "pains to delineate romantic doctrines against organicism, subjectivism, and charismatic genius—in short against all attempts to place the romantics' tradition at the service of vitalism and *L'ebensphilosophie*."¹²⁴

One wonders what could have united an apolitical, conservative, romantic autodidact with an urban sophisticate highly alert to politics and culture. Most obviously, the two shared a deep aversion to norms and easy solutions. Both chose to supercede norms and limitations by a fusion of the categories and a dream-like logic that psychoanalysis tried to fix and rationalize. In March 1925 Klages wrote to one of his followers, the psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn, "To the psychoanalysts, who are without exception lascivious petit bourgeois, it seems as if the sexual drive is a definite singular, and character is an indefinite plural."¹²⁵ As an alternative Klages offered the paradoxical relation between singular and plural, proximity and distance: "Since the relation between the here and now works always through a tension, it becomes a back and forth movement . . . We lose a sense of singularity in this relation, having been drawn further back; the I loses its place [*Ort*], and is drawn into the distance [*ins Ferne gezogen wird*], . . . as if it makes the distance and the one-ness *present* only so [*als welcher allein das Dort und Einst gegenwartig macht*]."¹²⁶

Benjamin followed such ideas with his own version of distorted space and dream logic, most apparent in his experiments with hashish. As he reported in 1928, "The idea of closeness of death came to me yesterday, in the formula: death lies between me and my trance."¹²⁷ In the betterknown "Hashish in Marseilles," Benjamin claimed that "all this [altered sense of space and time] does not occur in a continuous development; rather, it is typified by a continual alternation of dreaming and waking states, a constant and finally exhausting oscillation between totally different worlds of consciousness . . . All hits the subject reports in a form that usually diverges very widely

jeder Sinn offenbart sich, indem er erscheint. Der Sinn wird erlebt innerlich, die Erscheinung ausserlich." Ludwig Klages, *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*, in *Samtliche Werke*, vol. 3 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1974), p. 390.

¹²⁴ "Der Nihilismus jedoch der Kantischen Formel lasst, wie wir sehen werden, den der Eleaten noch hinter sich!" Klages, *Der Geist*, vol. 1, p. 57. Two-and-a-half pages later Klages also identifies Kantianism with the "kapitalistischer Unternehmer," that is, capitalist enterprise. See *ibid.*, p. 60.

¹²⁵ Benjamin plays here with the Jewish bible and Goethe's *Faust* simultaneously. But *logos*, the word, its sense of beginning or end, are all embedded in his understanding of life as pure language, taken from the tradition that ends with Holderlin and George. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Selected Writings*, vol. 1: 1913-1926 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 260-261.

¹²⁶ "Schlagen wir in einem beliebigen Worterbuche, z.B. von Georges, nach. So finden wir unter dem Worte 'genius' das folgende: Genius, von gignere=zeugen, bezeichnet den uber die menschliche Natur waltenden Gott, der bei der Erzeugung und Geburt des Menschen wirkte, als sein Schutzgeist ihn durchs Leben begleitet und sein Schicksal bestimmte." Klages, *Der Geist*, vol. 2, p. 1278.

¹²⁷ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 348.

from the norm.”¹²⁸ Benjamin connects this experience explicitly to the experience of *Rausch*: “[T]he memory of the intoxication [*Rausch*] is surprisingly clear.”¹²⁹

What separates Benjamin and Klages is Klages’s resistance to political philosophy, his reluctance to acknowledge the impact his own philosophy and vocabulary had on political theories in spite of the clear racist implications his theory of types carried.

7. Philosophy of characterology

In a comprehensive essay about major currents of German philosophy, published in 1931, Arthur Liebert (1878-1946), a well-known neo-Kantian from Marburg, described philosophy of life as a deep-seated intellectual innovation that reacts to a fundamental crisis, a “crisis of idealism” in philosophical terms. Pairing it with realistic and existential philosophy, and the collapse of the political system, Liebert pointed out, “[I]t is necessary to understand the motives of the movement and to familiarize oneself with this notable ‘philosophy of life.’”¹³⁰

During the mid-1920s *Lebensphilosophie* became a quintessential discourse in different fields and disciplines, elaborating on the hermeneutics of both a collective self and a personal self. Liebert was interested in *Lebensphilosophie* as a philosophy of individual existence in the world, hence a philosophy of psychology and anthropology, and chose to focus on Edward Spranger, Ludwig Klages, and his follower, Hans Prinzhorn, as its prime representatives. All three contributed to Liebert’s view in two ways: first, they revived a romantic tradition of self that was eradicated with Freudian psychology and the sciences; and second, all three made an attempt to create a neoromantic psychology and philosophy of the self on the basis of modern images and aesthetics, trying to integrate some Freudianisms to a conflicting typology of the soul. As Liebert shows, all three had been influenced by Nietzsche’s antitraditional views and biological philosophy, and they identified any idealization of reality or its philosophical category, idealism, “as cowardice.”¹³¹ All three focus on a total living experience (*Erlebnis*) and an immediate contact to the landscapes, while resisting the “over-intellectualization” of positivism and “polluted” modernity.¹³² (For my purposes this discussion will focus on Klages and Prinzhorn only.) Principle examples of the idealists’ cowardice were social institutions and the bourgeois normative codes that neo-Nietzscheans despised. Admitting the power of *Lebensphilosophie* as a radical force that altered the view of both individuals and their view of the world, Liebert argued, charges philosophy itself with a new power of creation: “Realism and the philosophy of life in the most charac-

¹²⁸ “Wie viele Begriffe und Gefühle hat sie [die Sprache des Nazismus] geschadet und vergiftet!” Klemperer, *LTI*, p. 10.

¹²⁹ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 238-239.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

¹³¹ Junger, *Der Arbeiter*, p. 45. See also Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, p. 74.

¹³² *Ibid.*

teristic sense of the word is a tendency which sees in life not merely the source of all philosophical reflection but also the creative force which permeates all being. In particular life is the source of all human existence, producing man's nature and his modes of action."¹³³ In 1931 *Lebensphilosophie* was already fusing together the philosophical provocation of the early 1920s and the demand to action of the late 1920s, following the severe social, political, and economic crisis of the Weimar republic. In short, it became a political discourse.

Before exploring the final shift in *Lebensphilosophie* to a direct political action, however, let us clarify the nature of the ties that link together the individual and collective in a situation of bare existence.

Historically speaking, Liebert ascribed *Lebensphilosophie* to Julius Bahnsen (1830-1881), a forgotten founder of characterology, or its more modern form, Gestalt psychology, which he says was "for a long time overlooked, until it was introduced to a wider public by the characterology of Ludwig Klages."¹³⁴ Naturally, typological psychology, developed by Klages and Prinzhorn, "[d]raws into the circle of Sigmund Freud, not however without severe criticism, since [it] objects that psychoanalysis rationalizes the unconscious and therefore gives false representation of it."¹³⁵ In contrast to Freud, Klages's graphological characterization presumed that humans express themselves with written symbols and signs, mere images of reality: "The leading conception of his [Klages's] realistic psychology may be stated in his own words: 'Not things but images are animated; this is the key to all biology.'"¹³⁶

Liebert's essay followed a period of eager American reception of German philosophy. Not long before, Edgar Wind, Husserl's and Heidegger's student, gave a public lecture at Columbia University and identified philosophy of life as "a wave of irrationalistic metaphysics [that] swept over Europe."¹³⁷ What gave *Lebensphilosophie* its power during the 1920s? What named it as a contemporary intellectual fashion that integrated many perspectives from both political and philosophical sides? And finally, if it was so powerful, why did it vanish?

8. The reception of nineteenth-century psychology:

Carus (Hans Kern) and Nietzsche (Karl Lowith)

The final part of this chapter discusses the potential and failure of characterology, or what I would like to identify here as *biopsychology*, and its inherent ties to *Lebensphilosophie*. The radical erasure of boundaries that fused private and public, social

¹³³ Ibid., p. 35.

¹³⁴ Ibid., p. 36.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Arthur Liebert, "Contemporary German Philosophy," in *The Philosophical Review* 44:1 (1935): 41.

¹³⁷ Edgar Wind, "Contemporary German Philosophy," in *The Journal of Philosophy* 22:18 (August 1925): 480.

and communal forms, past and present, was the force that generated different forms of biopsychology and *Lebensphilosophie*, phantasmagoria and ur-images, from the early 1920s to the late 1940s. As Roberto Esposito explained in his *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*: “At the moment in which on one side the modern distinctions between public and private, state and society, local and global collapse, and on the other that all other sources of legitimacy dry up, life becomes encamped in the center of every political procedure.”¹³⁸ The transformation of romantic psychology into a collective biopsychology is an excellent case study.

The summer of 1923 was dry and glinting, with bright starry nights. It was followed by a long and icy winter. Klages reflected about the weather while situating and reviving the philosophy of Johann Jakob Bachofen, who with Nietzsche can be considered the most substantial challenge to historicism and idealist Hegelianism. A year after the publication of his *Vom kosmogonischen Eros* (1922), dedicated to Bachofen’s symbolism, Klages moved to further illustrations of late romanticism, focusing more and more on its psychology and its idolization of childhood and using Bachofen’s emphasis on matriarchy in order to undermine nationalist historicism and even more so the Freudian focus on the father and mature consciousness. By then, he had become so well known as an expert of the romantic sciences that he was asked to lecture in the most prestigious universities.¹³⁹ Offers to professorships were submitted every other year—and cordially rejected. One of the first came from Karl Jaspers, who was taken by Klages’s 1910 work, *Principles of Characterology*, and offered him a position in Heidelberg.¹⁴⁰

In the midst of his work on Bachofen’s philosophy in the mid-1920s, Klages published two other large essays. First was an introduction to the reprint of *Psyche* (1846) by Carl Gustav Carus. In his introduction Klages looked back a generation in the history of the soul, to Goethe and Carus’s time. The second essay was about Nietzsche’s psychology, which was published first in Emil Utitz’s journal of characterology and later extended and revised as a book in 1926.¹⁴¹ The following sections describe those essays and their significance to Klages’s worldview. While they differ in emphasis, methodology, analysis, and even style of arguments, both late romantics, Carus and Nietzsche, contributed much to the new discipline of characterology, sharing a close view of life as biopsychology. Klages saw himself as their intellectual offspring.

8.1. Carl Gustav Carus

¹³⁸ Roberto Esposito, *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, trans. Timothy Campbell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), p. 15.

¹³⁹ Klages was invited to give a series of lectures about Nietzsche at Munich University during the spring of 1920.

¹⁴⁰ Klages to Jaspers, July 27 and 29, 1914, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61. 5472/1, letter no. 2.

¹⁴¹ See Ludwig Klages, *Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches* (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1926); published first in article form in Emil Utitz’s *Zeitschrift für Charakterologie*, no. 1 (1924).

Carl Gustav Carus (1789-1869) was a respectable physician (since 1827 the Saxon king's physician in Dresden), a well-known romantic painter, and a theorist of colors and landscape painting. A well-educated man and intellectual, he integrated a study of the subconscious with a theory of universal signs—which Klages introduced to his readers in 1926 as “the most essential contribution to the research of character and our perception of space [*Raumanschauung*].”¹⁴² Klages contextualized Carus—known mostly as an early theoretician of medicine and a close collaborator of Goethe—as a predecessor of Nietzsche's psychology.¹⁴³ Without mentioning his specific intention, and probably thinking of Dilthey and Freud, Klages denounced all credibility for a “psychology of understanding,” using Carus's work to depict it as a “psychology without a soul.”¹⁴⁴

As Jutta Muller-Tamm shows in her comprehensive study of Carus, he utilized his interdisciplinary interest as a medical doctor, his research in comparative anatomy, his fluency in poetics and literature, and his theory of painting and images to advocate for the idea of “simple living [*das Lebendige schlechthin*].”¹⁴⁵ Grounding his argument in a “genetic method” that assumed “the idea of unity in nature as a whole,” Carus developed—following Goethe—a morphological method that shaped “the connection between art and science, as the knowledge of nature [*Behufs*].”¹⁴⁶ Carus used the same principles of observation to look at human nature and the landscape and turned them into a tight, inherent connection between the geographical surrounding and the human character, all organized around “the physiognomic-cosmological perception of landscape, built on the basis of ‘classic German geography.’”¹⁴⁷ Little wonder that Carus's genetic system found its way into modern psychology (in 1853 he published *The Symbolism of Human Gestalt*), modern anthropology, and theory of art. According to Muller-Tamm, a strong influence on the young Carus was the anti-Kantian anthropology of one Ernst Platner, whose 1772 *Anthropology for Medical Doctors and the Worldly Educated* contextualized the modern profession of medicine in philosophical terms. Platner taught Carus one of the important principles of his own later work, that is, the theory of *i nfluxus physicus*, “the belief that the psychic appearance is shown through the world of the body.”¹⁴⁸ Carus, who demonstrated a healthy critical inclination in his comments on Platner, developed and extended his “idea of the unconscious” [*Idee des Unbewussten*] into a romantic science and modern anthropology.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴² Ludwig Klages, “Introduction,” in Carl Gustav Carus, *Psyche*, ed. Ludwig Klages (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1926), p. i.

¹⁴³ Ibid., p. ii.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., p. iii.

¹⁴⁵ Jutta Muller-Tamm, *Kunst als Gipfel der Wissenschaft: Ästhetische und wissenschaftliche Weltaneignung bei Carl Gustav Carus* (Frankfurt: Walter de Gruyter Verlag, 1995), p. 30.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 32.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 38.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 60.

Carus's science of life led him, according to Klages, to conclude that "[t]he key to understanding the essence of conscious inner life [*Seelenleben*] lies in the region of the unconscious."¹⁵⁰ Once again, Klages found in Carus, as he did in Platner, a popular theorist of the night and darkness, of dream time and dream space, a poetic voice proclaiming that "the greatest part of the soul life occurs during the night in the unconscious."¹⁵¹ The philosophy behind Klages's assertion is one of *Dasein* (being), or, more accurately, of "a form of living *Dasein*, . . . a form with no matter, which reveals itself as lacking an idea that would determine it, [and] is an absurdity [*U nding*]."¹⁵² Carus was the first to actually replace scientific matter with images as criteria, the "eternal flow of appearances in the spirit, [which] contains only the present."¹⁵³ Klages would take from him his reality of images.

Just as Klages's republication (and introductory remarks) of Bachofen's work became inseparable from Klages's concepts and views, so did analyses of Carus derive from Klages. In fact, that many young scholars writing about romantic psychology in general, or about Nietzsche and Carus in particular, came to Klages for advice. One of those was Hans Kern, a young student writing his dissertation about Carus and romantic psychology under the guidance of Max Dessoir, himself a close acquaintance of Klages since the early 1910s, a wellknown philosopher of psychology, and an adviser of Alfred Baeumler. After writing to Klages in the fall of 1924, Kern received an invitation to visit, and he became an enthusiastic follower. In 1925, fresh out of the academy, Kern narrowed his neo-Kantian dissertation to a 20-page article he revised to incorporate a Klagesian *Lebensphilosophie* and published it in Klages's journal, *Zeitschrift für Menschenkunde* (*Journal for the study of man*). In it, he painted Carus with the strong, bright colors of romantic philosophy and psychology, which "began, approximately at the turn of the century, to attract attention in the general population, then later specifically within the various branches of so-called *Lebensphilosophie* . . . This was namely a research of *causes* that would lead, as Nietzsche correctly noted in his *Will to Power*, to a *regressus in infinitum*."¹⁵⁴ Following Carus and Nietzsche, and in contrast to different scientific perceptions—Kern gives Max Weber's paradigmatic

¹⁵⁰ "Der Schlüssel zur Erkenntnis vom Wesen des bewussten Seelenlebens liegt in der Region des Unbewusstseins." Klages, "Introduction," in *Psyche*, p. vii.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. i.

¹⁵² "[E]in lebendiger Dasein . . . eine Form ohne irgendeinen Stoff, in welchem sie sich auspragte, und ohne irgendeine Idee, wodurch sie bestimmt wurde, ist ein Unding." *Ibid.*, p. viii.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. xvii.

¹⁵⁴ "Die Philosophie der Romantik, lange Zeit zum toten Hausrat gerechnet, begann etwa seit der Jahrhundertwende die allgemeine Aufmerksamkeit wieder zu erregen, denn innerhalb der verschiedenen Richtungen der sogenannten Lebensphilosophie . . . Diese war nämlich *Ursachenforschung* und fuhrte so, wie Nietzsche im 'Willen zur Macht' mit Recht bemerkte, auf einen regressus in infinitum." Hans Kern, "Die kosmische Symbolik des Carl Gustav Cams," in *Zeitschrift für Menschenkunde, Blätter für Charakterologie und Angewandte Psychologie* 1:4 (November 1925): 17.

“science as a vocation”¹⁵⁵ as an example—“the German youth has currently gathered enough power to rebel and find the new *Führer*, who would take a higher aim of life and promise us our one and only naked belonging.”¹⁵⁶

According to Kern, Carus’s importance was his *Biosophie*, which rejected Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling’s emphasis on (Kantian) awareness. Awareness, Kern warns, “was seen and grasped by Klages as the effect of *Logocentrism*.”¹⁵⁷ Carus, according to Kern, created a metaphysical system of “cosmic physiognomy,” grounded in the “cosmic rhythm,” and which sees all earthly creation as part of the flow of life, including rocks (“the crystal heavenly creation”), or rivers and their rhythmic flow, always “in relation to the whole earth (*Erdganz*).”¹⁵⁸ Carus was the one who turned our intuition toward the unconscious as constructed from primal images (*Urbilder*) that are felt before they can be uttered and are discussed mostly in the fashionable discourse of the time, the (vitalist) embryology. From the cell, or the embryo, “He took the universe to be shaped as a ball (whose center is everywhere, since it has no periphery),”¹⁵⁹ and hence fundamental to the qualities of any “plastic element” or the “organic plastic,” which Nietzsche would later adapt to his own aesthetics.¹⁶⁰

According to Klages and Kern, Carus fell short in one aspect: the importance given to death, which Bachofen would elaborate and explain later. Carus’s rhythmic and aesthetic view of the universe saw death as part of the scientific birth and death cycle, and therefore “clearly was not able to give it a metaphysical meaning.”¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, Kern concluded, Carus’s work can be considered as a “thinking of thinking [*Denken des Denkens*].”¹⁶²

In spite of their differences, Klages and his pupils were able to trace a counterhistorical line that united Carus and Bachofen with Nietzsche. Present historians of psychology are still committed to the view and mention Carus, Bachofen, and Nietzsche in the same breath when discussing the evolution of pre-Freudian subconsciousness. Henri Ellenberger, a well-known historian of psychiatry and psychology, presents Carus as the one who first “defines psychology as the science of the soul’s development from the unconscious to the conscious,”¹⁶³ leading to Bachofen’s symbolic soul, which was revived

¹⁵⁵ The phrase comes from a lecture Weber gave in Munich in 1918. The lecture was translated into English in Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 2004).

¹⁵⁶ Kern, “Die kosmische Symbolik des Carl Gustav Carus,” p. 17.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 19 (emphasis in the original).

¹⁵⁸ “[Z]u einem grosseren Organismus gehorig ist der Fels zu nennen mit seinen kristallinen fungen oder die Quelle mit ihren rhythmischen Stromungen in Beziehung zum Erdganzen.” Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 21.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., p. 22.

¹⁶² Ibid., p. 28.

¹⁶³ Henri F. Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), p. 208.

by the cosmics in Munich.¹⁶⁴ Carus's psychology, he argues, was based on a "genetic method, [which] was a way of connecting a primordial phenomenon with the metamorphoses . . . finding laws governing their connecting. Among other Ur-phenomena was the myth of Androgyne," which ties Carus—in Ellenberger's mind—directly to Plato's notion of Eros in his symposium.¹⁶⁵ Another well-known historian of psychology, Lancelot Whyte, argues in his *Unconsciousness before Freud* that Carus "seeks to derive all phenomena, as it were deductively, from a central principle of life, dimly conceived as the growth of forms. Carus's root principle is unconscious and holistic."¹⁶⁶ Both historians tie Carus to later contributions in psychology and to Bachofen's and Nietzsche's philosophy. All are seen through the looking glass of their influence on later generations, specifically Freud and his circle. The relation, however, should be one of opposition and dissenting, not the anachronistic presumption of linearity. In spite of Freud's interest in both Carus and Bachofen (Freud's library included works by both, as well as by Nietzsche), it was his rebellious followers—usually depicted as opponents of institutions of all kinds, socialists, and other dissenters—who embraced these alternative theories of symbols in nature and man. Carus became the hero of many opponents of Freud and the Jungian *Tiefpsychologie*: "Carus's unconscious is deep and is not influenced in its seed by stimulation. This, in fact, separates Carus's psychology from Freud's, who must have repeated himself, that he finds nothing religious (or 'oceanic') at the experiencing of the soul."¹⁶⁷

Ellenberger also points out how Freud's followers interpreted Carus: "Bachofen's influence reached Alfred Adler through the intermediaries, [the socialists] Engels and Bebel. Adler contends that the present oppression of women by men was an overcompensation of the male against a previous stage of female domination . . . As for Jung, he most probably had read Bachofen's main works, and his teaching is filled with concepts that may at least partly be ascribed to Bachofen's influence, such as those of the Anima and Animus, the 'old wise man,' and the 'magna mater.'"¹⁶⁸

When Klages explained the historical lineage that led from Carus to Bachofen to Nietzsche, he did so within the very terms of the formed discourse: "There is no doubt," Klages forcefully stated, "that Carus was on his way to the 'mothers.'"¹⁶⁹ Such innovative historical consideration has been made possible by the radical theories of the 1920s. Only a climate of cultural crisis enabled a drastic change of perspectives regarding a central and a key issue of German history: the relationship between romanticism and idealism. Klages and his circle disconnected the two and turned Carus, Bachofen,

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 222.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., p. 203.

¹⁶⁶ Lancelot Law Whyte, *The Unconscious before Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1960), p. 148.

¹⁶⁷ C. G. Graber, "Carl Gustav Carus als Erforscher des Unbewussten und Vorläufer unserer Seelenheilkunde," in *Zentralblatt für Psychotherapie* 3 (1941): 37. See also Bohleber, "Psychoanalyse," p. 517.

¹⁶⁸ Ellenberger, *The Discovery of the Unconscious*, p. 223.

¹⁶⁹ Klages, "Introduction," in *Psyche*, p. xi.

and Nietzsche's psychology against the idealist psychoanalysis, the psychology of the fathers.

8.2. Nietzschean Psychology

"If you have a character, you also have a typical experience that always comes back" wrote Nietzsche in one of the most frequently quoted citations of his *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886).¹⁷⁰ Klages constructed a more complicated network between those elements. Klages was obsessed with Nietzsche, his view of character, and his "eternal recurrence" since his early days in the George circle, and since the late 1890s he had held him almost in a sacred spot.¹⁷¹ He started seeing Nietzsche as central to all psychological narratives since the early 1900s, and he integrated Nietzsche's philosophy in his writing about characterology beginning in the early 1910s. According to Paul Bishop, "[I]n Nietzsche, Klages found a great 'Seelendurchschauer und Geisterkenner,' [the one who knows souls and intellects] whose philosophy 'dissolved' not just ethics but the 'intellectual phenomenon' itself, by relating it to its 'biological value.'"¹⁷² In 1919 Carl Albrecht Bernoulli seems to have decided to present Klages with a piece of this aura. He invited Klages to Basel on May 14, 1919, fifty years to the day since Nietzsche's inaugural speech at the University of Basel. Klages revised his lecture for the occasion into a large article and then into a book. He was so proud of this invitation that he mentioned it in his correspondence for years to come, long after he turned from Bernoulli in disgust. The weight of this invitation should not be underestimated, for Bernoulli had a very special position regarding Nietzsche's legacy. As Lionel Gossman explained, Franz Overbeck—Nietzsche's best friend and patron—and Bernoulli were debating a reductive, nationalistic popularization of Nietzsche, conducted first and foremost by Nietzsche's sister: "[O]verbeck strove for the rest of his life and beyond it, through the work of his student Carl Albrecht Bernoulli, to preserve a different picture of Nietzsche from that propagated, unfortunately with considerable success, by 'die Dame Forster,' as he [Overbeck] insisted on calling [Elisabeth Forster-Nietzsche, Friedrich's sister]."¹⁷³ Once again, against all odds, Klages was linked to a humanist tradition that resisted the sister's attempt to nationalize and make Nietzsche into an anti-Semite. Whether Klages comprehended this aspect, or was simply flattered by the honor given to him, he was still surrounded by different, antinormative thinkers.

In 1926, the same year he edited and published Carl Gustav Carus's *Psyche*, Klages also published his psychological interpretation of Nietzsche. In *Die psychologischen*

¹⁷⁰ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, part 4, citation number 70, trans. Judith Norman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 59.

¹⁷¹ Klages's comments on the margins express strong emotions, such as, "Jealousy, murder!" when Friedrich Nietzsche criticizes a youthful friend who was explaining about Wagner's music; or "incredible, horrible dictum!!" when Nietzsche portrays his school years as turning his youth to an empty waste of time. See handwritten inscriptions inserted in Klages's copy of Elisabeth Forster-Nietzsche, *Das Leben Friedrich Nietzsches*, vol. 1, in Klages's Library, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages: Bibliothek.

¹⁷² Paul Bishop, "The Reception of Friedrich Nietzsche in the Early Work of Ludwig Klages," in *Oxford German Studies* 31 (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 2002), p. 132.

¹⁷³ Gossman, *Basel in the Age of Burckhardt*, p. 418.

Errungenschaften Nietzsches (The psychological achievements of Nietzsche) Ludwig Klages followed those achievements of Nietzsche that he liked, mostly the countercultural framework, and criticized those he disagreed with, for instance, Nietzsche's will to power. As Steven Aschheim describes it, "for Klages, Nietzsche's psychological achievements were the demarcation of the battleground between Yahweh's ascetic priests and the orgiasts of Dionysius; his psychological sensitivity provided extraordinary illumination pursued through his relentlessly honest self-knowledge and unmasking [*Enttarnungstechnik*] . . . For Klages the aggressive and consumptive will to power was 'de-eroticized sexuality.'" ¹⁷⁴

In 1926 Klages's anti-Western—that is, anti-Christian and antiJewish—rhetoric did not seem self-contradictory when it met with a clear rejection of authority and naked power. His method advanced in a different way altogether: "If one thinks of the secret meaning of 'know thyself' the following is revealed: know in thyself the ur-image and the source of all being [*erkenne im Selbst das Urbild und den Quell alles Seins*]." ¹⁷⁵

Klages's interpretation of Nietzsche's psychology drew the attention of serious thinkers. One young student attracted to Klages's romantic psychology was Karl Lowith (1897-1973), a young Jewish conservative, Husserl's and Heidegger's student, who followed the latter to Marburg, where he was expelled by the Nazis—with Heidegger's support—in 1934. Among the major influences on his life, Lowith mentions "the formative power that radiated from the George circle," ¹⁷⁶ Max Weber's sociology, and Nietzschean and Heideggerean existentialism. Lowith's heretofore unknown correspondence with Klages during 1926-1927 accounts for the happy reception of Klages's Nietzscheanism. In his first letter to Klages, Lowith expressed his interest in Klages's characterology and its ties to Nietzsche's psychology. Following the publication of his own dissertation about Nietzsche's notion of eternal recurrence,

Lowith explained in correspondence that he was asked to review Klages's new book about Nietzsche. In a tiny, bug-like script, Lowith asked for a copy of the full text as well as other matters of advice. In his third letter, from March 1926, Lowith daringly asked Klages if he could arrange for a review of his own Nietzsche manuscript at Klages's journal. ¹⁷⁷ Klages responded favorably and in fact also offered him some books to review for the same journal. ¹⁷⁸ Moreover, in a letter from March 1927, Lowith began

¹⁷⁴ Aschheim, *The Nietzsche Legacy in Germany*, p. 81.

¹⁷⁵ Ludwig Klages, *Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1958), p. 24.

¹⁷⁶ Karl Lowith, *My Life in Germany before and after 1933: A Report*, trans. Elisabeth King (Athlone: University of Illinois Press, 1994), p. 19. For a critical reading of this explicit confession see Richard Wolin, *Heidegger's Children: Hannah Arendt, Karl Lowith, Hans Jonas, and Herbert Marcuse* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 84.

¹⁷⁷ Karl Lowith to Ludwig Klages, March 25, 1926, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.10787, letter no. 3.

¹⁷⁸ The first book Lowith reviewed was by one of the most important race theorists of the 1920s, L. F. Clauss. Lowith wrote a very fair review that tried to explore the advantages of Clauss's analysis and deny its most important claim, the one about the superiority of the Nordic race, "a dogmatic claim" that

discussing Dilthey's philosophy and psychology with Klages, and the letter concludes with a request to join Klages's seminar about graphology in Kilchberg.¹⁷⁹

Lowith worked on Klages's texts with all serious dedication. His essay about Klages's *Nietzsche's Psychological Achievements* can be justly counted among the best readings of Klages's psychology in general and of Nietzsche's influence on psychology in particular. Chapter by chapter, section by section, Lowith's refutation or affirmation of Klages's analysis argues, mocks, and finally admits its importance: "In the following we must investigate the extent to which Klages's science of appearances [*Erscheinungswissenschaft*] radicalizes the questions and answers of the contemporaneous *Lebensphilosophie*, especially that of Nietzsche."¹⁸⁰

Lowith's analysis of Klages deserves a short elaboration. Lowith starts the essay by pointing out Klages's resistance to all general concepts (*Allgemein-begriffe*). He determines Klages's *Denkmotiv* (thought motif or thread) as the one concerning the opposition between heart and mind (intellect and soul), and contextualizes Klages's work as a whole, from his 1904 George monograph and its "molding principle of *Rausch*."¹⁸¹ Interpreting Nietzsche on the basis of *Rausch* and *Lebensfülle* (fullness of life), Lowith shows, had directed Klages's attention to a certain aspect of Nietzsche's philosophy, equating him with the principles of *Ausdrucksbewegung* (movement of expression), which attests to a unity of body and mind, from the perspective of signs, or theory.¹⁸² Lowith explains Klages's method as polar dualism, which seeks unity and harmony on a metaphysical level, mostly by giving language a magical aura. The polarity is grounded in the principle "separation [that] Klages makes between the meaning of the word and the actual concept of the word."¹⁸³ That is, the conceptual frame of a word or an idiom is different from its literal meaning. Klages focuses on the latter, believing in the literal nearness of language and being. It is language, or words in particular, that pulse with the forgotten essence of life once pulsing in the body. Here Lowith himself seems to conform to what Jürgen Habermas called his "cosmology," usually incorrectly associated with Heidegger.¹⁸⁴ Lowith was accurate in his observation, in fact, providing a much greater sophistication than contemporary readers of Klages. In-

harks back to "a law of aristocracy." "At its best," he wrote, "it turns back to Nietzsche's psychological differentiation of human motivations." See Karl Lowith, "L. F. Clauss 'Rasse und Seele,' in *Zeitschrift für Menschenkunde* 2:3 (August 1926): 24.

¹⁷⁹ Lowith to Klages, March 25, 1927, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.10787, letter no. 9.

¹⁸⁰ "Wir werden daher im Folgenden vor allem nachzusehen haben, inwiefern Klages' 'Erscheinungswissenschaft' die Fragestellungen und Antworten der beizeitlichen Lebensphilosophie, insbesondere derjenigen Nietzsches, radikaler ausgebildet hat." Karl Lowith, "Nietzsche im Licht der Philosophie von Ludwig Klages," in his *Samtliche Schriften*, vol. 6 (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagbuchhandlung, 1987), p. 8.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 9. Lowith read the second edition. The book was first published in 1902.

¹⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 11.

¹⁸⁴ Jürgen Habermas, "Karl Lowith: Stoic Retreat from Historical Consciousness," in *Philosophical-Political Profiles*, trans. F. Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1981), pp. 79-98.

deed, Klages has fused his signs theory with the literal meaning of a pure language in many of his writings, especially when considering the need to reframe a new language of an authentic personality. Even in ancient Greek, he explains in his theory of personality, words that ended with a vowel *a* usually meant a sign, vital to any true character identification. “In earlier times, such words carried a symbolic or magical significance, which is why talismans in fairy tales are said to have secret characters engraved, i.e., signs that give them a magical vitality.”¹⁸⁵ Philosophy since the Enlightenment, or Kant, has neglected this essential key.

Lowith did not ignore Klages’s critique of Nietzsche. According to him, Klages criticized Nietzsche for his surrender to the metaphysics of the will, that is, for his admiration of power, traits which were taken blindly, in his eyes, by Heidegger (and Baeumler). For Klages, Nietzsche is a great thinker who shook up all normative thinking because of a “suicidal nature,” which is expressed in his negativity, the notion of *Nicht-Sein* (not being) and *Nicht-Haben* (not having).¹⁸⁶ Therefore, Nietzsche’s psychology is, for Klages, primarily engaged with a discourse of authenticity and loss of selfidealizations, with “the destruction of masking [*Destruktion der Maskierung*].”¹⁸⁷ Finally, according to Lowith, the appeal of Nietzsche’s constant retreat to a primordial past (and eternal return) is for Klages “a naturalistic use of ‘biology,’ ‘physiology,’ ‘body,’ etc. in the sense of a basic tendency toward a return to the nearest realities, in the sense of a concrete psychology (*Realpsychologie*) that takes into account vitalistic foundations.”¹⁸⁸

A life or vital Nietzschean psychology is inherently linked to a language of images and signs, as well as to a collective discourse of authenticity and immediacy. Benjamin was quick to point this out during the early 1930s, referring to Klages’s book as relevant to the new situation in Palestine.¹⁸⁹

To summarize, romantic psychology was for Klages the basis of his own characterology and science of expression. Moreover, in many ways, it supplied Klages with the roots of his metaphysics. Carus mentions the concept of logocentrism as early as 1857, accusing the West of completely misconstruing the inherent aesthetic difference between patriarchic cognition and aesthetic intuition. Nietzsche, like Carus and Ba-

¹⁸⁵ “[I]n der Herkunft des Wortes, das mit Ton auf der letzten Silbe und wie a gesprochenem e im Altgriechischen ‘Kennzeichen’ meint . . . Solche hatten aber in alter Zeit symbolischer oder magischer Sinn, wehalb es z.B. im Marchen heisst, dem Talisman seien geheimnisvolle ‘Charaktere’ eingegraben gewesen, d.i. Zeichen, die ihm eine zauberische Lebendigkeit liehen.” Klages, *Pers onlichkeit*, p. 145.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁸⁸ “In Sinne dieser Grundtendenz zum Ruckgang auf die nachstliegenden Wirklichkeiten versteht Klages Nietzsches naturalistische Redeweise von ‘Biologie,’ ‘Physiologie,’ ‘Leib’, usf. im Sinne einer konkreten, die vitalen Grundlagen in Rechnung setzenden Realpsychologie.” Lowith, “Nietzsche im Licht der Philosophie von Ludwig Klages,” p. 22.

¹⁸⁹ Walter Benjamin to Gershom Scholem, June 1, 1932, in Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Briefe*, vol. 4: 1931-1934, eds. Christoph Godde and Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1998), p. 100.

choben, “also held in his hand the Faustian key that promised to lead the way to the mothers.”¹⁹⁰

In May 1927 Hans Kern published another article in Klages’s journal, *Zeitschrift fur Menschenkunde* (where Lowith published as well), this time about Nietzsche and his romantic theory of the unconscious.¹⁹¹

Hans Prinzhorn and other Klagesians would follow suit the following year. The general approach of the Klages circle is on the design of “a whole different law of development,” and the intention to “shape a new image of man, a new psychology . . . It is time to follow him [Nietzsche] in his search and release this vision [Ausblick] into the present.”¹⁹² Alfred Baeumler must have listened to this plea as well as to the success of another member of the George circle who published a popular book about Nietzsche, celebrating and “lyricizing” him as a “great man,”¹⁹³ when he published his Nazi edition of Nietzsche in 1931.¹⁹⁴ Baeumler’s heroic and racial Nietzsche, a will-to-power Nietzsche, however, doesn’t match the Klages circle’s focus on Nietzsche as a lateromantic psychologist. The whole point about the revival of romantic psychology was the acknowledgment that life, life time, and meaning of life refer constantly to death as its being (*Sein*) and to existential fear as its motive of becoming. Unlike the Freudian death drive, the existential stress on the eternal recurrence shifts the discussion to the aestheticization of a circular, living experience.

Figure 4.1 Klages at his Desk in Zurich, ca. 1942. DLM: Nachlass Ludwig Klages.

9. The reception: Hans Prinzhorn, Emil Utitz and Salomon Friedrich Rothschild on biocentric psychiatry and Jewish characterology

Almost every psychiatrist in Germany in the 1920s knew Klages’s name, mostly thanks to the work of his disciple, Hans Prinzhorn (1886-1933). Anthony Kauders argues that Prinzhorn had attacked Freud since the mid-1920s—using Klagesian language—by “producing a mechanistic system that ignored or undermined the power

¹⁹⁰ Ludwig Klages, *Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches*, quoted in Paul Bishop, “The Reception of Friedrich Nietzsche in the Early Work of Ludwig Klages,” p. 151.

¹⁹¹ Hans Kern, “Friedrich Nietzsche und die romantischen Theorien des Unbewussten,” in *Zeitschrift fur Menschenkunde* 8:4 (May 1927): 107-116.

¹⁹² Hans Prinzhorn, *Nietzsche und das XX. Jahrhundert* (Heidelberg: Niels Kampmann Verlag, 1928), p. 13.

¹⁹³ Max Whyte, “The Uses and Abuses of Nietzsche in the Third Reich,” in *The Journal of Contemporary History* 43:2 (April 2008): 176. See also Ernst Bertram, *Nietzsche: Versuch einer Mythologie* (Berlin: Georg Bondi Verlag, 1920).

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173.

of life and animism, and, in doing so, psychoanalytic theory brought about ‘the danger of a chronic nihilism underlying the pathos of exact scientific knowledge.’”¹⁹⁵

Prinzhorn studied art history in Vienna and singing in London. He then shifted to the more practical discipline of medicine but was finally taken by the new findings of psychiatry. In 1918, after he was released from the army, he became an assistant in the Heidelberg Psychiatric Clinic, where he studied the clinic’s large collection of images of patients taken in different countries. Prinzhorn worked in sanatoriums near Dresden and then in Frankfurt before publishing *Artistry of the Mentally Ill* in 1922, which immediately made him famous. The book expounded a “biocentric” view that would later apply Klages’s environmental “mainspring” (*Triebfedern*), while rejecting most psychoanalytical assumptions. Its opening pages mention the impact that Klages’s *Lebensphilosophie* had on his analysis and diagnosis of patients:

Piderit, Darwin, Wundt, and later Croce and Kohnstamm have described the many ambiguities of expressive gesture. In general psychiatry it has become common because of Kraepelin to treat the disturbances of the expressive gestures as a unit in themselves. Only Klages, however, founded a complete theory of expression, much of which we accept. According to his theory, expressive gestures have the capability of so realizing psychic elements that they are communicated to us directly, as participants. Any motor discharge can be a carrier of expressive processes, not just voluntary movements, but also physiological [movements] reflect manifestations such as blushing.¹⁹⁶

Prinzhorn was trying to trace those unique moments of creativity of the mentally ill, and to spot through them the life force that motivated them. For that purpose he used the drawings of patients diagnosed with a variety of mental illnesses. What he called “configurations” had to connect the produced image to an ingrained inclination of the character, express the illness, and prove the creative power of life that burst through the illness or was empowered by it. His job was to analyze and classify the different types of configurations made by patients, who expressed their intuitive inclinations using colors, shapes, and free drawing. “Our conception of the nature of configuration,” he wrote, “is based mainly on Klages’s . . . [E]verything is discussed here only in the light of the central problem of configuration. This would not become altogether clear if we based our investigation of the creative process on an individual and expected to find the elements essential for future creation first in the chaos of individual life experience.”¹⁹⁷ The focus was again on the composition and the form as an expressive impulse, a trace of psyche. The method was to follow each individual form as a unique creation that makes its own laws and rules.

Prinzhorn’s book had a powerful reception from the artistic communities in Germany and France. He caught the attention of two of the most distinguished psychologists of the time, David Watson and William McDougall in the United States, and

¹⁹⁵ Kauders, “The Mind of a Rationalist,” p. 257.

¹⁹⁶ Prinzhorn, *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*, p. 12; originally published in 1922 as *Bildnerei der Geisteskranken*.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

he reported to Klages their enthusiasm of Klages's ideas about character. In 1926 Prinzhorn wrote to McDougall, urging him to appoint someone to translate Klages's *Prinzipien der Charakterologie*. After lecturing on Klages in Paris in 1929, he sailed to the United States to deliver more lectures on Klages at several universities—Yale, Duke, and Wisconsin—as well as Antioch College and St. Elisabeth Hospital in Washington, DC. (He also extended his visit to research narcotic effects in Mexico, conducted among Indian tribes, which changed Prinzhorn's anthropological view as a whole.) His lectures were not limited to psychiatry and characterology (always mentioning Klages as his principle influence), but extended to Nietzsche and other *Lebensphilosophers*. Here again the context is crucial. In a letter from February 1929 he told Klages that his psychiatric work was now combined with other principle philosophers of psychology, all belonging to the Baeumler group (by then already identified with the Nazi *Weltanschauung*): Manfred Schroter, Friedrich Seifert, and Edgar Daque. In May 1929 Prinzhorn reported to Klages about the Davos confrontation between “the young Heidegger and the old Cassirer” and told him about a plan to invite him and Heidegger to Paris, which he made with the president of the Institut Germanique der Sorbonne.¹⁹⁸

The guiding principle of Prinzhorn's career, from his 1922 book to his death in 1933, is his resistance to the opposition of normal and pathological. “The public,” he wrote, “has recently heard a great deal about ‘mad art,’ the ‘art of the mentally ill,’ ‘pathological art,’ and ‘art and insanity.’ We are not overly happy with these expressions.”¹⁹⁹ In the images drawn by the mentally ill and their “brushing creative energy,”

Prinzhorn found the basis of his system that he identified as “a future psychology of configuration.”²⁰⁰ It was a descriptive and nonjudgmental psychology that resisted the measuring of personalities according to psychiatric standards, for “hardly ever is the mind of the critical investigator superior to the personality he is testing.”²⁰¹ Hence, a psychology of configuration would avoid presumed judgments regarding the mentally ill. Prinzhorn identified the principle aim of his method as trying to place the mental situation we know (normal) and the one that is unknown (pathological) at odds—in other words, to defamiliarize the situation and hence avoid all presumed judgments and moralism.²⁰² At the heart of the psychology of configuration, Prinzhorn elaborated the role of the eidetic images. His method was based on the idea that “expressive gestures play a role in all vital actions,” yet when typologizing the gesture, one should take into account the individual. “From the purposeful movement of the arm, the gesture provoked by joy or anger, to the ‘oral gesture’ of the word and its manifestation in writing or in a picture, the individual psychological element is always communicated

¹⁹⁸ Prinzhorn to Klages, May 7, 1929, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.11625, letter no. 17.

¹⁹⁹ Prinzhorn, *Artistry of the Mentally Ill*, p. 1.

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁰² *Ibid.*, p. 6.

to us simply and directly, instead of by rational association.”²⁰³ At its core, Prinzhorn’s psychopathology returned to the principles of late-romantic psychology, as shown in Bachofen and Nietzsche’s use of symbols: “That an otherwise neutral ‘sign’ becomes the bearer of a meaning which is not explicit but is based on origin and tradition offers a connecting point to the communicative urge.”²⁰⁴ Prinzhorn’s theory of the soul, then, focused on the need to use symbols and signs for both playful and more serious expressions, as shown in primitive, mainly Indian art. “Primitive works of art especially still show traces of the original natural forms which may have stimulated playful activity.”²⁰⁵ The mind of the mentally ill, not bounded so much to norms and obedience to socialization, was used by Prinzhorn to get closer to this unconscious urge to create.

It is clear that characterology was understood since the mid-1920s as an essential science that was worth a serious philosophical and psychological consideration. Emil Utitz (1883-1956), a brilliant professor of philosophy in Halle, undertook the discipline as his life’s study during that significant decade. His book *Charakterologie* (1925) became a landmark in the field and a constant reference for later works. Utitz, a converted Jew, was born in Prague and studied with Franz Kafka and the group of German Jewish intellectuals around him. After accepting an academic position in Germany he fled back to Prague in 1933, was jailed in Theresienstadt until 1945, and was then reappointed as a professor at Prague University, where he remained until his death a decade later. Utitz’s understanding of characterology and its historicization was a moderate one in terms of the debate between neo-Kantians and anti-Kantians, Freudians and Klagesians, and he tried to find a middle ground between the factions. Utitz did not make a secret of the rebellious side of characterology, in spite of his own personal moderation: “Characterology itself is fighting for simple and linear outlines.”²⁰⁶ His critique of Freud, however, showed characterology as a counterlinear methodology, which he identified with the opposite aims of psychoanalysis. His history of the movement named Julius Bahnsen, Max Dessoir, William Stern, Georg Simmel, Karl Jaspers, the founders of Gestalt psychology. But most important to his history were Ludwig Klages’s *Lebensphilosophie* and *Charakterologie*, “the genius *Fuhrer* of graphology [*dem genialen Fuhrer der Graphologie*], who emphasizes the method of *multiplicity* of elements. Finally this does not negate the clarity [*Eindeutigkeit*] of a border case. It implies necessarily that under all potentials there is only one possibility.”²⁰⁷

Another close follower of Klagesian biocentric psychology was Salomon (Shlomo) Friedrich Rothschild (1889-1995). Rothschild was born in 1899 in Giessen. He died almost a century later (in 1995) in Jerusalem. He studied medicine and psychiatry

²⁰³ Ibid., p. 12.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p. 17.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ “Charakterologie selbst noch um einfache, lineare Umrisslinien kampf.” Emil Utitz, *Charakterologie* (Berlin: Pan-Verlag, 1925), p. 7.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., p. 32.

in Giessen and Munich. After his doctoral degree he worked under Erich and Frieda Fromm in Heidelberg (1925-1928), and later under the Jewish Lebensphilosopher Kurt Goldstein (1928-1933), in Frankfurt. In 1935 Rothschild published his Habilitation under the concise title “*Symbolik des Hirnbaus: Erscheinungswissenschaftliche Untersuchung u ber den Bau und die Funktionen des Zentralnervensystems der Wirbeltiere und des Menschen*”.²⁰⁸ The book was written under a strong Klagesian influence and Rothschild sent an early draft to Klages, who commented on the philosophical argumentation. At least one comment, according to Klages’s own report to other students in his circle, pointed out how Rothschild’s “natural tendency” to think and act according to the “grounding rules of his race” missed the deeper and darker tones Klages was expressing in his work.²⁰⁹

In 1936 Rothschild fled the sinking European ship to Palestine. He became a leading professor of medicine at the Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem. During the 1950s he continued to write about the “problem of the self” from the perspective of an interdisciplinary fusion of life-philosophy and the life-sciences, while researching the symbolic functions of the nerves system. In his personal file at the university archive is Rothschild’s curriculum vitae, in which he numbers himself “among the students of the well-known philosopher and Swiss psychologist Ludwig Klages.”²¹⁰ Later in the c.v., dated 1957, he slips into Klagesian language to explain how an “organic” and “biospheric” view of life works. Using Klagesian language to explore such tensions within different “life-forms” Rothschild extended and developed the system he called, in 1960, Biosemiotics. Never distinguishing in a hard way between Lebensphilosophie and psychoanalysis (unlike Utitz who separated the two and then tried to re-synthesize them) Rothschild became a member of the Israeli society of psychoanalysis during the late 1950s and the 1960s and developed a strong interest in parapsychology.

A few years after Utitz’s book gave an institutional voice to *Charakterologie*, Baeumler’s group published another major text about the discipline, this one by Friedrich Seifert.²¹¹ Beginning with the same set of assumptions, Seifert pointed out that characterology inherently resisted both the historical and the conceptual observations, “which would severely limit its options.”²¹² In contrast to the Kantian and structuralist approach of Utitz, or the dreamy aesthetics of Klages, Seifert emphasized a clear break with all conventions and the “move toward a radical secularization of humanity.”²¹³

²⁰⁸ Salomon Friedrich Rothschild, *Symbolik des Hirnbaus: Erscheinungswissenschaftliche untersuchungen u ber den Bau und die Funktionen des Zentralnervensystems der Wirbeltiere und des menschen* (New York: S. Karger, 1935).

²⁰⁹ Klages discussed Rothschild’s work and background with a few of his colleagues. See for example his correspondence with Chrstopf Bernoulli during 1934-1935. Ludwig Klages Nachlass, DLA, Sig. 61.4143.

²¹⁰ The Faculty Archive at the Hebrew University in Jersualam, Personal Files, Shlomo Rothschild.

²¹¹ Friedrich Seifert, *Charakterologie*, in *Handbuch der Philosophie* (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1929).

²¹² Ibid, p. 8.

²¹³ “Ein Zug zur radikalen verweltlichung des Menschen.” Ibid.

Idealism, Seifert showed, focused on concepts and objectivity, on the rational intellect and “the idealized I as the essential determining function of everything objective.”²¹⁴ *Charakterologie*, he shows, has for the first time brought humanity to a psychology of wholeness (*Psychologie des ganzen Menschen*).²¹⁵ The Klages school, he points out in a footnote, has taken characterology as its vocation while rejecting idealism as a whole and separating modern characterology—based on Nietzsche—from its historical roots. Yet its romantic basis, as in Carus’s case, “[only] succeeded in creating an opposition between *Charakterologie* and scientific psychology.”²¹⁶ Seifert’s focus on the practical applications of characterology is a typical reaction of the fascist view of such rebellions. The Baeumler circle applied many of the antilogocentric ideas but required that the formal provocation should be accompanied by an applicable option. This approach would become even clearer with Nazi psychoanalysis and racial philosophy and science. In 1938, when Nazism feared the influence of the impotent and passive philosophy of Ludwig Klages, Alfred Rosenberg would dedicate a special lecture and a published booklet to an elaborate explanation of the impracticality of the Klages school to the Nazi system and state.²¹⁷ No other school of philosophy has won the great honor of being attacked so severely by the primary ideologue of the Nazi party.

10. Conclusion

It is an irony of history that led to two very distinctive forms of characterology after 1945. One thread led to Klages’s anti-idealist *Lebensphilosophie* and the Baeumler-Seifert-Schroter pro-Nazi typology.

Part of this form of characterology was revived during the early 1950s and made acceptable by the main organ of German psychologists.²¹⁸

A second thread concluded with a small Jewish group that originated from Utitz’s effort. Utitz himself published in 1948 a short book that analyzed life at the concentration camps from a characterological perspective. His *Psychologie des Lebens im Konzentrationslager Theresienstadt* (The psychology of life in the concentration camp

²¹⁴ “[D]as idealistische Ich die alles Objektive wesentliche bestimmende Funktion.” Ibid., p. 9.

²¹⁵ Ibid., p. 12.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 13.

²¹⁷ Alfred Rosenberg, *Gestalt und Leben* (Halle: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1938). Based on a lecture given at the University of Halle in Wittenberg, April 27, 1938.

²¹⁸ “A cursory look at the first two congresses of the German society for psychology in 1948 and 1951 indicates that popular positions from the Weimar period witnessed a veritable renaissance. At the Göttingen conference, for example, a roundtable discussion on the ‘drives’ and the ‘will’ largely approved of Klages’ ideas ‘with a few reservations.’ . . . Similarly, numerous articles in the *psychologische Rundschau*, the official organ of the German Society for Psychology, betrayed the influence of Klages, bearing such titles as ‘Personality,’ ‘Character and Handwriting,’ ‘Fate and Character,’ ‘Handwriting and Sexuality,’ and ‘The Soul in the Signature.’ . . . [T]he obituary of Klages published in the *Rundschau* in 1957 lauded the ‘depth of his insight,’ the ‘extent of his awareness,’ and the ‘clarity of his argumentation.’” Kauders, “The Mind of a Rationalist,” p. 263, quoting “Nachruf,” in *Psychologische Rundschau* (1957), pp. 75-76.

Theresienstadt) attempted to reach the syntax of camp life. For example, Utitz emphasized the rhythm of widespread phenomena—rumors, for example—that characterized an internal form of life with a “biological meaning.”²¹⁹ The different human types and the different characters of human interaction in the camp supplied Utitz with a perfect notion of “the wretchedness of the present *Dasein*, which views even the most modest and free life form [*Lebensform*] to be [absolute] paradise.”²²⁰ In such conditions, he wrote, identity became more flexible. Both past and future became more important than the present, for “to live in the far future makes it much easier not to ask about the next day.”²²¹

To conclude, from a biopolitical perspective, Klages’s anti-idealistic tools fit the analytical tools Foucault used in order to examine the politics of sexuality. As Philipp Sarasin pointed out in his introduction to Foucault’s philosophy of sexuality and biopower: “In contrast to psychoanalysis, [Foucault’s notion of] sex in modernity functioned ‘without law, like power without a king.’ In that sense ‘thinking about the order of sexuality should be done with the assistance of the concepts of law, death, the blood and sovereignty.”²²²

²¹⁹ Emil Utitz, *Psychologie des Lebens, im Konzentrationslager Theresienstadt* (Vienna: Continental Edition Verlag, 1948), pp. 17-18.

²²⁰ “[A]ngesichts der Jammerlichkeit des jetzigen Daseins, wirkt selbst die bescheidenste Lebensform in Freiheit als Paradies.” Ibid., p. 22.

²²¹ “In ferner Zukunft zu leben und doch nach dem nächsten Tag nicht fragen.” Ibid., p. 26.

²²² Philipp Sarasin, *Michel Foucault zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 2005), p. 165.

5. Lebensphilosophie: Conservative Revolution and the Cult of Life

Not surprisingly, World War I left scars on a whole generation of army veterans in Germany, a generation that was as philosophically inclined as it was conservative. Many of them found in Ludwig Klages a voice to express their postwar sentiments and attitudes; in fact, a series of conservative texts citing Klages's influence quickly shaped the revolutionary tendencies of young intellectuals usually identified with the conservative revolution in the final years of the Weimar republic.¹ By 1930 a number of them were leading much of the reaction against the Weimar republic and Western democracy: Oswald Spengler (1880-1936) was already a famous man, after the publication of his two-part work *Decline of the West* (1918 and 1922). Carl Schmitt published a series of highly sophisticated reactionary works calling for the empowering of law and sovereignty, grounded in Catholic and Germanic values, as demonstrated in his *Political Theology* (1922), *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* (1923), and an essay called "The Concept of the Political" (1927, full book in 1932).² Hans Freyer published a well-received piece of conservative agitation known as *The State* (1926), and Ernst Junger, who became a celebrity after the publication of his autobiographical novels, *Storm of Steel* (1920) and *The Battle as a Living Experience* (1925), gave violence an eidetic and ecstatic appearance in *Total Mobilization* (1931), where the concept of *Rausch* (ecstasy, intoxication) makes frequent appearances at his deadly battlefields. Alfred Baeumler and Manfred Schroter were preparing the nationalization of Bachofen and the Nazification of Nietzsche; Martin Heidegger was preparing his innovative *Time and Being* (1927), shortly before turning to Nietzsche himself. All of those mentioned above, and many others with them, were pleading to revolutionize the state's philosophy and the relationship between representation and experience. It is interesting to note that the better philosophers in the group rejected *Lebensphilosophie* as a paradigm but also acknowledged its importance and innovative vocabulary.³ To cite just two arbitrary examples of the connection between *Lebensphilosophie* and the conservative revolutionaries, Oswald Spengler never openly admitted his interest in Klages or *Lebensphilosophie*, but Spengler's own lectures, as well as his depiction in the scholarly literature, relate some key ideas and interests to *Lebensphilosophie* in general

¹ Book I of the History of the Peloponnesian War, Oxford text, edited by H. Stuart-Jones; translated by Arnold J. Toynbee.

² R. W. Hutchinson, Prehistoric Crete (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962).

³ Herodotus, Book I, chapters 56 to 58.

or Klages in particular.⁴ The same interesting mixture of rejection accompanied by appreciation can be seen in every conservative intellectual of the time. Martin Heidegger edited the critical edition of Wilhelm Dilthey, admired the Catholic *Lebensphilosophie* of Max Scheler, and developed—if one agrees with Georg Imdahl and David Farrell Krell—his own form of life philosophy.⁵

The classic historiography of the Third Reich often stumbles in its assessments of the relevance of Nazi terminology to intellectual and daily life. Usually the relationship is described through personal testimony, such as that of Victor Klemperer in *Lingua Tertii Imperii: The Language of the Third Reich* (LTI, 1957), his theory of Nazi language. Presented as inherently irrational and often mystical, “Nazi philosophy”—always in scare quotes—is described as “cultlike” (*kultische*), a product of a vague phenomenological view based on negation and emphasizing external appearance, “a performance [*Schau*],” Klemperer argued, “that the Stefan George circle sacralized” by opposing it to “the ‘system’ the circle abhorred as much as it did ‘intelligence’ and ‘objectivity.’”⁶ Klemperer, similarly to Georg Lukacs, identified Nazi rhetoric with the organic and neoromantic worldview, which was for him quite close to religious ecstasy, and placed it opposite to an enlightened and rational view.⁷

In many respects profascist thinkers such as the *Lebensphilosophers* of the 1920s and 1930s looked much like the portraits in Klemperer’s rogue gallery. In the pan-Germanic and anti-Semitic chapters in *Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (1929-1932), Ludwig Klages identifies the sources of his vocabulary as cults and ancient religions. Moreover, as Klemperer surmised, Klages traced the inherent conflict to an overgrowth of Enlightenment philosophy that led directly to industrialization and the rationalization of life and of the world. Accordingly, Klages recognized *Lebensphilosophie*’s obsession with *Schau* (scene or performance), *Schauung* and *Anschauung* (intuition in Kant’s texts), *Schein* (mere or false appearance according to Hegel) and *Erscheinung* (true appearance according to Hegel), etymologically and semiotically related, all seen by *Lebensphilosophers* as part of an intuitive and “mysterious road” that leads to “a world of images.”⁸ This road, Klages wrote, leads to “breaking through thought (*discurrere*),” or “the *intuitive* spirit of the *discursive*.”⁹

⁴ Available in Ludwig Klages, *The Biocentric Worldview* (London: Arktos, 2013).

⁵ *Tuist* is a term coined by Klages. The distinction between *tuist* and *egoist* entails a recognition of the characterological distinction between those whose drives and affects are focused on the “you,” as opposed to those who are centered solely upon their own ego.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 17. Esposito quotes from Rudolf Kjellen, *Grundriss zu einem System der Politik* (Leipzig: Rudolph Leipzig Hirzel, 1920), pp. 3-4.

⁷ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 136. Hoche worked with another follower of Klages, the Jewish *Lebensphilosoph* Kurt Goldstein. He was also close to a central figure of the Klages circle, the psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn.

⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 3.

⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 2000).

In its depiction of “science as a cultural critique” in the aftermath of World War I, Anne Harrington’s *Reenchanted Sciences* describes the impact *Lebensphilosophie* created as a drive to wholeness or holism. “Many of the epistemological concerns raised by this movement,” Harrington writes, “were not very different from those advanced by people like Dilthey in the 1890s, but life philosophy unfused them with a far more explicit political and populist accent. The graphological and pop philosopher Ludwig Klages, for example, spent three volumes denouncing human rationality as a parasite that had worked across history.”¹⁰ In his *Reactionary Modernism*, Jeffrey Herf acknowledges that *Lebensphilosophie* and its political supporters among the conservative revolutionaries “have the public sphere.”¹¹ Both the political power of *Lebensphilosophie* and its impact on the public sphere were a consequence of its absolutist discourse. Herf’s chronology is crucial here for his narrative leads—not from a certain political affiliation to the politicization of the discourse, the primary argument in his book, but its opposite. “The conservative revolutionaries were heirs to European irrationalist traditions,” he writes, “traditions that took on a particularly intense coloration in Germany due to the politicization of *Lebensphilosophie*, the philosophy of life.”¹² In other words, for Herf, the course is leading from the irrational idea to a political philosophy and then to the mutual, crude politicization of both, which gave this generation its peculiar character.

The contention of this chapter, and book, is a different one: *Lebensphilosophie* was radical first, and only later politically so. It was aesthetic first, and later was applied—with its aesthetic principles—to serve political action. Its radicalism transcended politics per se, which is exactly why the Nazis liked it so much.

The present chapter describes the end of the process that led from the late 1890s to the late 1930s, which is the formative period in the politicization of *Lebensphilosophie*. As will be shown below, the politicization was inherently tied to the fundamental aesthetics and temporality of *Lebensphilosophie*; after the drive to radicalization described in previous chapters came the development of an antistructural and antisystematic hermeneutics. During the late 1920s and early 1930s the movement became identified with pro-Germanism, naked white bodies against dark land, the Nazi understanding of life and death, of revival and renewal, of individuals and collectives, until finally *Lebensphilosophie* fostered the development of a specific and strict kind of biological politics. I proceed through these themes in order to explore the full extent and impact of the forms *Lebensphilosophie* fashioned for the political weltanschauung of the 1930s.

¹⁰ Agamben “paulanized” Benjamin, Scholem, Taubes, and other GermanJewish thinkers discussed in this book since his *Homo Sacer* For the most coherent exploration of that philosophical move see Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹¹ Eric Santner, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), p. 13.

¹² Giorgio Agamben, “Absolute Immanence,” in *Potentialities*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 220.

I argue that only *Lebensphilosophie*—as a discourse—was able to foster the antireligious sacralization, the apolitical politics, and the ahistorical collective consciousness in which the Nazis brought about the utter destruction of conventional morality. To clarify further, I propose that Klagesian *Lebensphilosophie* be divided into three periods:

1. The early rebellious and intellectual *Lebensphilosophie* of the 1910s and early 1920s, shaped by the aesthetic and antinormative approach taken from the George circle and reworked by Klages, Baeumler, and Benjamin. The “Jargon of life” that marked the early 1900s reception of Nietzsche, Bachofen, and Dilthey, (see chapters 1 and 2) concluded in the mid-1920s with the Bachofen debate (see chapter 3) and a deep ideological division within this discourse.

2. The politicization of *Lebensphilosophie* in the midto late 1920s, adapted to the right wing in general and the Nazi party specifically. Close connection to Hitler’s declaration of the *FührerPrinzip* in 1926 and the establishment of Alfred Rosenberg’s Combat Organization for German Culture in 1930. It is not a mere coincidence that the growing interest in racial typology stood at the center of this shift. A new understanding of individual and collective emphasized a pure German element in both single and plural terms. Klages’s graphology and characterology helped to shape this against the “Jewish science” of psychoanalysis and individual freedom (see chapter 4). *Lebensphilosophie* has become the ultimate tool of control.

3. The actualization of *Lebensphilosophie* as a pure racial-political tool since the mid-1930s, and especially after 1938, left Baeumler in the midst of the Nazi administration, Klages on the margins, and Benjamin fleeing for his life. Long decades of historiography tried to separate here the conservative revolution from the racial and biological racism. Klages’s career proves that this separation missed important discursive elements.

My previous chapters explained *Lebensphilosophie* by focusing on how it worked in the aesthetic elitist movement in Schwabing and in the alternative psychological theories of characterology and graphology. In this chapter I describe how it worked in its prime political form. Did this highly refined terminology affect its social and political surroundings? Did the new world of organic structures—as Foucault pointed out in *The Order of Things*—change the relation between language and nature, knowledge and being?¹³ In the context of a certain period in Germany, how did it reach such wide circles of intellectuals, and what was its effect on them? What are the political implications of taking aesthetic categories and applying them to politics in a state of crisis? And finally, from a methodological perspective, what made “the most fashionable

¹³ Brian Massumi, “National Enterprise Emergency: Steps Toward an Ecology of Powers,” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 26:6 (November 2009), p. 170. I tried to explain the relevance of such readings for a contemporary understanding of life in Nitzan Lebovic, “Life,” in *Maftekh: Lexical Review of Political Thought* 2 (2011): <http://mafteakh.tau.ac.il/en/issue-2e-winter-2011/life/> (accessed June 1, 2013).

philosophy of our time,” as Heinrich Rickert called it in the title of a book published in 1920, into a Nazi language?¹⁴

1. Lebensphilosophie: A discourse and its politicization

Lebensphilosophie—as a discourse of intuition and “inner eyes”¹⁵— would never have made the leap into politics had not the *discurrere* (dashing, rushing with no direction) of the early 1920s turned to “a creeping crisis of culture”¹⁶ and a series of social and political upheavals that destroyed all public support for the Weimar parliamentary system, producing what the high-ranking conservative revolutionary Hermann Rauschning described as “a desperate people, a people ready for anything.”¹⁷ How else could a purely philosophical discourse become a popular, often populist, tool in the hands of politicians? For that matter, in the early 1920s *Lebensphilosophie* never constituted a united political phenomenon. More significant, once the discourse was translated into proper political terms, those terms often contradicted principles firmly established by dominant *Lebensphilosophers*. The search for a practical and a “final solution” to the question of European Jewry, whether by means of expulsion or the complete annihilation of the race, would never have been accepted by the earlier form of *Lebensphilosophie*, before its politicization and Nazification during the late 1920s and early 1930s.

¹⁴ Agamben comes close to it without making it a historical argument, when he points out Heidegger’s role as the mediator between two philosophical traditions. The first leads from Kant, via Husserl, to Heidegger and then Levinas and Derrida; the other leads from Spinoza, via Nietzsche, to Heidegger and then Foucault and Deleuze. In short, any examination of “the coming philosophy” should consider the 1920s’ debate about the role of life and immanence in Heidegger and his fellow critics of democracy, on the way to biopolitics and “immanentation.” Ibid., p. 239.

¹⁵ “Diese Formung des Lebens in seinem ganzen Verlaufe durch den Tod ist bisher sozusagen etwas Bildhaftes.” Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1994), p. 107.

¹⁶ Simmel stresses here a temporal dimension of a being which turns Sein (being) into a particular presence. Sosein was used by different Lebensphilosophers, for example, Georg Simmel, Max Scheler, and Ludwig Klages. It is translated differently for every thinker, and sometimes, as various translations of Simmel prove, differently in different works of the same thinker. Simmel used the term repeatedly. See *ibid.*, p. 108. For another example of Simmel’s use of Sosein see the first page of his *Philosophy of Money*, which was translated as a “particular quality of being.” See Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 56. Then again, in his book about the history of sociology, David Frisby translated the same term when used by Max Scheler as “essence.” See David Frisby, *The Alienated Mind: The Sociology of Knowledge in Germany, 1918-1933* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 30.

¹⁷ Heinrich Rickert, *Die Philosophie des Lebens: Darstellung und Kritik der philosophischen Modeströmungen unserer Zeit* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr Verlag, 1920).

Does the earlier resistance to practical solutions exempt those thinkers from any political responsibility? Ernst Cassirer argued in 1946 that fascism was based on destroying the sense of freedom and simultaneously “reliev[ing] men from all personal responsibility.”¹⁸ Cassirer’s own solution, much like Foucault after him, was to try to understand the transformation of life—and use of it—as a stronger plea for political responsibility, not weaker. *Lebensphilosophers* mostly ignored this notion of responsibility. Looking at the world with close-range aesthetic lenses, they refused to extract any political meaning unless it was aesthetic, too. Many of them, like Ludwig Klages, became involved in politics in order to realize their view of aestheticized life, and they ignored the negative politics it implied. Klages himself refused to recognize his views as anti-Semitic.¹⁹ Klages’s political involvement, and especially his anti-Semitism, of which there can be no doubt, has been denied by his followers and by some apologetic historians—even as most Holocaust historians have treated his position as barbaric.²⁰

The problem is somewhat clarified when illustrating how important the Klages circle became for the conservative revolution. Trying to realize, through this fusion of conservatism and revolution, the coming European revolution, the Klages circle felt deeply uncomfortable with the weapons taken up by the shock troops. Like other conservative intellectuals—Ernst Junger, Oswald Spengler, Hans Freyer, Wilhelm Stapel, Eduard Spranger, and, of course, Hermann Rauschning—the Klagesians approved of Nazi rhetoric yet refused to acknowledge its possible implications.

Lebensphilosophie had a great popular following during the 1920s and 1930s due to the interconnections among philosophy and psychology, aesthetics and an organic theory of the body. Much of its favorable reception came from circles connected to the post-Nietzschean conservative revolutionaries.²¹ Klages’s mixture of old-fashioned

¹⁸ Heinrich Rickert, *Unmittelbarkeit und Sinndeutung: Aufsätze zur Ausgestaltung des Systems der Philosophie* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1939), p. 57 (emphasis in original). The concept of immediacy, popularized by Nietzsche, had garnered great interest among *Lebensphilosophers* since the early 1900s. Yet not before the early 1920s could one attach it to any particular view of politics.

¹⁹ Georg Imdahl and David F. Krell are an exception to that rule; in their careful readings of Heidegger’s early writings, both labor to demonstrate the close interest and impact of Heidegger’s own editorial working and research of Dilthey’s life philosophy. Heidegger’s later rejection of *Lebensphilosophie* cannot disguise the impact it had on his interest in the living temporality of the *Dasein*. See David F. Krell, *Daheim Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), and Georg Imdahl, *Das Leben Verstehen, Heideggers formal anzeigende Hermeneutik in den frühen Freiburger Vorlesungen* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1997). A few intellectual historians paid close attention to Heidegger’s interest in *Lebensphilosophie* from a different angle. Let me mention here only the most recent and excellent two volumes Peter Gordon published on Heidegger’s proximity to Franz Rosenzweig, and the opponents of Ernst Cassirer and neo-Kantianism. See Peter E. Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and idem., *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

²⁰ Victor Klemperer, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1966), p. 20. English translations often miss the importance of vocabulary to the essence (*Wesen*) of Nazi language.

²¹ Ibid., p. 31.

politics and innovative post-Nietzschean aesthetics proved to be an audience magnet. In 1928 Klages's lecture tour—exploring the tight connections between graphological and characterological signs and *L'ebensphilosophie*—took him to Heidelberg, Baden-Baden, Mainz, Freiburg, Dusseldorf, Essen, and many smaller towns; detailed reports of his lectures usually followed in the local newspapers. In 1929 he lectured in Aachen, Leipzig, Duisburg, and Berlin, among other cities. When he spoke in Hamburg in 1932 and 1933, the newspapers reported sold-out halls, and the long newspaper reports included photos or sketches. Clearly he was a celebrity. In February 1932 the daily *Hamburger Fremdenblatt* devoted an entire page to Klages's lecture about temperament. "Today the name Ludwig Klages is a talisman," the article began. "One hears about him everywhere, from the *Lebensreform* and to the most recent issue of the *Goethe-Jahrbuch* . . . For the former, Klages is this century's great prophetic revivalist; for the latter, he is a nihilist who has pushed Nietzsche's ideas as far as they could possibly go and finally dissolves all traditional cultural values into an abyss [*Nichts*]." ²² Abyss is, here, a positive noun.

In December 1932, on his sixtieth birthday, Klages received from the Reich's president, Paul von Hindenburg (1847-1934), the prestigious Goethe medal. A month later, on January 30, 1933, Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany by a reluctant Hindenburg, and later that year Klages became a "senator for life" at the German Academy of Sciences, thereby recognized as a founding father of Nazi ideology.

In the summer of 1933 Klages gave a series of lectures in Berlin and was hailed by the young Hans Eggert Schroder, who organized a small crowd to welcome him. The lecture hall was so full that students were listening from the window sills to hear the famous philosopher. In November 1933 Klages again made a tour of Germany to talk about *Charakterologie*. The lectures were reported in both academic journals and daily newspapers, and the comments were generally laudatory. In September 1934 the University of Hamburg hosted a conference dedicated to Klages's philosophy; again, according to private reports from Klages's followers present at the event, the hall was full to capacity. In November of the same year, a Klagesian biological and medial researcher named Julius Deussen established the *Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung* (Working Group for Biocentric Research) in Leipzig and an accompanying journal. Schroder followed suit and edited a collection of essays dedicated to the newest Klagesian philosophy, biocentrism.

Early in the summer of 1935, at its annual conference, the congress of German philosophers had not turned its full attention to Klages, as he complained in a letter written shortly afterward. ²³ This lack of respect was quickly corrected, as the next conference was dedicated to Klagesian themes. Among those present at the 1936 conference were Bruno Bauch (1877-1942), the acclaimed neo-Kantian who was then head

²² Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 5.

²³ Edward Ross Dickinson, "Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse about 'Modernity,'" in *Central European History* 37:1 (2004): 1-38.

of the Kant Society and served as chairman of the German Society of Philosophy between 1934 and his death in 1942; Eduard Spranger (1882-1963), the popular Diltheyan thinker who developed the psychology and philosophy of the *Lebensformen* in his book of that name (1922); the famous philosopher and biologist Nicolai Hartmann (1882-1950), who was Heidegger's and Gadamer's mentor at Marburg; and Erich Rothacker (1888-1965), the rector of Bonn University and a well-known *Lebensphilosoph* who established the discipline of *Begriffsgeschichte* (history of concepts).

Reports about the conference filled not only the German papers of the day, but also reached the American academic audience. *The Philosophical Review* reported in May 1937:

The meeting, held at Berlin, September 21-23, 1936, was devoted to the general theme of "Soul and Spirit." This topic had been chosen in order to clarify issues raised by Ludwig Klages's thesis that "spirit is the enemy of the soul." However, the well-intentioned purpose was frustrated when Klages, who was to lead the discussion, was taken ill while on the way to Berlin and could not attend the meeting (although he read his paper a few days later to a Berlin audience). The papers presented at the meeting were entirely free from references to an ideology that is objectionable to most non-Germans. They breathed the traditional spirit of scholarly objectivity and could have been read before any audience of philosophers.²⁴

The idealized report summarizes a number of the papers presented, among them a critique Spranger offered of Klages's emphasis on the immediacy of drives and intuition: "Immediate understanding always remains anthropomorphic . . . [An] understanding through categories implies that 'in our productive imagination' we comprehend a 'scheme of the world as a whole.'"²⁵ The focus of the conference (and of the report) was *Lebensphilosophie* and the debates it had sparked among Germany's various philosophical schools. Attendees agreed in general about the critical and revolutionary value of *Lebensphilosophie*, which was characterized as an excellent tool for grasping "man in his totality and concrete reality."²⁶ A comparison of *Lebensphilosophie* and Heideggerian existentialism led to the following conclusion: "To-day we can only place life side by side with the inorganic world as 'primordial phenomenon,' without reducing the one to the other . . . Being is now grasped as a destruction . . . *Lebensphilosophie* has rendered a great service to philosophy in general by stressing the fact that time is intertwined with being."²⁷

²⁴ "Das Hauptgewicht der nationalsozialistischen Sprachbeeinflussung liegt auf der neuen Sinngebung oft alter, bekannter Worte." Manfred Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, inaugural dissertation submitted to the philosophy faculty of the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University of Greifswald (Greifswald: Hans Adler Buchdruckerei, 1935), p. 11.

²⁵ Boaz Neumann, *New German Critique* 85, Special Issue on Intellectuals (Winter 2002), 110.

²⁶ Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, p. 13.

²⁷ "Was heisst Leben? Leben heisst *kaempfen*! Schom *Heraklit* sagte: Der Kampf is der Vater aller Dinge, und Nietzsche beantwortete die Frage . . . so: 'Die Welt ist der Wille zur Macht und nichts ausserdem.' Wohin du auch schaust, ueberall findest du Kampf ums Dasein, Ringen um selbsterhaltung, Arterhaltung und Entwicklung . . . Sie vergessen, dass es den Menschen nur so Scheint, weil unser

What the report to the American public missed, intentionally or not, was the controversial ideological remarks of the conference. For example, the conference opened with a militant speech by Werner von Blomberg, the minister of war and commander in chief of the German Wehrmacht. Bruno Bauch, the next speaker and the conference's chief organizer, ended his welcoming speech with a declaration of support for the Nazi regime. His remarks were sent to Hitler, "who did not reply."²⁸

When Klages lectured in Berlin during this period, it was often to oblige Bernhard Rust, a former student of philosophy who held the post of Reich minister of education and the arts. Much like Joseph Goebbels and Hjalmar Schacht, who saw themselves as champions of German literature, Rust believed that the essence of Germany lay in its language and poetics, so he invited Klages to speak frequently. The support from within the Nazi party won Klages favorable reviews in the Nazi press. A report in the *Volksischer Beobachter* entitled "Opposite Interpretations within the National [volkischen] Idea," announced that Ludwig Klages and Alfred Baeumler—recently appointed as the head of pedagogy at Berlin University—lectured in Berlin to full halls.²⁹ The report expressed equal interest in the two *Lebensphilosophers* but admitted that large gaps opened between the two meant that "the center of the conflict has been defined," hinting at the antagonism between Klages and Baeumler: "It seems that the grounds for fencing decisions would not be made only for the [sake of] philosophy."³⁰ "Fencing decisions" here meant the appeal of *Lebensphilosophie* to Nazi politics, exploring the possibility that a winner in philosophical terms would take over a wider public discourse, another testimony to the importance of philosophy in general, to radical politics in general, and of *Lebensphilosophie* to Nazism, in particular. Baeumler and Rosenberg thought along the same lines and between 1935 and 1938 worked together to secure their control over *Lebensphilosophie* vis-a-vis the Klagesians. During 1935 and 1936 Klages was negotiating with both the University of Berlin and the Lessing Hochschule in Berlin for a permanent professorship, a distinguished position due to the extraordinary connection between Nazism and philosophical education at

Denken beschränkt ist in *Raum und Zeit*, weil wir nicht erkennen, was sich da in der *Ewigkeit* entwickeln und erlösen will . . . Der erste Schritt zu bewusstem Leben heisst: Erkenne dich selbst! In dir selbst, in deinem Rassenerbgut liegt der geheimnisvolle Wille deines Lebens." Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, vol. 4, article 24, "Weltanschauung, NS," p. 1. No further publication details are given; all emphases in the original. Karl Dietrich Bracher spoke of the "army of agitators" the Nazi trained in that context: Karl D. Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1969), p. 159. See also Goebbels's description of his propaganda success, based on "battalions of speakers," which he still insisted were a "mystical phenomenon" in Joseph Goebbels, *Der Angriff. Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1935), pp. 94-96.

²⁸ "Weil das Judentum mit den Gesetzen des Lebens ging, darum gab ihm das Leben recht, darum hat es heute eine weltbeherrschende Machtstellung ueber die arischen Volker erreicht." Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, p. 3.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-79*, trans. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 19.

³⁰ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 143.

that time. He was outraged to discover that Baeumler and Rosenberg had erected tremendous barriers to his academic advancement. As will be shown below, the formal conflict related to philosophical issues such as the role of spirit (*Geist*) in the Nazi *Lebensphilosophie*. Informally, Baeumler identified Klages as an internal threat to his own hegemonic *Lebensphilosophie* and wanted to neutralize Klages and his circle by reducing their political impact. So keenly was the battle waged that Schroder thought it appropriate, in his report to Klages, to describe Baeumler's assistant's activity at the philosophy conference. A stream of letters from other correspondents kept Klages informed about all of Baeumler's (and Rosenberg's) actions against him.³¹

Under other circumstances these skirmishes might be seen as typically Machiavellian academic feuding. The picture changes, however, once we consider that both groups not only influenced the way Germans reflected about their own lives, but projected this image to the outside world. In 1936 Klages was sent as a Nazi cultural ambassador to the Norwegian and Baltic states. In addition to representing the cultural contribution of the Nazi regime in both lectures and a long series of meetings with governmental representatives, he was asked to pay special attention to Jewish "subversive elements," as he calls them in his reports. His general report to the Nazi Ministry of Culture declared his mission a spectacular success.³² In his detailed reports he considered the valuable impact of his ideas on a welcoming audience that more often than not already knew his theories. In his reports Klages assessed the loyalty of other German representatives he met and insinuated that some were of less than perfectly Aryan stock. The German dailies, once again, covered Klages's tour in detail and confirmed his claims of success.³³

The Nazi regime was obviously interested in exploiting Klages's reputation. His public activities in Switzerland, now his homeland, during the 1930s and 1940s helped provide the national socialist cause with a patina of respectability. Klages himself saw an opportunity to enter the elite of the Nazi regime, integrate his philosophy with its politics, and become the regime's official philosopher. Journal entries from a trip he made to Greece in the spring of 1937 boastfully noted his ability to identify Jews "and other eastern races" at a glance.³⁴

Until Rosenberg's office quashed it, a plan to establish an SS college would have based part of its curriculum on Klages's graphology and characterology.³⁵ The proposal had been given preliminary approval in 1935 by Rust's office and the Prussian

³¹ Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus, and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 14.

³² Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 111.

³³ Ibid., p. 12.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 13.

³⁵ Vitalpolitik is grounded in the principle of growth or reduction that lies at the bottom of all competitive systems: economic, organic-physiological, or totalitarian. It assumes that politics, economics, society, and the individual all share the same form and image of the living body. It is exactly this shared body, or "synthesis of individuals," according to Foucault, that allows the system to have "no explicit contract, no voluntary union, no renunciation of rights, and no delegation of natural rights

finance minister Johaness Popitz; its advocates were a group of philosophically inclined economists, among them Klages's disciple, Kurt Seesemann, and Jens Peter Jessen (1895-1944), a conservative revolutionary better known today as one of the July rebels executed at Hitler's command in 1944.³⁶ Jessen was not the only conservative interested in Klages's *Lebensphilosophie* on the one hand and cooperating with the Nazis on the other (until he grew disillusioned, of course). In fact, politically speaking, the conservative revolution was Klages's home base, which is probably the explanation for the stark attack on Klages by Rosenberg and Baeumler.

The two Alfreds obviously suspected the Klages circle to be popular enough to take over the mainstream of Nazi ideology. Baeumler used his role in Rosenberg's office to encourage Rosenberg to sic the Gestapo on Klagesians. Rosenberg's personal attack on Klages and his students in 1937 eliminated the political role of the Klages school. Still, the very vehemence of Rosenberg's attack indicates that he thought he was facing a real threat.³⁷

The public lecture Rosenberg delivered at the University of Halle in April 1938, entitled "Gestalt und Leben" (Form and life), is a unique case of a stark attack on a philosophical school by the Nazi elite. In his lecture, later published on the front pages of the Nazi daily newspapers and issued in book form, Rosenberg argued that the Klages circle "identifies itself with the courageous protection of nature within the rich inner forms [*Gestalten*] of our time . . . [T]his is what Klages and his students call the 'biocentric system,' their name for a list of great thinkers that starts with Heraclites and continues to Goethe, Nietzsche, and then Klages."³⁸ Rosenberg rejected the idea of Klages as the most important *Lebensphilosoph* of his generation and the principal framer of the Nazi *weltanschauung*: "For over ten years my work has involved this philosophy of life, but there is no actual life

[*fassbaren Leben*] there [in Klages's *Lebensphilosophie*], only an abstract notion of primordial humanity [*abstrakten Urmenschen*]."³⁹ Rosenberg's attack, other than providing an inaccurate reading of Klages, revisited the mid-1920s' debate about the correct interpretation to Bachofen's *Mutterrecht* (Mother right; see chapter 3). Rosenberg's claims were an important part of the Nazi regime's campaign to bring out the active side of *Lebensphilosophie*, which inevitably involved suppressing the movement's

to someone else. In short, there is no constitution of sovereignty by a sort of pact of subjection." Ibid., pp. 242-243, 300.

³⁶ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 259.

³⁷ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 137.

³⁸ Foucault uses this term in *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 248.

³⁹ "It has been evident for a number of centuries how, in the general consciousness, the thought of death has become less omnipresent and less vivid . . . In the course of the nineteenth century, bourgeois society—by means of medical and social, private and public institutions—realized a secondary effect, which may have been its subconscious main purpose: to enable people to avoid the sight of the dying." Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller," in *Selected Writings*, vol. 3:1: 1935-1938 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 151.

radical aestheticism and its rebellious resistance to the phallic or patriarchic element embedded in all systems.

In cultural terms *Lebensphilosophie* can be regarded as one of the first movements to combat the distinction between high and low culture. Relying on the post-Nietzschean *Kulturkritik* (cultural critique) and the call for a return to primordial life, the partisans of *Lebensphilosophie* argued for a view of the individual and the nation as unified by elementary instincts. Conservative revolutionaries turned to Klages's negative biocentrism and critique to form a dynamic movement, grounded in an antinormative appeal to new social forms and the power of life (*Lebenskraft*).

2. Lebensphilosophie and the conservative revolution

The conservative revolution that swept through Germany in the 1920s grew out of fierce opposition to the postwar parliamentarians and the damage the individual had suffered through mechanization.

Lebensphilosophie was present behind the founding book of the conservative revolution, written by Hermann Rauschning, an elitist conservative and at one time a close adviser to Hitler. Rauschning fled to Switzerland in 1936 after realizing that the final aims of the Nazi party were bound to result in catastrophe. When he offered a general description of the mood that propelled the revolution, Rauschning turned to a passage by Hugo von Hofmannstahl, a conservative author, avantgarde poet, and a close friend of Walter Benjamin who, like Klages, had been a protege of Stefan George only to rebel against him later.

What we of the younger generation sought was allegiance to a whole: accepted loyalties, established standards. We sought responsibility to the world around us, we asked for an allotted place and service. I come to that great passage of Hofmannsthal's which seems to me to be the deepest and most comprehensive of diagnoses of a possible future: "We may fairly speak of it as a gradual and momentous process when we consider that it begins actually as a counter movement to that intellectual upheaval of the sixteenth century which we call, in its two aspects, Renaissance and Reformation. The process of which I am speaking is nothing else than a *Conservative Revolution*, in such a scale as the history of Europe has never known."⁴⁰

Trained in politics rather than the humanities, Rauschning did not succeed in conveying the sense that the banner of this revolution bore a lucid aesthetic discourse, which would be so decisive for Hofmannsthal's understanding of organic *Schau* (performance). Nevertheless, his strong dependence on an aesthetician as a principal source for

⁴⁰ For a short but coherent description of Foucault's notion of biopower and biopolitics, see Chloe Taylor, "Biopower," in *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (Durham, NC: Acumen, 2011), p. 48.

a political revolution is a telling point concerning the close relation between aesthetics and politics.

Roger Woods's history of the conservative revolution acknowledges this relation but frames it within a social context. Woods emphasizes that after 1918, many felt that "the war had no meaning."⁴¹ Woods focuses on an educated middle class opposed to democracy, with little interest in "conventional nationalism"⁴² or individualism. As radical was Ernst Junger's image of soldiers as ants being trampled by a giant, taken from the expressionist Klagesian, Alfred Kubin.⁴³ Woods adds to that image a feeling of inevitability, strongly associated with a new image of the machine. As one of the authors of the magazine *Die Standarte* wrote, "Faced with the might of the machine, everyone was equal, and it was an unjust, despicable, and damnable business . . . just as birth and death, gale and storm will always be until the end of time."⁴⁴

But what really distinguished this revolution from others was the emphasis on the battle as *Inneres Erlebnis* (inner experience)—the title of a popular 1922 book by Junger—and its adoption of the Nietzschean aesthetics of destruction. Junger turned the aestheticization of death and violence to the living dynamic of a "world that is perpetually creating and destroying itself." This last phrase was a part of the epigraph Junger used for his famous anthology *Krieg und Krieger*, identified by Walter Benjamin as the ur-text of fascism. Benjamin himself took Junger and this inherent relation between destructive violence and re-creation of inner experience to represent the rise of fascism in general. In "Theories of German Fascism," published in *Die Gesellschaft* in 1930, Benjamin pointed out that a whole generation of conservative revolutionaries learned to reconsider war as a "primal experience" that is identified with "the eternal," an untimely essence "which these new Germans now worship as it is the 'final' war that the pacifists carry on about . . . If this corrective effort fails, millions of human bodies will indeed inevitably be chopped to pieces and chewed up by iron and gas. But even

⁴¹ "Heute, glaube ich, geht ein immer starker anwachsendes Raunen durch Millionen und aber Millionen Menschen Seelen . . . eines tiefen Wissens, dass wir in einer der grosten Zeiten und Weltenwende leben, in einer Epoche, die einen bis in die Wurzeln gehenden Umbruch nicht nur auf einigen Gebieten des Daseins, sondern fur unser ganzes Lebensgefuhl bedeutet." Alfred Rosenberg, "Der Kampf um die Weltanschauung," *Redenmateriel der NSDAP*, ed. Fritz Reinhardt, p. 5.

⁴² The Reich's minister of education explained on January 15, 1935, that the first priority of the Reich was political education, and he went on to say that "allein die Biologie kann den Begriff der Rasse und Vererbung und die rassischen Lebensgesetze von der Seite der Tatsachen-Forschung her zwingend entwickeln." *Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie 1: Schriften uber Familie, Volk und Rasse* (Berlin: Zentralverlag der NSDAP/Fritz Eher Verlag, 1938), p. 7.

⁴³ "Fehlt es an einer solchen Erziehung, so entstehen 'Politiker,' deren Wesen und Gefahr keiner klarer durchschaut und gezeichnet hat als der Fuhrer des neuen Deutschland, Adolf Hitler. Er hat auch in seiner eigenen Entwicklung ein unumstossliches Vorbild fur solche politische Erziehung gegeben." Hans Gerber, ed., *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934), p. vi.

⁴⁴ "[D]ie Universitat . . . muss vielmehr auch den Gehalt der personlichen Uberzeugung bilden." Ibid.

the habits of the chthonic forces of terror, who carry their volumes of Klages in their packs, will not learn one-tenth of what nature promises.”⁴⁵

In their own studies of the conservative revolution, Stefan Breuer and Rolf Peter Sieferle—two of the best-known historians of the period—emphasized a similar type of aesthetics and temporality that supported the aestheticization of violence. In their eyes, a close reading of the conservative revolutionaries would inevitably bump into the “image of repetition” (*Weltbild der Wiederkehr*),⁴⁶ the principle of sovereignty that “did not distinguish state from society, or *status civilis* from *status politicus*,”⁴⁷ and Moller van den Bruck presented the notion that “the beginning is eternal” (*Anfang is immer*).⁴⁸ In more than one way, *Lebensphilosophie* was responsible for this language and its ideological content; uniting a “beginning” with “repetition” was its rebellion against every progressive teleology that developed according to a presumed end. What about the beginning of the conservative revolution itself?

“The conservative revolution,” according to Jeffrey Herf, “took place in and around universities, political clubs, and little magazines. These institutions,” he claims, “constituted the public sphere.”⁴⁹ According to Herf, this public sphere was created by *Lebensphilosophie*. “The conservative revolutionaries,” he writes, “were heirs to European irrationalist traditions, traditions that took on a particularly intense coloration in Germany due to the politicization of *Lebensphilosophie*, the philosophy of life.”⁵⁰ Even though the correlation between the two groups was not exact—one was obsessed with translating immanent aesthetics into hard politics, the other refused in principle to acknowledge any institution—the shared interest in fundamental aesthetics, inner experience, and obsession with life incorporating death cannot be denied.

So we return to my earlier question: How were *Lebensphilosophie* and the conservative revolution connected? Herf’s argument about the Weimar intellectual right wing, that it “claimed to be in touch with ‘life’ or ‘experience’ and thereby to be endowed with a political position beyond any rational justification,” is just as true about Weimar’s

⁴⁵ “Was aber ist es, was den immer wechselnden Strom des Lebens über die Erde hintreibt?” Ernst Lehmann, “Der Einfluss der Biologie auf unser Weltbild,” in *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934), p. 131.

⁴⁶ “Alle biologischen Erfahrungen sprechen dafür, dass dieses Prinzip eine überragende Rolle im Entwicklungsgeschehen spielt . . . Jedermann weiss nun aus den unzähligen traurigen Büchern der Gegenwart, dass unser deutsches Volk bei der immer starker zurückgehenden Geburtszahl diesem Grundsatz der Selektionstheorie nicht mehr gerecht wird. Biopolitisch sind uns die Völker an unserer Ostgrenze durch ihre viel höhere Geburtszahl weitgehend überlegen.” Ibid., p. 138.

⁴⁷ “Kein Zweifel aber auch: Nicht nur in Nordamerika gibt es eine Negerfrage, nicht nur in aller Welt eine Judenfrage u.s.f.-in jedes deutsche Haus ist durch die Arbeit Hans Gunthers die Kenntnis gedrungen von der rassistischen Verschiedenheit innerhalb unseres Volkes.” Ibid., p. 139.

⁴⁸ Sheila Faith Weiss, “Pedagogy, Professionalism, and Politics: Biology Instruction during the Third Reich,” in *Science, Technology, and National Socialism*, ed. Monika Renneberg and Mark Weller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 189.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 193.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 188.

left wing.⁵¹ Such an analysis cannot elucidate how the particular *Lebensphilosophie* preached by Ludwig Klages and Georg Simmel during the 1910s became a reactionary political praxis, nor can it explain how left-wing thinkers like Walter Benjamin, conservative thinkers like Hans Freyer, militant aestheticians like Ernst Junger, or a mix of all like Karl Lowith would be so receptive.

The integration of *Lebensphilosophie* to the conservative revolution seemed to come from a fusion of philosophy and politics, aesthetics and the everyday, Bachofen and Nietzsche with “heroic realism.”⁵²

Ernst Junger, like Alfred Baeumler and other pro-Nazi intellectuals, pleaded to invest in a new type of warrior-worker as “the face of a race that starts representing a new landscape . . . where one is represented neither as a person nor as an individual but as a type.”⁵³ As Herf shows, “Junger’s use of the categories of *Lebensphilosophie* lends a peculiarly grotesque duality to his celebration of war. The sources of war are not to be found in national conflicts of interest but in suprahistorical terms such as ‘life’ or ‘blood.’”⁵⁴ Like Klages (or Benjamin) or Baeumler (or George Gross), Junger suffused his terminology with the *Rausch* (intoxication, ecstasy) of war. “Once again,” wrote Junger, “the ecstasy. The condition of the holy man, of great poets and of great love is also granted to those of great courage . . . It is an intoxication beyond all intoxication, an unleashing that breaks all bonds.”⁵⁵

Why is it that conservative revolutionaries like Rauschning, Junger, Spengler, Freyer, and others always found their way back to the Georgian aestheticization of life and the Diltheyan hermeneutics of inner experience, even when not being fully conscious of it? A few years before Rauschning expressed his debt to Hofmannsthal—one of Stefan George’s young proteges⁵⁶—Benjamin had warmly praised Hofmannsthal’s play *Der Turm* (The Tower, 1925)⁵⁷ for its presentation of the “primal sound of nature’s creatures” and of a hidden yet “permanent, providential element of all revolutions.”⁵⁸

⁵¹ See James G. Lennox, *Aristotle’s Philosophy of Biology: Studies in the Origins of Life Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 129.

⁵² Tobias Schneider has denied that Klages ever subscribed to Nazi anti-Semitism. See Schneider, “Ideologische Grabenkämpfe: Der Philosoph Ludwig Klages und der Nationalsozialismus 1933–1938,” in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 49:2 (2001): 275–294.

⁵³ Hannah Arendt came close to Klages’s claim but with the opposite ideological conclusions; she recognized Aristotle as the creator of a Western *bios politikos*, which she tied to the concepts of *praxis* and *lexis* (speech), the cornerstones of modern democratic politics. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958), pp. 12, 25.

⁵⁴ Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, in *Samtliche Werke*, vol. 2 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1966), p. 866. This passage first appeared in a much shorter book entitled *Geist und Seele*, which Klages published in 1918; he integrated much of that book into *Der Geist* in 1929.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 867.

⁵⁶ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, Deutsche Literaturarchiv am Marbach (henceforth DLA), Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁵⁷ This was the same Bodeschule für Körperziehung München, in Schloss Nymphenburg, still known to many Bavarians: <http://www.bode-schule.de>.

⁵⁸ Bode summarized his philosophy as follows:

In a letter to Hofmannsthal he wrote, “I see your play as a play of pure mourning . . . and your Sigismund [the protagonist] as a ‘Creature.’ . . . The spirits that are necessary in the mourning play are intrinsically connected here to the Creature [*Kreatur*].”⁵⁹ The word *Kreatur*, which means something inbetween the human and the animal, has recently been identified by Eric Santner as a key Benjamin used to describe the “inhuman” and “amplified life,” a political and historical category central to his theory of signs, his “dialectic-at-a-standstill” temporality and biopolitics.⁶⁰ Retracing our steps from Benjamin back to the conservative revolution, it seems as if both aestheticians and revolutionary politicians were looking for a pathbreaking set of forms that would unite thinking and reality, human imagination and the primal sense of animalistic life. The left-right division came later. Benjamin, after all, like Hofmannsthal and Junger, was “one of the first to note that certain concepts of beauty were connected to *Lebensphilosophie* . . . [In] his essay on Junger, he had observed that the right-wing intellectuals had transferred the idea of expression from the language of *Lebensphilosophie* to the interpretation of historical events.”⁶¹ Ernst Junger was trying to do something Rauschning was striving for as well: translating the aesthetic immanence of *Lebensphilosophie* into organic metaphors of political activity. Equally interesting, however, was Benjamin’s ability to sense this transformation while it occurred. Only someone who studied *Lebensphilosophie* and was equally sensitive to the sciences (biology), aesthetic tradition (philosophy, history), and contemporary relevance (*Jetztzeit*, politics) was able to understand the implications and effect of such a shift. Only someone who did not commit to the ideology behind those, the progressive view of Enlightenment, the conservative view of theology and tradition, or the sense of authoritarianism of politics, could have defamiliarized all and worked at a new perspective.

1. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind Bewegungen des ganzen Körpers. Niemals beobachten wir eine isolierte Bewegung (Prinzip der *Totalität*).

2. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen verlaufen rhythmische, d.h. sie nehmen ihren Ausgang von den grossen Körpermuskeln . . . (Prinzip der *Rhythmik*).

3. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind aufeinander abgestimmt, so dass bei geringstem Kraftaufwand die grosste Krafwirkung erzielt wird. Dieser Abstimmung entspricht die Abstimmung im Formverhältnis der Körperteile zueinander (Prinzip der *Form*).

4. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit langsamen Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem entspannten Muskelzustand und münden wieder in diesen (Prinzip der *Entspannung* oder der *Schwere*).

5. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit schnellem Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem Gleichgewichtsverhältnis antagonistischer Muskelspannungen. Die Bewegung entsteht durch Spannung der einen Muskelgruppe und Entspannung der anderen (Prinzip der *Vorbereitung*).

Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁵⁹ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 127.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Hitlerrummel mit allem Tamtam eingesetzt.” Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, April 2, 1927, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 47.

Such observations were not limited to Benjamin and his piercing intellectual power. Other intellectuals with an open approach to politics and aesthetics reacted with the same curiosity regarding *Lebensphilosophie* and its close ties with the conservative revolution, specifically Hans Freyer and Karl Lowith.

Hans Freyer arrived in Berlin in 1913 to study with Georg Simmel, attended all of Simmel's university lectures at the university, and visited Simmel at home on several occasions.⁶² Like other members of the *Serakreis*—the small circle of conservative thinkers in Jena established by Eugen Diederichs—Freyer's first exposure to Simmel's ideas had come through Diederichs and the reactionary circle around *Die Tat*.⁶³ Diederichs himself served as Freyer's informal mentor, published two of his books, and was responsible for Freyer's first contribution to a major periodical, a review of Oswald Spengler's *Decline of the West* that appeared in *Die Tat* in 1919.⁶⁴ As I explained in chapter 3, during the 1920s and 1930s Hans Freyer referred routinely to *Lebensphilosophie* in general and to Klages in particular. Much like Benjamin and Junger, Freyer came to believe that Klages's notion of antilinear time could provide a crucial starting point for a modern hermeneutics. This led him to reject the idea of Western progress, a philosophy of time and history he identified with totalitarianism. During the 1930s he often sounded very much like the Klagesians, which critics pounced on, questioning his loyalty to the Nazi party.⁶⁵

In his research on the *Tat* group, historian Kurt Sontheimer did not refer to Freyer, but explained that the journal and the circle around it “could be grasped as symptomatic [of] the spiritual and political crisis of the Weimar Republic.”⁶⁶ For Sontheimer, who ignored the discursive applications of *Lebensphilosophie* and the way it was integrated by the politics of the conservative revolution, the *Tat* circle amounted to nothing more than a “group of esoteric writers,” even if “Diederichs's *Tat* was not a ‘*volkisch*’ journal in the primitive sense, like other groupings one views during the Weimar period.”⁶⁷ Sontheimer found here an interesting point but turned against his own conclusions; in fact, it was *especially* those intellectuals standing between right

⁶² Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, December 13, 1930, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 5. See also Erich von Ludendorff, *Weltkrieg droht auf deutschem Boden: Broschur* (Munich: Faksimile-Verlag, 1931).

⁶³ For the first, see the analysis of Laure Guilbert, *Danser avec le IIIe Reich: les danseurs modernes sous le nazisme* (Brussels: Complexe, 2000), p. 152. For the latter, see Rudolf Bode, *Angriff und Gestaltung* (Berlin: Widukind Verlag, 1939).

⁶⁴ “Das Ziel ist: Die . . . Bewegung hervorgehen zu lassen aus der Instinktiven Sicherheit in der Erzeugung natürlicher Bewegung, wie sie jedes Tier und auf jedes körperlich unverdorbenes Kind hat.” Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁶⁵ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, p. 128.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, February 6, 1941, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8373, letter no. 17.

and left that were most interested in *Lebensphilosophie* for its radical philosophical potential, and Karl Lowith is one clear example of this unconventional group.

In 1938 Karl Lowith, “one of the most significant figures of twentiethcentury German philosophy,”⁶⁸ a Jewish disciple of Martin Heidegger who was forced to flee Germany, was living in exile in Japan. From the other side of the globe, Lowith continued to reflect on and write about the philosophical and discursive conditions that enabled the politics of this time. One of his texts was a review for the Frankfurt School’s *Zeitschrift fur Sozialwissenschaft* in which he compared Klages, Freyer, and Albert Schweitzer. He was quite fascinated by the first two and pronounced them as “two characteristic examples of our spirit and times.” Relating their thinking to the tradition stemming from Dilthey’s *Lebensphilosophie*, Lowith argued that their philosophy was “no longer a discipline shaped by Ranke and Burckhardt, but a liberating advance [*frei Vorstossende*] inspired by one of the Fuhrer’s initiatives and a ‘logic of the heart,’” arising “from the blood, from the race, from faith.”⁶⁹ Compared to the later generalizations, Lowith in 1938 seems much better equipped to judge and examine the potential and risks of this terminology. Lowith himself changed and shaped his positions between the mid-1920s and late 1930s. As I mentioned in chapter 3, in the late 1920s Lowith maintained a lively correspondence with Klages, praised his interpretation of Nietzsche, and contributed a number of reviews to his *Zeitschrift fu r Menschenkunde*. The boundaries that would divide the camps so decisively along political, ideological, and ethical lines in 1938 did not seem to exist in 1927.

3. Lebensphilosophie and politics: Der geist als widersacher der seele

The story of *Lebensphilosophie* and its connection to politics, even Walter Benjamin’s part of the story, is not one of complete independence. After all, Benjamin used many sources as guidance and interacted with ideologies or thinkers Klemperer would never even consider deserving from an academic standpoint. A primary source for Benjamin was Klages’s *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (Spirit as the adversary of the soul), published in three parts between 1929 and 1932. Klages’s book embodied the hermeneutic principles that occupied both *Lebensphilosophers* and conservative

⁶⁸ For Bode and his role see also Tobias Schneider, “Ideologische Grabenkampfe,” pp. 283-284.

⁶⁹ “Denn theoretisch habe ich immer und immer betont, dass die einseitige Unterjochung des Körpers unter die Gewalt des Geistes, genannt ‘Körperherrschaft,’ die Gefahr einer Verflachung und Vernegerung des Seelischen in sich birgt, denn alle Zweckhaftigkeit ist zielstrebig und nur in einseitig eingegengten Bahnlinien vollzieht sich der ‘Störunglose’ Ablauf der Bewegung . . . Dieses verläuft aber nicht in zielstrebigem Bahnen, sondern in rhythmischen! Und praktisch habe ich das Uebermass der Zielstrebigkeit bekämpft, indem ich die Schwindung, jenes geheime Vibrieren, das den Menschen nicht nur mit dem Menschen, sondern auch mit aller Natur verbindet.” Rudolf Bode, “Körpererziehung und Kultur,” in *Der Rhythmus, Zeitschrift für gymnastische Erziehung Mitteilungen des Bodebundes* 5:3 (July-September 1927): 99.

revolutionaries in the heat of their own political transformation. Most visibly, it gave greater prominence to the biological terms that had been marginal in previous works, dwelling especially on the idea of *Grenzqualität* (quality of thresholds), which Klages connected to the most fundamental condition of human cells.⁷⁰ Klages's biological ruminations were supported by many historical examples, drawing on current ethnological research and studies of ancient religions and rituals; the mathematical and physical material had presumably been mediated by Melchior Palagyi.⁷¹

In *Der Geist* Klages identified four guiding principles of life—continuity, pulse, waves, and flow. The principles were based on ones elaborated in previous works by Klages: the typological system of repetitive modes, the aesthetic emphasis on thresholds, and the unexpected ecstatic potential of the inner experience. The first, continuity, was marked by “an unbroken living experience” which Klages understood as a continuous “having-been-flowing [*erlebete immer schon verflossen*],” opposed to the “interruptive quality of the spirit [*Grade der Lebensstorbarkeit*].” The essential form of *Erlebnis* was identified with the pulse, the repetitive but hidden rhythm of the planets, life and death, the ocean's waves and human hearts. Klages warned his readers not to confuse the movement of waves, identified with a “regular cosmic rhythm [*einer regelmässigen Wellenbewegung*],” with “the expression of breaks and oppositions [*des Erlebten wird zum Bewusstsein der Geschiedenheit der Gegenstände*].” But most important of all was the “flowing experience . . . that forms the basis of any threshold quality [*Grenzqualität*] and hence consciousness in the sense of the ability to comprehend and render judgment.”⁷² In other words, Klages argues that temporal terms such as repetition and flow or liminal aesthetic ones like thresholds and systems of signification bring one closer to life itself. Klages did not stop there, but made an attempt to bring the two parts together, the anti-linear and anti-Jewish temporality he identified with the Germanic, and the liminality he identified with the discourse of life.

The liminal temporality Klages emphasized at the heart of *Der Geist* did not prevent him from setting clear poles, mostly surrounding the core opposition of soul (*Seele*) and mind (*Geist*). The continuity, flow, repetition, and pulse all belong to the side of life and soul. The mind or the spirit stops this movement and therefore the flow of life

⁷⁰ “[Die] höchste Offenbarung . . . zum Grundprinzip aller körperlichen Bildung machte und dessen Wiedererweckung als das eigentliche pädagogische Problem der Gegenwart aufstellte.” Ibid.

⁷¹ “Alle Bewegungen müssen sich von innen entladen als rhythmischgeformte, in dem Sinn, dass die Bewegung von einem Zentrum aus auf den ganzen Körper überstrahlt.” Rudolf Bode, “Die Bedeutung der körperlichen Bewegung für die Erneuerung der deutschen Kultur,” *Rhythmus* 13, pp. 286-293. See also Norbert Hopster and Ulrich Nassen, *Literatur und Erziehung im Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1983), p. 53.

⁷² “Unsere Aufgabe als Hochschullehrer ist es, sie zu gestalten: eine neue Erkenntnislehre, eine neue Ethik, die Wissenschaft der uns artgemässen totalen Lebensordnung unseres Volkes.” Hans Lohr, “Wesen und Sinn der nationalsozialistischen Akademie des NSD-Dozentenbundes der Christian-Albrechts-Universität,” in *Kieler Blätter*, no. 1 (1938): 40. Quoted in Monika Leske, *Philosophen im “Dritten Reich”, Studie zu Hochschulkund Philosophiebetrieben im faschistischen Deutschland* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1990), p. 81.

itself. For Klages, “Soul is the meaning of the living body,” which, Thea SteinLewinson wrote, “is the basis of Klages’s science of expression.”⁷³ Mind, spirit, intellect are all regulating forces connected to the will and to the regulation of the spontaneous life. Three properties of this polarized structure are the ability to arouse an emotional response (“affectivity”), the capacity to arouse one’s will (“Temperament”), and the personal capacity for expression or “threshold of expression.”⁷⁴ The expressive side of the vital movements is “the visible manifestation of the impulses and feelings of the psychic life,” and it “formulates the following principle of expression: ‘An expressive (body) movement is the visible manifestation of the impulses and feelings which are represented in the vital movement of which it is a component part . . . [T]he expression manifests the pattern of a psychic movement as to its strength, duration and direction.’”⁷⁵

Der Geist is a far more political book than anything Klages had previously written. Its anti-Semitism—in spite of its reliance on Palagyi, a Hungarian Jew—is explicit and profuse, especially in the second part. Its principal thread leads from a theory of signs, time, and language to the ancient, Bachofenic world of cults and rituals, inherently tying together life and the cult of death, aesthetics and rituals of violence, leaping back to different images of “modern decline,” “distancing of the worlds,” the “growing alienation of subjective and objective.” Much of the fault of this general decline is laid at the door of “Jewish moralism” taken further and reproduced by “Christian hunger for power”; “Judaism,” Klages quoted one-sidedly from Nietzsche, “is the priestly people of resistance par excellence.”⁷⁶ Referring next to Bachofen’s theory of civilizations, Klages claimed that, while adapting high economy to a new history of the intellect, “[Catholic] Rome took over Jerusalem.”⁷⁷ Jewish textual culture and its Catholic descendants signified for him a clear sign that logic, will, mind, and intellect took over life, flow, impulse, and the biocentric.

Romanticism meant to Klages the alternative to this inherent sense of decline, drawing on the romantic aesthetics of nature. Therefore, *Der Geist* erased the divisions between images and facts, past, present and future, laws and what lies outside of the law. The “flow” allowed nature to resist static structures. Instead of developing a historical-scientific narrative of culture, made of facts, events, or objects, Klages conceived of a historical process based on typology, working from a typological language of symbols. For example, he cared less about the history of architecture and great monuments than

⁷³ “Sprache ist nicht bloss aussere Form, gute Sprache nicht Schmuck des Lebens, sondern Ausdruck der volkischen Denkform und Denkweise. Darum bedeutet Zucht der Sprache zugleich Zucht des Denkens und des Charakters.” Ernst Krieck, *Dichtung und Erziehung* (Leipzig: ArmanenVerlag, 1941), p. 147.

⁷⁴ “Die Sprachgesetz des Volkes . . . seiner besonderen *Lebensaufgaben* und seines eigentumlichen *Lebenssinns* kommt.” Ernst Krieck, *Die Wirklichkeit*, vol. 1 of *Volkisch-politische Anthropologie* (Leipzig: Armanen, 1936), p. 39 (emphases in the original).

⁷⁵ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 231, 238.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁷⁷ Ernst Cassirer, *Zur Metaphysik der symbolischen Formen, Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1995), p. 24.

he did about the ruins of ancient temples, the hidden forms they exposed to those who view them without assumptions and moral judgments. The perspective is one of the present relevance, internalizing an ur-image that it inherits from its earliest sources: “When we, those living in the present, step in front of the temple ruins of the past, with a single glance we are deeply disturbed yet comprehend certain characteristics of the soul of antiquity . . . [A]n inner glow seems to reach . . . with Homer’s Olympian epics and the clear metallic reverberations of the rhythms of the Greek tragedians.”⁷⁸ The poetic consideration of symbols to life, according to Klages, is what contemporary science is missing. Arguing against Max Weber’s famous *Science as a Vocation* (1918), Klages contrasts the idealistic view of science with the power of ur-images. Playing on the meaning of Max Weber’s own name (*Weber* translates to “weaver”), he claims that Weber and Weberian sociology were incapable of understanding what he (or the ancient tragedian) weaves (*webt*).⁷⁹ Klages’s deconstructive work on the relation between distance and nearness, implying an attack on Weber and then Simmel’s sociology of *Distanz*, was the basis for his definition of the *aura*, a concept he and Schuler took from Bachofen and the ancient cults and which Benjamin, in turn, adapted along similar lines that undermined the spatial division of distance and nearness. For Klagesians, conservative revolutionaries, and critical thinkers alike, past and present came close and enmeshed into one mythic entity.⁸⁰ As esoteric as it may sound, such views made complete sense to the conservative revolutionaries of the late 1920s.

Klages’s tendency to empty out concepts is most apparent when discussing Judaism and its “Paulinian sects.” Channeling Nietzsche, Klages biliously called Judaism “a historical mistake of the Monon of the spirit.”⁸¹ For him, “the victorious ‘monotheism’ of the Israeli prophets, and their hatred of gods . . . translated into the vampire will to power.”⁸² One feels here the heart of Klagesian *Lebensphilosophie* beneath (negative) universal laws; a naked will to power, he claims, displayed the material laws found in “*Jahwes Gesetz*” (Jehovah’s law), whereas Nietzsche and especially Bachofen found the substance of cosmic life and their biocentric metaphysics in appearances, images, fables set in worlds without shadows—or, rather, in worlds with shadows so deep they cannot be described.⁸³ Judeo-Christian morals applied directly to the world and never reflexively considered their own presuppositions, while Klages’s world was constructed

⁷⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 26.

⁷⁹ Peter E. Gordon, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 75.

⁸⁰ Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 53.

⁸¹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 33, 39.

⁸² Oliver A. I. Botar, “Raoul France and National Socialism: A Problematic Relationship,” a paper given to the Fifth International Congress of Hungarian Studies, Jyväskylä, Finland, 2011, p. 8. I thank Professor Botar for sharing this unpublished paper with me.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

from the thin lines separating shapes and temporal reincarnations. In a brilliant chapter devoted to the *Magna Mater* (Great mother), Klages proved that behind the discourses of antilegalism and antistructuralism lay nothing but “the beginning of life, thrown into the future, but rather as the fullness of life,” grounded “not on the mutual exclusion of oppositions, but rather on the cutting through, the *coincidentia oppositorum*.”⁸⁴

The final aim of this “cutting through” was a “secret language,” a typology that connected man and nature, in contrast to the JudeoChristian appeal to scientific clarity. Writing about the “essence of reality,” Klages traced the philological ties between the German word *Dichten* (poetry) and the Latin word *dictare*, meaning “to copy” and, later, “to draft.”⁸⁵ As Bachofen and Nietzsche indicated, the relationship between thought and image were much closer when humans identified nature as their immediate surrounding. Klages, however, contended that “the primordial Dionysian broke and was fused with the concept of ‘prophet,’ a demonic quality of the time.”⁸⁶ In the premonotheistic period, time was not flowing necessarily to the realization and fulfillment of aims. Hence, the notion of thought and spirit or intellect had a different meaning altogether. From that perspective, Klages wrote about an “ancient meaning of *Geist*—the *spiritus* or *spirare* [breath, exhalation] or the *anima* and *animus*—all tied to drifting [*Wehen*] and to wind. In a linguistic sense, ‘drifting’ stemmed from *Rausch*, fermenting, ‘drifting back’ which survived from the old Nordic *gaisa*, meaning the ecstatic rupture [*rauschend Ausbrechen*].”⁸⁷ This linguistic lesson he connects with the fable about a secret language spoken by the Nordic races and their heroic god Wotan, whose name “is related to the German word for anger [*Wi ten*] and the Latin word for a singer of godly inspiration [*vates*]. Wotan is the god of runes—the secret and legendary Nordic language—and the father of magic, prophecy, and poetry. A rune is, then, the expression of ‘a secret word,’ the fatherland’s song, a secret sign.”⁸⁸

As demonstrated in his mythic, highly codified language, Ludwig Klages tried to reload the normal, daily, banal language with an esoteric meaning he extricated from the ancient roots of language itself, before it was classified and organized in modern life. Such a suggestive and alternative undercurrent, flowing right under the feet, was an appealing thought for the conservative revolutionaries of the late 1920s. It enabled them to rethink their own senseless existence and the horrid violence they viewed

⁸⁴ Rene Romain Roth, *Raoul H. France and the Doctrine of Life* (Bloomington, Ind.: First Books Library, 2000), p. 176. France is also known as the inventor of the concept of biotechnology, which he identified with “the study of living and life-like systems” (p. 109).

⁸⁵ Botar’s paper traces the explicit references to France’s work among the artistic avant-garde of the 1920s, among them well-known names such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Fritz Neumeyer, Mies van der Rohe, and El Lissitzky.

⁸⁶ Oliver A. I. Botar, “Defining Biocentrism,” in *Biocentrism and Modernism*, ed. Oliver A. I. Botar and Isabel Wunsche (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 17-18.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁸⁸ “Rosenberg contra Klages,” see John Claverely Cartney, web-page editor, “The Biocentric Metaphysics of Ludwig Klages” in <http://www.revilo-oliver.com> (accessed July 16, 2012), quoted in *ibid.*, p. 30.

as another appearance, an explosion, of an untimely entity that reached them from a primordial past. The images of *Lebensphilosophie* found their way into the daily life and speech of the Nazi elite. Rauschnig quotes Hitler using the same language of biological metaphors and anti-ethical blood-aesthetics, time after time, in front of his closest adherents: “I assure you, that as Haeckel and Darwin, Goethe and Stefan George became the prophets of their own ‘Christianity,’ so would the swastika replace the cross. Instead of the blood of a messiah, you will celebrate the pure blood of our *Volk*, . . . a symbol for the eternal community of the *Volk*.”⁸⁹ For some reason, most historians and philosophers preferred to view this as a simple case of irrationality.

4. The Klages circle: Werner Deubel

The growing integration of Klages’s language in political circles, especially among those conservative revolutionaries who became Nazi supporters, could be easily demonstrated if one looks at his admirers. A few of Klages’s leading disciples moved within the reactionary circles, and they dedicated much effort to spreading the Klagesian word and politicizing it. First among them is Werner Deubel, the best-known member of the Klages circle, after Klages himself. In December 1929 Deubel (1894-1949), a poet, cultural philosopher, and theater critic who had known Klages since the early 1920s, accepted an invitation to give a lecture on Klages’s thought at a prestigious gathering of the Kant Society. In his report to Klages from the meeting, Deubel referred explicitly to the growing need to tie *Lebensphilosophie* to hard political issues on the one hand and canonical philosophy on the other. Klages seemed reluctant to follow this advice.

A year earlier, in 1928, Hans Kern, another faithful Klages disciple and later a loyal Nazi, was asked by Radio Berlin to prepare a series of lectures on *Lebensphilosophie*. Kern divided his lectures into four sections: the eighteenth-century notion of life espoused by Johann Georg Hamann and Johann Gottfried Herder, the romantic notion of life exemplified by Lavater and Carus, Nietzsche’s radicalization of the romantic models, and, as the grand finale, Ludwig Klages on life. This four-part structure, as well as Kern’s explicit references to current politics, made it clear that he saw *Lebensphilosophie* as part of an antiKantian tradition of the revolutionary right.

When he expanded his lecture in an article published by Werner Deubel, he pushed the claim further. Eight years after his radio lectures, transcripts of Kern’s lectures

⁸⁹ “Deshalb ist es kein Zufall, wenn auch unsere Einigung in das Jahr der nationalsozialistischen Erhebung fällt: Erst heute beginnt unsere praktische Wirksamkeit möglich und auch nötig zu werden . . . Der Schwerpunkt der NSDAP läuft wesentlich auf politischem Gebiet, die Ziele unseres Forschungskreises berühren die religiöse Sphäre. Infolge der gemeinsamen weltnanschaulichen Grundlage haben wir die Verpflichtung, die wirkliche Radikalität der nationalen Revolution dort zu wahren, wo der Politiker Vermittlungen sucht. Die staatliche Macht ist verpflichtet, dem kulturellen Aufbau Schutz zu gewahren, denn ohne ihn entbehrte sie ihres Inhaltes und überhaupt ihres Lebensrechtes.” Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Konv.: Prosa.

were distributed by Klages's followers to key figures in the Nazi elite and to Nazi journals and newspapers.⁹⁰ The circle's work was so thorough that historians who have conscientiously studied these Nazi sources still consider Carus and Lavater the fathers of modern racism, without comprehending the organized effort by the Klages circle to convince them of that viewpoint since the early 1920s, and especially after 1930.⁹¹ Klages himself, in spite of his paranoia about the "Jewish journalism,"⁹² acknowledged the influence he had on big conservative dailies such as the *Vossische Zeitung* as well as smaller and elitist magazines such as the *Berliner Blätter* and *Die Tat*.⁹³ Even a partial reckoning of the dailies and journals that had published Klages since the midand

⁹⁰ Wolfgang Olshausen, "Ludwig Klages in Berlin, 1933," unnumbered manuscript in the "Prosa" section, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages,

⁹¹ On this group, see *Hestia: Jahrbuch der Klages-Gesellschaft 1967/1969* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1971). The work is described as "lectures on the theme of language and its importance in the work of Ludwig Klages" and includes articles by Hans Eggert Schroder, Albert Wellek, Heinz Alfred Mueller, Hans Kasdorf, Françoise Wiersma-Verschaffelt, and Otto Huth. On Hirt's research see also the court sitting at Nuremberg that took place July 29 to August 8, 1946, at <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/tgmwc/tgmwc-20/tgmwc-20-198-04.shtml>.

⁹² "(1) Der Mensch gehört den beiden Reichen des Lebens und des Geistes an. Folgt er den idealistischen oder materialistischen Gesetzen des Geistes, dient er der logozentrischen, -setzt er die Mächte des Lebens als letzten Wert, dient er der *biozentrischen* Weltanschauung. Durch diese Entscheidung wird die Substanz des Menschen in ihrer *Existenz* und in ihrer Entwicklung bestimmt. (2) Mit besonderer Absicht verwenden wir die von Ludwig Klages geprägten Begriffe. In Klages erblicken wir den bedeutendsten Verkünder einer *Lebensphilosophie*, deren Unterströmung in die vorchristliche, germanische Zeit reicht . . . Gewiss mögen uns unter den lebenden Philosophen auch andere Namen bedeutungsvoll geworden sein, -kein Name besitzt eine Leuchtkraft wie derjenige *Klages*'. (3) Nie werden wir den zivilisatorischen Verfall unserer Kultur durch den Einfluss von *pseudo-radikalen* . . . durch den Einfluss von Ressentimentsgetriebenen Politikern ertragen. (4) Die selbstgeschaffene Bergung innerhalb einer Kulturgemeinschaft verlangt, die sich auf eine feste Hierarchie der Lebenswerte gründet, d.h. Blut- und Landschaftszusammenhang als Wurzeln unsrer Existenz anerkennt, -und entscheidendes Vertrauen auf die letzten bildenden Mächte des *Menschen*: Das Wunder, die Liebe, das Vorbild gesetzt. (H. Prinzhorn gibt in seiner *Persönlichkeitspsychologie* [1932] die eindringlichste Zusammenfassung einer biozentrischen Wirklichkeitslehre vom Menschen.) (5) Als allgemein verbindliche *Methode* unserer Forschung kann das hinweisende oder symbolische Denken bezeichnet werden. In den Ergebnissen der *Charakterologie*, die vor allen auf diesen Erkenntnisweg angewiesen ist, erblicken wir die Bedingung für eine notwendige Gesundung unseres Wirklichkeitssinn es . . . Hierbei sind wir davon überzeugt, dass unsere wissenschaftlichen Möglichkeiten weniger im atomisierten Spezialistentum, als *zwischen* den Einzeldisziplinen liegen." "Der Arbeits-Kreis für biozentrische Forschung (AKBF)," in DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Prosa, unpublished manuscripts (all emphases in the original).

⁹³ "Für das ihm innewohnende Vermögen der Wandlung und Erneuerung. Endlich waren wir solcher Art Physiognomiker, aber in einem tieferen Sinne als dem bisher mit dem Worte durchweg verbundenen. Wir fragen nicht mehr in erster Linie: welcher Vorgang folgt auf welchen andern? Sondern wir fragen . . . welche Lebensregungen *erscheinen* in ihnen? . . . Beharrung bedeutet zugleich Wiederholung; und aufgrund der Annahme von *Widerholungen des Gleichen* wird die Welt vom Geiste rechnerisch bewältigt. Allein die Wirklichkeit geht nur über jede von der Rechnung erreichte Dezimale unendlich hinaus." Ludwig Klages to Carl Haebler, January 10, 1935, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61/5117, letter no. 1 (emphases in the original).

late 1920s would list dozens of references.⁹⁴ Klages's influence definitively displays the criteria Herf made for the principle sites for the conservative revolution, created in the public sphere of "universities, political clubs, and little magazines"; but more importantly, his influence proves how *Lebensphilosophie* penetrated into the heart of the popular conservative media, uniting aesthetic anarchism with conservative politics.⁹⁵

The most explicitly political texts, those that formed the ideological backbone of the conservative revolution, were never written by Klages himself but by his most trusted students, primarily Werner Deubel and Hans Kern (see chapter 4 for more on Kern). The two disciples exemplify the shift from a post-World War I conservative revolution to a Nazi obsession with racial purity. Deubel, addicted to morphine since he received an injury in World War I, grew increasingly dependent on the Klages circle in the 1930s and 1940s.⁹⁶ Klages and his followers provided the Deubel family with both food and cash, and Deubel, who had been convinced of Klages's genius since the appearance of *Vom kosmogonischen Eros* in the early 1920s, repaid his patron with intense loyalty and a highly laudatory tone in a long series of critiques for different newspapers.

In 1931 Deubel published *Deutsche Kulturrevolution; Weltbild der Jugend* (The German cultural revolution: A worldview of the youth). Reinhard Falter described this popular text as "a Klages disciple's manifest."⁹⁷ Much like other Klagesian texts, it places Klages's ideas in line with the conservative revolution, politically speaking, but presents a philosophical divergence due to its focus on aesthetic ideas. Later Klagesians would refer to Deubel and other writers of this period as the "intergeneration," the group that was active between the early postwar generation and the national socialists. Deubel, indeed, like Nietzsche's "last man," pointed at the major contribution made by younger thinkers than himself—the generation that was not haunted by the traumas of the trenches of World War I, but that translated the lessons of the war to an aesthetic conclusion that would overcome the "old age of European civilization."⁹⁸

As Deubel showed in the first pages of his book, this group set the conditions for the German revolution, that is, the "dynamic movement" of the "living craft" (*lebendige Kraft*).⁹⁹ Yet, typical of the constant ambivalence that plagued the Klages

⁹⁴ Christian Eckle, "Erbcharakterologische Zwillingsuntersuchungen," in *Beiheft zur Zeitschrift angewandte Psychologie und Charakterkunde*, ed. Otto Klemm and Phillip Lersch (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth Verlag, 1939), p. 11.

⁹⁵ Julius Deussen, *Klages Kritik des Geistes, mit 7 Figuren und einer monographischen Bibliographie Ludwig Klages und einer Bibliographie der biozentrischen Literatur der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1934).

⁹⁶ A. Abbott, "German Science Begins to Cure Its Historical Amnesia," *Nature* 403 (2000): 474-475; William E. Seidelman, "Science and Inhumanity: The Kaiser-Wilhelm/Max Planck Society," *Not Now: An Electronic Journal* 2 (Winter 2000), <http://www.baycrest.org/journal/ifnot01w.html> (accessed February 12, 2013).

⁹⁷ Julius Deussen to Joachim Haupt, July 11, 1933, DLA, Nachlass Julius Deussen, doc. no. 7, file 6.

⁹⁸ Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einführung* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 2007), p. 19.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

circle, Deubel also expressed some reservations regarding the total politicization of the aesthetic as “an intensive, but helpless drive.”¹⁰⁰ As an alternative, Deubel suggested the Jungerian “experiencing of death,” which put a demand on total aestheticization and reached beyond conventional politics. Deubel grounded this in an actual experience: “The world war meant the graphic experiencing of death and for thousands the earthquake of the soul . . . This infused the conventional content of concepts such as *right* and *left*. Both camps serve death, . . . and where one flourishes without roots, the other hopes to bloom though its fibers are desiccated.”¹⁰¹ The last part of the passage was taken almost word for word from a letter Klages had written to Deubel in April 1931 and which continued to separate left and right: “The left is associated with the shrewdness of the ‘evil will,’ the right wing with obtuseness.”¹⁰² In the letter Klages instructed his acolyte to consult *Der Geist*, which traced a history of ideas (*Geistesgeschichte*)—or, rather, a counterhistory—from Heraclitus to Nietzsche to Alfred Schuler, and, inevitably, Klages. The principal theme connecting the names was “the prehistory of the revelation of images.”¹⁰³

After two decades invested in the philosophy of life, Klages and his circle had become the philosophers of death. By the paradoxical phrase “experiencing of death,” Klages and Deubel meant to express the inherent link between life and death, the simultaneous existence of an end and of a continuous process. They presented life according to pre-Socratic thought, experienced in terms of a primordial and imagistic time, scorning as “an intellectual act” the idea of continuing time.¹⁰⁴ From this perspective, all life should be seen not as something that arose out of nothing and shaped into fullness, but as an image reflected backward, in search of a deadly cell, the only carrier of true *duree* (duration) in life. This retroactive capacity to see death everywhere is different from the roots of *Lebensphilosophie*, as they were discussed by Simmel and Dilthey. Simmel’s notion of *Grenzwesen* (essential thresholds), which—as Heinrich Adolf noted—“carries within it the inherent notion of overcoming borders.”¹⁰⁵ Instead, Klagesian *Lebensphilosophie* should be understood as a hermeneutic power that uses

¹⁰⁰ Petra Gehring, *Was ist Biomacht? Vom zweifelhaften Mehrwert des Lebens* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2006), p. 222 (emphases in original).

¹⁰¹ Agamben, *The Open*, p. 37.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Samuel Weber, “Bare Life and Life in General,” in *Gray Room* 46 (Winter 2012), p. 20. Sam Weber’s article is an exceptionally precise analysis of the concept of “bare life.” However, in contrast to my analysis of *Lebensphilosophie*, Weber’s stress falls on the weight given to *life* and *death* within the antinomial relationship, in a post-Paulinian context, rather than the immanentization of death within life as a secularized form.

¹⁰⁴ “Schon beim stillen Nachsprecher dieser Worter durfte den Lesern und Leserinnen klar werden, dass die deutsche Volkerkunde seit 1945 ein terminologisches Problem hat.” Thomas Hauschild, “‘Dem lebendigen Geist,’ Warum die Geschichte der Volkerkunde im ‘Dritten Reich’ auch fur Nichtetnologen von Interesse sein kann,” in *Lebenslust und Fremdenfurcht, Ethnologie im Dritten Reich*, ed. Thomas Hauschild (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995), p. 22.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

finality as an image in order to sharpen one's sense of living life on the edge. Death charges life with *Rausch* (ecstasy), for it requires one to live life to the fullest at any given moment. *Lebensphilosophie* provides the close connection between *Rausch* and pessimism. In the words of the Pythagorean philosopher and physician, Alcamaeon (Alkamion), quoted by Klages and later cited by Hans-Georg Gadamer, "We human beings must die because we have not learned to connect the end with the beginning again."¹⁰⁶

Tying death with linearity and human finality was, then, an old tradition. What Klages and his disciples pleaded to, however, was the internalization of human finality into life itself and overcoming the ancient metaphysics that accompanied it. Overcoming old opposition between life and death was translated also to collective terms, which is perhaps the reason Deubel repeated—after Klages—that "it is not only the epoch of German culture that has ended, but the European position in the world that has reached its end."¹⁰⁷ The end of history, individual death, and images of ruins precede history itself, individual life, and new constructions. Now was the time to rethink its limits and boundaries. Klages tried to redirect Simmel's threshold philosophy back to the living experience of the Germanic mythos.

Deubel's text became a basic text of the conservative revolution in its later pro-Nazi form. It was described as such in the November 1935 *Völkischer Beobachter*, which featured a comprehensive review of his work. The article praises Deubel both for his "brilliant text" and for his longstanding contributions to the Nazi effort, "not only as a critic and a cultural philosopher, but as a creator"—the last comment a reference to his career as a dramatist.¹⁰⁸ It also praised Deubel for cultivating popular awareness of poetics (*Dichtung*) in his book, for adopting an antianalytic writing strategy that relied on metaphors and images instead of polemical arguments.

5. Conclusion: First attempt to theorize Lebensphilosophie

Lebensphilosophers argued fiercely in favor of a ritualistic yet selfconscious notion of life as a coherent discourse and a form of codification of signs, grounded

¹⁰⁶ "Die Kraft körperhaften Sehens und Erfassen lässt sich entfalten . . . Der Wille, aus klarer Erkenntnis das Eigene, das Lebendig-Eigene aus eigenem Willen zu wirken, scheint mir ein Kennzeichen unserer Gegenwart und mehr noch ein Anzeichen und Vorzeichen der Zukunft zu sein." Hans Gunther, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, vol. 1 (Munich: Lehmann Verlag, 1939), p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ "Aus einem Zeitalter der Not heraus wollten viele Denker der 30er Jahre die Zeit als solche besiegen und sich auf ewig in einer heilen, erlösten Menschheit fortzeugen." Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰⁸ "Der Gedanke der kraftvollen und lustvollen Eroberung der Zukunft, aber auch die Sorge um eine als 'krank' und bedroht empfundene Gegenwart ist Reich und Gunther, oder auch: Marcuse und Junger, Adorno und Klages gemeinsam. Gemeinsam ist vielen Denkern der 30er Jahre auch die Bindung ihres Denkens an Motive der Lebenslust . . . die Suche nach einem naturwuchsigem Ursprung, zu dem zurückzukehren gilt." Ibid., p. 20.

in the circularity of blood, the repetitive heartbeat, or other bodily arithmetics (*Rechenkunde*).¹⁰⁹ *Lebensphilosophers* turned to the sacred world as a store of images and symbols: the sacred body, the repetitive flow of time, and the biocentric focus on “cosmic life and blood symbolism.”¹¹⁰ These were manifested in the ahistorical human appearance (*Schau*) of shapes (*Gestalt*) such as “the rod, cross, ring, egg, hand, finger, eye, etc.,”¹¹¹ mediated by the ancient symbol of certain trees “and the shape of the phallus.”¹¹² The types of symbols, one should note, always worked from the feelings in the present, from the phenomenon or “now point” (*Jetztpunkt*).¹¹³ Klages found his way back into an immanent perspective by seeing an inherent relation between the outer phenomenon and the inner experience. “The soul is the formative principle of the living body,” he wrote, “exactly as the living body is the phenomenon and exposure of the soul,”¹¹⁴ and his writing grew from this intricate, heavily symbolic, and circular mythical perspective.

If the only way to figure the gradual politicization of *Lebensphilosophie* is by examining it from the perspective of discourse theory, it is not surprising that the first to pay attention to its aesthetic rebelliousness were literary scholars and political philosophers. Following the lead of Peter Szondi, who focused on the work of nineteenth-century *Lebensphilosophie*, I argue that *Lebensphilosophie*’s greatest contribution was its hermeneutical radicalism.¹¹⁵ This radicalism, in turn, allowed *Lebensphilosophie* to keep its political relevance even while debating the principle of representative politics and the mimetic relation between thought and reality. For *Lebensphilosophie* nothing but total unity was deemed satisfactory. In this sense, *Lebensphilosophie* was leading to what Hannah Arendt called the totalitarian principle of “a constant radicalization of the standards,”¹¹⁶ and Hans Mommsen called a “cumulative radicalization.”¹¹⁷ Stressing the inherent radical element in *Lebensphilosophie* demonstrates how and where it worked for the Nazi rhetoric.

Expanding beyond Szondi’s thesis, I believe that during the 1920s *Lebensphilosophie* radicalized oppositions to such a degree that they simply collapsed in favor of an

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 43.

¹¹² Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einfuhrung*, p. 31.

¹¹³ Ibid., p. 40.

¹¹⁴ Mosse, *Masses and Man*, pp. 1, 15.

¹¹⁵ Currently, the best place to read Klages in English is the monumental work of translation done by John Claverley Cartney, an unidentifiable independent scholar whose name can be easily linked with some suspicious groups. See http://www.revilo-oliver.com/Writers/Klages/Ludwig_Klages_.html and the anti-Semitic http://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/index_.html.

¹¹⁶ Samuel Weber, *Benjamin’s-abilities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 66.

¹¹⁷ “The classification of man into racial types according to groups of traits and the study of the transmission of physical traits and predispositions through heredity is a completely legitimate scientific endeavor because a part of total human existence is undoubtedly of animal nature and can be isolated as such.” Eric Voegelin, *Race and State*, trans. Ruth Hein (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), p. 34.

ontology of flow and circularity; *Lebensphilosophie* shaped a unique hermeneutic that served well the Nazi demand to form an antipolitical language to deal with democratic representative politics or an antiparliamentarian philosophy that pleaded the end of the democratic left-right divide in favor of a total organic unity.¹¹⁸ The roots of this extreme approach could be seen in Nietzsche and Bachofen, but the idea did not turn into a clear cultural marker until the 1920s. Here again, seeing *Lebensphilosophie* only as a discourse permits such a view, and only this perspective can demonstrate the power the discourse had, not only on the aesthetics of both Klages and Baeumler, but on other strange communions of left and right, such as the life characterology of the Jewish phenomenologist Emil Utitz (see chapter 4), the radical *volk* psychology of Wilhelm Stapel, or the sociology of the progressive Georg Simmel and the conservative Hans Freyer. Finally, it is my belief that this is the critical explosive potential that enabled Walter Benjamin's extraterritorial perspective on all matters.

Szondi argued that the new hermeneutics developed by the Dilthey school created the basis for a new language of life and a new total speech act that tried to unite the most abstract aesthetic principles with what Heidegger would later call the *ontic*, the ontology of the everyday. This meant that the discourse of life was committed to the same life laws of the individual and collective soul that led to Heidegger and Gadamer's philosophy, and, in contrast to the formalistic theories, into a world of metaphors and images extracted from what Szondi calls a "*path-breaking life moment* [*Lebensmoment*] as an immediate act, [performed] not through a document, but through an active, actual expression of life."¹¹⁹ In this way Szondi characterized the Dilthey school of *Lebensphilosophie*, but Klages went one step further. For him, this aesthetic of life forms was asserting its relevance to even the simplest actions of the body, only to conclude that its realization was the opposite of activity and the will. In other words, Klages took a purist aesthetic position that forced him to support a passive stance in the world; only such passivity could allow a total recognition of the cosmic aesthetic power and avoid the easier enactment by any political force. If, as Ulrich Raulff showed, Klages's aestheticism and political abstinence were shared by George, "a decisionist of ambiguity," Klages made this avoidance a philosophical principle.¹²⁰

Klages's cosmology echoes the most basic arguments Simmel set forth in his *Lebensanschauungen* (1918),¹²¹ following Henri Bergson and Stefan George, and extends

¹¹⁸ Ibid., p. 82.

¹¹⁹ "Um die Auffassung des Gesprochen . . . Rede und Schrift aufgefasst als *hervorbrechender Lebensmoment* und zugleich als Tat, also nicht bloss als Dokument, sondern als active, aktuelle Ausserung des Lebens." Ibid., p. 112 (emphasis in the original).

¹²⁰ Ulrich Raulff, *Kreis ohne Meister, Stefan Georges Nachleben* (Munich: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2009), p. 72.

¹²¹ Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Munich: Duncker and Humblot, 1918).

them.¹²² Klages's was unique in his early attempt to conceptualize the fundamental principles of structuralism, the better to transgress them, striving all along to achieve the very same exclusivity that Simmel and Bergson, Lessing and Benjamin were avoiding. This attempt was visible in his 1922 *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*: "The cosmos lives, and everything that lives is polarized; the two poles of life are soul [*psyche*] and body [*soma*] . . . The meaning is experienced internally; the appearance externally."¹²³ The concept appears in his 1930s work on the opposition between the spirit and the soul, working in the same way by radicalizing the opposition and then overcoming it, thanks to an internal "reality of [primordial] images," of life and especially of death.

In contrast to the Judeo-Christian tradition that Kant helped to institutionalize, and that Klages sees as "nihilist" formalization,¹²⁴ Klages attempted to overcome structures and absolute limits.

The gaps Klages traced between the demand to total inner living and what the outer phenomenon reflected required a horizon of a catastrophe, or, as Walter Benjamin wrote a year after Klages's *Eros*, "pure language" can be attained only where "all information, all sense, and all intention finally encounter a stratum in which they are destined to be extinguished."¹²⁵ There is no contrast between Klages's passivity and his belief in the perfection of catastrophe; it was this very cosmological passivity, he thought, that would enable the catastrophe and create the condition for the rise of the superman. He was not wrong.

Klages's superman was a man of words, the creator of a new language of life. Klages longed for the appearance of pure language through a linguistic *Führer*, but acknowledged this desire as wishful thinking as a testimony for loss. "If we look in any dictionary, e.g., that of George, we find that 'genius' comes from *gignere* "to beget" [*zeugen*], which indicates a god that reigns over human nature and acts on the procreation and birth of humans, that accompanies them as their protector throughout life, and that

¹²² Rudolf W. Meyer, "Bergson in Deutschland, Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung seiner Zeitauffassung," in *Studien zum Zeitproblem in der Philosophie des 20. Jahrhunderts*, Phänomenologische Forschungen 13, ed. Ernst Wolfgang Orth (Munich: Verlag Karl Albert, 1982), vol. 13, pp. 10-89.

¹²³ "Der Kosmos lebt, und alles Leben ist polarisiert nach Seele (Psyche) und Leib (Soma). Wo immer lebendiger Leib, da ist auch Seele; wo immer Seele, da ist auch lebendiger Leib. Die Seele ist der Sinn des Leibes, das Bild des Leibes die Erscheinung der Seele. Was immer erscheint, das hat einen Sinn; und jeder Sinn offenbart sich, indem er erscheint. Der Sinn wird erlebt innerlich, die Erscheinung ausserlich." Ludwig Klages, *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*, in *Samtliche Werke*, vol. 3 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1974), p. 390.

¹²⁴ "Der Nihilismus jedoch der Kantischen Formel lasst, wie wir sehen werden, den der Eleaten noch hinter sich!" Klages, *Der Geist*, vol. 1, p. 57. Two-and-a-half pages later Klages also identifies Kantianism with the "kapitalistischer Unternehmer," that is, capitalist enterprise. See *ibid.*, p. 60.

¹²⁵ Benjamin plays here with the Jewish bible and Goethe's *Faust* simultaneously. But *logos*, the word, its sense of beginning or end, are all embedded in his understanding of life as pure language, taken from the tradition that ends with Holderlin and George. Walter Benjamin, "The Task of the Translator," in *Selected Writings*, vol. 1: 1913-1926 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), pp. 260-261.

determines their fate.”¹²⁶ In other words, it is the aesthetic genius, the painter of words, the creator of images, that possesses the power to reunite the different human levels, the upper and the lower with authentic images of existence.

In spite of his strong resistance to George, Klages, much like Benjamin, still acknowledged his crucial role in reforming language, reconstituting German around the idea of inherent life. Still, Klages was certain that only he was capable of importing these Georgian insights into the philosophical realm that would reunite language with the imagistic experience of the world. It was a total view of the world exactly because it was limited to the appearances and images to begin with. The cosmology, ontology, and mysticism were all encircled by the boundary of perception, which internalizes the entire world (*Welt-All*).

Hannah Arendt complained that totalitarian movements drained concepts of their content, inverting the conventional hierarchy of contents over form.¹²⁷ Klemperer made a similar complaint: “How many concepts and emotions [the Nazi language] has poisoned and damaged!”¹²⁸ Yet *Lebensphilosophie* and Nazi terminology both rejected the very use of concepts as a necessary tool of understanding and refused to acknowledge the value of analytical characterization. One might as well debate existentialism with a ghost as attack Klages and his epigones for ignoring, twisting, or falsifying the true meaning of a concept.

In *The Order of Things* Michel Foucault pointed out a fundamental change that occurred at the end of the eighteenth century, namely the integration of the “organic structure” into the language, and the “essential displacement which toppled the whole of Western thought: representation has lost the power to provide a foundation . . . for the links that can join the various elements together.”¹²⁹ *Lebensphilosophie*, obsessing about immediacy, ecstasy, intuitive typology, inner experience, and inner sight, extended this vitalistic turn and radicalized it. It immanentized death as a subcategory to life, but refused to acknowledge its political implications: “It kills because it lives,” Foucault wrote, referring to the transformation that was leading to modern animalism, vitalism, and “untamed ontology.”¹³⁰ Celebrating this animalism as an aesthetic-political phenomenon, Ernst Junger argued, “To live means to kill,” giving a voice to a whole generation of conservative revolutionaries.¹³¹ Accepting the necessary presence of death in life, *Lebensphilosophie* chose a less militant but not less destructive road. It destroyed the mimetic-analogical operation of classical logic in favor of a new

¹²⁶ “Schlagen wir in einem beliebigen Wörterbuche, z.B. von Georges, nach. So finden wir unter dem Worte ‘genius’ das folgende: Genius, von *gignere*=zeugen, bezeichnet den über die menschliche Natur waltenden Gott, der bei der Erzeugung und Geburt des Menschen wirkte, als sein Schutzgeist ihn durchs Leben begleitet und sein Schicksal bestimmte.” Klages, *Der Geist*, vol. 2, p. 1278.

¹²⁷ Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, p. 348.

¹²⁸ “Wie viele Begriffe und Gefühle hat sie [die Sprache des Nazismus] geschadet und vergiftet!” Klemperer, *LTI*, p. 10.

¹²⁹ Foucault, *The Order of Things*, pp. 238-239.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 278.

¹³¹ Junger, *Der Arbeiter*, p. 45. See also Herf, *Reactionary Modernism*, p. 74.

immanent relation one identifies, nowadays, with biocentrism and biopolitics. My final chapter describes that collaboration.

6. Lebensphilosophie and Biopolitics: A Discourse of Biological Forms

1. The history of biopolitics

Current histories of biopolitics repeat the key importance of Germany in the 1920s. The decade is generally described as the period that saw “the emergence of this biopower that inscribes it in the mechanisms of the State.”¹ “Biopower,” Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri write, “is a form of power that regulates social life from its interior, following it, interpreting it, absorbing it, and articulating it . . . As Foucault says, ‘Life has now become . . . an object of power.’”² What Hardt and Negri imply is that biopolitics can be explained from the perspective of the 1920s as the history and concept of life. For them, German biopolitics was realized with an actual stress on sheer naked power, or what Ernst Junger coined as the idea of “total mobilization.”³ Roberto Esposito, more interested in the history of philosophy, agrees with their estimation in *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*. The 1920s shaped the “nucleus of biopolitical semantics,”⁴ he writes, in “not [just] any state but the German state.”⁵ Furthermore, the term *biopolitics*, he argues, was coined by Rudolf Kjellen in the context of the German discourse of *Lebensformen* (life-forms) in his 1920 *Outline for a Political System*: “this tension that is characteristic of life itself . . . pushed me to denominate such a discipline biopolitics, which is analogous with the science of life, namely, biology.”⁶ Giorgio Agamben never discusses the 1920s in Germany as a separate issue, but he has implicitly done so through his philosophical discussions, most of which depend on the pre-Nazi theory of power. Both left-wing and right-wing interpretations of power originated for him

¹ Book I of the History of the Peloponnesian War, Oxford text, edited by H. Stuart-Jones; translated by Arnold J. Toynbee.

² R. W. Hutchinson, Prehistoric Crete (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962).

³ Herodotus, Book I, chapters 56 to 58.

⁴ Available in Ludwig Klages, The Biocentric Worldview (London: Arktos, 2013).

⁵ Tuist is a term coined by Klages. The distinction between tuist and egoist entails a recognition of the characterological distinction between those whose drives and affects are focused on the “you,” as opposed to those who are centered solely upon their own ego.

⁶ Ibid., p. 17. Esposito quotes from Rudolf Kjellen, *Grundriss zu einem System der Politik* (Leipzig: Rudolph Leipzig Hirzel, 1920), pp. 3-4.

in that period and historical context, from Walter Benjamin's understanding to Carl Schmitt's and Martin Heidegger's, from Alfred Hoche's (1865-1943) concept of "life unworthy of being lived," coined under the influence of Klages and other *Lebensphilosophers*,⁷ through Jakob von Uexkull's concept of *Umwelt* (environment) and to Hannah Arendt's dialogue with Martin Heidegger and Karl Jaspers, extending from her studies in Germany during the 1920s. It is the 1920s' radicalization of life that brings Agamben to adopt Foucault's later understanding of "disciplinary control achieved by the new bio-power . . . of 'docile bodies.'" ⁸ Why is this stress on the 1920s important to the understanding of biopolitical critique? For Agamben, the most radical relation between individual and public institutions emerged with the creation of "bare life" and the recognition of the "naked body" in a Benjaminian-Schmittian "state of emergency." The end point of this historical-theoretical discussion is of course the 1940s' *oikonomia* responsible for the reduction of human beings to the "naked life" of the *Muselman* in the concentration camp.⁹ To an extent, much of what is discussed nowadays in political theory is the byproduct of this process, extending from the early 1920s politicization of life to the 1940s racist realization that changed Western culture as a whole. Yet little of this historical background ever wins any attention. It is discussed by the philosophers as an analytical argument that allows them to radicalize their view of the present. This is what many of the biopolitical critics identify with "liminality" and "immanence" as hermeneutic practices. Agamben reinserts the radical political theories of the 1920s back into the political-theological discourse, especially the part of it that is identified now with the rise of a Paulinian discussion.¹⁰

Other interpreters of biopolitics such as Mladen Dolar and Eric Santner have written obsessively about the key thinkers of the German 1920s, among them Walter Benjamin, Martin Heidegger, Carl Schmitt, and Franz Kafka, with this liminality in mind. When Eric Santner evokes the existence of a "German Jewish school of biopolitics," he means the following: "The tradition of thought that I am calling 'German Jewish' is one that takes as its point of departure some form of the decisionist logic of sovereignty, . . . a space where the rule of law is in effect [and] always includes an immanent reference to a state of exception," that is, where all laws are suspended and where

⁷ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 136. Hoche worked with another follower of Klages, the Jewish Lebensphilosopher Kurt Goldstein. He was also close to a central figure of the Klages circle, the psychiatrist Hans Prinzhorn.

⁸ Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), p. 3.

⁹ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 2000).

¹⁰ Agamben "paulanized" Benjamin, Scholem, Taubes, and other German Jewish thinkers discussed in this book since his *Homo Sacer*. For the most coherent exploration of that philosophical move see Giorgio Agamben, *The Time That Remains: A Commentary to the Romans*, trans. Patricia Dailey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

absolute authority, present or hidden, is always lurking.¹¹ Such an understanding of law and norms— whether “German Jewish” or simply “German”—understanding of life as operative and an inherent category, which Agamben defines in *Potentialities* as “immanent” and the sign of the “coming philosophy”: “A legacy that clearly concerns the coming philosophy, which, to make this inheritance its own, will have to take its point of departure in the concept of life.”¹² In other terms, the “coming philosophy” has to do with three necessary elements: The intellectual history of the 1920s, the political theory that examines the crisis of democracy, and the concept of life.

This discussion is not disconnected from the analysis of contemporary politics. Take for example Brian Massumi, who emphasizes recently the relevance of biopolitics and the immanence of life not only as the “coming philosophy,” but as the very present politics in the United States: “The neoconservative power . . . is infra-vital. Its immanence to life is also, indiscriminately, the imminence of death: the threatening actualization, everywhere and at all times, of the conditions of emergence of life crisis.”¹³

Since a majority of the interpreters of biopolitics agree—even if reluctantly—on its timing and political hermeneutics, it is surprising to see that none has conceptualized the terminology of life so evident in Germany in the 1920s.¹⁴ Neither Agamben nor any of the other philosophers and historians of biopolitics, Foucault included, mention *Lebensphilosophie* in an orderly fashion. For example, the very concept at the heart of Agamben’s *Homo Sacer*, bare life (*blossen Leben*), was popularized by Georg Simmel in his *Lebensanschauungen* (1918) as an inherent relation to death, on the one hand, and as aesthetic operation on the other: “The formation of life in its whole movement through death is, so to say, image-able.”¹⁵ Simmel himself connected this life form in the flowing of time into “nowness” [Jetzt-*Sosein*] and “the mere nowness [*Das blosse*

¹¹ Eric Santner, *On Creaturely Life: Rilke, Benjamin, Sebald* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2006), p. 13.

¹² Giorgio Agamben, “Absolute Immanence,” in *Potentialities*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), p. 220.

¹³ Brian Massumi, “National Enterprise Emergency: Steps Toward an Ecology of Powers,” in *Theory, Culture & Society* 26:6 (November 2009), p. 170. I tried to explain the relevance of such readings for a contemporary understanding of life in Nitzan Lebovic, “Life,” in *Maftekh: Lexical Review of Political Thought* 2 (2011): <http://maftekh.tau.ac.il/en/issue-2e-winter-2011/life/> (accessed June 1, 2013).

¹⁴ Agamben comes close to it without making it a historical argument, when he points out Heidegger’s role as the mediator between two philosophical traditions. The first leads from Kant, via Husserl, to Heidegger and then Levinas and Derrida; the other leads from Spinoza, via Nietzsche, to Heidegger and then Foucault and Deleuze. In short, any examination of “the coming philosophy” should consider the 1920s’ debate about the role of life and immanence in Heidegger and his fellow critics of democracy, on the way to biopolitics and “immanentation.” *Ibid.*, p. 239.

¹⁵ “Diese Formung des Lebens in seinem ganzen Verlaufe durch den Tod ist bisher sozusagen etwas Bildhaftes.” Georg Simmel, *Lebensanschauung: Vier metaphysische Kapitel* (Berlin: Duncker and Humblot, 1994), p. 107.

Jetzt-Sosein].”¹⁶ As we saw in previous chapters, the neo-Kantian Heinrich Rickert complained after Simmel’s death that Simmel had turned the concept of bare life, and *Lebensphilosophie* as a whole, into “the most fashionable philosophy of our time.”¹⁷ Shortly thereafter, Rickert extended his critique to Simmel’s grounding of “nowness” or “immediacy.” In 1923 he wrote that “the concept of *i mmediacy* would have liked to have remained unobjectionable [*unbedenklich*], but it needs to be thought of from a negative conception, for it has no positive definition.”¹⁸ Obviously, immediacy or “nowness,” “now time,” etc. are key concepts for *Lebensphilosophers* in their plea to reconsider temporality itself. Even Heidegger, in that sense, was not working within a vacuum, as many philosophers would have liked us to believe.¹⁹

If a naked life, or a naked immediacy, existed in philosophical texts and concepts since the late 1910s, then the discourse on life adapted into Nazism should follow suit and be considered in light of those cultural changes occurring during that period. According to the Nazi rhetoric, every Aryan carried the totality of living experience in him or herself, and every Nazi institution existed as a form of life, finite and infinite at the same time. Victor Klemperer summarized this logic in his research on the Nazi language: “The Third Reich speaks with a frightening unity about all life

¹⁶ Simmel stresses here a temporal dimension of a being which turns Sein (being) into a particular presence. Sosein was used by different Lebensphilosophers, for example, Georg Simmel, Max Scheler, and Ludwig Klages. It is translated differently for every thinker, and sometimes, as various translations of Simmel prove, differently in different works of the same thinker. Simmel used the term repeatedly. See *ibid.*, p. 108. For another example of Simmel’s use of Sosein see the first page of his *Philosophy of Money*, which was translated as a “particular quality of being.” See Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money*, trans. Tom Bottomore and David Frisby (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 56. Then again, in his book about the history of sociology, David Frisby translated the same term when used by Max Scheler as “essence.” See David Frisby, *The Alienated Mind: The Sociology of Knowledge in Germany, 1918-1933* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 30.

¹⁷ Heinrich Rickert, *Die Philosophie des Lebens: Darstellung und Kritik der philosophischen Modestromungen unserer Zeit* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr Verlag, 1920).

¹⁸ Heinrich Rickert, *Unmittelbarkeit und Sinndeutung: Aufsatze zur Ausgestaltung des Systems der Philosophie* (Tubingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1939), p. 57 (emphasis in original). The concept of immediacy, popularized by Nietzsche, had garnered great interest among *Lebensphilosophers* since the early 1900s. Yet not before the early 1920s could one attach it to any particular view of politics.

¹⁹ Georg Imdahl and David F. Krell are an exception to that rule; in their careful readings of Heidegger’s early writings, both labor to demonstrate the close interest and impact of Heidegger’s own editorial working and research of Dilthey’s life philosophy. Heidegger’s later rejection of *Lebensphilosophie* cannot disguise the impact it had on his interest in the living temporality of the *Dasein*. See David F. Krell, *Daheim Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), and Georg Imdahl, *Das Leben Verstehen, Heideggers formal anzeigende Hermeneutik in den frühen Freiburger Vorlesungen* (Wurzburg: Konigshausen and Neumann, 1997). A few intellectual historians paid close attention to Heidegger’s interest in *Lebensphilosophie* from a different angle. Let me mention here only the most recent and excellent two volumes Peter Gordon published on Heidegger’s proximity to Franz Rosenzweig, and the opponents of Ernst Cassirer and neo-Kantianism. See Peter E. Gordon, *Rosenzweig and Heidegger: Between Judaism and German Philosophy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003); and *idem.*, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

expressions [*Lebensa usserungen*] and about its legacy.”²⁰ In 1933, Klemperer shows, “the [Nazi] party empowered all its private and public life zones: the political, the legal, the economic, the artistic, the scientific, the schools, the sports, the family, the kindergartens and child care.”²¹ A recent research of Nazi language similarly concluded that Nazi “directives and projects greatly reduced the plurality of language use, instead determining the legitimacy of racialized norms and categories.”²² In short, the Nazis turned the discourse of life into a racial discourse of life and death, and this vocabulary penetrated all levels of society, from high politics to the smallest child-care center or fertility clinic.²³ A doctoral dissertation approved in 1934, at the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University in Greifswald concluded that, indeed, Nazi language was dependent on its “totality of life” and that Nazism did try “to change the language by adding new meanings to well-known words.”²⁴ In contrast to how historians used to view this change, it was not a mere adding up or reduction, but, rather, a semantic change of meaning. Nazism changed the relation between life and its expression, between life and the different types of living entity and their immanent deadly core. Life did not stream from birth to death anymore, but integrated death at its heart: it was not a course so much as a momentary emphasis on each pure moment of living experience (*Erlebnis*). The historian Boaz Neumann wrote about it as “the Nazi life experience (reserved to the *Lebensraum*) [that] paved the way to the death experience,” hence giving preference to an “ontology” of death.²⁵ The political implication extended beyond even the usual course of nationalist rhetoric. As the author of the dissertation, an enthusiastic Nazi, explained in his contemporaneous analysis, Nazism was working, linguistically, beyond the usual nationalist realm. “National Socialism objected to the usual use of the concept of ‘nationality,’ since such usage ignored and betrayed the more important signification of ‘being born together’ or of ‘growing up together [*zusammengeborenen, Zusammengewachsenen*].”²⁶ The emphasis is not one of an individual joining the collective but of an inherent relation to the one collective of living and death that is set from the point of origin and at many points along the road. In manuals distributed to Nazi-trained speakers sent to teach the Nazi gospel to local communities, the instructions guide the speakers to emphasize again and again the concept of life as a revolutionary

²⁰ Victor Klemperer, *LTI: Notizbuch eines Philologen* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1966), p. 20. English translations often miss the importance of vocabulary to the essence (*Wesen*) of Nazi language.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

²² Thomas Pegelow Kaplan, *The Language of Nazi Genocide: Linguistic Violence and the Struggle of Germans of Jewish Ancestry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p. 5.

²³ Edward Ross Dickinson, “Biopolitics, Fascism, Democracy: Some Reflections on Our Discourse about ‘Modernity,’” in *Central European History* 37:1 (2004): 1-38.

²⁴ “Das Hauptgewicht der nationalsozialistischen Sprachbeeinflussung liegt auf der neuen Sinngebung oft alter, bekannter Worte.” Manfred Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, inaugural dissertation submitted to the philosophy faculty of the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt University of Greifswald (Greifswald: Hans Adler Buchdruckerei, 1935), p. 11.

²⁵ Boaz Neumann, *New German Critique* 85, Special Issue on Intellectuals (Winter 2002), 110.

²⁶ Pechau, *Nationalsozialismus und deutsche Sprache*, p. 13.

message. The instruction is taken from speeches by Alfred Rosenberg and expresses an attempt to fuse together a whole history and philosophy of life into one, prolonged, act of resistance: This is the rejection of any linear understanding of life in favour of racial immanence:

What is life? Life means *struggle* [*Kampf*]; as Heraklitus showed, “Struggle is the father of all things.” Nietzsche answered so the question [about life] . . . You are forgetting that our world looks as it does because our thought is reduced to viewing it through *space and time*, that [it] could be developed and released in *eternity* . . . [T]he first step to conscious life is [to] know thyself! In yourself, in the self, in your racial origin lies the full secret of the will of life.²⁷

Shortly after this emphasis on the value of life as an absolute fusion of self and community, the Nazi manuals explain why Judaism is the eternal enemy of the Nazi race. Strangely enough, the explanation credits Jews as equal competitors in the Darwinian struggle of life: “Judaism grasped the laws of life, for life gave it the right, and made it the contemporary world ruler above the Aryan people.”²⁸ That is, of course, when the Aryan should transform life into death and overcome Judaism and its own sense of life. Indeed, death has become the seed that predicts, preforms, life; life is now dependent on the praxis of death and defined by it.

Such discussions make it clear that historians read the Nazi racial bias a little too quickly. Hastening to explain the enmity and the actual action that were carried against the Jews, they skipped the discursive background that enabled it. Such discussions also illustrate what Michel Foucault identified, during the 1970s, as the discourse of biopolitics, or “the border between too much and too little.”²⁹ In the *History of Sexuality*, Foucault turned Aristotle’s understanding of man as a “*bios politikos*” on its head and defined “modern man” as “an animal whose politics places his existence as

²⁷ “*Was heisst Leben?* Leben heisst *kaempfen*! Schom *Heraklit* sagte: Der Kampf is der Vater aller Dinge, und Nietzsche beantwortete die Frage . . . so: ‘Die Welt ist der Wille zur Macht und nichts ausserdem.’ Wohin du auch schaust, ueberall findest du Kampf ums Dasein, Ringen um selbsterhaltung, Arterhaltung und Entwicklung . . . Sie vergessen, dass es den Menschen nur so Scheint, weil unser Denken beschraenkt ist in *Raum und Zeit*, weil wir nicht erkennen, was sich da in der *Ewigkeit* entwickeln und erloesen will . . . Der erste Schritt zu bewusstem Leben heisst: Erkenne dich selbst! In dir selbst, in deinem Rassenerbgut liegt der geheimnisvolle Wille deines Lebens.” Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, vol. 4, article 24, “Weltanschauung, NS,” p. 1. No further publication details are given; all emphases in the original. Karl Dietrich Bracher spoke of the “army of agitators” the Nazi trained in that context: Karl D. Bracher, *Die deutsche Diktatur* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1969), p. 159. See also Goebbels’s description of his propaganda success, based on “battalions of speakers,” which he still insisted were a “mystical phenomenon” in Joseph Goebbels, *Der Angriff. Aufsätze aus der Kampfzeit* (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1935), pp. 94-96.

²⁸ “Weil das Judentum mit den Gesetzen des Lebens ging, darum gab ihm das Leben recht, darum hat es heute eine weltbeherrschende Machtstellung ueber die arischen Volker erreicht.” Fritz Reinhardt, ed., *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, p. 3.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France 1978-79*, trans. Michel Senellart (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), p. 19.

a living being in question.”³⁰ Biopolitical sovereignty is located where politics decides about life and death but hides the decision within a so-called normal or regular conduct in the world. Foucault summarized this point in his discussion of the biopolitical system as an *apparatus* or *dispositif* that attempts to control and supervise any decision regarding the individual’s life, including how one thinks or desires it. As Giorgio Agamben recently characterized it: “I shall call apparatus literally anything that has in some way the capacity to capture, orient, determine, intercept, model, control, or secure the gestures, behaviors, opinions, or discourses of living beings.”³¹ This process of internalizing boundaries of life and death—proper and improper life—started, according to Foucault, during the eighteenth century and marks our daily existence in the modern and postmodern world. Nazism radicalized this process but also channeled it. In his late lectures about biopolitics, Foucault identified the Nazi leader cult with the formalization and internalization of an antistate form of biopolitics: “Nazism was the first systematic attempt to initiate the withering away of the state . . . The *Volk* in its community organization, the people as *Gemeinschaft*, is at once the principle of right and objective behind every organization . . . [I]t will be the form in which the *Gemeinschaft* [community] both manifests itself and produces its actions, but the state will be nothing more than this form, or rather, than this instrument.”³² It is also the basis for modern governmentality as a whole, grounded “in the principle of ‘internal regulation’ [which] means that this limitation is not exactly imposed by either one side or the other.”³³ Where life and death boundaries are drawn from the perspective of life, “the whole question of critical governmental reason will turn on how not to govern too much.”³⁴ This process, Foucault claims, is what ties the totalitarian principle of *Vitalpolitik* to the economy of bodies, or population.³⁵ Nazism used *Vitalpolitik* for its own good, but simultaneously advanced beyond it. “The objective of the Nazi regime was . . . to expose its own race to the absolute and universal threat of death. Risking one’s life, being exposed to total destruction, was one of the principles inscribed in the basic duties of the obedient Nazi.”³⁶ Foucault’s discussion of biopower and biopolitics is one

³⁰ Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Vintage, 1990), p. 143.

³¹ Giorgio Agamben, *What Is an Apparatus, and Other Essays*, trans. David Kishik and Stefan Pedatella (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 14.

³² Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, p. 111.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

³⁵ *Vitalpolitik* is grounded in the principle of growth or reduction that lies at the bottom of all competitive systems: economic, organic-physiological, or totalitarian. It assumes that politics, economics, society, and the individual all share the same form and image of the living body. It is exactly this shared body, or “synthesis of individuals,” according to Foucault, that allows the system to have “no explicit contract, no voluntary union, no renunciation of rights, and no delegation of natural rights to someone else. In short, there is no constitution of sovereignty by a sort of pact of subjection.” *Ibid.*, pp. 242–243, 300.

³⁶ Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 259.

of the most sophisticated readings of contemporary politics of our time, and it opened a door to the further theorization of biopolitics by Giorgio Agamben. Foucault's analysis, however, as innovative as it may be, stops short due to his overarching, encompassing argument. His understanding of life and death ends with a paradox; according to Foucault, modern biopolitics replaces old forms of sovereignty by regulating all aspects of life and population, while also releasing the control over death, but—and here is the paradox—it is exactly this obsession with life and deregulation of death that shapes the conditions for much bloodier wars and genocides: “If genocide is indeed the dream of modern powers, this is not because of a recent return to the ancient right to kill, it is because power is situated and exercised at the level of life, the species, the race, and the large-scale phenomena of population.”³⁷ The “disqualification of death” ends, then, with more organized death, not less.³⁸ What Foucault misses here, especially in relation to the Nazi genocide, is the dispositive, the apparatus, or the gradual shift from life to death and how death is reintegrated into life. In short, death is not “disqualified” as much as internalized, without regulation and supervision. In *Lebensphilosophie*, especially the *Lebensphilosophie* that developed after the mid 1920s, death becomes the invisible hand behind life, which does not need to report about it anymore; it is always there. Hence, from the perspective of *Lebensphilosophie*, the endpoint of the biopolitical apparatus is not the “receding of death” or “death becoming a scandal” for everyday language (this is how Benjamin describes the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie's relation to death—before *Lebensphilosophie*),³⁹ but rather the intensification of the presence of death in the midst of everyday language and “living experience.”⁴⁰ Every page of popular *Lebensphilosophie* during the mid and late 1920s, as of the Nazi rhetoric of the 1930s and 1940s, would demonstrate this point.

Nothing fascinated *Lebensphilosophie* more than the constant and irreducible presence of death in the midst of life. Nazi speakers sent to villages in Germany had to recite such mantras, taken from Hitler and Rosenberg's speeches. “We are living at the greatest time and turn of worlds, during a period of a break that reaches to the roots, not only meaningful to those areas of being [*Dasein*], but even more so to our life feeling.”⁴¹

³⁷ Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, p. 137.

³⁸ Foucault uses this term in *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 248.

³⁹ “It has been evident for a number of centuries how, in the general consciousness, the thought of death has become less omnipresent and less vivid . . . In the course of the nineteenth century, bourgeois society—by means of medical and social, private and public institutions—realized a secondary effect, which may have been its subconscious main purpose: to enable people to avoid the sight of the dying.” Walter Benjamin, “The Storyteller,” in *Selected Writings*, vol. 3:1: 1935-1938 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 151.

⁴⁰ For a short but coherent description of Foucault's notion of biopower and biopolitics, see Chloe Taylor, “Biopower,” in *Michel Foucault: Key Concepts* (Durham, NC: Acumen, 2011), p. 48.

⁴¹ “Heute, glaube ich, geht ein immer starker anwachsendes Raunen durch Millionen und aber Millionen Menschen Seelen . . . eines tiefen Wissens, dass wir in einer der grosten Zeiten und Weltenwende leben, in einer Epoche, die einen bis in die Wurzeln gehenden Umbruch nicht nur auf einigen Gebieten

In fact, if we trace the origins of biopolitics as a concept, we quickly see how vital *Lebensphilosophie* was to its acceptance. The vocabulary of life was the basis for Nazi biopolitical education, the combination of life and politics, feeling and action, internal and external. A Nazi official stated in 1935 that this connection was “the first and foremost goal of the Nazi regime . . . Only biology can develop the [German] race’s laws of life [*Lebensgesetze*] in accordance with actual research.”⁴² By the mid-1930s Nazis held academic posts that would permit the party to define and advance its philosophy of life in accordance with biology or race. A collection of academic articles entitled *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Germany at a pivotal moment, 1934), based on a conference held at the University of Tübingen in fall 1932, was dedicated to “educating politicians” in accordance with the biological principles “clearly expressed then by the *Führer* of the new Germany, Adolf Hitler.”⁴³ The academy, in that respect, “accepted the mission of politicization” in order to “rebuild personal convictions.”⁴⁴ The path to both goals, a meta-political model of education emanating from the *Führer*, passed through a “personal” conviction and educated the “will of the body.” In the words of Ernst Lehmann (1888-1957), the director of the Botanical Institute at Tübingen, “On May 9, Reich Minister Frick emphasized in his lecture to the cultural ministers of the German districts [*Länder*] the grounding importance of a ‘biological’ teaching of life [*Lebenskunde*]” to be carried by “the always swelling stream of life”⁴⁵ and what he called biopolitics:

The biological experience [*Erfahrung*] attests to the great role this concept has in the development [of people] . . . Everyone knows, from countless distressing books, that the German birth rate is falling and the basic demand of the theory of natural selection can no longer be met. [In contrast,] the people sitting on our eastern borders seem biopolitically [*Biopolitisch*] strong, thanks to [their] much higher birth rate.⁴⁶

des Daseins, sondern für unser ganzes Lebensgefühl bedeutet.” Alfred Rosenberg, “Der Kampf um die Weltanschauung,” *Redenmaterial der NSDAP*, ed. Fritz Reinhardt, p. 5.

⁴² The Reich’s minister of education explained on January 15, 1935, that the first priority of the Reich was political education, and he went on to say that “allein die Biologie kann den Begriff der Rasse und Vererbung und die rassistischen Lebensgesetze von der Seite der Tatsachen-Forschung her zwingend entwickeln.” *Nationalsozialistische Bibliographie 1: Schriften über Familie, Volk und Rasse* (Berlin: Zentralverlag der NSDAP/Fritz Eher Verlag, 1938), p. 7.

⁴³ “Fehlt es an einer solchen Erziehung, so entstehen ‘Politiker,’ deren Wesen und Gefahr keiner klarer durchschaut und gezeichnet hat als der Führer des neuen Deutschland, Adolf Hitler. Er hat auch in seiner eigenen Entwicklung ein unumstößliches Vorbild für solche politische Erziehung gegeben.” Hans Gerber, ed., *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer Verlag, 1934), p. vi.

⁴⁴ “[D]ie Universität . . . muss vielmehr auch den Gehalt der persönlichen Überzeugung bilden.” Ibid.

⁴⁵ “Was aber ist es, was den immer wechselnden Strom des Lebens über die Erde hintreibt?” Ernst Lehmann, “Der Einfluss der Biologie auf unser Weltbild,” in *Deutschland in der Wende der Zeiten* (Stuttgart: W. Kohlhammer, 1934), p. 131.

⁴⁶ “Alle biologischen Erfahrungen sprechen dafür, dass dieses Prinzip eine überragende Rolle im Entwicklungsgeschehen spielt . . . Jedermann weiss nun aus den unzähligen traurigen Büchern der

The conclusion was clear: “There can be no doubt: not only is there a Negro question in North America, not only is there a Jewish question in all the world, etc.—in every German house, Hans Gunther’s work has communicated the awareness of racial difference within our own people.”⁴⁷ Gunther had recently been appointed to a chair in race theory at the University of Jena; his ideas offered a solution to the biopolitical problem Germany faced through a combination of the temporality and aesthetics of life and the scientific discourse of biology.

Recent articles about Nazi biology have demonstrated clearly how in the early 1930s, even before the seizure of power, biology was integrated in the teaching of life (*Lebenskunde*), that is, patriotic pedagogy, health education, and an amorphous philosophy, “a name that seemed to support the broader philosophical outlook long since held by most biology teachers.”⁴⁸ Still, as the author of this comment herself admits, the involvement of high Nazi officials such as Bernhard Rust— Klages’s principal patron in the Nazi regime—and Wilhelm Frick made “*Lebenskunde* instruction” into a narrowly defined curriculum, aimed at indoctrinating schoolchildren in “the unity and interdependence of life’ . . . an emphasis on *Ganzheit* [wholeness] and the dependence of life.”⁴⁹ For that purpose Ernst Lehmann established the German Association of Biologists (Deutscher Biologen-Verband, DBV) in 1931, and immediately afterward its journal, *Der Biologe*, which from that point on furnished many future Nazis with basic knowledge of biology and eugenics.⁵⁰

Research into the history of biology and racial sciences mostly ignores philosophy as a serious matter, even when admitting that laws of life supplied the core understanding of this new pedagogy. The result is a gross misunderstanding of the role of *Lebensphilosophie* in Nazi indoctrination, and, more specifically, of the preconditions set by its aesthetic notion of life and its antiparliamentary politics. In methodological terms, *Lebensphilosophie* was never apparent as a coherent discourse that went through a period of transformation when adapted to the political institutions of the state, as many discourses do. Rather, it was integrated into the very tissue of everyday language and all levels of life.

Gegenwart, dass unser deutsches Volk bei der immer starker zuruckgehenden Geburtzahl diesem Grundsatz der Selektionstheorie nicht mehr gerecht wird. Biopolitisch sind uns die Volker an unserer Ostgrenze durch ihre viel hohere Geburtzahl weitgehend uberlegen.” Ibid., p. 138.

⁴⁷ “Kein Zweifel aber auch: Nicht nur in Nordamerika gibt es eine Negerfrage, nicht nur in aller Welt eine Judenfrage u.s.f.-in jedes deutsche Haus ist durch die Arbeit Hans Gunthers die Kenntnis gedrungen von der rassischen Verschiedenheit innerhalb unseres Volkes.” Ibid., p. 139.

⁴⁸ Sheila Faith Weiss, “Pedagogy, Professionalism, and Politics: Biology Instruction during the Third Reich,” in *Science, Technology, and National Socialism*, ed. Monika Renneberg and Mark Weller (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 189.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 193.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 188.

2. Klages's *bioi*

Let us return to a discussion of philosophy and its *bioi* (ways of life).⁵¹ Since his early publications about philosophy of life, Ludwig Klages acknowledged the necessary link tying together his *Lebensphilosophie*, the theory of signs and forms, and biological metaphors. As demonstrated in previous chapters, Klages moved from an earlier theory of aesthetics based on racial types to a politics of life, grounded in the same racial typology.⁵² During the Nazi era, probably trying to enhance his own position, Klages attached to this fusion a new component of political education. For him, the modern man was standing at the exact opposite end from what Aristotle—the coiner of *bioi* as a philosophical term—and Aristotelians promoted: a logical language of concepts and a practical ability to act.⁵³ Following on Bachofen and Nietzsche's attack on Western logic and other forms of "anthropocentrism," Klages wrote about Aristotle with scorn, the same scorn he felt for contemporaneous German academicians: "If Heraclitus is the great discoverer among the Greeks, Plato the great formulator of the apocalypse, [then] Aristotle is its great professor."⁵⁴ This snide remark cast Aristotle as the inventor of modern reason and consciousness, making him responsible for the modern and tragic rupture between *Lebendigen* (living, bodily) and *Geistigen* (spiritual, intellectual) matters.⁵⁵

Klages's views of the living body were taken up by many of his followers and acquaintances in Zurich and Berlin. Tracing the movement of his ideas allows us to view the gradual acceptance of a specific philosophical vocabulary by an institution, in this case the Nazi party. Even more specifically, it allows us to view the gradual implementation of Klages's philosophy of life—from the 1920s—by Nazi political education during the 1930s and 1940s. In contrast to Foucault and Agamben's characterization of modern politics as a shared ground for both the neoliberal economy of *Vitalpolitik* and total biopolitics, Klages and his followers chose a form of total body politics that they identified with an antiliberal system: revolutionary, antiglobal, and anticapitalistic growth that resisted all material consideration. The seeds sown by Klages during

⁵¹ See James G. Lennox, *Aristotle's Philosophy of Biology: Studies in the Origins of Life Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 129.

⁵² Tobias Schneider has denied that Klages ever subscribed to Nazi anti-Semitism. See Schneider, "Ideologische Grabenkämpfe: Der Philosoph Ludwig Klages und der Nationalsozialismus 1933-1938," in *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 49:2 (2001): 275-294.

⁵³ Hannah Arendt came close to Klages's claim but with the opposite ideological conclusions; she recognized Aristotle as the creator of a Western *bios politikos*, which she tied to the concepts of *praxis* and *lexis* (speech), the cornerstones of modern democratic politics. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1958), pp. 12, 25.

⁵⁴ Ludwig Klages, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, in *Samtliche Werke*, vol. 2 (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1966), p. 866. This passage first appeared in a much shorter book entitled *Geist und Seele*, which Klages published in 1918; he integrated much of that book into *Der Geist* in 1929.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 867.

the early 1920s bore interesting fruits during the early 1930s. The Bode school is our first example for this practical political phase of *Lebensphilosophie*.

3. The Bode school

In November 1921 Rudolf Bode (1881-1970), one of Klages's closest followers, shared with his mentor his "principles of bodily education."⁵⁶

Figure 6.1 Rudolf Bode, *ca.* 1950. DLM: Nachlass Ludwig Klages.

In the accompanying letter Bode described the "Bode school for the education of the body," which he planned to establish in the magnificent Bavarian castle of Nymphenburg in Munich, surrounded by beautiful parks and gardens.⁵⁷ Bode, later the director of the ambitious and popular Nazi gymnastics program, presented his philosophy of the body as a set of principles emphasizing the importance of connecting the "natural movement of the body" to "the principle of totality."⁵⁸ Bode grounded his whole system of gymnastics and "natural dance" on principles of rhythm and dynamic form, the physical dialectic of muscular tension and relaxation and the principle of physical automatization, all seen as immanent "poles" of *Lebensphilosophie*. Karl Toepfer describes him in *Empire of Ecstasy* as a theorist of body and movement who "introduced a 'total' concept of rhythm . . . A major influence was Klages, who asserted that excessive rationality or intellectual analysis was a source of 'arhythm,' or unnatural, strained, discordant, stifled movement."⁵⁹ During the first half of the 1920s Bode constructed a system of movement and gymnastics that relied on Klages's science of expression (*Ausdruckswissenschaft*) and published a popular work in 1925 under this

⁵⁶ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, Deutsche Literaturarchiv am Marbach (henceforth DLA), Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁵⁷ This was the same Bodeschule für Körperziehung München, in Schloss Nymphenburg, still known to many Bavarians: <http://www.bode-schule.de>.

⁵⁸ Bode summarized his philosophy as follows:

1. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind Bewegungen des ganzen Körpers. Niemals beobachten wir eine isolierte Bewegung (Prinzip der *Totalität*).

2. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen verlaufen rhythmische, d.h. sie nehmen ihren Ausgang von den grossen Körpermuskeln . . . (Prinzip der *Rhythmik*).

3. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen sind aufeinander abgestimmt, so dass bei geringstem Kraftaufwand die grösste Kraftwirkung erzielt wird. Dieser Abstimmung entspricht die Abstimmung im Formverhältnis der Körperteile zueinander (Prinzip der *Form*).

4. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit langsamen Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem entspannten Muskelzustand und münden wieder in diesen (Prinzip der *Entspannung* oder der *Schwere*).

5. Alle natürlichen Bewegungen mit schnellem Anstieg der Spannung gehen hervor aus einem Gleichgewichtsverhältnis antagonistischer Muskelspannungen. Die Bewegung entsteht durch Spannung der einen Muskelgruppe und Entspannung der anderen (Prinzip der *Vorbereitung*).

Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

⁵⁹ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy: Nudity and Movement in German Body Culture, 1910-1935* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), p. 127.

title (*Ausdrucksgymnastik*).⁶⁰ During the later 1920s, the Nazis adopted a similar view of the body built explicitly on philosophical principles that were always related to an inherent view of life and total action. Bode expressed strong contempt for the Nazis in 1927, complaining to Klages that Munich had become the center of a lot of “Hitler-fuss with all of its tribal drumming.”⁶¹ Klages was careful not to mention any names in his reply, but he did second Bode’s views. However, by 1930 Bode had joined other conservative revolutionaries in admiring the apocalyptic views set forth by General Erich von Ludendorff in “Weltkrieg droht auf deutschem Boden” (A world war impends on German soil), as well as other reactionary texts.⁶² The conservative revolutionaries were drawn into the Nazi regime by its promise to realize a revolutionary vocabulary of life.

Rudolf Bode was the principal advocate of the gymnastic movement, a set of practices later exported to many countries. He was close to Carl Heinrich Becker (1876–1933), the Weimar republic’s conservative minister of culture, a connection that led to his appointment as *Reichsleiter*—one of the highest ranks in the Nazi party—in 1933 as the head of Nazi gymnastics and dance organization under Alfred Rosenberg’s Combat Organization for German Culture (Kampfbund für Deutsche Kultur). Bode set forth his ideas about the automatization and regulation of the body in 11 books and a Klagesian journal titled *Rhythmus* (published since 1923 under Klages’s close supervision). In a series of essays he published in the early 1930s and especially after Hitler’s appointment as chancellor in 1933, Bode explicitly equated ideas such as the spiritual foundations of physical education and dance in the national socialist state or works he wrote under titles such as *Angriff und Gestaltung* (Attacking and shaping) with the doctrine of *Lebensphilosophie* in general and Klages’s in particular.⁶³ As Bode mentioned to Klages in their correspondence, his aim all along was to take human movement back to the animalistic self-assurance visible in children but never in adults.⁶⁴ The idea was that action and movement could project motivation and the will, not the opposite. Reviving the body as a living entity could reshape the will needed for its movement retroactively. Such vitalistic ideas concerning the body would have been very awkward before the 1920s and *Lebensphilosophie*. Bode built his career during the

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ “Hitlerrummel mit allem Tamtam eingesetzt.” Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, April 2, 1927, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 47.

⁶² Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, December 13, 1930, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 5. See also Erich von Ludendorff, *Weltkrieg droht auf deutschem Boden: Broschur* (Munich: Faksimile-Verlag, 1931).

⁶³ For the first, see the analysis of Laure Guilbert, *Danser avec le IIIe Reich: les danseurs modernes sous le nazisme* (Brussels: Complexe, 2000), p. 152. For the latter, see Rudolf Bode, *Angriff und Gestaltung* (Berlin: Widukind Verlag, 1939).

⁶⁴ “Das Ziel ist: Die . . . Bewegung hervorgehen zu lassen aus der Instinktiven Sicherheit in der Erzeugung natürlicher Bewegung, wie sie jedes Tier und auf jedes körperlich unverdorbenes Kind hat.” Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, November 24, 1921, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8372, letter no. 12.

1920s and 1930s around them. As Toepfer explains it, “according to Bode, a ‘principle of totality’ must govern perception of the body and its expressivity . . . Bode did not want his method associated with sport competition; rather, the aim of expression gymnastics was to develop bodily movements derived from rhythms in nature, with the view of making the body expressive in the performance of everyday action.”⁶⁵ Toepfer argues, against this notion, that Bode failed to clarify what he meant by natural, or “organic,” rhythms.⁶⁶

In February 1941 Bode was appointed “NSDAP-Gymanstikpapst und Leiter der von Reichsbauernführer” (gymnastics pope and principal instructor of the Reich’s farmers) under the *Reichsbauernführer* (director of the farmers organization of the Reich) Richard Walther Darre (1895-1953), making him one of the highest functionaries in the political education of the German population.⁶⁷ Darre was busy at that time in reorganizing the German *Lebensraum* under a biopolitical plan titled “Rasse und Raum” (Race and space), which was adapted by Heinrich Himmler. Bode’s system of rhythmic movement was taught as a consistent philosophy of the *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil), another form of the rhythmic, repetitive flow found in the human pulse, natural cycle of the seasons, the ocean’s waves, and the movement of the stars.⁶⁸ In a representative article titled “Körpererziehung und Kultur” (Body education and culture), Bode instructed his own followers against the “[body] theory under the violent spiritual [*geistige*] pressure that is called body control [*Körperbeherrschung*] . . . and achieves only the flattening and the niggling of the soul, since all utility [*Zweckhaftigkeit*] strives toward a goal, and the uninterrupted movement occurs only in unbalanced and narrow lines.” In contrast to the spiritual, Bode argued that natural movements do not occur in long, goal-oriented lines, but “along rhythmic ones! . . . [in which] the oscillation [*Schwingung*] and secret vibration connect the human not only with his human side, but with all of nature.”⁶⁹ Bode taught gymnastic teachers to feel, look, and teach the organic principle in their everyday movements and interactions with other humans or objects, incorporating all into instinctive movement. This teaching, he wrote, “opened everything . . . [and] became the grounding principle for all bodily

⁶⁵ Karl Toepfer, *Empire of Ecstasy*, p. 128.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ Rudolf Bode to Ludwig Klages, February 6, 1941, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61.8373, letter no. 17.

⁶⁸ For Bode and his role see also Tobias Schneider, “Ideologische Grabenkämpfe,” pp. 283-284.

⁶⁹ “Denn theoretisch habe ich immer und immer betont, dass die einseitige Unterjochung des Körpers unter die Gewalt des Geistes, genannt ‘Körperherrschaft,’ die Gefahr einer Verflachung und Vernegerung des Seelischen in sich birgt, denn alle Zweckhaftigkeit ist zielstrebig und nur in einseitig eingegengten Bahnlinien vollzieht sich der ‘Störunglose’ Ablauf der Bewegung . . . Dieses verläuft aber nicht in zielstrebigem Bahnen, sondern in rhythmischen! Und praktisch habe ich das Übermass der Zielstrebigkeit bekämpft, indem ich die Schwindung, jenes geheime Vibrieren, das den Menschen nicht nur mit dem Menschen, sondern auch mit aller Natur verbindet.” Rudolf Bode, “Körpererziehung und Kultur,” in *Der Rhythmus, Zeitschrift für gymnastische Erziehung Mitteilungen des Bodebundes* 5:3 (July-September 1927): 99.

education and installed the reawakening [of the body] as *the* pedagogic problem of the present.”⁷⁰

Bode’s system illustrates how *Lebensphilosophie* was able to break all social barriers of genteel German education and the physical boundaries that conventionally separated humanity from the rest of nature. It was not limited to one gender or one social class and instead preached a unity of all “organisms,” all *bioi*. In spite of its clear appeal to reactionary thinkers, it did not show any preference for one ideological system before 1933, when Bode integrated it into the Nazi core curriculum.

In his new role, during the 1940s, Bode reported directly to Darre, who, together with Heinrich Himmler, controlled the SS Ahnenerbe, the principal research division of the SS, among other organizations. Yet Bode’s influence could not—and should not—be measured by his actual political activities, but through his contribution to the Nazi vocabulary of the body and movement. As Norbert Hopster and Ulrich Nassen have shown in their study of Nazi education, Bode coined many of the fundamental concepts in the Nazi vocabulary of movement and “bodily competence”: “All movements must be ordered from within and rhythmically formed, in the sense that the movement shines from the center to the whole body.”⁷¹ The concept of *Rhythmus* should be read here as a direct impact of Klagesian *Lebensphilosophie*—mediated through his followers—on the whole education system of Nazi Germany. Hopster and Nassen recognize Bode’s impact but not its philosophical background.

Given Klages’s and Bode’s claim about a primordial unity between pure and naked life in the body and the wide practical teaching systems it fostered, the impact of *Lebensphilosophie* on Nazi education may be gauged by the following widely disseminated pedagogical dictum: “Our task as high school teachers . . . is the formation of a new awareness, a new ethic, a science that will shape the total living order [*Lebensordnung*] of our *Volk*.”⁷²

The vocabulary of life encompassed a total reality that started with the individual and ended with the planets. The principal concept here was biology as grounded by *Lebensphilosophie*. On its way from the cell to the cosmic, the vocabulary labored to erase all forms of earthly hierarchy—between high and low culture and between

⁷⁰ “[Die] höchste Offenbarung . . . zum Grundprinzip aller körperlichen Bildung machte und dessen Wiedererweckung als das eigentliche pädagogische Problem der Gegenwart aufstellte.” Ibid.

⁷¹ “Alle Bewegungen müssen sich von innen entladen als rhythmischgeformte, in dem Sinn, dass die Bewegung von einem Zentrum aus auf den ganzen Körper überstrahlt.” Rudolf Bode, “Die Bedeutung der körperlichen Bewegung für die Erneuerung der deutschen Kultur,” *Rhythmus* 13, pp. 286–293. See also Norbert Hopster and Ulrich Nassen, *Literatur und Erziehung im Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1983), p. 53.

⁷² “Unsere Aufgabe als Hochschullehrer ist es, sie zu gestalten: eine neue Erkenntnislehre, eine neue Ethik, die Wissenschaft der uns artgemässen totalen Lebensordnung unseres Volkes.” Hans Lohr, “Wesen und Sinn der nationalsozialistischen Akademie des NSD-Dozentenbundes der Christian-Albrechts-Universität,” in *Kieler Blätter*, no. 1 (1938): 40. Quoted in Monika Leske, *Philosophen im “Dritten Reich”, Studie zu Hochschulkund Philosophiebetrieben im faschistischen Deutschland* (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1990), p. 81.

social divisions—sacrificing freedom to reach a total state of equality and fraternity. The teacher’s manifesto quoted above was written with the explicit intention to share between teachers and students the burden of philosophical and ideological reforms to the educational system. This vocabulary paved the way for a call for reform that came simultaneously from below and above, from academics and working people, from teachers and students, from parents and children, from regional bosses and loyal workers. The only but necessary loyalty was to the Nazi vocabulary and its image of a *Führer* at its center. Human psychology was molded accordingly. Ernst Krieck, the rector of Frankfurt University and the principal philosopher of Nazi education, wrote in his *Dichtung und Erziehung* (Poetry and education, 1933): “Language is not simply a pure external form; a good language is not an ornament of life. Rather, it expresses thought in its *volkisch* form and in its essence. Hence, the cultivation of language means simultaneously the cultivation of thought and character.”⁷³ Like other Nazi devotees, Krieck identified the concepts of character in accordance with Klages’s characterology and science of expression. Integrating the vocabulary

into his own philosophy, he wrote, “The language of the *Volk* . . . means especially its *task of life* [*Lebensaufgaben*] and its unique *meaning of life* [*Lebenssinns*].”⁷⁴ This simultaneity erased, in principle, a hierarchy of systems and images of progression. The task of life, which is typically defined in terms of a final result from the point where one achieves a goal, was supposed to inform one about life in its earliest stages and blur beginning and end. In other words, the body was united not only with nature and the material world, but with the essential processes that guide nature along its course. It was fragmented and recomposed on the basis of a momentary, pure essence, itself a result of the threshold between life and death, which—after 1941—would turn substantially toward the deadly side.

4. Biocentrism

In *The Myth of the State*, Ernst Cassirer claimed that “universals are not to be sought in the thoughts of man but in [the] substantial forces that determine his destiny”; in other words, “[o]ntology precedes morality and remains the decisive factor in it.”⁷⁵ In the totalitarian state, this ontology cannot be separated from the power of myths and the myth of power. Therefore, the totalitarian state, in Cassirer’s mind, united politics with ontology via myths and rituals: “In the totalitarian state, there is no private sphere, independent of political life; the whole life of man is suddenly inundated by the high

⁷³ “Sprache ist nicht bloss aussere Form, gute Sprache nicht Schmuck des Lebens, sondern Ausdruck der volkischen Denkform und Denkweise. Darum bedeutet Zucht der Sprache zugleich Zucht des Denkens und des Charakters.” Ernst Krieck, *Dichtung und Erziehung* (Leipzig: ArmanenVerlag, 1941), p. 147.

⁷⁴ “Die Sprachgesetz des Volkes . . . seiner besonderen *Lebensaufgaben* und seines eigentümlichen *Lebenssinns* kommt.” Ernst Krieck, *Die Wirklichkeit*, vol. 1 of *Volkisch-politische Anthropologie* (Leipzig: Armanen, 1936), p. 39 (emphases in the original).

⁷⁵ Ernst Cassirer, *The Myth of the State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974), pp. 231, 238.

tide of new rituals.”⁷⁶ Examining carefully the rise of the biophilosophical vocabulary in the Weimar republic, Cassirer was well aware of Ludwig Klages’s contribution to this totalitarian view of life, or what he calls “Klages’s metaphysical awareness” based on his ontology of life and images:

Almost always, the overemphasis on the appearance of the *inner* will overcome the simple competent perception and content of impression, that is the dominant “demonic-living reality of images” [*der dämonisch-lebendigen Wirklichkeit der Bilder*], ignored only by the opposing mechanical world. With this fundamental understanding, Klages’s teaching, as no other, calculates the unique significance of the mythic. It wishes not only to convey the meaning of myths from the outside, but places it in the midst of its own typical orientation and analysis. In spite of it, . . . [Klages’s system] remains trapped in the circle of mythic appearance. As [it was] for Bachofen, the myth [here] is not simply inventing or fictionalizing but rather an organ of exposure of the historical world and the historical reality, that is, an organ of the metaphysical awareness.⁷⁷

Next to Klages, Cassirer saw Jakob von Uexküll’s (1864-1944) biocentric philosophy as having brought about a basic shift in perception: now life carried with it a self-conscious, symbolic universe. Culture was united with biology or with the cultural “*animal symbolicum*” behind it.⁷⁸ As Peter Gordon demonstrates, *Lebensphilosophie* (known also as “philosophical anthropology”) was placed at the center of the debate between Cassirer and Heidegger, who were often pitted against each other in fierce debates. Both identified this new biocentric philosophy with Uexküll, Klages, and Hans Driesch. “For Heidegger,” writes Gordon, “philosophical anthropology furnished evidence for his own conception of the human being as governed by fundamental moods and situated within the totality of practical assignments he called the environment, or *Umwelt*. Cassirer, however, found validation of his philosophic belief that the human being may begin in finitude but eventually breaks free of its limits to create a symbolic order it then understands to be both an objective order and an expression of its own spontaneous consciousness.”⁷⁹ From the perspective of *Lebensphilosophie*, both positions were wrong even if one more than the other; Uexküll and Heidegger’s stress on the limits of *Umwelt* and finality was only slightly better than Cassirer’s emphasis on the need to break away from them. For *Lebensphilosophie*, both positions were grounded in an old tradition of Western metaphysics. Both Cassirer and Heidegger conceptualized the crisis of their time in terms of the history and aesthetics of bodily concepts. In a lecture delivered in Freiburg during the winter of 1929-1930, Martin Heidegger hailed von Uexküll and his colleague and friend, Hans Driesch, as the two

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 284.

⁷⁷ Ernst Cassirer, *Zur Metaphysik der symbolischen Formen, Nachgelassene Manuskripte und Texte*, vol. 1 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1995), p. 24.

⁷⁸ Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man: An Introduction to a Philosophy of Human Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944), p. 26.

⁷⁹ Peter E. Gordon, *Continental Divide: Heidegger, Cassirer, Davos* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010), p. 75.

principal representatives of vitalist biology who had taken “two decisive steps” that together “had consumed biology.”⁸⁰ He himself never changed into the harder biological discourse of Uexkull and Driesch, in spite of his sympathy. Still, due to his great philosophical impact, Heidegger’s analysis could be placed at the origins of a biocentric view that was generalized into a worldview and correlated with the terminology of *Lebensphilosophie*. In *The Open: Man and Animal*, Giorgio Agamben refers to Driesch and Uexkull as the principal inspiration over a new sense of life, which inspired, in turn, such high philosophy as Martin Heidegger’s *Sein und Zeit*.⁸¹ For Agamben, the key significance of the biocentric philosophy was its service to high philosophy or to totalitarian politics, but he misses the function of this vocabulary at the time and therefore its actual contribution. Heidegger’s anti-Humanism was not the same as a biopolitical stress on the apparatus of living-life. For that, one has to turn to more marginal figures for philosophers, and for the more important contributors to the discourse of *Lebensphilosophie* and its understanding of biopotics.

The term *biocentrism* was invented by Raoul H. France (1874-1943), a Hungarian biologist who immigrated to Germany and identified with the legacy of Ernst Haeckel. France established in Munich the Biological Institute that popularized biology as “the biocentric discourse intersection,” as art historian Oliver Botar calls it.⁸² Artists from both left and right sides of the political map and who considered themselves first and foremost revolutionaries took on the biocentric approach.⁸³ As France’s late biographer argues, “the biocentric philosophy” that France popularized in Germany was based on the assumption that “life had to be the master of knowledge and had to determine its values.”⁸⁴ France’s conceptualization of biocentric systems corresponded with the work of Uexkull and Driesch. Much like Klages, France contributed much to the shaping of the discourse and was well-known to every scholar and artist who was interested in biology, biopolitics, biocentrism, and the like, but has sunk into complete oblivion since 1945.⁸⁵

Botar’s recent book on biocentrism and modernism follows Cassirer’s path in focusing on Jakob von Uexkull, Hans Driesch, Ludwig Klages, and the latter’s loyal

⁸⁰ Anne Harrington, *Reenchanted Science: Holism in German Culture from Wilhelm II to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), p. 53.

⁸¹ Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 33, 39.

⁸² Oliver A. I. Botar, “Raoul France and National Socialism: A Problematic Relationship,” a paper given to the Fifth International Congress of Hungarian Studies, Jyväskylä, Finland, 2011, p. 8. I thank Professor Botar for sharing this unpublished paper with me.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸⁴ Rene Romain Roth, *Raoul H. France and the Doctrine of Life* (Bloomington, Ind.: First Books Library, 2000), p. 176. France is also known as the inventor of the concept of biotechnology, which he identified with “the study of living and life-like systems” (p. 109).

⁸⁵ Botar’s paper traces the explicit references to France’s work among the artistic avant-garde of the 1920s, among them well-known names such as Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, Fritz Neumeyer, Mies van der Rohe, and El Lissitzky.

follower, Hans Prinzhorn.⁸⁶ For Botar, biocentrism is understood mostly through its close contact with organicism, neovitalism, monism, and *Lebensphilosophie*. In narrower terms it is defined as a neoromantic Klagesian philosophy. “*Biozentrik*,” writes Botar, “can perhaps best be characterized as *Naturromantik*—including both its scientific and metaphysical baggage—updated by nineteenth-century biology. In its usage by Klages, *Biozentrik* was contrasted with both logocentrism and anthropocentrism. *Biozentrik* rejected anthropocentrism, decentering the human species in favor of ‘nature’ and ‘life.’”⁸⁷ Perhaps it was this wide popular claim or the wide methodological scope that led Alfred Rosenberg, the key Nazi ideologue, to mention Klages’s biocentric school as a threat in 1938: “These disciples of Klages refer to themselves as the ‘biocentric’ school, and they regard it as their sacred mission to do battle with the so-called ‘mechanistic’ philosophy, . . . [but] the far greater danger that I believe confronts us today is, rather, the biocentric philosophy itself.”⁸⁸

What was the nature of this biocentric school and the unwanted reaction it awakened? Neither scientists nor statesmen, Klages and his circle set out in the late 1920s to forge a pure language that would bring together biocentrism and *Lebensphilosophie*. They called themselves the *Zwischengeneration*, the “intergeneration,” which came of age between the veterans of World War I and the younger generation of the national socialist state. Inspired by the plea presented in *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* for a new, pure language based on life study (*Lebenskunde*) and the new biology, in 1933 Klages’s students established a think tank and a journal, both called *Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung*. Initially supported by the Nazi regime (the Nazis shut down the operation in 1936), its editorial leaders—Julius Deussen, Hans Eggert Schroder, Kurt Seesemann, and Hans Kern—met regularly with the Gestapo, the SS, and other Nazi institutions for racial research and biological and medical studies, as the manifesto of the group shows:

It is no coincidence that our gathering takes place in the same year as the National Socialist revolution. Only today has our practical work been enabled and, moreover, has it become necessary . . . We define ourselves in relation to two groups, the political and the religious: the emphasis of the NSDAP is essentially political, while this group focuses on attacking religious groups. As to our shared grounding worldview [*weltanschauliche Grundlage*] . . . the power of the state is committed to protecting cultural structures, since without them no right to life [*Lebensrecht*] can exist.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Oliver A. I. Botar, “Defining Biocentrism,” in *Biocentrism and Modernism*, ed. Oliver A. I. Botar and Isabel Wunsche (Burlington: Ashgate, 2011), pp. 17–18.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁸⁸ “Rosenberg contra Klages,” see John Claverely Cartney, web-page editor, “The Biocentric Metaphysics of Ludwig Klages” in <http://www.revilo-oliver.com> (accessed July 16, 2012), quoted in *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁸⁹ “Deshalb ist es kein Zufall, wenn auch unsere Einigung in das Jahr der nationalsozialistischen Erhebung fällt: Erst heute beginnt unsere praktische Wirksamkeit möglich und auch nötig zu werden . . . Der Schwerpunkt der NSDAP läuft wesentlich auf politischem Gebiet, die Ziele unseres Forschungskreises berühren die religiöse Sphäre. Infolge der gemeinsamen weltanschaulichen Grundlage haben wir die

Expressing a more general longing for primal forms, the Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung opened another window—a more scientific one, perhaps—onto biology, then a fashionable issue. Indeed, the center attracted a great deal of public attention, and with it another group of followers for Klages. For example, in a short memoir devoted to that period, one of Klages’s younger followers wrote: “I have come to [Werner] Deubel and [Hans] Kern after reading about the Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung in a three-part interview conducted by the *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* in Berlin. The first interview, before [that with] Deubel and Kern, was with Klages!”⁹⁰

For Klages, biology was inherently tied to a perception of images and names. He cared less about the scientific, vitalistic work of Driesch and Uexküll and was drawn more to the typological analysis of characters (as explained by Prinzhorn, for example). Without a clear ability to define life against death, beginning and birth against the end and death, *Lebensphilosophie* adopted a formal view of existential struggle as a “struggle for life” opposed to fragmentation and mechanization, which it interpreted as a modern alienation.

The correspondence and the reports prepared by Julius Deussen (1906-1974), the founder of the Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung, reveal that he was in constant touch with the heads of the Nazi medical institutions. Among his correspondents from this period, one notes not only Hugo Bruckmann, one of Hitler’s main financial patrons in the early 1930s, but also Eugen Diederichs and Ernst zu Reventlow (1869-1943), who helped found the Verbandes gegen die Überhebung des Judentums (Organization against the Jewish Takeover), which counted among its members at one point both Martin Bormann and Alfred Rosenberg, and which published *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* and the early Nazi weekly *Reichswart*. Deussen’s other correspondents included Wolfram Sievers, Herman Wirth, August Hirt, and Otto Huth, the founders and principal thinkers of the SS Ahnenerbe organization. Sievers was tried at Nuremberg and executed in 1948; Hirt, a famous anatomist whose research on the development of the human skull relied on hundreds of skulls acquired from Auschwitz, committed suicide in Schoenebach; and Otto Huth, who suffered no consequences as a result of his Nazi affiliations, was a professor at Strasbourg and published with the Klagesians.⁹¹ Also involved with the Arbeitskreis was Wilhelm Wirth (1876-1952), the director of the Institute for Experimental Psychology in Leipzig. Wirth had studied

Verpflichtung, die wirkliche Radikalität der nationalen Revolution dort zu wahren, wo der Politiker Vermittlungen sucht. Die staatliche Macht ist verpflichtet, dem kulturellen Aufbau Schutz zu gewahren, denn ohne ihn entbehrte sie ihres Inhaltes und überhaupt ihres Lebensrechtes.” Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Konv.: Prosa.

⁹⁰ Wolfgang Olshausen, “Ludwig Klages in Berlin, 1933,” unnumbered manuscript in the “Prosa” section, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages,

⁹¹ On this group, see *Hestia: Jahrbuch der Klages-Gesellschaft 1967/1969* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1971). The work is described as “lectures on the theme of language and its importance in the work of Ludwig Klages” and includes articles by Hans Eggert Schroder, Albert Wellek, Heinz Alfred Mueller, Hans Kasdorf, Françoise Wiersma-Verschaffelt, and Otto Huth. On Hirt’s research see also the court

folk psychology and Wundt's psychology; in 1940 he became an army adviser in the field of military psychology and psychiatry. As was typical of Klagesian groups, the Arbeitskreis für biozentrische Forschung also included several outspoken critics of the Nazis, such as Ernst Schwarz, who became an important politician in occupied Germany after the war.

The group's manifesto (1933) that circulated among the Arbeitskreis members, laid out their political aims:

(1) Man belongs to both zones of life and the spirit. However, if one follows the idealist or materialist laws of the spirit, one serves the *logocentric*. And if one leaves all values to the power of life, one serves the *biocentric* Weltanschauung. Through such a decision one reaches the substance of *existence* and development. (2) We use the concepts coined by Ludwig Klages with special care. For us, Klages is the most significant harbinger of a *Lebensphilosophie*, the undercurrent of which reaches back into the pre-Christian, Germanic period . . . Certainly other names among the living philosophers may also be significant, but no name has enlightened us as much as that of Klages. (3) We could not bear the downfall of our culture thanks to the influence of *pseudo-radicalism* . . . encouraged by resentful politicians. (4) [The importance of] saving the cultural community, which is grounded on a secure hierarchy of life values, i.e., the inherent connections between blood and terrain as the roots of our existence. A decisive trust in the final powers of *human* teaching: the wonder [*Das Wunder*], the love, the pre-ideal image [*Vorbild*].

(5) The universally reliable method of our research can be designated as demonstrative or symbolic thinking. In the results of *characterology*, which depend on this method of cognition, a condition becomes visible that is necessary to improve the health of our sense of reality . . . Therefore, we are convinced that our scientific possibilities lie not in the nonsense of atomized specialists [*a tomierten Spezialistentum*], but *between* the individual disciplines.⁹²

sitting at Nuremberg that took place July 29 to August 8, 1946, at <http://www.nizkor.org/hweb/imt/tgmwc/tgmwc-20/tgmwc-20-198-04.shtml>.

⁹² "(1) Der Mensch gehört den beiden Reichen des Lebens und des Geistes an. Folgt er den idealistischen oder materialistischen Gesetzen des Geistes, dient er der logozentrischen, -setzt er die Mächte des Lebens als letzten Wert, dient er der *biozentrischen* Weltanschauung. Durch diese Entscheidung wird die Substanz des Menschen in ihrer *Existenz* und in ihrer Entwicklung bestimmt. (2) Mit besonderer Absicht verwenden wir die von Ludwig Klages geprägten Begriffe. In Klages erblicken wir den bedeutendsten Verkünder einer *Lebensphilosophie*, deren Unterströmung in die vorchristliche, germanische Zeit reicht . . . Gewiss mögen uns unter den lebenden Philosophen auch andere Namen bedeutungsvoll geworden sein, -kein Name besitzt eine Leuchtkraft wie derjenige Klages'. (3) Nie werden wir den zivilisatorischen Verfall unserer Kultur durch den Einfluss von *pseudo-radikalen* . . . durch den Einfluss von Ressentimentsgetriebenen Politikern ertragen. (4) Die selbstgeschaffene Bergung innerhalb einer Kulturgemeinschaft verlangt, die sich auf eine feste Hierarchie der Lebenswerte gründet, d.h. Blut- und Landschaftszusammenhang als Wurzeln unsrer Existenz anerkennt, -und entscheidendes Vertrauen auf die letzten bildenden Mächte des *Menschen*: Das Wunder, die Liebe, das Vorbild gesetzt. (H. Prinzhorn gibt in seiner *Persönlichkeitspsychologie* [1932] die eindringlichste Zusammenfassung einer biozentrischen Wirklichkeitslehre vom Menschen.) (5) Als allgemein verbindliche *Methode* unserer Forschung kann das hinweisende oder

A letter sent by Klages to Carl Haeberlin (1870-1954), a doctor in Mainz, on January 10, 1935, also addressed the value of an interdisciplinary approach to *Lebensphilosophie*, biology, and politics. Like the Arbeitskreis manifesto writer, Klages dwelt on the opposition between logocentrism and biocentrism, but he went much further in his discussion of appearance, its connections to a more general theory of signs, and his post-Nietzschean philosophy of repetition.

For the ability to undergo transformation and rebirth, which lies within, . . . the primary concern nowadays should not be questioning which process follows which, but rather which stirring of life *appears* in it . . . Steadfastness means *repetition* and if one accepts a *repetition of the same*, the spiritual world can be calculated . . . Only the primordial human gives rise to a collision of polarities . . . The primordial human has ceased to experience appearances as either a positive or a negative drive and experiences them instead as the appearances of the essence of the world . . . Like the circular earth, as long as it lasts, . . . one gaze is transformed into another in a repetition . . . and renews itself from one gaze to another in the stream of occurrences that flows incessantly in the scheme of its own shapes, or—to put it in a more sophisticated way—resembles its own primordial image.⁹³

In other words, Klages's theory of life was focused not on an ontological state of existence, but on an ontological form of time. The preservation or repetition he detected was found only in forms that kept a certain *sameness* due to the metastructural and primordial polarity that is still the major power of all human perception. The influence of his biocentric circle was apparent in such genetic experiments as the work done on twins in the late 1930s. In one study, explicitly indebted to Klagesian *Lebensphilosophie* and biocentrism, the researcher made the distinction between identical and fraternal twins, concluding that the genes of twins included not only the biological attributes of their race but also their “*Charakter-Ganzheit*” (wholeness of character).⁹⁴ The study was published by Philipp Lersch and Otto Klemm, two of the

symbolische Denken bezeichnet werden. In den Ergebnissen der *Charakterologie*, die vor allen auf diesen Erkenntnisweg angewiesen ist, erblicken wir die Bedingung für eine notwendige Gesundung unseres Wirklichkeitssinn es . . . Hierbei sind wir davon überzeugt, dass unsere wissenschaftlichen Möglichkeiten weniger im atomisierten Spezialistentum, als *zwischen* den Einzeldisziplinen liegen.” “Der Arbeits-Kreis für biozentrische Forschung (AKBF),” in DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Prosa, unpublished manuscripts (all emphases in the original).

⁹³ “Für das ihm innewohnende Vermögen der Wandlung und Erneuerung. Endlich waren wir solcher art Physiognomiker, aber in einem tieferen Sinne als dem bisher mit dem worte durchweg verbundenen. Wir fragen nicht mehr in erster Linie: welcher Vorgang folgt auf welchen andern? Sondern wir fragen . . . welche Lebensregungen *erscheinen* in ihnen? . . . Beharrung bedeutet zugleich Wiederholung; und aufgrund der Annahme von *Widerholungen des Gleichen* wird die Welt vom Geiste rechnerisch bewältigt. Allein die Wirklichkeit geht nur über jede von der Rechnung erreichte Dezimele unendlich hinaus.” Ludwig Klages to Carl Haeberlin, January 10, 1935, DLA, Nachlass Ludwig Klages, Sig.: 61/5117, letter no. 1 (emphases in the original).

⁹⁴ Christian Eckle, “Erbcharakterologische Zwillingsuntersuchungen,” in *Beiheft zur Zeitschrift angewandte Psychologie und Charakterkunde*, ed. Otto Klemm and Phillip Lersch (Leipzig: Johann Ambrosius Barth Verlag, 1939), p. 11.

Wehrmacht's leading psychologists; they called on their fellow psychologists to continue the research in depth.

5. The Deussen case, 1934

In 1934 Julius Deussen, the loyal follower and founding muse of the biocentric circle in Leipzig, published a study of Klages, treating him in a rather neutral and scientific fashion; he even went so far as to criticize the inconsistencies in his teacher's thought.⁹⁵ The reaction was swift. Schroder and Seesemann—Klages's most loyal disciples and Nazi adherents—expelled Deussen immediately from the Arbeitskreis, which they began running themselves. And when Klages circulated the unverified and false gossip that Deussen had a Jewish grandmother (which he probably heard from Haebler), Seesemann and Schroder informed the Gestapo. Deussen lost his medical and research position at Leipzig even before the investigation ended in his favor, with no charges brought against him. His search for a new job led to the Heidelberg clinic that planned and carried out the murder of thousands of disabled men, women, and children during the late 1930s. Records show that, as the clinic's director of surgery, Deussen led the way in the killing of handicapped children.⁹⁶ In a personal letter to his friend, the conservative revolutionary Joachim Haupt—a close adviser to Rust and the designer of the Nationalpolitische Erziehungsanstalten (Nationalist Political Institutes of Education) for Nazi-elite indoctrination—Deussen referred to Haupt as the pseudonymous author of the article on Klages and Baumbach that appeared in *Völkischer Beobachter*.⁹⁷ The letter, much like the personal involvement of key Nazis, shows that the enmity between Klages and Deussen was known among the high administrators of the Nazi regime. It does not prove Klages's upper hand, though: Deussen himself was appointed in 1937 as a leader of the pedagogical indoctrination of his area and continued to win promotions in Nazi psychiatry organizations. In his capacity as a leading medical researcher in Heidelberg and participant in the Nazi euthanasia program, he was appointed to lead an important experiment on children with different mental and physical disturbances, causing the death of many. Deussen's official preoccupation was not over after the Nazis lost the war. As late as 1955-1956 he was still working as a medical adviser to the minister of law in Bavaria.

⁹⁵ Julius Deussen, *Klages Kritik des Geistes, mit 7 Figuren und einer monographischen Bibliographie Ludwig Klages und einer Bibliographie der biozentrischen Literatur der Gegenwart* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1934).

⁹⁶ A. Abbott, "German Science Begins to Cure Its Historical Amnesia," *Nature* 403 (2000): 474-475; William E. Seidelman, "Science and Inhumanity: The Kaiser-Wilhelm/Max Planck Society," *Not Now: An Electronic Journal* 2 (Winter 2000), <http://www.baycrest.org/journal/ifnot01w.html> (accessed February 12, 2013).

⁹⁷ Julius Deussen to Joachim Haupt, July 11, 1933, DLA, Nachlass Julius Deussen, doc. no. 7, file 6.

It seems that wherever one finds loyal Klagesian biocentrists, one finds loyal Nazis, that is, Klagesians who were willing to participate in the biopolitical apparatus of the Nazi state. But the impression is somewhat misleading. Unlike other Nazi racial scientists, those who embraced biocentrism never tried to solve the riddle of existence—such a solution would have been too linear. Had Deussen remained in the Klages circle, he most likely would never have become one of the senior members of the Nazi euthanasia program. In those cases where loyal Klagesians were successfully integrated into the Nazi hierarchy, it's important to note that they remained loyal to philosophical rather than political action. The task of biocentrism was the production of a truthful and amoral phenomenological description, not the actual killing of innocents.

The different motivation does not absolve the Klagesians from responsibility of the murderous policies they supported, even if passively. After all, they shaped and supported the discourse that allowed it. Much as some may deny it, and most Klagesians did, at the root of a certain vocabulary *as it is used* lies a close and inherent relation to the life and politics of the community, to actions in the world, and to the obsession with power and sovereignty. In his recent *Biopolitik: zur Einföhrung*, Thomas Lemke points out that *Lebensphilosophie* was at the discursive heart of biopolitics; its stress on “organic existence, such as the instinct, intuition, feeling or living experience [*Erlebnis*] was contrasted with ‘death’ and the ‘rigid’, which represented mostly the ‘abstract’ concept, the ‘cold’ logic or the ‘soulless’ intellect [*Geist*].”⁹⁸ Lemke continues to point out that “the formulation of ‘blood and soil’ is the unique expression of the National Socialist biopolitics, a relation between the racial delusion and the murder of people,” but also that “the grounding idea of a ‘biologization of politics’ [*Biologisierung des Politik*s] is not a German phenomenon and not reduced to the Nazi period.”⁹⁹ Where Klages is concerned, Lemke is correct about the time, but wrong about the geographical focus. Klages's *Lebensphilosophie* and impact on the biopolitics of his time should be read from the perspective that precedes the rise of Nazi biopolitics, but it was explicitly stated as a German phenomenon. Let's return to Deussen and the AKBF one last time. Deussen's attempt to correct the Klagesian *Lebensphilosophie* and guide it toward a safer political haven opposed some fundamental principles of *Lebensphilosophie* in general and of the Klages group in particular, but its notion of power was not different. From the perspective of *Lebensphilosophie*, as much as one tends to approve of Deussen's critical tendencies, the Klagesians might have had a point in expelling him: his rationality was drawing Klagesian *Lebensphilosophie* into a threatening actuality. Marking actuality as the true fulfillment of *Lebensphilosophie* made Deussen sound closer to Baeumler and Rosenberg than to Klages, as I have shown in chapter 3. Either way, Deussen's case is a good example of the internal conflicts that threatened the Klages circle in particular and *Lebensphilosophie* in general, a conflict that repeats some of the broad lines sketched in the third chapter of this book, when describing the

⁹⁸ Thomas Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einföhrung* (Hamburg: Junius Verlag, 2007), p. 19.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

unfolding conflict between Alfred Baeumler and Ludwig Klages. The Deussen-Klages debate provides a clear instance of the close affinity between *Lebensphilosophie* and Nazi exclusionary policy, as well as of *Lebensphilosophie*'s reluctance to enter into any form of actual politics. Paradoxically, the Klagesians had no qualms using the worst politics possible, the Gestapo, from intervening in order to keep their philosophical distance. In short, they liked the idea of controlling the murderous apparatus, but without dirtying philosophy with the actual stains shaped by *Blut und Boden* (blood and soil).

Because Klages and other important theorists of *Lebensphilosophie* proved reluctant whenever crossing through the political arena, they yielded control over their vocabulary to men more experienced in politics and government. By 1938 Klages's ideas were utterly out of step with the neo-Klagesian practice of those who had commandeered his ideas to suit the needs of national socialism. The attack launched by Rosenberg against Klages showed how inadequate was the latter's extra-philosophical actions when they confronted a continuously radicalized political movement.

6. Biomacht (biopower)

Petra Gehring wrote recently about the discourse of biopower in the context of bioethics: "The real power of *life* is one of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and it became omnipotent in our day, symbolically and socially. We have all learned that we do not only *have* life and could tell about it or from within it, but that we *are* life."¹⁰⁰ A careful history of *Lebensphilosophie*—originating in Germany in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but expanding nowadays around the globe—reveals its destructive and simultaneously critical-constructive potential.

Giorgio Agamben, currently identified as the leading voice of biopolitics, described the appearance of the concept of life in the center of different linguist phenomena since the late nineteenth century in Germany. One idiom Agamben explores, of the "*sprachloser Urmensch*" (speechless proto-human), ties together life, biopolitics, and the aestheticization of borders. Leading from Ernst Haeckel's text from 1899 to the *Umwelt* (environment) theory of his disciple Jacob von Uexkull during the early 1920s, Agamben demonstrates the simultaneous rise of an affirmative and critical discourse of life. According to Agamben, the theory represents the primitive form of German—that is, modern—politics as a whole, mediated through the interplay of exclusion and inclusion and the anthropological machine of the nonspeaking apeman, or "the Jew, that is, the non-man produced within the man."¹⁰¹ The appearance of a liminal man-ape, Agamben believes, is the ur-form of any state of exception, where "the animal is

¹⁰⁰ Petra Gehring, *Was ist Biomacht? Vom zweifelhaften Mehrwert des Lebens* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2006), p. 222 (emphases in original).

¹⁰¹ Agamben, *The Open*, p. 37.

separated within the human body itself.”¹⁰² Such an image was projected by a whole set of metaphors taken from the perception of the *Umwelt*.

What *Lebensphilosophie* adds here, and perhaps corrects, is the way this category was translated into the world of fundamental forms: the Jews were seen as responsible for destroying the living environment by introducing the power of logocentrism and turning against all primal forces. They represented a life-death relation that refused to internalize death and make it immanent, and because of that, enabled death and destruction to take over life. From the Nazi perspective, as Samuel Weber summarized it “the Jews thus could be identified with the forces that affirm the priority of death over life and law over grace. To kill death would thus logically be to annihilate the Jews.”¹⁰³ From this perspective, *Lebensphilosophie* viewed Jewish thought as a destructive epistemology opposed to the ontology of life (or its fragmented temporality), a negative power much greater than any natural and instinctive violence. Taken from this set of concepts, the figure of the Jew becomes the most decisive element for an ontology of biological images, be it *Lebensphilosophie*, biopolitics, or old-fashioned ethnology. It is no wonder then, that after 1945, when the Nazi genocide was slowly researched and exposed, a gap opened between *Lebensphilosophie* and biopolitical critique.

In an introductory article to a book about current German ethnology (anthropology)—and mentioning *Lebenslust* (lust for life) in its title—Thomas Hauschild explains that “since 1945 German ethnology has had a terminological problem,”¹⁰⁴ the result of a post-1945 association of the German descriptive language of ethnicity with the Nazi vocabulary of life and race. As a solution he proposes a turn to Foucault’s notion of biopolitics (*Biomacht*) as the sole possibility of German ethnology that is interested in the link between German barbarism and German civilization.¹⁰⁵ Standing behind both the terminological problem and its offered solution is *Lebensphilosophie* and its politicization by Nazi race sciences. Further behind them both is the principle that links *Lebensphilosophie* in all its appearances, biopolitics included, with its immanent temporality as an ontology of (bodily) images. As the bestknown scientist of race in Nazi Germany wrote in his 1939 manifesto of racial policy, “[T]he power of the bodily observation and perception is unfolding . . . [T]he will, which originates with the clear awareness of the individual, is worked from within the will of the living individual

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Samuel Weber, “Bare Life and Life in General,” in *Gray Room* 46 (Winter 2012), p. 20. Sam Weber’s article is an exceptionally precise analysis of the concept of “bare life.” However, in contrast to my analysis of *Lebensphilosophie*, Weber’s stress falls on the weight given to *life* and *death* within the antinomial relationship, in a post-Paulinian context, rather than the immanentization of death within life as a secularized form.

¹⁰⁴ “Schon beim stillen Nachsprecher dieser Worte durfte den Lesern und Leserinnen klar werden, dass die deutsche Volkerkunde seit 1945 ein terminologisches Problem hat.” Thomas Hauschild, “‘Dem lebendigen Geist,’ Warum die Geschichte der Volkerkunde im ‘Dritten Reich’ auch für Nichtethnologen von Interesse sein kann,” in *Lebenslust und Fremdenfurcht, Ethnologie im Dritten Reich*, ed. Thomas Hauschild (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1995), p. 22.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 23.

[*Lebendige-Eigene*], and seems to me a sign of our present, and still more a sign and an omen of [our] future.”¹⁰⁶ *Lebensphilosophie* is present in this comment—and other quotes from the period—not only because of the rather expected usage of the terms “life” and “living,” but also in fusing those with an inherent and immediate expression of bodily drives on the one hand, and, less expected, the metaphysics of time on the other. “Many thinkers of the 1930s,” Hauschild argues, “wanted to grasp time itself and eternalize it.”¹⁰⁷ This notion that humanity stands on the verge of a breakthrough regarding time was common to all those rebels who turned their backs on an absolute idealist notion of progress and who turned all of their attention to pure forms and even purer principles of forms. This idea, Hauschild argues, was not any inherent Nazi necessity, but a radical notion that Nazism was able to exploit. During the late 1920s and early 1930s, “the concept of a powerful and passionate conquest of the future, but also the worry concerning a ‘sick’ and threatened present, is shared by [Wilhelm] Reich and [Hans] Gunther, but also Marcuse and Junger, Adorno and Klages. Common to many thinkers of the 1930s is the continuity between their own philosophy and the motive of lust for life [*Lebenslust*], . . . the search after the natural origin, which must turn back to the past.”¹⁰⁸

Why biopolitics, then? Hauschild explains this choice very carefully, justifying both ethnology and biopolitics with Foucault’s notion that ethnology stands “on the boundary of human awareness . . . equal to psychoanalysis.”¹⁰⁹ Adding *Lebenslust* and biopolitics to Foucault’s “disposition of power,” Hauschild concludes with a different view of origin (*Ursprung*), political theology, and Heideggerean primitivism.¹¹⁰ The final step, then, seems almost obvious: “[P]ostmodernity and its material reality have created the conditions for a new perspective of 1930s and 1940s ethnology.”¹¹¹

7. Conclusion

Ludwig Klages died in Kilchberg, Switzerland, on July 29, 1956. He was 84. His last letters, some of them already deepened by illness and heavy depression, expressed no

¹⁰⁶ “Die Kraft körperhaften Sehens und Erfassen lässt sich entfalten . . . Der Wille, aus klarer Erkenntnis das Eigene, das Lebendig-Eigene aus eigenem Willen zu wirken, scheint mir ein Kennzeichen unserer Gegenwart und mehr noch ein Anzeichen und Vorzeichen der Zukunft zu sein.” Hans Gunther, *Rassenkunde des deutschen Volkes*, vol. 1 (Munich: Lehmann Verlag, 1939), p. 3.

¹⁰⁷ “Aus einem Zeitalter der Not heraus wollten viele Denker der 30er Jahre die Zeit als solche besiegen und sich auf ewig in einer heilen, erlösten Menschheit fortzeugen.” Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁰⁸ “Der Gedanke der kraftvollen und lustvollen Eroberung der Zukunft, aber auch die Sorge um eine als ‘krank’ und bedroht empfundene Gegenwart ist Reich und Gunther, oder auch: Marcuse und Junger, Adorno und Klages gemeinsam. Gemeinsam ist vielen Denkern der 30er Jahre auch die Bindung ihres Denkens an Motive der Lebenslust . . . die Suche nach einem naturwuchsigem Ursprung, zu dem zurückzukehren gilt.” Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 33.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., p. 21.

¹¹¹ Ibid., p. 43.

regret. In the end of his life Klages wrote about great sadness, following the death of his sister and his niece during the bombing of Munich. He also reported in different letters that the allies did not let him pass into Germany. He made great attempts to convince both the German and American authorities that he was not the anti-Semite they thought he was. How can a historian examine such sources and ignore the lack of self-reflection and absolute disregard of human lives? How can a historian comprehend the role of sources and origins in a discourse that denies history itself?

In this book, I have tried to reconstitute a lost discourse of life as a radical element that is still in many ways present in the contemporary intellectual and cultural climate. The discourse offers a way to grasp 1920s Weimar, with its fundamental aestheticism and radical politics, as the fundamental historical basis for current intellectual comprehension. It unites the two sides of one process of modernity in a single discourse, a single temporality, and a similar political philosophy without reducing them to a single phenomenon. Bluntly put, the history of *Lebensphilosophie* is the best possible elucidation of the perplexing fascination of both Nazis and aesthetic avant-gardists, of both antiSemites and a group of brilliant Jewish intellectuals, with the jargon of life. I traced the early roots of this discourse in the 1900s, its moment of formulation during the early 1920s, and a moment of change during the mid-1920s when the discourse was politicized. I conclude with the catastrophic end of the discourse and its aftermath.

At the end of the process, at the close of the 1920s, the discourse broke into three major chunks: the Nazi *Lebensphilosophie* of Adolf Hitler, Alfred Rosenberg, and Alfred Bauemler literalized in Hitler's geopolitical *Lebensraum*; the conservative, reluctantly pro-Nazi, cultural antiSemitism of Ludwig Klages and other *Lebensphilosophers* from the right; and the life vocabulary of pre-1933 and post-1945 critical thought, following the radical thinking from both the unofficial right and the left. This last critical strand only reconfirms the principal argument concerning the political nature of *Lebensphilosophie*: beyond all commitment to politics, it was the absolute and total commitment to radicalism and total forms that shaped its character. Biopolitics has recently completed the circle by turning the theory back to its discursive roots. Its stress on the apparatus that controls life allowed a variety of political forms to evolve out of it—"the different political positions of 'biopoliticians' [*Biopolitologen*] stand far apart,"—as Lemke writes, but the discursive source stands much closer to each of those different political appearances.¹¹² Lemke himself admits as much when he writes that "[the concept of] *life*, since the 1970s, becomes a reference point for both political thought and action. The stress on the *environment* [*Umwelt*] of human society . . . serves to secure the 'survival conditions of humanity.'"¹¹³ The intellectual historian, sensitive to discourses, is needed in order to expose the shared root of such different phenomena, and ask—truly ask—about the implications of exposing the secret flow that runs under so much of our current political discourse in the West.

¹¹² Lemke, *Biopolitik zur Einführung*, p. 31.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

The interdisciplinary character of the topic should not stand between a historian and the challenge of fascist politics. A careful examination of the latter proves that no simple theory and history of nationalism could exhaust a “nervous age” trying to “represent itself as largely a literary and aesthetic movement.”¹¹⁴ In fact, no history of single characters, nor of particular philosophical or political schools—Nietzsche or Klages, Rosenberg or Hitler—could explain the impact of such abstract ideas on a common political sphere. One needs to historicize the very language of political consciousness, in this particular case, an explicit 1920s-1930s jargon of life.

In cultural terms, *Lebensphilosophie* offered a radical unity of high and low culture that turned the notion of cultural crisis upside down. From this perspective, I might identify the Nazi revolution as a movement that succeeded in totalizing an aesthetic discourse on all levels of daily life, thereby overcoming the deep epistemological and existential crisis of the 1920s. Identifying a clear enemy worked better than any other positive strategy. At one level, Nazism was the product of a negative cultural revolution that used aesthetics to form an ever-changing political dynamic, essentially committed to radical action. It denied the option of an individual and existential choice in favor of a collective “life form.” It is only thanks to its total aesthetics that it was able to take over the whole vocabulary of life, and this vocabulary allowed it to totalize politics through the state of emergency.

Among the *Lebensphilosophers* whose thinking became part of the Nazi system, Klages’s case is unique because of the radical conceptualization of the principles pointing at both the cleavage that needed to be healed and the medicine that would do it: the radical dualism of spirit and soul discussed in Klages’s writings polarized the world as an immanent form and a fundamental temporality. His *Lebensphilosophie* is unique because of its stress on an immanent temporal order that charged the life with life’s end, as the very core of its movement. In social-political terms it is unique because of its deep impact on both his archenemies—the Jewish intellectuals of the left—and those later carriers of his ideas in the Nazi elite. Because of this fork in the genealogy of *Lebensphilosophie*, terms that Klages used during the 1920s continue to carry great philosophical weight and are used by both his opponents (see the progressive critical edge *logocentrism* received) and his reactionary supporters.¹¹⁵

Walter Benjamin, Klages’s most important commentator for the twenty-first-century reader, translated his stress on life to a whole set of life-related terms and a movement he re-calibrated for his own purposes. As Samuel Weber showed in his recent *Benjamin-abilities*:

What characterizes Benjamin’s language, in German, and what once again tends to get lost in the English translation, is the critical movement of departure, of taking-

¹¹⁴ Mosse, *Masses and Man*, pp. 1, 15.

¹¹⁵ Currently, the best place to read Klages in English is the monumental work of translation done by John Claverley Cartney, an unidentifiable independent scholar whose name can be easily linked with some suspicious groups. See http://www.revilo-oliver.com/Writers/Klages/Ludwig_Klages_.html and the anti-Semitic http://www.vanguardnewsnetwork.com/index_.html.

leave, a movement that moves outward and away . . . This movement outward is then taken up in the shift from the familiar noun “life” (Leben) and the gerundive, built on the present participle, which I translate as “the living”; in German, “das Lebendige.”¹¹⁶

Indeed, it is time to take our leave. In the view of Eric Voegelin (1901-1985), the cluster of concepts that led to modern racism derived from scientific biology and “legitimate” research on types and races. Including Hans Driesch and other non-Darwinian biologists in his research, Voegelin recommended further investigation of the intellectual history of the concept of race, speaking of “the soul characteristic of races.”¹¹⁷ In 1933 Voegelin concluded that “the failure of modern

Figure 6.2 Ludwig Klages during the 1950s (undated). DLM: Nachlass Ludwig Klages.

race theories” to produce an up-to-date version of Kant’s “science of experience” had ensured Klages a readership: “In general we recommend that those who have so much to say about spirit and soul read, among other things, some works by Klages—not in order to adopt his theories but simply to learn what they are actually dealing with.”¹¹⁸ No twenty-first-century historian could have put it better, not even the historian writing this work. After four years of research, I am back to the point of origin, trying to rethink life and pure language with its existential temporality, either out there in the political realm of crisis and order, or right here, inside this text, with its attendant ghosts.

Dilthey’s influence on Heidegger, see the discussion of faktisches Leben in David F. Krell, *Daimon Life: Heidegger and Life-Philosophy* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992), pp. 150-158. See also the comprehensive reading of the early “diltheyish” Heidegger in Georg Imdahl, *Das Leben Verstehen: Heideggers formal anzeigen Hermeneutik in den frühen Vorlesungen (1919-1923)*. Würzburg: Königshausen and Neumann Verlag, 1997.

¹¹⁶ Samuel Weber, *Benjamin’s-abilities* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 66.

¹¹⁷ “The classification of man into racial types according to groups of traits and the study of the transmission of physical traits and predispositions through heredity is a completely legitimate scientific endeavor because a part of total human existence is undoubtedly of animal nature and can be isolated as such.” Eric Voegelin, *Race and State*, trans. Ruth Hein (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), p. 34.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 82.

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The Biocentric Worldview

Selected Essays and Poems of Ludwig Klages

Translated by Joseph D. Pryce

2013

Epigraph

Out of Phlegethon!
Out of Phlegethon,
Gerhart
Art thou come forth out of Phlegethon?
with Buxtehude and Klages in your satchel...
— From “Canto LXXV” by Ezra Pound

Praise for the author

”Ludwig Klages is primarily responsible for providing the philosophical foundations for the pan-Romantic conception of man that we now find among many thinkers in different scientific disciplines, for example, Edgar Dacqué, Leo Frobenius, C. G. Jung, Hans Prinzhorn, Theodor Lessing, and, to a certain extent, Oswald Spengler.”

— From *Man’s Place in Nature* by Max Scheler

”In the field of scientific psychology, Klages towers over all of his contemporaries, including even the academic world’s most renowned authorities.”

— Oswald Spengler

”The Spirit as Adversary of the Soul by Ludwig Klages ranks with Heidegger’s *Being and Time* and Hartmann’s *The Foundation of Ontology* as one of the three greatest philosophical achievements of the modern epoch.”

— Erich Rothacker

”Klages is a fascinating phenomenon, a scientist of the highest rank, whom I regard as the most important psychologist of our time.”

— Alfred Kubin

”Ludwig Klages is renowned as the brilliant creator of profound systems of expression-research and graphology, and his new book, entitled *On the Cosmogonic Eros*, possesses such depth of psychological insight and so rich and fructifying an atmosphere, that it moved me far more deeply than I have ever been moved by the writings of men like Spengler and Keyserling. In the pages of this book on the “Cosmogonic Eros,” Klages almost seems to have found the very words with which to speak that which has hitherto been considered to be beyond the powers of speech.”

— Hermann Hesse

”When we survey the philosophical critiques of Nietzsche’s thought that have been published thus far, we conclude that the monograph written by Ludwig Klages, *The*

Psychological Achievements of Nietzsche, can only be described as the towering achievement.” — Karl Löwith

On The Biocentric Metaphysics of Ludwig Klages by Joseph D. Pryce

"Without a doubt, *The Spirit as Adversary of the Soul* by Klages is a great work of philosophy."
— Walter Benjamin

Prelude: The Intellectual Environment

During the closing years of the nineteenth century, the limitations and inadequacies of the superficial positivism that had dominated European thought for so many decades were becoming increasingly apparent to critical observers. The wholesale repudiation of metaphysics that Tyndall, Haeckel and Büchner had proclaimed as a liberation from the superstitions and false doctrines that had misled benighted investigators of earlier times, was now seen as having contributed significantly to the bankruptcy of positivism itself. Ironically, a critical examination of the unacknowledged epistemological assumptions of the positivists clearly revealed that not only had Haeckel and his ilk been unsuccessful in their attempt to free themselves from metaphysical presuppositions, but they had, in effect, merely switched their allegiance from the grand systems of speculative metaphysics that had been constructed in previous eras by the Platonists, Medieval scholastics, and post-Kantian idealists whom they abominated, in order to adhere to a ludicrous, ersatz metaphysics of whose existence they were completely unaware.

The alienation of younger thinkers from what they saw as the discredited dogmas of positivism and materialism found expression in the proliferation of a wide range of philosophical schools, whose adherents had little in common other than the will to revolt against outmoded dogma. "Back to Kant!" became the battle-cry of the neo-Kantians at Marburg. "Back to the things themselves!" proclaimed the "phenomenologist" Edmund Husserl; there were "neo-positivists," "empirio-critical" thinkers, and even the invertebrate American ochlocracy lent its cacophonous warblings to the philosophical choir when William James proclaimed his soothing doctrine of "pragmatism," with which salesmen, journalists, and other uncritical blockheads have stupefied themselves ever since.

A more substantial and significant revolt, however, emerged from another quarter altogether when several independent scholars began to re-examine the speculative

metaphysical systems of the “philosophers of nature” who had flourished during the Romantic period. Although the astonishing creativity of these men of genius had been forgotten whilst positivism and materialism ruled the roost, of course, men like Nietzsche, Burckhardt, and Bachofen had preserved elements of the Romantic heritage and had thereby, as it were, already prepared the soil in which younger men would sow the precious seed of a Romantic revival. By the turn of the twentieth century the blossoms had emerged in the form of the philosophers of the “vitalist” school. In France, Henri Bergson became the leading proponent of philosophical vitalism, and his slogan of *élan vital* as well as his doctrine of *évolution créatrice* thrilled audiences in the salons as well as in the university lecture halls. In Hungary, the astonishingly gifted philosopher and physicist, Melchior Palágyi — a thinker of an altogether higher order than the superficial Bergson — conducted profound research into celestial mechanics, which clearly anticipated the theory of relativity; he developed the theory of “virtual” movement; and his critical powers enabled him to craft a definitive and withering refutation of Husserl’s pseudo-phenomenology, and his insights retain their validity even now in spite of the oblivion to which the disciples of Husserl have consigned them.

In the German-speaking world the doctrines of *Lebensphilosophie*, or “philosophy of life,” achieved academic respectability when Wilhelm Dilthey became their spokesman. Sadly, candor demands that we draw the reader’s attention to the troubling fact that it was Dilthey who inaugurated a disastrous trend that was to be maintained at German universities for the next hundred years by such able obfuscators and logomachs as Heidegger and his spawn, for, to put it as charitably as possible, Dilthey was the first significant German philosopher to achieve wide renown in spite of having nothing significant to say (that is why, perhaps, Dilthey and Heidegger furnish such mountains of grist for the philosophical proles who edit and annotate and comment and publish and — prosper).

Among these “philosophers of life,” there were “amalgamists,” among whom we find Hans Driesch, who sabotaged his own project by indulging in futile attempts to combine the irreconcilable doctrines of Kantian idealism and vitalism in his theory of the “entelechy,” which, although he proclaimed it to be a uniquely vitalistic notion, is always analyzed mechanistically and atomistically in his expositions. The profound speculative metaphysics of Houston Stewart Chamberlain also succumbed to the Kantian infection, for even Chamberlain seems to have been blind to the ineluctable abyss that divides vitalism and Kantianism.

Finally, and most significantly, we encounter the undisputed master-spirit of the “vitalist” school in the German world, the philosopher and polymath Ludwig Klages, whose system of “biocentric” metaphysics displays a speculative profundity and a logical rigor that no other vitalist on the planet could hope to equal.

The Early Years

Ludwig Klages was born on December 10, 1872, in the northern German city of Hannover. He seems to have been a solitary child, but he developed an intense friendship with a class-mate named Theodor Lessing, who would himself go on to achieve fame as the theorist of “Jewish Self-Hatred,” a concept whose origins Lessing would later trace back to passionate discussions that he had had with Klages during their boyhood rambles on the windswept moors and beaches of their Lower Saxon home.

In 1891 he received his Abitur, and immediately journeyed to Leipzig to begin his university studies in chemistry and physics. In 1893, he moved to Munich, where he would live and work until the Great War forced him into Swiss exile in 1915.

Klages continued his undergraduate studies in Chemistry and Physics during the day, but at night he could usually be found in the cafés of Schwabing, then as now the Bohemian district of Munich. It was in Schwabing that he encountered the poet Stefan George and his circle. George immediately recognized the young man’s brilliance, and the poet eagerly solicited contributions from Klages, both in prose and in verse, to his journal, the *Blätter für die Kunst*.

Klages also encountered Alfred Schuler (1865-1923), the profoundly learned Classicist and authority on ancient Roman history, at this time. Schuler was also loosely associated with George’s circle, although he was already becoming impatient with the rigidly masculine, “patriarchalist” spirit that seemed to rule the poet and his minions. Klages eventually joined forces with Schuler and Karl Wolfskehl, an authority on Germanistics who taught at the University of Munich, to form the *Kosmische Runde*, or “Cosmic Circle,” and the three young men, who had already come under the influence of the “matriarchalist” anthropology of the late Johann Jakob Bachofen, soon expressed their mounting discontent with George and his “patriarchal” spirit. Finally, in 1904, Klages and Schuler broke with the poet, and the aftermath was one of bitterness and recrimination “all compact.” Klages would in later years repudiate his association with George, but he would revere Schuler, both as a man and as a scholar, to the end of his life.

The other crucial experience that Klages had during this last decade of the old century was his overwhelming love affair with Countess Franziska zu Reventlow, the novelist and Bohemian, whose *Notebooks of Mr. Lady* provides what is, perhaps, the most revealing — and comical — rendition of the turbulent events that culminated in the break between the “Cosmic Circle” and the George-Kreis; Wolfskehl, who was himself an eyewitness to the fracas, held that, although Franziska had called the book a novel, it was, in fact, a work of historical fact. Likewise, the diaries of the Countess preserve records of her conversations with Klages (who is referred to as “Hallwig,” the name of the Klages surrogate in her “Mr. Lady”: she records Klages telling her that “There is no ‘God’; there are many gods!” At times “Hallwig” even frightens her with oracular allusions to “my mystical side, the rotating Swastika” and with his prophecies of inevitable doom). When the Countess terminated the liaison, Klages, who suffered from serious

bouts of major depression throughout his long life, experienced such distress that he briefly contemplated suicide. Fate, of course, would hardly have countenanced such a quietus, for, as Spengler said, there are certain destinies that are utterly inconceivable — Nietzsche won't make a fortune at the gambling tables of Monte Carlo, and Goethe won't break his back falling out of his coach, he remarks drily.

And, we need hardly add, Klages will not die for love...

On the contrary: he will live for Eros.

Works of Maturity

After the epoch-making experiences of the Schwabing years, the philosopher's life seems almost to assume a prosaic, even an anticlimactic, quality. The significant events would henceforth occur primarily in the thinker's inner world and in the publications that communicated the discoveries that he had made therein. There were also continuing commitments on his part to particular institutions and learned societies. In 1903 Klages founded his "Psychodiagnostic Seminars" at the University of Munich, which swiftly became Europe's main center for biocentric psychology. In 1908, he delivered a series of addresses on the application of "expression theory" (*Ausdruckskunde*) to graphological analysis at one such seminar.

In 1910, in addition to the book on expression theory, Klages published the first version of his treatise on psychology, entitled *Prinzipien der Charakterologie* (Principles of Characterology). This treatise was based upon lectures that Klages had delivered during the previous decade, and in its pages he announced his discovery of the "Id," which has popularly, and hence erroneously, for so long been attributed to Freud. He came in personal contact with several members of rival psychological schools during this period, and he was even invited — in his capacity as Europe's leading exponent of graphology — to deliver a lecture on the "Psychology of Handwriting" to the Wednesday night meeting of the Freudian "Vienna Society" on October 25, 1911.

The philosopher also encountered the novelist Robert Musil, in whose masterpiece, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* (The Man Without Qualities), Klages appears — in caricatured form, of course — as the eerie and portentous prophet Meingast, that "messenger from Zarathustra's mountain." The novelist seems to have been most impressed by the philosopher's speculations in *Vom kosmogonischen Eros* (On the Cosmogonic Eros) concerning the ecstatic nature of the "erotic rapture" and the Klagesian "other condition" (*andere Zustand*). Paradoxically, however, Musil's novel presents Meingast (Klages) as a manic and domineering worshiper of power, which is quite strange when one considers that Klages consistently portrays the Nietzschean "will to power" as nothing but a modality of hysteria perfectly appropriate to our murderous age of militarism and capitalism. Anyone familiar with the withering onslaught against the will and its works which constitutes the section entitled "Die Lehre der Wille" in Klages' *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (The Spirit as Adversary of the Soul) must, in addition,

feel a certain amazement at Meingast's ravings concerning the necessity for a "determined will"! Another familiar (and depressing) insight into the resistance mounted by even sympathetic writers to the biocentric philosophy can be derived from a perusal of Musil's *Tagebücher* (Diaries), with its dreary and philistine insistence that the Klagesian rapture must at all costs be constrained by Geist, by its pallid praise for a "daylight mysticism," and so on. Admittedly, *Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften* will remain an astonishing and beautifully-crafted masterpiece of twentieth century belles lettres, in spite of its author's jejune "philosophical" preachments.

During this same period, Klages rediscovered the late-Romantic philosopher Carl Gustav Carus, author of the pioneering *Psyche: Zur Entwicklungsgeschichte der Seele* (*Psyche: Towards a Developmental History of the Soul*) in which the unconscious is moved to center-stage (sadly, the Jung-racket falsely credits their master with this discovery). The very first sentence of this work indicates the primacy attributed by Carus to the unconscious: "The key to the understanding of the conscious life of the soul lies in the realm of the unconscious." During the Romantic revival that took place in the Germany of the 1920s, Klages would edit a new, abridged version of *Psyche*, in which Carus is purged of his logocentric and Christian errors. Klages, however, fully accepts Carus' definition of the soul as synonymous with life, a formulation that he rates as epochally significant. He finds Carus' statement to be as profound as the aphorism of Novalis in which he locates the soul at the point of contact between the inner and outer worlds.

In 1913, Klages presented his *Zur Theorie und Symptomatologie des Willens* (On the Theory and Symptomatology of the Will) to the Vienna Congress of International Societies for Medical Psychology and Psychotherapy. In that same year, Klages delivered an address entitled "Mensch und Erde" to a gathering of members of the German Youth Movement. This seminal work has recently received its due as the "foundational" document of the "deep ecology" movement when a new edition was published in 1980 in coordination with the establishment of the German "Green" political party.

In his *Heidnische Feuerzeichen* (Pagan Fire-Signs), which was completed in 1913, although it would not be published in book form until 1944, Klages has some very perceptive remarks on consciousness, which he regards as always effect and never cause. He cautions us to realize that, because our feelings are almost always conscious, we tend to attribute far too much importance to them. Reality is composed of images (Bilder) and not feelings, and the most important idea that Klages ever developed is his conception of the "actuality of the images" (*Wirklichkeit der Bilder*). He also savages the insane asceticism of Christianity, arguing that a satisfied sexuality is essential for all genuine cosmic radiance. Christ is to be detested as the herald of the annihilation of the Earth and the mechanization of man.

The pioneering treatise on "expression theory," the *Ausdruckskunde und Gestaltungskraft* (Expression Analysis and Formative Force), also appeared in 1913. The first part of his treatise on the interpretation of dreams (*Vom Traumbewusstsein*) appeared in 1914, but war soon erupted in Europe, swiftly interrupting all talk of

dreams. Sickened by the militaristic insanity of the “Great War,” Klages moved to neutral Switzerland. In 1920 he made his last move to Kilchberg, near Zurich, Switzerland, where he would spend the rest of his life.

The first substantial excerpt from the treatise that would eventually become his Hauptwerk, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, was published as *Geist und Seele* in a 1916 issue of the journal *Deutsche Psychologie*. He soon turned his attention to the more mundane matter of the contemporary world situation, and in 1918, concerned by the spread of “One World”-humanitarianism and other pernicious forms of “humanism,” Klages published the classic *Brief über Ethik* (Letter on Ethics), in which he re-emphasized his opposition to all ethical and individualistic attempts to improve the world. The modern world’s increasing miscegenation has hatched out a horde of mongrels, slaves, and criminals. The world is falling under the dominion of the enemies of life, and it matters not a bit whether the ethical fanatic dubs his hobbyhorse Wille, Tat, Logos, Nous, Idee, Gott, the “Supreme Being,” reines Subjekt, or absolutes Ich: these phrases are merely fronts behind which spirit, the eternal adversary of life, conducts her nefarious operations. Only infra-human nature, wherein dwells a principle of hierarchical order in true accord with the laws of life, is able to furnish man with genuine values. The preachers of morality can only murder life with their prohibitive commands so stifling to the soul’s vitality. As Klages’ disciple Hans Prinzhorn cautions us, the vital order “must not be falsified, according to the Judæo-Christian outlook, into a principle of purposefulness, morality, or sentimentality.” The Letter on Ethics urges us to avoid all such life-hostile values, and to prize instead those moments when we allow our souls to find warmth in the love which manifests itself as adoration, reverence, and admiration. The soul’s true symbol is the mother with her beloved child, and the soul’s true examples are the lives of poets, heroes, and gods. Klages concludes his sardonic Letter by informing the reader, in contemptuous and ironical tones, that if he refuses to respond to these exemplary heroes, he may then find it more congenial to sit himself down and listen, unharmed, to a lecture on ethics!

In 1921, Klages published his *Vom Wesen des Bewusstseins* (On the Nature of Consciousness), an investigation into the nature of consciousness, in which the ego-concept is shown to be neither a phenomenon of pure spirit nor of pure life, but rather a mere epiphenomenal precipitate of the warfare between life and spirit. In this area, Klages’ presentation invites comparison with the Kantian exposition of “pure subjectivity,” although, as one might expect, Klages assails the subjectivity of the ego as a hollow sham. The drive to maximize the realm of ego, regardless of whether this impulse clothes itself in such august titles as “the will to power” (Nietzsche), the “will to live” (Schopenhauer), or the naked obsession with the “ego and its own” (Stirner), is merely a manifestation of malevolent Geist. Klages also ridicules the superficiality of William James’ famous theory of “stream of consciousness,” which is subjected to a withering critical onslaught. After James’ “stream” is conclusively demolished, Klages demonstrates that Melchior Palágyi’s theory more profoundly analyzes the processes whereby we receive the data of consciousness. Klages endorses Palágyi’s account of consciousness in order to estab-

lish the purely illusory status of the “stream” by proving conclusively that man receives the “images” as discrete, rhythmically pulsating “intermittencies.”

We should say a few words about the philosopher whose exposition of the doctrine of consciousness so impressed Klages. Melchior Palágyi (1859-1924) was the Hungarian-Jewish Naturphilosoph who was regarded as something of a mentor by the younger man, ever since 1908, when they first met at a learned conference. Like Klages, Palágyi was completely devoted to the thought-world of German Romantic Naturphilosophie. Klages relied heavily on this thinker’s expert advice, especially with regard to questions involving mechanics and physics, upon which the older man had published outstanding technical treatises. The two men had spent many blissful days together in endless metaphysical dialogue when Palágyi visited Klages at his Swiss home shortly before Palágyi’s death. They were delighted with each other’s company, and reveled even in the cut and thrust of intense exchanges upon matters about which they were in sharp disagreement. Although this great thinker is hardly recalled today even by compilers of “comprehensive” encyclopedias, Palágyi’s definitive and irrefutable demolition of Edmund Husserl’s spurious system of “phenomenology” remains one of the most lethal examples of philosophical adversaria to be found in the literature. Palágyi, who was a Jew, had such a high opinion of his anti-Semitic colleague, that when Palágyi died in 1925, one of the provisions of his will stipulated that Ludwig Klages was to be appointed as executor and editor of Palágyi’s posthumous works, a task that Klages undertook scrupulously and reverently, in spite of the fact that the amount of labor that would be required of him before the manuscripts of his deceased colleague could be readied for publication would severely disrupt his own work upon several texts, most especially the final push to complete the three-volume *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*. One gets the impression that Klages felt the task that had been imposed upon him was also one of the highest honors, and Klages’ high regard for Palágyi’s thought can best be appreciated when we realize that among the numerous thinkers and scholars whose works are cited in his collected works, the contemporary philosopher who is cited most frequently, and at the greatest length, is none other than Melchior Palágyi.

Klages published his influential anthropological-historical study, *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*, in 1922, and in the *Selbstbericht* (Self-critique) which serves as an introduction to this work he details the points of agreement and disagreement between his views and those of Friedrich Nietzsche.

In 1923 Klages published his *Vom Wesen des Rhythmus* (On the Nature of the Rhythmic — a revised edition of which would be issued in 1934). Then in 1925, two fervent admirers of Klagesian biocentrism — one was Niels Kampmann who would go on to publish some of Klages’ works in book form — brought out the first issue of a scholarly journal, the brilliant *Zeitschrift für Menschenkunde* (The Journal of Anthropology), which would continue to publish regularly until the rigors of war eventually forced the editors to suspend publication in 1943 (eight years after the end of the war, the journal began a new career in 1953).

A revised and enlarged edition of the treatise on characterology appeared in 1926 with the new title *Die Grundlagen der Charakterkunde* (The Foundations of Characterology). Klages also published *Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches* (The Psychological Achievements of Nietzsche) in this same year, a work which, more than a quarter of a century after its initial appearance, the Princeton-based Nietzsche scholar Walter Kaufmann — surely no friend to Klages! — would nevertheless admire greatly, even feeling compelled to describe Klages' exegesis of Nietzsche's psychology as "the best monograph" ever written on its subject.

A collection of brief essays entitled *Zur Ausdruckslehre und Charakterkunde* (On the Theory of Expression and Characterology), was brought out by Kampmann in 1927; many of them date from the early days of the century and their sheer profundity and variety reinforce our conviction that Klages was a mature thinker even in his twenties.

The first two volumes of his magnum opus, the long-awaited and longer-pondered, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, finally appeared in 1929. One year later the *Graphologisches Lesebuch* (Textbook on Graphology) appeared, and the third and final volume of *Der Geist* hit the book-shops in 1932, a year that seems to have been a very busy one indeed for our polymathic philosopher, since he also found time to revamp his slender monograph entitled *Goethe als Naturforscher* (Goethe as a Scientist), a short work that can only be compared to the books about Goethe by H. S. Chamberlain and Friedrich Gundolf for breadth of scholarship and insight into the creativity of a great seer and scientist (this study was a revised edition of a lecture that had originally been published in the *Jahrbuch des Freien Deutschen Hochstifts* in 1928).

Hans Prinzhorn, the psychologist, translator of D. H. Lawrence and compiler of the landmark treatise on art produced by the mentally disturbed, had long been a friend and admirer of Klages, and in 1932 he organized the celebration for the sixtieth birthday of the philosopher. The tributes composed the various scholars who participated in this event were collected and edited by Prinzhorn for publication in book form, with the title *Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstag*.

National Socialist Germany, World War II, and their Aftermath

Shortly after the National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) assumed power at the beginning of 1933, one of Klages' disciples established the *Arbeitskreises für biozentrisches Forschung* (Workgroup for Biocentric Research). At first the German disciples of Klages were tolerated as harmless philosophical eccentrics, but soon the Gestapo began keeping a close eye on members and contributors to the biocentric circle's house organ *Janus*. By 1936 the authorities forcibly shut down the journal and from that time until the fall of the regime, the Gestapo would periodically arrest and

question those who had been prominent members of the now-defunct “circle.” From 1938 onwards, when Reichsleiter Dr. Alfred Rosenberg delivered a bitter attack on Klages and his school in his inaugural address to the summer semester at the University of Halle, the official party spokesmen explicitly and repeatedly condemned Klages and his friends as enemies of the National Socialist worldview.

Klages traveled widely during the 1930s, and he especially enjoyed his journeys to Greece and Scandinavia. In 1940 he published Alfred Schuler, *Fragmente und Vorträge: Aus dem Nachlass* (Alfred Schuler, *Fragments and Lectures: From the Notebooks*), his edition of Alfred Schuler’s literary remains. The Introduction to the anthology is a voluminous critical memoir in which Klages rendered profound tribute to his late mentor. However, in the pages of that introduction, Klages introduced several statements critical of “World-Jewry” that were to dog his steps for the rest of his life, just as they have compromised his reputation after his death. Unlike so many *ci-devant* “anti-Semites” who prudently saw the philo-Semitic light in the aftermath of the war, however, Klages scorned to repudiate anything that he had said on this or any other topic. He even poured petrol on the fires by voicing his conviction that the only significant difference between the species of master-race nonsense that was espoused by the National Socialists and the variety adopted by their Jewish enemies was in the matter of results: Klages blandly proclaims that the Jews, after a two-thousand-year-long assault on the world for which they felt nothing but hatred, had actually won the definitive victory. There would be no re-match. He sneered at all the kow-towing to Jewry that had already become part of the game in the immediate post-war era, because, he reasoned, even as a tactical ploy, such sycophantic behavior has always doomed itself to complete and abject failure.

In December of 1942, the official daily newspaper of the NSDAP, the *Völkischer Beobachter*, published a vicious and ungracious attack on Klages in the edition that appeared on the philosopher’s seventieth birthday. During the war years, Klages began compiling notes for a projected full-dress autobiography that was, sadly, never completed. Still, the notes are fascinating in their own right, and are well worth consulting by the student of his life and thought.

In 1944, Barth of Leipzig published the *Rhythmen und Runen* (Rhythms and Runes), a self-edited anthology of Klages’ prose and verse writings stemming from the turn of the century (unfortunately, however, when Bouvier finally brought out their edition of his “Collected Works,” which began to appear in the mid-1960s, *Rhythmen und Runen*, along with the monograph on Stefan George and such provocative pieces as the Introduction to Schuler’s writings, were omitted from the set, in spite of the fact that the original prospectus issued to subscribers announced that these works would, in fact, be included. The reasons for this behavior are — need we say? — quite obvious).

When the war ended, Klages began to face true financial hardship, for his market, as well as his publishers, had been devastated by the horrific saturation bombing campaign with which the democratic allies had turned Germany into a shattered and

burnt-out wasteland. Klages also suffered dreadfully when he learned that his beloved sister, Helene, as well as her daughter Heidi, the philosopher's niece, had perished in the agony of post-war Germany. Although Klages had sought permission from the occupying authorities to visit his sister as she lay dying, his request was ignored. This refusal, followed shortly by his receipt of the news of her miserable death, aroused an almost unendurable grief in his soul.

His spirits were raised somewhat by the Festschrift that was organized for his 80th birthday, and his creative drive certainly seemed to have remained undiminished by the ravages of advancing years. He was deeply immersed in the philological studies that prepared him to undertake his last great literary work, *Die Sprache als Quell der Seelenkunde* (Language as Source of Psychology), which was published in 1948. In this dazzling monument of twentieth century scholarship, Klages conducted a comprehensive investigation of the relationship between psychology and linguistics. During that same year he also directed a devastating broadside in which he refuted the fallacious doctrines of Jamesian "pragmatism" as well as the infantile sophistries of Watson's "behaviorism." This brief but pregnant essay was entitled "Wie Finden Wir die Seele des Nebenmenschen?"

During the early 1950s, Klages' health finally began to deteriorate, but he was at least heartened by the news that there were serious plans afoot among his admirers and disciples to get his classic treatises back into print as soon as possible. Death came at last to Ludwig Klages on July 29, 1956. The cause of death was determined to have been a heart attack. He is buried in the Kilchberg cemetery, which overlooks Lake Zurich.

Understanding Klagesian Terms

A brief discussion of the philosopher's technical terminology may provide the best preparation for an examination of his metaphysics. Strangely enough, the relationship between two familiar substantives, "spirit" (Geist) and "soul" (Seele), constitutes the main source of our terminological difficulties. Confusion regarding the meaning and function of these words, especially when they are employed as technical terms in philosophical discourse, is perhaps unavoidable at the outset. We must first recognize the major problems involved before we can hope to achieve the necessary measure of clarity. Klages regards the study of semantics, especially in its historical dimension, as our richest source of knowledge regarding the nature of the world (metaphysics, or philosophy) and an unrivalled tool with which to probe the mysteries of the human soul (psychology, or characterology [Charakterkunde]). We would be well advised, therefore, to adopt an extraordinary stringency in lexical affairs. We have seen that the first, and in many ways the greatest, difficulty that can impede our understanding of biocentric thought confronts us in our dealings with the German word Geist. Geist has often been translated as "spirit" or "mind," and, less often, as "intellect." As it happens, the trans-

lation of Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes* that most American students utilized in their course-work during the 1960s and 1970s was entitled *The Phenomenology of Mind* (G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind* [New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1967], translated by J. B. Bailey).

Lest it be thought that we are perversely attributing to the word *Geist* an exaggeratedly polysemic status, we would draw the reader's attention to the startling fact that Rudolf Hildebrandt's entry on this word in the *Grimm Wörterbuch* comprises more than one hundred closely printed columns. Hildebrandt's article has even been published separately as a book. Today in everyday English usage, spirit (along with its cognates) and soul (along with its cognates) are employed as synonyms. As a result of the lexical habits to which we have grown accustomed, our initial exposure to a philosopher who employs soul and spirit as antonyms can be a somewhat perplexing experience. It is important for us to realize that we are not entering any quixotic protest here against familiar lexical custom. We merely wish to advise the reader that whilst we are involved in the interpretation of Klagesian thought, soul and spirit are to be treated consistently as technical philosophical terms bearing the specific meanings that Klages has assigned to them.

Our philosopher is not being needlessly obscure or perversely *recherché* in this matter, for although there are no unambiguous distinctions drawn between soul and spirit in English usage, the German language recognizes some very clear differences between the terms *Seele* and *Geist*, and Hildebrandt's article amply documents the widely ramified implications of the distinctions in question. In fact, literary discourse in the German-speaking world is often characterized by a lively awareness of these very distinctions. Rudolf Kassner, for instance, tells us that his friend, the poet Rainer Maria Rilke, inhabited a world of soul (*Seele*), not one of spirit (*Geist*). In speaking of Rilke's world as that of the soul, Kassner is proclaiming the indisputable truth that Rilke's imagination inhabits an innocent, or pagan, world, a realm that is utterly devoid of such "spiritual" baggage as "sin" and "guilt." Likewise, for Kassner, as for Rilke, the world of spirit is the realm of labor and duty, which is ruled by abstractions and "ideals." I can hardly exaggerate the significance of the spirit-soul dichotomy upon which Kassner has shed so much light in these remarks on Rilke as the man of "soul." If the reader bears their substance in mind, he will find that the path to understanding shall have been appreciably cleared of irksome obstacles.

Therefore, these indispensable lexical distinctions are henceforth to function as our established linguistic protocol. Bearing that in mind, when the reader encounters the Klagesian thesis which holds that man is the battlefield on which soul and spirit wage a war to the death, even the novice will grasp some portion of the truth that is being enunciated. And the initiate who has immersed his whole being in the biocentric doctrine will swiftly discover that he is very well prepared indeed to perpend, for instance, the characterological claim that one can situate any individual at a particular point on an extensive typological continuum at one extreme of which we situate such enemies of sexuality and sensuous joy as the early Christian hermits or the technocrats

and militarists of our own day, all of whom represent the complete dominance of spirit; and at the opposite extreme of which we locate the Dionysian maenads of Antiquity and those rare modern individuals whose delight in the joys of the senses enables them to attain the loftiest imaginable pinnacle of ecstatic vitality: the members of this second group, of course, comprise the party of life, whose ultimate allegiance is rendered to soul.

Before we conclude this brief digression into terminological affairs, we would advise those readers whose insuperable hostility to every form of metaphysical “idealism” compels them to resist all attempts to “place” spirit and soul as “transcendental” entities, that they may nevertheless employ our terms as heuristic expedients, much as Ampère employed the metaphor of the “swimmer” in the electric “current.”

Biocentric Metaphysics in its Historical Context

Perhaps a brief summary will convey at least some notion of the sheer originality and the vast scope of the biocentric metaphysics. Let us begin by placing some aspects of this philosophical system in historical context. For thousands of years, Western philosophers have been deeply influenced by the doctrine, first formulated by the Eleatic School and Plato, which holds that the images that fall upon our sensorium are merely deceitful phantoms. Even those philosophers who have rebelled against the schemes devised by Plato and his successors, and who consider themselves to be “materialists,” “monists,” “logical atomists,” and so on, reveal that they have been infected by the disease even as they resist its onslaught, for in many of their expositions the properties of matter are presented as if they were independent entities floating in a void that suspiciously resembles the transcendent Platonic realm of the “forms.”

Ludwig Klages, on the other hand, demonstrates that it is precisely the images and their ceaseless transformations that constitute the only realities. In the unique phenomenology of Ludwig Klages, images constitute the souls of such phenomena as plants, animals, human beings, and even the cosmos itself. These images do not deceive: they express; these living images are not to be “grasped,” not to be rigidified into concepts: they are to be experienced. The world of things, on the other hand, forms the proper subject of scientific explanatory schemes that seek to “fix” things in the “grasp” of concepts. Things are appropriated by men who owe their allegiance to the will and its projects. The agents of the will appropriate the substance of the living world in order to convert it into the dead world of things, which are reduced to the status of the material components required for purposeful activities such as the industrial production of high-tech weapons systems. This purposeful activity manifests the outward operations of an occult and daemonic principle of destruction.

Klages calls this destructive principle “spirit” (Geist), and he draws upon the teaching of Aristotle in attempting to account for its provenance, for it was Aristotle who first asserted that spirit (nous) invaded the substance of man from “outside.” Klages’

interpretation of this Aristotelian doctrine leads him to conclude that spirit invaded the realm of life from outside the spatio-temporal world. Likewise, Klages draws on the thought of Duns Scotus, Occam and other late Medieval English thinkers when he situates the characteristic activity of spirit in the will rather than in the intellect. Completely original, however, is the Klagesian doctrine of the mortal hostility that exists between spirit and life (soul). The very title of the philosopher's major metaphysical treatise proclaims its subject to be *The Spirit as Adversary of the Soul*.

The indivisible body-soul unity that had constituted the living substance of man during the "primordial," or prehistoric, phase of his existence, in time becomes the focus of spirit's war against life. Spirit severs the vital connection by thrusting itself, like the thin end of an invasive wedge, between the poles of body and soul. History is the tragic chronicle that recounts the ceaseless war that is waged by spirit against life and soul. When the ever-expanding breach between body and soul finally becomes an unbridgeable abyss, the living substance is no more, although no man can predict how long man may endure as a hollow shell or simulacrum. The ceaseless accumulation of destructive power by spirit is accompanied by the reduction of a now devitalized man to the status of a mere machine, or "robot," who soullessly regurgitates the hollow slogans about "progress," "democracy," and the delights of "the consumer society" that are the only values recognized in this world of death. The natural world itself becomes mere raw material to be converted into "goods" for the happy consumer.

An Age of Chaos

In the biocentric phenomenology of Ludwig Klages, the triadic historical development of human consciousness, from the reign of life, through that of thought, to the ultimate empire of the raging will, is reflected in the mythic-symbolic physiognomy which finds expression in the three-stage, "triadic," evolution from "Pelagian" man — of the upper Neolithic and Bronze Ages of pre-history; through the Promethean — down to the Renaissance; to the Heracleic man — the terminal phase that we now occupy, the age to which two brilliant twentieth century philosophers of history, Julius Evola and Savitri Devi, have applied the name "Kali Yuga," which in Hinduism and Buddhism is the dark age of chaos and violence that precedes the inauguration of a new "Golden Age," when a fresh cycle of cosmic events dawns in bliss and beauty.

And it is at this perilous juncture that courageous souls must stiffen their sinews and summon up their blood in order to endure the doom that is closing before us like a mailed fist. Readers may find some consolation, however, in our philosopher's expressions of agnosticism regarding the ultimate destiny of man and Earth. Those who confidently predict the end of all life and the ultimate doom of the cosmos are mere swindlers, Klages assures us. Those who cannot successfully predict such mundane trivialities as next season's fashions in hemlines or the trends in popular music five

years down the road can hardly expect to be taken seriously as prophets who can foretell the ultimate fate of the entire universe!

In the end, Ludwig Klages insists that we must never underestimate the resilience of life, for we have no yardstick with which to measure the magnitude of life's recuperative powers. "All things are in flux." That is all.

*

"Oliveira said, 'Let's keep on looking for the Yonder, there are plenty of Yonders that keep opening up one after the other. I'd start by saying that this technological reality that men of science and the readers of *France-Soir* accept today, this world of cortisone, gamma rays, and plutonium, has as little to do with reality as the world of the *Roman de la Rose*. If I mentioned it a while back to our friend Perico, it was in order to make him take note that his æsthetic criteria and his scale of values are pretty well liquidated and that man, after having expected everything from intelligence and from the spirit, feels that he's been betrayed, is vaguely aware that his weapons have been turned against him, that culture and civiltà, have misled him into this blind alley where scientific barbarism is nothing but a very understandable reaction. Please excuse my vocabulary.' 'Klages has already said all of that,' said Gregorovius."

— From Chapter 99 of *Hopscotch* by Julio Cortázar

Editor's Note

Most of the texts included in this volume were translated from the *Sämtliche Werke* (Collected Works) of Klages, which was published in 15 volumes by H. Bouvier of Bonn between 1964 and 1978. Specific citations are as follows:

"Man and Earth": "Mensch und Erde," vol. 3: pp. 614-630

"On Ethics": "Brief über Ethik," vol. 3: pp. 664-673

"On Truth and Actuality": "Über Wahrheit und Wirklichkeit," vol. 3, pp. 720-723

"On the Problem of Socrates": "Das Problem der Sokrates," vol. 3, pp. 656-663

"On Consciousness and Life": "Bewusstsein und Leben," vol. 3, pp. 646-655

"Carl Gustav Carus as Romantic Thinker": excerpt from "Stammväter der Seelenkunde" ("The Founding Fathers of Psychology"), vol. 4, pp. 573-578

"On the Value of Science": "Vom Wert der Wissenschaft," vol. 3, pp. 710-714

"Nature vs. Nurture": Excerpt from "Vom Verhältnis der Erziehung zum Wesen des Menschen" ("On the Relationship between Education and the Nature of Man"), vol. 3, pp. 729-730

"The Problems of Psychology": "Probleme der Seelenkunde," vol. 4, pp. 696-700

"Goethe as Psychologist": "Goethe als Seelenforscher," vol. 4, pp. 564-568

"On Love as Eros and as Passion": "Schlusswort über Eros und Leidenschaft" (final chapter of *Vom kosmogonischen Eros*), vol. 3, pp. 471-473

"The Identity of Spirit in Every Bearer of Life": "Die Einerleiheit des Geistes in allen Bewusstseinsträgern," vol. 3, pp. 334-336

The original year of publication is given at the head of each essay.

"On 'Psychoanalysis'" and "On Academic Psychology and Characterology" were both taken from *Die Grundlagen der Charakterkunde*, originally published in 1928. These translations were also made from the *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, pp. 191-428.

All of the poems were selected from the volume *Rythmen und Runen* that was published by Johann Ambrosius Barth of Leipzig in 1944, although the poems themselves were originally composed at the turn of the twentieth century.

I would like to thank Joe Pryce, who very possibly possesses the most cultivated literary mind I have ever encountered, for giving *Arktos* the opportunity to publish these translations of an unjustly neglected thinker of the modern German tradition.

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Panjim, Goa, India

February 2013

The Essays

Man and Earth (1913)

Every age, and ours is surely no exception, proclaims certain slogans that embody the inner tendencies of the age. Such slogans possess the power to silence the voice of doubt in the minds of disciples as if with a deafening roar of drums. A new trend is always on display, and even the unbiased few soon congregate around its banner. The three predominant slogans of our own time are “progress,” “culture,” and “personality.” As it happens, in order that the idea of progress may achieve ascendancy as the exclusive creed of our times, its rivals soon relinquish their positions and lend their support, and even their characteristic colors, to the victor. Thus, there are those who suggest that we cannot be inferior to the “primitive” peoples to whom our history books devote a few preliminary paragraphs, and for anyone who questions them as to the basis for their conviction, they have a ready response: science now commands heights never before achieved, and technology has at last subjugated nature — therefore, every earlier form of human culture must beat a helpless retreat before them. Science, which now effectively exploits the inexhaustible riches of the Earth, methodically contributes to the general prosperity; space and time are permeated by long-distance communication systems, and even the limitless atmosphere has finally been “conquered” by the genius of technology. It is not, however, for the convinced disciple of this faith in technology (which will die with him), but more for the members of a younger generation, which still asks questions, that we desire to lift at least a corner of the veil in order to reveal the perilous self-deception that lurks behind it.

In addition, those who still see something strange in the view that the guiding idea of “progress” has led to horrendous results, should be puzzled for other reasons. To the ancient Greeks, the loftiest desire was to achieve *kalokagathie*, which was that harmonious wedding of man’s inner and outer beauty that they saw embodied in the images of the Olympians; to the men of the Middle Ages, it was the “salvation of the soul,” which they saw as the soul’s ultimate ascension to God; to the man of Goethe’s time, it was the poised perfection of style, the masterful acceptance of one’s destiny; and no matter how diverse such goals may have been, we can easily comprehend the profound satisfaction that was experienced by those whose good fortune enabled them to achieve them. But the progress-monger of today is mindlessly proud of his successes, for he has somehow managed to convince himself that every increase in mankind’s power entails an equivalent increase in mankind’s value. We must doubt, however,

whether he is able to experience true joy, and not just the hollow satisfaction afforded him by the mere possession of power. By itself, however, power is completely blind to all values, blind to truth as it is blind to justice. Finally, power is undoubtedly blind to all the beauty of the life that has thus far survived the encounter with “progress.” Let us add some well-known items to our account.

The pre-eminence of science is conceded; it is immune to all objections, however slight. The high standing of technology is also beyond doubt. And yet one might well ask: what are its fruits? As the Bible wisely says, it is only “by their fruits” that we should estimate the value of the works of man. Let us begin with beings whose status as living organisms no one would question: the plants and animals. We recall that the ancients dreamt of a lost “Golden Age,” or “paradise,” a realm wherein the lion would lie down with the lamb, and the serpent would dwell with man as his protective spirit. Even this idea is not so utterly fantastic as the false doctrine that teaches us that all of nature is perpetually in the grip of a ceaseless “struggle for existence.”

The scientists who study the polar regions tell us of the fearless intimacy with which penguins, reindeers, sea lions, seals, and sea-gulls greet the first appearance of man. Pioneers who have explored the tropical regions never fail to amaze us with the images they communicate, especially those which pertain to the moment in which these students first perceive, arrayed in peaceful cohabitation, swarms of wild geese, cranes, ibis, flamingoes, herons, storks, marabouts, giraffes, zebras, gnus, antelopes, and gazelles. We understand completely the true symbiosis that embraces the entire animal kingdom, and which extends throughout the entire planet. However, as soon as the man of “progress” arrives on the scene, he announces his masterful presence by spreading death and the horror of death all around him. How many of the species of creatures that flourished in ancient Germanic lands have lasted into our century? Bear and wolf, lynx and wildcat, bison, elk and aurochs, eagle and vulture, crane and falcon, swan and owl, have all become creatures inhabiting only our fairy-tales; this was the case, in fact, even before the introduction of our new and improved wars of annihilation. But there is cause for even deeper merriment. Under the most moronic of all pretexts — which insists that vast numbers of animal species are actually noxious pests — our progress-monger has extirpated nearly every creature who happens not to be a partridge, a roe-deer, a pheasant, or, if need be, a pig. Wild boar, ibex, fox, pine marten, weasel, duck and otter — all animals with which the legends dear to our memory are intimately intertwined — are shrinking in numbers, where, that is, they have not already become extinct; sea gull, tern, cormorant, duck, heron, kingfisher, red kite and owlet are all ruthlessly hunted down; the communities of seals on the coasts of the North Sea and the Baltic are condemned to destruction. We know more than two hundred names of German towns and villages whose names derive from the word “beaver,” a fact that constitutes proof of the flourishing of these industrious rodents in earlier times; today there still exists a small preserve on the Elbe river between Torgau and Wittenberg, but even this refuge will soon disappear without immediate statutory protection. And who is not afflicted with grave anxiety to witness, year

after year, the disappearance of our beloved singers, the migratory birds? Only a mere generation ago the blue air of our cities was filled all summer long with the whir and buzz of swallows and the cries of sailors, sounds that, emerging from the distance, seemed to fill one with the yearning for travel. At that time, one could count, in one suburb of Munich alone, as many as three hundred occupied nests, whereas today one can only find four or five. More ominously, the countryside has become eerily silent, throbbing no longer as it once did every dew-laden morning in the joyous melody of Eichendorff's "countless larks." Already one must consider oneself fortunate if, whilst walking along a remote forest path near a grassy, sunlit hollow, one is privileged to hear just once the luminous and yearning call of the quail; at one time, throughout the length and breadth of Germany, these birds numbered many, many thousands, and they lived in the songs of the common people as well as in the works of our poets. Magpie, woodpecker, golden oriole, warbler, rooster, grouse, and nightingale, they are all disappearing, and the decline seems to be utterly beyond remedy.

Today we see ever-increasing hordes huddled together in our big cities, where they grow accustomed to the soot belching from the chimneys and the thunderous turmoil of the streets, where the nights are as bright as the days. These urban masses believe that they have had an adequate introduction to the world of nature as soon as they have caught a glimpse of a potato-field, or seen a single starling perched upon a branch of an emaciated road-side tree. But, to anyone who recalls the sounds and scents of the German landscape of seventy years ago, from out of the words and images in which these memories are embodied, a wind would arise to pronounce a warning reproach to the lost souls of today as soon as they begin to regurgitate their weather-proof platitudes about "economic development," "necessities," and "culture."

We express no opinion as to whence mere utility derives its deplorable authority over all modern transactions. Nor will we waste our time in belaboring a point that will soon become common knowledge; we merely state the simple fact that in no conceivable case will human beings ever meet with success in their attempt to "correct" nature. Wherever the population of song-birds dwindles, we find an immeasurable proliferation of blood-sucking insects and caterpillars, which can devour whole vineyards and forests in a matter of days; wherever one shoots the buzzard and exterminates the adder, a plague of mice swiftly erupts to bring destruction to the bee-hives. As a result, the fertilization of the clover, which depends upon the bees, will not occur. With the aid of improved weapons, hunters massacre the finest specimens of wild deer, thus bringing about the degeneration of the herd through the excess reproduction of the unfit survivors, in an environment without natural predators; and this unthinking slaughter will continue in this fashion until a serious reaction on the part of wounded nature springs up in exotic lands, in the shape of terrible epidemics, which fasten themselves to the heel of "civilized" Europe. This enables us to understand that the Far Eastern plague was, in actuality, the result of the wholesale marketing in Asia of the pelts of rodents such as the woodchuck. Let us put these facts aside in order that we may focus a bright ray of light upon the one, decisive point: these examples conclusively prove that the

profits that are produced by these commercial transactions do not have the slightest connection with any pressing material needs.

What the Germans refer to as an "Alpine forest," is just a recently reforested stand; a true Alpine forest, as it appears to us in myth and saga, will spread itself all the way to the ends of the Earth. America, which during the time of the Indians was endowed with the richest forests on Earth, has now begun to import lumber; the few regions that export their timber, such as Hungary, Russia, Scandinavia, and Canada, will soon be the only regions endowed with a surplus. The "progressive" nations, taken as a whole, annually cut down three hundred and fifty thousand tons of timber for the production of paper, thereby cutting down one book every two minutes, and one magazine every second; we can appreciate, from these rough estimates alone, just how massive the production of these items in the "civilized" world really is. Someone should at least attempt to explain to us why it is necessary to inundate the world with such quantities of newspapers, scandal magazines, and fictional thrillers; should no explanation be forthcoming, we must consequently consider the cutting down of primeval forests to be an even greater offense.

The Italians annually hunt down millions of migratory birds along their coasts, and they perform this operation in the most gruesome manner; what they themselves do not consume, is packed up for export to England and France. Numbers will express this more clearly: in one example from 1909, a single vessel transported two hundred and sixty thousand living quails, who were shipped in narrow cages to England, where the poor creatures were kept in miserable conditions, until the quail fanciers got around to butchering them. On the Sorrento peninsula, year after year, the birds have been captured alive, in numbers ranging as high as five hundred thousand. For Egypt, the tally of the exterminated reaches three million, not counting the untold numbers of larks, ortolans, warblers, swallows, and nightingales who also perished. It was not hunger that required the slaughter of these plumed singers: they fell to luxury and greed. More gruesome still is the devastation directly attributable to the fashion industry, as we learn when we read about those greedy designers and merchants whose faculty of invention seems to have been inspired by Satan himself. In the words of the *Cri de Paris*: "The Parisian hatmakers annually utilize up to forty thousand swallows and sea-gulls. A London merchant purchased during the preceding year thirty-two thousand colibris, eighty thousand sea birds, and eight hundred thousand birds of different species. It is known that every year no fewer than three hundred million birds are killed to adorn our ladies of fashion. There are lands where distinctive species once gave a unique appearance to regions from which they have now vanished. To guarantee that the feathers and down retain their brilliance, they must be plucked from the bodies of the birds while they still live. That is why one may not hunt the poor creatures with guns, but with nets. These inhuman hunters tear the feathers from their victims, who must endure the sufferings of the great martyrs before they perish in horrendous convulsions."

Thinking of himself as well-bred, man refuses to acknowledge the existence of such awkward happenings, while his women callously adorn themselves with the melancholy trophies of the hunt. It need not be emphasized that every one of the animal species that we have listed, along with many others such as the “bird of paradise,” are nearing extinction. Sooner or later, the same fate will befall every animal species, except for those whom man has destined for breeding or domestication.

The billions of animal pelts of North America, the countless blue foxes, sables, and Siberian ermines, all point to the excesses of the fashion industry. In Copenhagen, in the years since 1908, a corporation has been developing a “method of hunting whales in a more peaceful manner, and according to a new method,” i.e., employing ocean-based factories, which process the carcasses immediately after the hunt. These “swimming” factories, during the course of the two following years, processed approximately five hundred thousand of the largest mammals on the Earth, and the day is swiftly approaching when the whale known to history will have become a mere museum exhibit.

For millennia the American buffalo, the prized game of the Indians, roamed the prairie. But scarcely had the European set foot on the continent, when a lawless and savage slaughter broke out, so that today the buffalo is over and done with. In time, the same sad spectacle will be enacted in Africa. In order to furnish our so-called civilized man with billiard balls, buttons, combs, and similar articles of great importance, the most recent calculations provided by Tournier of Paris indicate that eight hundred thousand kilograms of pure ivory are processed annually. The result is the yearly slaughter of fifty thousand of the most stupendous of the world’s creatures. In the same way occurred the merciless killing of the antelope, the rhino, the wild horse, the kangaroo, the giraffe, the ostrich, and the gnu in the tropics, along with the polar bear, musk ox, arctic fox, walrus, and seal in the arctic zone. An unparalleled orgy of destruction has seized mankind, and it is “civilization” that has unleashed this lust for murder, so that the Earth withers before its noxious breath. These are indeed the fruits of “progress”!

All of these facts are well known. Well-meaning and warm-hearted individuals have raised the warning cry again and again during the past ten years, urging mankind to protect nature and to preserve regional traditions from abuse; unfortunately, neither the deepest causes for, nor the massive consequences of, the menace to nature have been comprehended. However, before we probe more deeply into these matters, we must continue to pronounce our accusation.

We need not concern ourselves with determining whether or not life extends beyond our world, or whether the Earth is, in fact, a living being (which was the belief of the ancients), or merely an unfeeling lump of “dead matter” (the modern view); it is only because the Earth endures, that the tracts of land, the play of clouds, the bodies of water, the cloak of plant life, and the ceaseless activity of the animal kingdom, have all been woven together in a profoundly animated totality, which gathers the individual creatures together as if within an ark, which, in turn, is itself closely bound together with the great events of the infinite universe. An indispensable harmony resounds in

the clamorous storms of the planet, in the sublime bleakness of the wilderness, in the solemnity of the highest mountains, in the appealing melancholy of the endless heath, in the mysterious fabric of towering forests, and in the pulsating lightning of the sea-storm as it hurls its bolts against the coastline. Or this harmony may exist in a dreamy immersion in the primordial works of man. If, in a moment of profound reverie, we should direct our gaze upon the pyramids, the Sphinx, and the lotus-shaped capitals of Egypt's columns; or upon the brightly decorated bell-towers of the Chinese and the structural clarity of the Hellenic temple; or upon the warm domesticity of the Dutch farmhouse and the Tartar encampment on the open steppes: we perceive that all of these creations breathe the very soul of the landscape upon which they stand. Earlier cultures said that such structures had "sprung from the Earth"; thus, we too see that there is form and color in everything that has sprung from the Earth, from the dwellings to the weapons and household implements, the daggers, spears, axes, swords, necklaces, brooches, and rings, the elegant decorated vessels, the cakes filled with nuts, the vessels of copper, and the thousand-fold textures and fabrics. More frightful still than those items that we have already surveyed — albeit not quite so irremediable — are the effects of "progress" in the colonial regions. The connection between the works of man and the Earth has now been disrupted, shattering for centuries — perhaps permanently — the primordial song of the landscape. Now railroad tracks, telegraph poles, and high-voltage power cables cut through the contours of forest and mountain; this can be seen not only in Europe, but in India, Egypt, Australia, and America as well. The gray, multi-level apartment blocks that stand attached to an endless row of identical structures, sprout up wherever an educated person wishes to display his ability to increase "prosperity." Everywhere, the rural fields are "combined" into rectangular plots, ancient grave-sites are disturbed, thriving nurseries are obliterated, the reed-bordered fishponds dry up, and the flourishing forested wilderness of yesteryear has had to surrender its pristine state, because all trees must now line up like soldiers, and every woodland must be purged of the old thickets of "poisonous" undergrowth; the winding rivers which once suspended themselves in glittering, labyrinthine curves, must now become perfectly straight canals; the swift streams and waterfalls — and this is true even for Niagara — must now feed electric power plants; ever-expanding forests of smokestacks reach all the way to the oceans' shores; and the water pollution caused by industry transforms nature's pristine waters into raw sewage. Very soon, the face of the Earth will be transformed into a gigantic Chicago, pocked with a few patches of agriculture! "My God," cried out the noble Achim von Arnim at the beginning of the last century, "where are the old trees, under which we still rode only yesterday? And what has happened to the ancient inscriptions carved upon the boundary stones? These things are already forgotten by our people, and nothing could be sadder than to see us striking against our own roots. When the peak of a towering mountain has been but once stripped of its timber, no timber will ever grow there again; my mission is to see that Germany's heritage will not be squandered!" And Lenau's impressions of the landscape of our homeland made him feel that nature has been stuffed up to the

throat so that blood spurts from her every pore. What would these men have to say to us today! Perhaps they might, like Heinrich von Kleist, decide to quit the Earth, whose son, man himself, has brought such shame upon his head. "The devastation of the Thirty Years' War did not bring about such fundamental alterations of the heritage of the past in town and countryside as the obsession of modern life with its ruthless, one-sided pursuit of practical purposes." (From the announcement of the establishment of the "League for Nature Preservation.") However, as regards the hypocritical "nature feeling" of the tourist trade, we need hardly direct our attention to the devastation which its "exploitation" of remote coastal regions and mountain valleys leaves in its wake. Even these matters were comprehensively addressed, again and yet again, but the effort was wasted. The complete presentation was developed by 1880 through the efforts of the first-rate writer Rudorff, to whose 1910 essay "On the Relation of Modern Life to Nature" we would direct every reader's attention.

As if those things were not enough, the rage for extermination has now dragged its bloody furrow through mankind himself. Tribal populations have dwindled, and some tribes have even vanished. Some were exterminated or starved to death, while others succumbed to disease; all were forced to accept the blessings of "progress": brandy, opium, and syphilis. The Indians are over and done with; the Australian aborigines are finished; the noblest Polynesians are at their last gasp; the most courageous African warriors have fought the good fight, but now they too must give way to "civilization"; and Europe has just seen an equally courageous folk, Europe's last primordial tribe, the Albanians — those "Eagle-sons," whose ancestry can be traced directly back to the legendary "Pelasgians" — methodically killed, by the thousands, at the hands of the Serbs.

Make no mistake: "progress" is the lust for power and nothing besides, and we must unmask its method as a sick, destructive joke. Utilizing such pretexts as "necessity," "economic development," and "culture," the final goal of "progress" is nothing less than the destruction of life. This destructive urge takes many forms: progress is devastating forests, exterminating animal species, extinguishing native cultures, masking and distorting the pristine landscape with the varnish of industrialism, and debasing the organic life that still survives. It is the same for livestock as for the mere commodity, and the boundless lust for plunder will not rest until the last bird falls. To achieve this end, the whole weight of technology has been pressed into service, and at last we realize that technology has become by far the largest domain of the sciences.

Let us pause here for a moment. In a certain sense, even man belongs to nature; some even suggest that man belongs entirely to nature; as we will see, that is certainly an erroneous view. In any case, when something within him struggles with life, it is not, after all, struggling with man himself. Our chain of evidence will lose its most important links if we do not also offer illustrations of the self-demoralization of mankind.

The roll call of the dead, which could be inscribed here, even were it to be restricted to the most important names, would far exceed the list of fallen animals. It will suffice to commemorate a few prominent victims: where are the popular festivals and sacred

customs, which for uncounted millennia served as perpetual springs for myth and poetry? Where is now the rider on the meadow who sows the precious seeds? And where can we find the procession of the Pentecostal bride and the torch-bearer running through the cornfields? Where is now the intricate richness of traditional costume, in which every folk could express its own nature, on its own landscape? The rich pendants, the multicolored bodices, the decorated waistcoats, sashes adorned with precious metals, and the light sandals? Where can we find now the toga-styled shawls, the pleated turbans, and flowing kimonos? They are all being replaced by “civilized” attire. Throughout the world civilization distributes the three-piece suit for the men, and for the women — the latest Parisian style.

Where now do we find the folk-song, that ever-renewed treasury of melody, which cloaks with its fabric of silver man’s advancing age and passing away. Wedding-feast and solemn wake, revenge, war, and destruction, drunkenness and wanderlust, the feeling of a child and the delight of a mother, all of these things breathe and stream in inexhaustible songs, which can swiftly provoke one to a fiery action, or swiftly cradle another in the sleep of forgetfulness. There were once poems and songs composed for the dance, for the brimming goblet, for farewell and homecoming, for consecration and magical incantation, for the dusk that falls in the spinning room; before the battle, and at the bier of the slain, one was stirred by songs of scorn, by martial anthems of a dark-bright poetry blending mountain, spring, and shrub, the animals of the household, wild game and plant, the force of the wind and the torrent of rain. Even work was felt to be a kind of festival, a feeling that has long since been inconceivable to us. Song was not reserved solely for roving and revelry; song accompanied the hoisting of the anchor, the rhythm of the oar-stroke, the shifting of heavy cargo, the towing of the ship, the stowing of the casks, the blacksmith’s hammering, and the rowing of the oarsmen; there was song for the mowing, threshing, and grinding of the corn, and for the picking, braiding, and weaving of the flax. Not only has “progress” made life gray, it has also silenced life’s very voice. But no — we forget that after the primordial melody of the popular ballads comes the operetta and the syrupy idioms of the cabaret; after legendary musical instruments like the Spanish guitar, the Italian mandolin, the Finnish kantela, the gusli of the Southern Slavs, and the Russian balalaika, there comes the piano and the record player. There we have the fruits of “progress”! Like an all-devouring conflagration, “progress” scours the Earth, and the place that has fallen to its flames, will flourish nevermore, so long as man still survives. The animal- and plant-species cannot renew themselves, man’s innate warmth of heart has gone, the inner springs that once nurtured the flourishing songs and sacred festivals are blocked, and there remains only a wretched and cold working day and the hollow show of noisy “entertainment.” There can be no doubt: we are living in the era of the downfall of the soul.

There would still be large personalities under such circumstances! We certainly do not wish to underestimate the ingenuity of the masters of technology, nor the computational talent of our captains of industry. Nevertheless, if one placed such mere

talent alongside a true creator's strength, we must surely come to the conclusion that technology is without the slightest capacity to enrich life. The cleverest machine has meaning only in the service of a purpose, and even the most extensive industrial organization of today will be nothing in a thousand years; whereas the poetry of Homer, the wise words of Heraclitus, and the symphonies of Beethoven belong to the undying treasures of life. But how sad we become, when we think of those who once were justly proclaimed to us as the most illustrious of men, when we look at our poets and thinkers of today! Whom do we still have, since the veterans of the spirit and the deed have departed: Burckhardt, Böcklin, Bachofen, Mommsen, Bismarck, Keller, and even Nietzsche, the last flame from that old fire, all of them gone without a trace, without a successor! It is as empty up on Parnassus, as it is in politics and thought, and we will maintain a discreet silence regarding the putrefying arts. When we come down to the level of everyday life, we can see very clearly the total nihilism behind all the commonplace chatter about "personality" and "culture."

Most men do not really live, they merely exist: some to be used up as if they were mere machines in the service of some great undertaking, and some to be reduced to the status of money's slaves, deliriously busying themselves with the value of stocks and bonds; some, finally, attach themselves to the frenzied diversions offered by the big city. Many, likewise, are oppressed by the wretched and ever-increasing tedium of this existence. In no earlier time was unhappiness greater or more poisonous. Groups of men, large or small, whose members are bound each to the other in the furtherance of some special interest, struggle endlessly to destroy their enemies. Such enmity may arise from commercial, political, racial, or religious grounds. At times one may discover such crazed power-struggles even within a single association. Humans the world over always seem to project their own prejudices onto their environment. Thus, man foists his own obsession with status and power onto nature, wherein he swiftly discovers a wild struggle for existence; he convinces himself that he must have been in the right if he alone survived this struggle for existence; and he paints the world in the guise of a great machine, where the pistons only give off the steam that must turn the wheels, in order that "energy" — one does not see to what end — will be transferred, and he accompanies all of this with a bit of idle chatter about the so-called "philosophy of monism," which utterly falsifies the billion-fold life of nature in order to reduce the universe to the level of the human ego. Where one previously prized love, or renunciation, or a god-intoxicated withdrawal from the world, we find instead a newly hatched success-religion, which is announced, from atop the graves of former ages, to those of little faith, whose coming had been anticipated by Nietzsche, who, with white-hot scorn and a knowing wink, makes his "last man" proclaim: "We have invented happiness!"

Of course, the superficial errors in all of these systems, sects, and tendencies will not be with us for very much longer. Nature knows no "struggle for existence," but only a caring for life. Many insects die after the act of procreation, thus demonstrating the slight emphasis that nature places upon mere preservation. Nature only ensures that

similar forms will continue to unfold amid the surging waves of life. What prompts one animal to hunt another to the death is simply the need to appease the predator's hunger; greed, ambition, and the lust for power have no place here. In reality, there is a gaping abyss here that no evolutionary logic will ever bridge. Species were never exterminated by other species, since every excess on one side is followed almost immediately by a reciprocal reaction on the other; the ranks of the vanquished are thinned, and the booty of the slain foe becomes the sustenance of the stronger. Transformation, however, is consummated over gigantic periods of time, and invariably leads to a burgeoning of lower life-forms in the vicinity. The annihilation of hundreds of species during the course of mankind's earthly tenure permits no point of comparison with the wholesale extinction of the dinosaur and the mammoth.

Utterly mindless, moreover, is the transfer of the numerically quantifiable operations of the physical laws that govern the conservation of energy, to questions of life. No single living cell has ever been created in a chemical retort, and should science ever announce such an achievement, it will not have been as a result of some combination of physical forces, but because even the chemical matter with which such an experiment must begin is already imbued with the instinct for life. Life is an enduring, perpetual renewal of formative power; and we extinguish some measure of such power whenever we exterminate a living species, and the Earth will be impoverished till the end of time because of it, regardless of any detriment to the so-called law of conservation of energy.

As we have said, such erroneous teachings will fade and perish eventually, but the resulting, all-too-real eventualities that they have brought to pass will remain, making all those conceptual schemes seem more like mere shadows of thought than the genuine article. There is certainly no basis for the opinion that considers the ongoing destruction to be a mere side-effect of passing conditions, out of which will arise some sort of attempt at reconstruction. With that we arrive at the meaning of the preceding course of events to which man has given the name "world history."

The ancient Greeks had no skill with electrical wiring, power cables, and radios, and this fact sheds light on their habitual scorn for physical science, which they saw as a rather lowly business. But only they could construct temples, carve images on columns, and cut precious gems, of such beauty and delicacy, that we can only compete with them by making use of our most artificial tools! Without conducting experiments, and supported only by everyday perception, the Greek philosophers have influenced, and in large part governed, the course of Western thought for over two millennia. The didactic virtue of Socrates has been revived in the scrawnier "categorical imperative" of Kant; the Platonic "doctrine of the Ideas" has been revived in the aesthetics of Schopenhauer; and the philosophical framework of the atomistic theory of chemistry stems directly from Democritus. Faced with these facts, is it not more likely that the Greeks avoided physical science not because of their lack of capacity for such study, but because they chose not to have any dealings with it? Perhaps their mystics might enable us to recover many insights that have been lost to us? Let us take another

example: the Chinese of Antiquity would have seen all our modern discoveries as alien to their culture; the modern Chinese would feel the same way towards these discoveries, had we not compelled China to accept them by force. We are likewise impressed by the great Chinese philosophers, sages such as Lao Tse or Lei Zi, who speak to us in words of such wisdom that even Goethe seems a mere bungler by comparison. Thus, if the Chinese did not possess a science with whose assistance they might have been able to build cannons, blow up mountains, and grace their tables with margarine, it is because they had no desire for these things. Behind the scenes, certain forces are controlling mankind, and it is only by examining these forces that we can understand a crucial fact: before the progressive research of modern times could be undertaken, the intellectuals had to be conditioned to adopt a philosophical theory upon which would be founded a required practice: we call that practice capitalism.

No intelligent person can have the slightest doubt that the dazzling achievements of physics and chemistry have been pressed into the exclusive service of "capital." The identifying characteristic of modern science is its substitution of numerical quantities for unique qualities, thus merely recapitulating, in the cognitive form, the fundamental law that the will must control everything, even that which resides in the brightly-colored domain of the soul and its values: the values of blood, beauty, dignity, ardor, grace, warmth, and the maternal sense; these must yield to the insidious values of the power which judges the worth of a man by the weight of his gold. A new word for this viewpoint has even been coined: "Mammonism." Nevertheless, how few are conscious of the fact that this "Mammon" is a genuine, substantial entity, which seizes hold of man, and wields him as if he were a mere tool that might help Mammon eradicate the life of the Earth. Let us provide here a brief word of explanation.

We have already indicated that "progress," "civilization," and "capitalism" constitute different manifestations of the same direction of the will. We must likewise admit that the disciples of this will-centered worldview are drawn exclusively from the Christian world. Only within that world were the inventions accumulated; only within that world was that quantifying, "exact" scientific methodology brought to perfection; and, finally, only within that world, that Christian world which is perpetually engaged in the most ruthless imperialism imaginable, could one find those men who have sought to conquer all of the non-Christian races, just as they have sought to conquer the whole of nature. Consequently, we are compelled to locate the proximate causes of world-historical "progress" in Christianity itself. On the surface, of course, Christianity seems always to be preaching sermons in praise of "love," but when we take a closer look at this "love," we discover that in reality this persuasive word functions as a gilded surface which masks the underlying reality of a categorical command: "you must"; and this unconditional command applies solely to man, who has now come to consider himself as divine, as a god standing in opposition to the whole of nature. Christianity may mouth such phrases as "the welfare of mankind," or "humanity," but what the voice inside these formulas is really saying is that no other living being has the slightest intrinsic value or purpose, except in so far as it can be forced to serve the purposes of

man. From time immemorial, the “love” of the Christian has never prevented him from persecuting religious pagans with a murderous hatred; and this same “love” does not prevent him even now from abolishing the sacred rituals of conquered tribal cultures. It is a well-known fact that Buddhism proscribes the killing of animals, because the Buddhist recognizes the obvious fact that each and every earthly creature shares a common nature with man himself. But when one objects to the Italian’s murdering of an animal, he will immediately respond by assuring you that the creature “has no soul,” and “is not a Christian.” This indicates clearly that, for the devout Christian, only man has a right to live. To the people of the ancient world, religion, which at one time also proceeded according to this pattern that even now springs up in hovels of the people, restrains its standard bearer, and yet it excites him on the other hand, and permits the power of one who threatens the peace of the world to prosper until it has become the terrifying megalomania that considers the bloodiest offenses against life to be permitted, and even commanded, provided such deeds result in “benefits” to humanity. Capitalism, along with its pathfinder, science, is in point of fact the fulfillment of Christianity; the church, like science, constitutes a consortium of special interests; and the “one” that is addressed by a secularized morality is indistinguishable from the life-hostile “ego,” which, in the name of the unique godhead of the spirit — only now coupled with a blind cosmology — accounts for the war that has been waged against the innumerable, “many” gods of the world; earlier ages were at least more honest in their opposition to the cosmic deities, for they frankly approached the fray in the menacing aspect of judges.

Icy northern winds have gone
To devastate the blooms of May;
To make us worship only ONE,
A world of gods must fade away!

— Friedrich Schiller, “The Gods of Greece”

By now it should be perfectly clear, however, that he who seeks to enrich himself — whilst he stomps Earth’s blossoms into dust — is man as the bearer of calculating reason and the will-to-acquisition. The gods whom he has torn from the tree of life are the perpetually changing images of the phenomenal world, from which he has exiled himself. The hostility to images, which was inwardly nurtured by the self-lacerating Middle Ages, had to emerge into the light of day, as soon as it had achieved its goal, which was to sever the bond connecting man to the soul of the Earth. In man’s bloody atrocities against his fellow creatures, he could only complete that which he himself had already begun: to exchange the multiform patterns of living images for the homeless transcendence of the world-alienated spirit. He has shown enmity to the planet that bore and nursed him, and even to the revolutions of the starry heavens, because he is now possessed by a power that resembles a vampire, which introduces into the “music of the spheres” sounds of an ear-shattering dissonance. At this point it is clear, however, that in the course of this very ancient evolutionary process, Christianity

signifies but one epoch; from distant beginnings, this process has now reached its final stage. Certainly, the unique physiognomy of Europe was decisively shaped by this process.

In fact, the force that provokes man's enmity against the world is precisely as old as "world history"! The "history" that is surnamed the evolutionary process — which in the course of events marches beyond, and ever onwards, and cannot be compared to the destiny of other organisms — begins at the very moment of man's expulsion from "paradise," when he finds himself on the outside, seeing now with the cold, clear gaze of the stranger, and knowing that he has lost his previous accord with plants and animals, with oceans and clouds, with rocks, winds, and stars. In the myths of almost every people we encounter bloody battles in pre-historic ages between solar heroes who are bent upon installing a new order and the "chthonic" powers of fate, who are finally banished into a lightless underworld. Nevertheless, a Jesuit scholar, in an astonishing, but instructive, reversal of circumstances, has discovered in the legend of the acts of the Greek Heracles a prophetic "plagiarism" of the life of the Christian redeemer! That above-mentioned reorganization, with which history begins, is always and everywhere the same: over the soul rises the spirit, over the dream reigns a wide-awake rationality, over life, which becomes and passes, there stands purposeful activity. During the millennial development of spirit, Christianity was only the final, crucial thrust. Therefore spirit, which emerged from a condition of powerless knowledge — Prometheus is in chains, while Heracles is free! — now penetrates the will, and in murderous deeds, which have constituted, without interruption, the history of nations ever since, has revealed a truth that had heretofore seemed to be merely a notion: that a power from outside our cosmos had broken into the sphere of life.

For that reason, our dearest desire is simply for everyone to open his eyes. Further, we should desist from all attempts to blend together things that are sundered by the profound abyss that separates the powers of love and the soul on one side, from the powers of reason and will on the other. We must perceive that the very essence of the will is manifest in its compulsion to tear the "veil of maya" to tatters; for when man has been reduced to the status of a mere creature of will, he must, in a blind rage, set his hand against his own mother, the Earth. In the end, all of life, along with man himself, will be swallowed up by nothingness.

No teaching can return us to that which has once been lost. Regarding all such attempts, we feel that man simply does not have the ability to bring about a transformation of his inner life on his own. We stated earlier that the ancients never presumed to unravel nature's secrets by means of experiments, and never thought to conquer her through the use of machines, which they dismissed as clever contraptions that were suitable only for slaves; we now insist, moreover, that they abhorred such attempts as ungodliness. Forest and spring, boulder and grotto were for them filled with sacred life; from the summits of their lofty mountains blew the stormwinds of the gods (it was not from lack of a "feeling for nature" that one did not climb their peaks!), and tempest and hailstones threatened or clashed furiously in the play of battle. When the Greeks

desired to construct a bridge across a stream, they begged the river deity to pardon this deed of man for which they atoned by offering up to him a sacrificial libation of wine. In ancient German lands, an offense against a living tree was expiated by the shedding of the offender's blood. Today's mankind sees only childish superstition in those who attend to the planetary currents. He forgets that the interpreting of apparitions was a way of scattering blooms around the tree of an inner life, which shelters a deeper knowledge than all of science: the knowledge of the world-weaving power of all-embracing love. Only when this love has been renewed in mankind will the wounds inflicted by the matricidal spirit be healed.

It was a mere hundred years ago that something truly new welled up within the hearts of men, as if from out of the depths of mysterious springs: we are alluding to those unforgettable dreamers, those child-like sages and poets, whom we conventionally call the "Romantics." Their expectations were illusory and their storm has subsided; their wisdom has been buried, the flood has receded, and the "desert grows." Nevertheless, we are prepared, like the Romantics, to believe in miracles, and we are quite willing to deem it possible that a coming generation may indeed see the birth of a new world. Perhaps the visionary words of Eichendorff in "Foreboding and the Present" best describe the labor pains that must precede the birth of that world:

Our age seems to me to resemble an ever-expanding, uncertain twilight. Light and shadow battle still, powerful forces that appear to be inseparable; storm-clouds brew dark destinies, and no one can tell whether their portents indicate death or benediction; and the wider world below remains abandoned to its hollow expectations. Comets and celestial messages haunt the heavens once more, phantom spirits wander through the night, and mythical sirens plummet into the sea as if they fled in dread of some approaching tempest that has already obscured the mirror-surface of the waters; they sing, gesticulating with bloody fingers, warning us of some terrible, impending doom. No carefree childhood game or frolic can delight our young people as much as those sessions of long ago, during which our forefathers prepared us for the serious side of life. We are born in battle, and, regardless of whether we are victor or vanquished, we will perish in battle. For, from out of the magical mists of our schooldays, there takes shape the Ghost of War, clad in armor, with the pallid face of death, and with blood-spattered hair; his eyes are well-accustomed to solitude, and they already perceive, through the webs of smoke that swirl all around, the almost imperceptible outlines of the coming struggle. Woe to those who, when the hour of battle strikes, find themselves unarmed and utterly unprepared for combat! How many weak men, who fritter away their idle hours in the pursuit of pleasure and in frivolous reflections, who manage to deceive themselves as readily as they deceive the world, will recall the words of Prince Hamlet: 'The time is out of joint; O cursed spite/That ever I was born to set it right!' Then, out of the collapse of the world, will emerge once more an unprecedented contest between the old and the new, and the passions of today that slink about in disguise, will find that their masks are now disparaged. A burning frenzy will burst with flaming torch held high into the pandemonium, as if the inferno itself had been loosed upon the

world. Justice and injustice will seem to have merged their natures in a blind access of rage. But miracles will at last take place, and the just will receive their just rewards; and a new, yet somehow very ancient, sun will radiate its light through the scenes of horror. The thunder will still roll, but only upon the peaks of distant mountains; and then the white dove will soar aloft in the clear blue skies; and the Earth itself will shine with a brighter light from the heavens above.

On Ethics (1918)

What does our moralist really want? Obviously, he wants to “improve” man ethically, and to keep on improving him, until, finally, perfection graces the Earth. Of course, there can be no doubt as to the moralist’s good intentions and no one would wish to cast aspersions on the “purity” of his heart. But it is also obvious from the outset that he has not the slightest inclination to open up for critical discussion such issues as how he intends to accomplish his purpose and how he has achieved such certainty as to the correctness of that purpose. Nor does he seem at all eager to disclose just who or what has charged him with his mission to change everything that lives and breathes. We might also wish to enquire of him whether or not his program of “improvement” has the slightest prospect of success!

Ethical codes are always presented to us by their apologists as if they were solid structures standing firmly upon the bedrock of facts. Nevertheless, the moralist, who regards man and the world as interchangeable terms, is not permitted to draw any conclusions from an examination of the behavior of “man” as he conducts himself in the visions of poets and dreamers. The moralist must instead focus his attention solely upon the mankind whose exploits constitute the chronicle known as “world history.” On this matter, we can quite easily demonstrate something that everyone should surely comprehend even without our assistance: that the mankind of blood, murder, betrayal, violence, and greed, is without even a superficial resemblance to the product of wishful thinking that inhabits the brain of the moralist. It is the intention of the moralist that everyone around him should “improve” himself. He transports his “idea of the good” into the future, which he always finds to be a more congenial place than the sorry present: previously, mankind was malicious and vile, and even now, admittedly, he possesses these vicious traits in abundance. But hearken! Man will now improve himself more and more until, perhaps, some fine day in the distant future, he will draw nigh to the realization of the “idea of the good,” albeit there is only a slim chance that he will, in point of fact, attain to the highest pitch of perfection. The moralist is alone in his conviction that the fulfillment of his expectations really lies within the realm of possibility. But how will he go about changing the crimes and the misdeeds that have already occurred? How could history’s countless millions of villains — known and unknown — the backbiters, the poisoners of hearts, the jealous, the dishonorable, the slanderers, the schemers, and the parasites (both physical and spiritual), be improved

so long after we have buried their corpses? Or does our moralist restrict membership in his “mankind” to those now living? Or is he talking about those particularly fortunate men who have been cunning enough to postpone the hour of their birth to a later century when, at long last, these illustrious ethical ideals shall have been brought to fruition? Will a single atrocity that transpired in an earlier time be negated, or minimized, merely because some future generation — I know not which — will finally rejoice in having attained to complete moral perfection? How little truth there is in the moralist’s schemes will, perhaps, be made somewhat clearer if we ponder, for a moment, the fortunes of those doomed souls who were forced to suffer under the vile French Revolutionary government, with its treason, deceit, lawlessness, theft, betrayal, and every conceivable form of torture!

Let us consider the bitter anger of nobles who, with gnashing of teeth, humiliated themselves by groveling before their vicious revolutionary captors, lest a proud demeanor offend their jailers and lead to their heads being hacked off; the pain and anguish of the myriad victims who fell to the bloodsucking guillotine; and the helpless endurance of shame and betrayal by the guiltless. Are they, somehow, to have their sufferings cancelled or ameliorated retroactively, as it were, because, after the lapse of some unspecified number of millennia, a spotless generation shall have inherited the Earth? Just as it is certain that an event that has transpired can never be transformed into a “non-event,” it is equally certain that no rational person can conceive of “improving” those who have already been buried in an “unimproved” state! I might draw your attention here to the affinity that exists between these ridiculous schemes for moral improvement and two of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity. The first is the curious notion that mere “faith” in the mission of the Christian redeemer “makes blessed.” However one interprets this doctrine, such blessedness can only benefit a limited segment of mankind, for it pertains only to those individuals who were born after a certain point in history. As a matter of fact, there were not a few simpletons during the late Middle Ages who were absolutely certain that Plato and Aristotle, even if they had managed to avoid hellfire, were at least suffering the torments of purgatory! The second Christian doctrine holds that the first priority on “Doomsday” will be answering the divine accountant’s questions regarding profit and loss; there is no need for us to make any further comment on that piece of information!

In aiming at this pretended improvement of mankind, nothing — and whoever denies this is something of a deceiver — nothing takes precedence before natural good faith, in other words, a faith that is guileless, unconscious, and, hence, instinctual. Deceit plants itself within the heart; the head, as always, will manage to concoct reasons with which to reinforce a predetermined faith.

The mere practitioner of ethics would not, of course, force the issue; if mankind has hitherto shown no interest in being saved, the practical moralist would merely comment that his true concern is with the living and the yet unborn. On bended knee, he will pronounce his fervent wish that such and such evil deeds shall never again come to pass. The theoretician of ethics, however — the one who is, so to speak, “in

the know” — need make no concessions. Thus, because he has nothing to say about the “eternal law” and the “absolute good” (although he himself certainly aspires to their realization), he will explain that the whole project of “improvement” is nothing more than a hygienic measure, as if one were to drain a swamp that is swarming with infectious mosquitoes or send the shoe that is pinching one’s foot to the shoemaker for repairs. In order to achieve his goals, he employs no “moral claim,” no “categorical imperative”; instead, he mouths those more or less emphatic phrases with which one provides oneself in order to emphasize one’s devotion to duty. Let us now revert to the true moralist.

We have seen that the very idea of “improving” mankind is a pious self-deception, because, regardless of how much improvement occurs in mankind, in the long run, every human being must, alas, die and decompose. Now we ask ourselves if it is only the improvement of future generations that is to enter into the moralist’s reckoning. But are not we ourselves — the living and the present — the bodily, psychical, and spiritual descendants of the same mankind that oozed bloody murder and vileness long before we came upon the scene? Does not their blood course through our veins and arteries? We think of ourselves as being racially pure members of an advanced, “guileless” stock; but is it not the case that the future will infallibly bring about an ever-increasing process of racial bastardization? And does not such racial pollution infect only the innocent, and never those — we have no need to speak the name of the tribe aloud — who are the unrecognized criminals of the heart? Do we not find, throughout history, that the party of the degenerate always triumphs over the party of the noble? Is it really necessary that we trot out every scrap of irrefutable evidence that proves our point? Constantine the so-called “Great,” Charles the so-called “Great” (Charlemagne), Gregory, Torquemada, Cortés, Cromwell, Robespierre, and so many others: is it not true that the only essential distinctions to be drawn between such characters concern the measure of horror and destructiveness with which each one conducts his orgies of mass murder? Yet it is these same so-called “great men” — whose actions have set mankind upon the road that he now travels, and whose careers have determined the destiny of succeeding generations — whom we insist upon calling the “great”! It is less the noble souls than the criminal spirits, in other words, those who have created, and still create today, the history of the world, who comprise our ancestral heritage. With a very great semblance of truth, one might say that we are engaged in the incessant debasement of mankind.

Meanwhile, the ethical teacher retorts, if at any time the ethical idea were to achieve complete success, or only partial success, or even no success whatsoever, that would have no bearing on the issue, for the “Ideal” would endure and would advance its inviolate demands, and only the demands of this “Ideal” deserve man’s attention. The success or failure of his actions is not decisive for the moralist, and should his efforts run aground a hundred times in a row, the “good” would still remain, no less than before, the guiding principle of his striving. However, we might wish to examine these ideals of his a bit more closely at this juncture.

In earlier publications I adduced many reasons that lead us to the conclusion that we must examine the relationship between two ultimate and irreducible principles in order to account for the history of man; and I have further indicated that these two powers stand in opposition to each other, and that the degree to which one of these powers gains ascendancy entails the reciprocal weakening of the other. Regardless of the verbal form in which this insight makes its appearance, the truth behind the insight can and must be demonstrated. On the other hand, there is certainly no conclusive explanation as to why each individual must affiliate himself with one party or the other; perhaps it is merely a personal disposition which determines which of the parties to the dispute one holds to be a constructive force and which is seen as a destructive one. Let us elaborate: I call the one $+x$, so I must call the other $-y$; on the other hand, when I speak of $-x$, there must also be a correlative $+y$. The customary names for that which appears to me to be the constructive power and, thus, the $+x$, are nature, sensuality, and heart. More precise and correct terms would be life, cosmos, and soul. My $-y$, consequently, would be will, deed, Logos, mind, "idea," "God," "supreme being," the pure subject, the absolute ego, and spirit. At present, one side of the ledger is recognized by our ethical teachers, an admission that is attended by a qualification, for they feel that the concession of which we speak in no way entails agreement with any imputation of "dualism" to the constitution of man. They deny as well that the "idea of the good" stems from nature. Above all, however, they deny with all of the force that is in them our view that between the two opposed forces, spirit and soul, there exists a relationship of opposition or hostility. On the contrary, they assure us that nature is an "exposition" or "revelation" of the "idea of the good." Before we prove conclusively that they have already landed themselves in insuperable logical contradictions, we might examine the provenance of their opinions with some profit.

The "idea of the good" is characterized from the outset by the making of demands or, in other words, by the giving of commands. More than that, it is, so to speak, the "command in itself," the absolute command, the old categorical imperative! Thus, whoever maintains this point of view reveals that it is precisely in introducing this "categorical imperative" into the spatio-temporal world that he concedes that the world itself was brought into being by a command. But that claim differs not in the least from the Mosaic creation-myth; it is identical to the procedure employed by Yahweh, the God of the Jews. And let us avail ourselves of this opportunity to put our finger on the reason why this Mosaic idea, which has no parallel among other cultures, is without a doubt the most preposterous sort of impudence: such arrogant impostures could never have arisen among healthy natures. They have survived among us only because the inhabitants of Christendom have had these lunatic fables drummed into their heads since childhood; as a result, they can never escape from idiocies in comparison with which all of our extant ghost stories and fairy tales have the appearance of truth. One laughs at those who believe in ghosts, one mocks at the fetishes and idols of "primitive" tribes, one considers it to be an astounding phantom of the brain when the Orphic theologians of ancient Greece sought the origin of the world in the primeval ovum; one

does not even notice that no cosmogony ever devised by the mind of man possesses a fraction of the absurdity inherent in the Mosaic world-creation on demand! For no command can ever have the power to create one single object, not even the rain-drop that beats upon my window-pane.

When the sergeant shouts the order “Halt!” or “March!”, is the energy that sets the soldier in motion released as soon as the command is issued, or does it require the living force embodied in the soldier who hears it? What holds true in this case holds true in every other. Surely the command cannot produce results by itself, for it always requires the innate responsive force of the person who has heard it. In other words, the command requires the whole spatio-temporal world, particularly its vital energy and, ultimately, a conscious mind within that world, to recognize the existence of the command: without such responsive recognition, it is nothing.

The Mosaic creation myth, on the other hand, maintains that a mere command brought forth the entire universe out of nothingness. And the identical procedure holds for the ethical teacher when he explains the spatio-temporal actuality as a phenomenal reproduction of his “idea of the good,” of the categorical imperative, of the absolute demand. Whereas, however, he somehow suppresses as an unholy fiction the opposition between the two powers of spirit and soul, a view that he can never endorse, he is forced back upon his own theory. Therefore, as we now wish to demonstrate, that which he preaches is, in fact, nothing but mortal hostility to life! We now understand that he is compelled to weave his phantoms in order to conceal this hostility from himself, for very few men of the modern age have the courage to admit that the battle between the two hostile powers even exists. Here, we must go all the way back to the so-called “Dark Ages,” even back to the apologists and “Fathers of the Church,” to encounter those — such as the agitator Augustine — whose basic viewpoint was that God’s crucial commandment requires that we flee the “world of the senses.” With those ancient ethical teachers one can come to an understanding of sorts. Each party can admit to the other that they represent two irreconcilably hostile powers, and thus they are in basic agreement on at least one crucial point. The opposition is crystal clear: they believe in the unyielding strife between Heaven and Hell. Each party, of course, sees Heaven in what the other regards to be Hell. On the other hand, no reconciliation is possible with the ethical teacher of today, who wages war against life, and who has no inclination to parley with the enemy. Like the Church Father, he stands on the side of the enemies of life, but, unlike them, he is ignorant, he hides behind a mask, he is a liar: and he is devoid of self-understanding. But let us now proceed to the conclusive proof of his self-contradiction!

What is the very essence of a command or an order? One must answer: a precept. But what exactly is a precept? To this we respond: always and everywhere it is a prohibition! The commands say, of course, “You must.” In general, there is clearly no incentive in ordering someone to do that which he is quite prepared to do on his own. As we all know, however, he does not do whatever it is that we would command him to do “on his own,” and so he must be prompted by a command. Without a doubt, his

actions would be quite different in the absence of the command; a different command would likewise bring about a different outcome. Thus we must ask: wherein lies the essential nature of the moral command? And we must respond: in the suppression of a vital process or condition. I have scarcely opened the pages of the Roman Catholic catechism when I discover that, out of the “Ten Commandments,” seven employ the formula “Thou shalt not,” whilst the remaining three take the “Thou shalt” form. But it requires no great critical astuteness to perceive that even these three have merely cloaked their negative substance in a positive verbal disguise. The essence of every commandment — and every categorical imperative — is to forbid something; that which is forbidden is, in every case, a natural or vital process. Therefore: the categorical imperative is the categorical annihilation of vitality.

We advance to the ultimate proof of our contention. Every moral “you must” is directed against that which the moralist considers to be a “sin,” thus the moralist always brandishes before the mind of man the concept of “sinfulness,” or “wickedness.” Without this concept of “sin,” nothing would make the slightest sense to the moralist! The concept of sin covers, in fact, every “categorical imperative,” every ethical demand, and every conceivable virtue (one can already see this happening in St. Paul). In the case of the animals, it is obvious that, since one cannot attribute the capacity for sin to them, they can commit no crime and will never be able to comprehend the claims of ethics. Life, therefore, knows nothing of sin; therefore, life is without sin and, hence, without guilt. We now ask, what is the peculiar significance of the Mosaic invention of sin? We hold the solution to that puzzle as soon as we realize that, according to the laws of the church, there is, in word and deed, only one “mortal sin,” namely, the sin against the “Holy Spirit.” The predicate “Holy” teaches us that the highest value, the summum bonum, the “supreme being,” the ens realissimum of the ethical conscience is the spirit. Thus, there is only one genuine sin, the sin against the spirit! Now, as we have said, the spirit stands in opposition to life; therefore, what is considered to be sinful is life itself! From this quandary, no escape is possible. In order to understand an ethical “you must,” I must first erect the concept of “sin,” and in order to erect that concept, I must make spirit the measure of life, in such a manner, that life itself is directly connected with sin. And now we have arrived at the discovery of that truth which the teacher of ethics is hiding with his faith in the world-creating power of the commandment: the discovery that he himself stands in the service of a power that aims at the destruction of life; the ethical teacher is trapped, as it were, behind his spiritual barbed-wire, which mutilates life and sucks its blood; his mission is to poison his flock with the insane conviction of “sinfulness,” and in order to achieve this end he must stuff the heads of his sheep with threatening fairy tales in order to contaminate and confuse their instincts. The teacher of ethics is nothing but the bloodless successor of inventive priests, and he will remain the advocate of negation forever and beyond. The priestly initiators may have been no more than a pack of ingenious con-men, but their followers are actually con-men who have managed to con themselves, con-men in all innocence, con-men with a good, even with the best — conscience.

A word has just escaped me that the ethical teacher always relies upon to bolster his case against me. He denies the "heteronomy" of the moral will of course, but he retains, on the other hand, the "autonomy" of his categorical "you must." He draws our attention back to the renowned "conscience," for he wishes somehow to make us believe that this conscience of his is part of man's constitutional endowment, and that it is an inalienable datum of man's inner life. Here, he is apparently saying: you would even disavow the "voice of conscience"; more, you would make yourself the advocate of every type of irresponsibility; you may even want to encourage every sort of wickedness and criminality!

On the contrary, we must ask him: if conscience is, in fact, a reality of life, why then is it not found anywhere else in the whole animal kingdom? If we wish to ignore the animals, is not primitive man in deep accord with the confirmed criminal in that neither has the slightest comprehension of the experience of conscience? How are we to doubt this fact? Shakespeare, who knew more about man than all of history's moralists put together, has his Richard III gloatingly aver that he has willed himself into becoming a villain! Shakespeare understood that the truly great villain never regrets the calamities that he has brought about; he only feels regret when he has failed to achieve his foul purpose. And where indeed can we find the conscience in such luminaries as Julius Caesar, Nero, Tiberius, Cromwell, Napoleon, and so on? As Goethe has said, "The businessman never has a conscience; at least, no one has ever encountered it." Accordingly, we revert to the erroneous view that conscience is an original fact of experience, and now permit ourselves to report our findings: the commander requires an obedient listener, otherwise his command amounts to nothing; the categorical imperative thus requires the existence of people who believe that such an imperative is sacred, or, more simply put, who believe that "Lord" Yahweh needs his slaves or else it is all over for his "Lordship." The ethical conscience certainly exists, for without it there could be no ethical teachers. But there also exists a power that is hostile to life, and this power loudly proclaims its presence in "conscience." So little substance, however, inheres in this conscience that is "common to all men," that we can dismiss those who are most deeply scarred by its stigma as "slave-men," which is precisely what Nietzsche calls them. How this "slave-man" arises will be, for those who have followed our exposition thus far, a simple question to answer: the "slave-man" has arisen, and he will arise, always and everywhere, as a result of racial bastardization and poisoning of the blood; and the slave-man has, as his necessary complement, the criminal. Thus, the student of life views the phenomenon of moralism as the spiritual expression of bad blood.

Since, however, it is a demonstrable error to consider the faith in duty as deriving from the sphere of life, we must at least point out that the instigators of moralism are lying when they attempt to persuade us that the amoral man, and the immoral one, represent the opposite of conscience, or even its absence. In fact, this false claim leads directly to the third allegation: that there is no conceivable system of values other than the ethical one, nor can there be. That, however, is irrelevant in view of man's

status as bearer of spirit; in other words, one for whom the logical norm is by no means the ethical norm. As long as I only search for truth, discover truth, prove truth, I am ethically indifferent. But there exists, in opposition to the spirit's mode of evaluation, a value system which regards man from the standpoint of life. Just as the philosopher of spirit considers everything that denies spirit to be a "sin," the philosopher of life regards that which denies life to be an offense. The concept of sin sprouts from the same soil that nourishes ethics, but the concept of the offense has very different roots indeed. On this point, language dispels all doubt. Just as the moralist is completely bound by his dread of the sin against the spirit, so are we bound by our opposition to the offense against life. No one speaks of a sin against a tree, but men have certainly spoken in the past — and even today many still speak — of an offense against a tree. The tree neither is a spirit, nor does it house the spirit, and thus no one can commit a sin against it; nevertheless, the tree certainly lives, and therefore one can commit an offense against it. And just as the "sinner" must endure the destructive will of spirit when he experiences his ordained "punishment" in the midst of men, so is the offender against life punished according to the world-principle of retribution when he is confronted by the "vengeance of the Erinyes." The principle that embodies the offense against life is the categorical imperative. Therefore: the ethical teacher is unconsciously a systematic offender against life.

And so, therefore, we place opposite the forced denial of life an affirmative attitude. Accompanying the rejection of the offense must be a positive, caring attitude towards life. It is with some unease that I refer to this as education, because, as we have already seen, that word has already been pressed into the service of a moralistic sort of guidance for the soul. We will, however, employ the word education, provided the facts of the case are made clear.

No guide of the soul will ever be persuaded that he can change or improve anything at all. From the pine cone comes the pine tree, from the beechnut comes the beechtree, from the acorn comes the oak tree, and the guardian of the seed is neither its procreator nor the sculptor of its form. A plant does, nonetheless, require light and moisture, and the fortunes of the plant will depend to a large extent upon my caring for its needs. Thus, vital guidance for the soul lies not in the direction of the command and the promotion of the sterilizing faith in such threatening expressions as "you must." Vital guidance serves to provide the soul with sustenance. Had the expression "care of the soul" not been tainted by a parsonic aftertaste, there would be no better phrase to apply to the work of the esoteric soul-guide.

Where now do we find the mediators of the soul? We find them in wonder, love, and the example of heroes. The soul finds wonder in the landscape, in poetry, and in beauty. Thus, you look upon a landscape, a poem, or a thing of beauty, to see whether or not you can discover the beauty that flourishes therein. Love — in the broadest meaning of the word — entails reverence, admiration, and adoration: indeed, every type of heart-felt recognition that is warm and true, which can be evoked only by the beloved. The eternal icon that illustrates the soul's guide is embodied in the mother

with the beloved child. The soul receives every shining ray of maternal love. The soul's examples are gods, poets, and heroes. The soul participates in the advent of the heroes when it delights in their shining shapes. And if you do not find that wonder, love, and example are flourishing within you, then it is your own inner life that is impoverished and no guide of the soul has the power to enrich you. For this is the secret of the soul: that it only grows richer by giving of itself. It is not the love that one receives that enriches the soul, but the love that is kindled within one through the receiving of that love. Thus, if you find that you are unable to arouse within your soul the secret wonders and the secret heroes, then the dazzling spectacle of the world would remain a mere theater production. Since your soul cannot respond, its guide will abandon you, and then you can sit yourself down and listen, unharmed, to — a lecture on ethics.

On Truth and Actuality (1931)

From time immemorial, the vexed question regarding a general criterion of truth has remained unanswerable, since any proposed solution would presuppose the validity of that which is in question. However, it is also unnecessary that we establish such a criterion, since there are numerous propositions, both factual and philosophical, that possess such inherently compelling force that we habitually refer to them as “immediately self-evident.” Still, it is crucial that we understand that the expressions “true” and “false” pertain only to our judgments. In a world wherein there existed no thinking consciousness, such predicates would be utterly devoid of meaning.

Even if all of the discrete sciences should decide to coordinate their efforts so as to achieve one universal science that would be based upon correct and incontrovertible judgments, there would still be two opposed camps within that one scientific discipline when it came to the question regarding the actuality content of scientific judgments. The first group would explain as mere objects of thought that which the other camp would hold to be actuality itself; one group would see mere appearance in that which the other considered to be genuine substance. The one camp (which today constitutes the majority party) again falls into two sub-divisions, known as “idealists” and “materialists.” The school of idealists, whose founding father is Plato, insists that the ultimate realities are concepts (“ideas,” “representations”). The school of materialists, whose founding father is Democritus, holds that concepts are merely propositions that have been designed so as to correspond with objects. Above all, however, objects are objects of thought, which we comprehend with the aid of concepts: thus, both parties endorse the faith in the creative, or the formative, power of the (human) spirit, the idealist consciously, the materialist (for the most part) unconsciously. Therefore, we call the camp of the majority, comprising both the “idealist” and the “realist,” the logocentric school.

The minority party, the party of opposition, we call the biocentric school. Its representatives look upon the matters in question as follows: all the proper objects of

thought, both those mediated by thought and those immediately given, arise out of the sphere of actuality, but they do not contain actuality; for actuality can only be experienced, never conceived. Likewise, an understanding of the actual is certainly possible, but this understanding can never be exhaustively explained or conceptualized. The science of actuality is the science of appearances; the science of appearances strives to achieve a profound comprehension of the content of experience. Its aim is the discovery of that which Goethe referred to as “primal phenomena,” in which the meaning of the world reveals itself.

Suppose that two individuals were successively to count the same one hundred dollars, and suppose also that one of the two had been born blind. Now these individuals’ perceived images of the dollar bills would easily be distinguished from each other. However, that also holds true, if to a lesser degree, of the perceived images experienced by every living being; indeed, this also holds true of the perceived images in one and the same bearer of perception in different moments of his life. It follows that experiences can never be identically repeated.

In our judgments, we do not perceive reds or blues or colors as generalities; nor do we perceive sounds, tastes, and tactile sensations as generalities; nor do we perceive feelings of thirst or hunger, feelings of hope, yearning and expectation as generalities. What our judgments of the world do achieve, in fact, is this and this alone: we distinguish the multiform qualities, outer as well as inner, from each other. The qualities are thereby presupposed in the experiences. Our conceptions are derived from the qualities, since the conceptions are abstracted from the vital experience that is received. Whoever regards the objects of thought as actuality, confuses the boundaries that divide the objects with that which has established those boundaries. Conceptual thought must yield place to referential thought. The science of appearances, or the science of actuality, is the science not of conscious thought, but of referential thought.

In the major work of the author of these lines, *Spirit as Adversary of the Soul*, we present the proof of our contention that the objects of thought, both in the “idealist” and the “materialist” incarnations, cannot render the appearances according to their true nature. In every idealist philosopher we have a demonstration that the idealist’s own principles render him incapable of distinguishing the world of perceptions from the world of representations. As a result, the idealist must perforce disavow the world of actuality; as a result, that world will always be found to play a miniscule role in the idealist’s system. In fact, the idealist treats the world of perception as if it were a product of spiritual activity, whereas this activity could not raise itself up as the antithetical counterpart to the world of perception unless it had based itself upon a pre-existent substratum of vital events.

However, our experiences have no connection with the concept of being, nor have they any true relationship to the kindred concept of existence. For our experiences transform themselves without interruption; to employ the phrase of Heraclitus, they transpire in an “eternal flux.” Actuality can neither be conceptualized nor quantified;

only that being in which spirit subdues actuality can be thus rigidly fixed in concept and quantity.

As soon as one is convinced that the substance of experienced life is outside the reach of spirit, one is compelled to endorse the conviction that conceptualizing spirit, which is solely found in man, is a force that, in itself and for itself, does not belong to the cosmos. One can indeed marvel at the deeds that spirit, employing our activity, has consummated in this world; but one can nevermore fall into the error of attributing creativity to spirit. Spirit broadens the scope of man's will to power until we come to realize that spirit has at last unmasked itself as the will to annihilate nature. It is, thus, "utilitarian," and this is the reason why the "truths" of the party of spirit have seduced a greater number of disciples than can ever be found in the party of life. "Knowledge," in the biocentric sense, is seen as an end in itself. Such knowledge is only sought by the chosen few, who regard every glimpse into the nature of actuality as more rewarding than the fruits of utilitarianism and the will to power.

On the Problem of Socrates (1918)

This cursory overview of our understanding of Socrates should be sufficient to prove that the alleged "problem" of Socrates was solved a long time ago. We confess that our standpoint is in marked opposition to prevailing beliefs; thus, our major emphasis will be placed on the pedantry and the sheer lack of creativity of Socrates. We will review the record thematically, and we will draw upon the opinions of clear heads of earlier times, so that with their assistance we will be able to present an unambiguous portrait of the character and the teaching of this most peculiar thinker.

There have been attempts to link the character of Socrates with a decisive turning point in the spiritual history of the Greeks; in large part, these attempts have misfired. Certainly, the unique importance of Socrates, that which has made him the most popular figure in the entire history of philosophy, lies, in any case, not so much in his doctrine as in his personality and his fate. He was not the founder of a religion, although he does invite comparison with certain earlier founders, as for example Pythagoras, in that Socrates, instead of crafting a written doctrine, attempted instead to bring about a change in the lives of his auditors through a spoken teaching that was religiously conditioned and morally tendentious. In a profound sense, he is the Greek world's unacknowledged forerunner of the Christian consciousness. Nietzsche goes so far as to attack Socrates as the instigator of the "revolt of the slaves in morality." With him there appears for the first time the unbounded self-mastery of a racially alien and, so to speak, international rationalism. He even referred to himself as a "citizen of the world." We are instructed in the Socratic teaching in part through Xenophon; in part through Plato, who situated an idealized representation of Socrates in his dialogues; and, finally, through the mockery of Aristophanes. Xenophon, who was, after all, an historian, may provide us with the most faithful account of the deeds and drives of

Socrates; Plato, who placed his own doctrine in the mouth of his master, reveals to us, more critically than Socrates himself would have been able to do, the yet unknown aim of the Socratic direction of the spirit. In order to comprehend the specific meaning of the character of Socrates, we must focus our hindsight more closely on the life of this thinker than is the case with most other philosophers.

Socrates was born in Athens in 469 BC; he was the son of the sculptor Sophroniskos and the mid-wife Phainarete. He devoted his early years to sculpture, but he soon relinquished all vocational activity in order to develop a startling and unprecedented type of teaching career. He married a woman named Xanthippe who bore his children but who, as the result of his indifference to her, has unjustly received from the hands of posterity her reputation as the archetypal “shrew.” In a word, Socrates was a professional guest, who spent his time engaged in endless discussions, in part with laborers, and in part, and above all, with attractive and cultured young men. The workshop, the gymnasium, and the drinking-bout were the favorite haunts of this amusing loafer.

With regard to the spiritual history of the Greeks in its general outlines, he would boast that he had never even made an attempt to study the doctrines of his philosophical predecessors, and, all things considered, Socrates presents the perfect picture of the half-educated, self-taught amateur, who, armed with the arrows of his naturally sharp critical sense and the acid of his plebeian mother-wit, upsets dull-witted men in general and the more highly educated in particular.

Even today, there are attempts to portray Socrates as a uniquely “harmonious” character. If we are not in error, Hegel was alone in disputing this error until Nietzsche, in his *Twilight of the Idols*, applied his unmasking technique to Socrates, thus providing, in its essentials, such a definitive demolition that no one reading it could have worn a more ironic smile on his face than — Socrates himself! To what extent his life-hostile doctrine deceived Socrates himself, it would be difficult to determine; but that he, thanks to his penetrating and all-dissolving, inner-directed rationalism, possessed an extraordinary understanding of himself, is almost beyond doubt, provided that there is at least some measure of truth in the stories that have been told about him. Thus, he is said to have responded to the remarks of a stranger who concluded, from an examination of the philosopher’s face, that Socrates concealed every lust and every craving within his soul: “You know me well! But I have overcome them all.” This proves that in no way did he consider himself to be a “harmonious” character, but rather a character who — to speak with Nietzsche — has become master over the anarchy of his drives, and who maintains his mastery by means of the clear light of rationality. We are also struck in no small way by what tradition tells us about his physical appearance. The rachitic, bulging eyes; the recessed, snub nose; the bald head and the pot belly must have made him appear hideous even to himself, for already during his lifetime, people had begun to compare him to Silenus. “Socrates,” says Nietzsche, “belonged to the dregs of the populace, Socrates was rabble. One understands, one sees for oneself even now how ugly he was. But ugliness constitutes an objection. Among the Greeks, it amounted to a refutation. Was Socrates really a Greek?” In the Platonic dialogues

much still shines through to indicate that aristocratic contemporaries of ancient racial stock saw Socrates in just this way. Aristophanes, in whose savage ridicule — perhaps! — the love of the ancient religiosity wages war with the self-seeking “enlightenment” of an already secular atmosphere, has, with sure instinct, in his comedy *The Clouds*, selected Socrates as the very embodiment of the vendor of sophistries; contemptuously, he says that, with dialectical fallacies as a foundation, the sophist’s only purpose is to undermine tradition.

How did it come about that this character was surrounded by a halo in the eyes of the most talented young men of Athens? How could the Delphic Oracle have concluded that Socrates was the wisest of men? There were superficial grounds that may account for this judgment. Socrates manifested in the highest degree the quality that the Greeks called *sophrosyne*, which is equivalent to our notion of “self-possession.” In modern terms, he was a thoroughly unemotional character, cautious and eminently cold-blooded. In certain respects, he anticipated the Cynics, who, like Socrates, were able to bear poverty, fatigue, and danger with an unruffled equanimity. He actually participated in many of the military campaigns conducted by Athens (Potidaea, Amphipolis, Delion), and, without the slightest trace of the “rush” of combat, he still maintained his iron courage on the day of battle. After a nocturnal drinking-bout, when the sprightliest among his young companions were overcome with wine, he would remain sober to the last, and, without a minute’s sleep, he would head off to the Forum. This man was, in every moment of his life, the master of himself to such an extent that he embodied the very principle of his fencing mode of dialectic.

But he was also a great eroticist, and the novel style of his approach to young men was to endure throughout the rest of Greek history: the tendency to establish an erotic bond between an older man and a youth in the pursuit of education. From the time of Socrates, instead of the older lover, we have now the “master” and critic; and instead of the younger beloved, we have now the “student” and learner. This type of relationship had, in fact, long been the custom in Sparta; but, from the outset, the Socratic education no longer meant a teaching designed to develop courage, but one designed to develop that which Socrates called wisdom. Finally, Socrates was attended by a “presence,” an apparition that we moderns might relegate to the precincts of “occultism.” Periodically, an absent-minded, trance-like state would come over him, and it was said that he could become insensible for as long as an hour. At such times he would become oblivious to everything that was transpiring around him, and his stance became absolutely rigid. Then he would hear an inner voice that warned him to do this or that; sometimes he is given a serious task to perform, and at other times he is commanded to do something completely unimportant. He himself claimed that, without exception, the warnings were correct. In addition, the voice at times spoke, not to Socrates, but to one of his friends; and we have many instances in which the philosopher, thanks to this voice, avoided actions that, if he had performed them, would have led to disaster. Thus, he became accustomed to the promptings of a bright,

visionary somnambulism, which, it was understood, strengthened the man who was under its sway.

Still, the astonishing vigor of its operation resides not so much within the “voice” as it does within the other party involved.

The soul of Greece was fragmented and exhausted when it gave birth to this naysayer who, like every prophet of dissolution, made his appearance in the guise of a “healer of souls.” As we have said, Socrates was the complete master of himself; but he was more than that: he proved, or at least attempted to prove, that the assistance, not to say salvation, of which everyone stood in need, resided in the complete mastery of one’s self. He claimed that such mastery is to be found in subordinating our uprooted drives to a detached rationality. He derided strong drives and an affirmative attitude towards life, and an impoverished and unsettled generation would have been startled at the forcefulness with which he announced his views.

Socrates knew exactly what he was doing when he embarked on the course that led to his own condemnation to death. As a living man, he had been the ruler of but one faction. As a martyr, he would conquer the world! In 399 BC the democratic forces which had just re-established their rule over Athens accused Socrates of “misleading the young” and “introducing new gods.” At least the first and most important charge of the indictment was, as Hegel was the first to demonstrate, unimpeachable with regard to theory and perfectly in order with regard to practice. For we must bear in mind that among the dearest pupils of Socrates there had been Kritias, the bloodiest of all the Thirty Tyrants on one side, and, on the other, there was Alkibiades, who was responsible in large part for the crushing defeat, and attendant fall from power, of Athens in the disastrous Peloponnesian War. Socrates was found guilty, and had he now followed Athenian custom and requested a lenient sentence, he would undoubtedly have been let off lightly. Instead, he not only abjured every admission of guilt, but he even had the nerve to request that Athens bestow rewards upon him in recognition of the benefits that he had showered on the state and its youth! Certain now that their teacher would perish if he remained in Athens, his pupils arranged matters so that he would be permitted, without hindrance by the authorities, to escape his predicament. He categorically refused the offer: for he wanted to be executed, thus showing himself to be, once again, a forerunner of the Christian “redeemer.”

Let us now begin to separate that which is fundamentally new in the Socratic teaching from that which can be dismissed as the stale wares of an epigone. In his own time, Socrates was judged to be the consummate Sophist. This judgment was certainly not intended to be a flattering one. He brought the hair-splitting dialectic and disputatious verbal jugglery of the Sophist to the pitch of perfection. The entire philosophy of the West has been encumbered ever since with this legacy. The sport of excelling by means of craft and the setting of snares (one side of which can be seen in the American mania for competitions) was first perfected by the Socrates who described himself as a philosophical “mid-wife.” Likewise, he was a Sophist to the letter in his ceaseless war against traditional order and traditional morality; he was the self-

mastering man who submitted all weighty matters to his personal conscience. However — and here we come to the truly new Socratic turning — it is not the personality that is made out to be the measure of all values, but solely that element of personality, which enables man to separate himself from the Cosmos in order to ascend to a “higher” rank: the spirit, reason, or, more accurately, the sense of rational purposefulness!

We have it from Socrates himself that the consideration of cosmological hypotheses left him cold. He utterly despised such modes of “speculation,” and, because he was completely ignorant of the magnificent cosmologies that had been achieved by the hylozoists, he insisted on viewing the whole of nature entirely from the perspective of one who is only interested in its rational, practical applications.

The content of his philosophy is nothing but educational moralism.

The exposition of the Socratic findings must be subordinated to the exposition of the Socratic method, for it is not in the findings but in the method that his characteristic and unique contribution is to be found. Socrates employed a witty allusion to the vocation of his mother when he described his method as the *maieutic*, in other words, that of the mid-wife. He held the opinion that knowledge already slumbers in the soul of the student, and that it could be awakened solely through the employment of suitable concepts; thus, he sees his dialectical process, in a sense, as a birth. He was obviously denied the capacity to give birth himself in the natural fashion; but he says that he does have the modest gift that enables him to assist others to give birth — in the spiritual sense. The apparent modesty of this claim shows itself, on closer examination, to be rather startlingly arrogant. In the first place, Socrates insists that his opinion is to be accepted unconditionally by his students; but will it really be the opinion of his audience if it has managed to slumber within the listener to this very hour? In the second place, the entire procedure is presented as if, in fact, we are not concerned with the views of Socrates, or with any views under the Sun, but, rather, with something that is beyond doubt, something certain, that only waits to be discovered. There is already a sophistical trick here, which, for sheer cunning, puts all previous sophistical tricks quite in the shade, for we never discover just how this spiritual obstetrics is to be set in motion. On the first point, it is quite obvious that the Socratic claim cannot be demonstrated in the style of the earlier Sophists, who announced their views in well-prepared lectures, skillfully delivered; the Sophists really attempted to persuade their audiences. Instead of that, we get with Socrates a game of questions and answers, in which Socrates wards off all objections in the manner of the Japanese jiu-jitsu master warding off blows. Socrates never announces a proposition and defends his conclusion in statement and contradiction; instead, he causes the other speaker to advance judgments of his own. Socrates sees his first duty to be the refutation of such judgments. Placing the entire burden of proof upon the shoulders of the other speaker, Socrates easily demonstrates the untenable nature of the proofs that have been advanced by involving the speaker in absurdities. One may, perhaps, find that not everyone is inclined to follow this procedure of advancing propositions. In such cases, Socrates performs his unique trick. He stands silent; he laments that he

still does not know what justice, virtue, and truth really are. He movingly begs the gods to teach him. This is the so-called Socratic irony; it is purely verbal, and, hence, a mere pretense. Soon a hesitant voice pronounces an opinion; in the blink of an eye Socrates is back at his dreadful and disputatious irony! Socrates is equipped with the perfect response to such fools as might ask additional questions: he has a hundred answers on hand. Every new answer unleashes ten new questions. The end is finally reached when the unlucky speaker lands himself in self-contradiction. The supposed knowledge was not real knowledge. At the beginning, Socrates was ignorant; the other speaker has shown him that he is even more ignorant than he had supposed. The first phase of the dialogue closes in an orderly manner, with this admission of ignorance. Now there begins the positive phase of the Socratic variety of mid-wifery, which, as we have already indicated, consists in bringing to conscious birth the knowledge that already exists within man. At this point in the proceedings, Socrates states that the other speaker's ignorance was actually a limited, or incorrect, knowledge of himself, and Socrates proceeds to assist in enabling the other speaker to attain to the correct understanding.

We now observe the results that follow from the formal side. Once again, we see that Socrates merely continued a scientific direction that had already been initiated by the Sophists. To wit, he proceeds by way of the analysis of concepts, or, more accurately, through analyzing the conceptual content of words. Although the Sophists had, in fact, employed this method, it constituted merely a secondary matter for them. With Socrates, it becomes the overarching priority, and thus there begins with him a new direction in the history of spirit. The Ionic hylozoists philosophized on the basis of the consciousness of the object; the Sophists on the basis of the consciousness of the self; Socrates, finally, philosophizes on the basis of the consciousness of connection: for him the concept is the spiritual bond that connects the object and the self (object and subject).

First, there is established, in the midst of a many-sided research program into linguistics, the exact analysis of semantics; second, there is an attempt to fix the conceptual boundaries of words, by defining them. The purpose of all Socratic dialectic is, after all, to make decisions that relate to concepts. It used to be said of Socrates that he cleverly planted in words opinions that he already held. But he provided a not inconsiderable epistemological service, for he was the first to open up the study of concepts, and therefore he can be said to have inaugurated a research trend for the Western world that has remained in operation to this very day. For the West, it is not so much the facts regarding the external world, but more the linguistic facts, that have been solidly established; thus, induction has won the day as our (questionable) conceptual mediator. It is readily understood that for Socrates, the designation of concepts is intimately intertwined with the discovery of truth. Nevertheless, the prevailing interest in all of the Socratic dialectic is the arousing of the soul of the listener: that is the true meaning of the Socratic Eros.

We ourselves have given some thought to the biological tendency exhibited in such a method, and our reflections have led us to the following conclusion: Socratism is founded upon a faith in the exclusive worthiness of conceptual thought (or consciousness). Regardless of whether an act was performed by a superior or an inferior person, the act can have no serious consequences so long as the person in question understands the motives for his actions; instinct, drive, and finally life itself are explained by Socrates as ignorance, and not, as with St. Paul, as sin. On the other hand, all good arises from (reflective) cognition. The Socratic method entails the Socratic findings, about which we will now have a few words.

Vice, sin, and deficiency of all sort, arise in error; virtue, excellence, and privilege are the results of correct insight (Phronesis). Phronesis can be taught, because its substance already resides within the soul of the erring person; but it is, as yet, only unconscious. Thus, virtue can be taught. Whoever attains to the correct insight, gains total possession of the self; he adopts a style of self-control that also enables him to hold himself accountable to that insight. This is done to achieve temporal as well as eternal blessedness (eudemonism). The Socratic ethic is, therefore, eudemonistic, but it is, at the same time, completely intellectual (the Kantian ethic is only the most recent model!). In its intellectualism, it establishes that it holds the primacy of virtue (or rectitude), in contrast to the Sophists, to be impersonal as well as universally binding; in its eudemonism, it remains utterly external, as this very principal ordains, because Socrates has told us that universally binding rectitude results in a completely practical purposefulness (aimed at attaining an even more absolute blessedness). Thus we revolve in an endless circle, for we are given no yardstick by which we can differentiate between a personal purposefulness and an impersonal one. It is merely a matter of formula when we are told that the true measure lies not outside us but rather within. Telling us that the true measure can be found within us remains the last word of the Socratic morality.

On “Psychoanalysis” (1928)

The so-called psychoanalysis (meaning analysis of the soul) is a bizarre bastard fathered by Herbart’s atomism of representation upon Nietzsche’s philosophy of self-deception. It is obvious also that the monstrous creature bears the impress of numerous other influences of a more exotic species, such as in the shape of the doctrine that the entire man, and, indeed, the entire world, is merely sex; or, to express it more moderately, that the living individual is a mere appendix to his genes, a variable dependent in relation to them. Proleptic glimpses of this notion are found already in the system of Schopenhauer, and its avatars were later cultivated by various biologists, who derived this notion from a doctrine that was espoused in earlier ages by physicians (certain scholastic doctors, for example, taught that sperma virile, if not spent, rises into the brain and there becomes spirit). However, this kind of theory should interest no one but the professional vulgarian, for it is certainly an unsubstantiated belief; a

proof cannot even be attempted from the very nature of the case. (If, in accordance with this theory, the equation is set up, $\text{God} = \text{sex}$, then we have one of the main directions of the psychoanalytic propaganda; if the equation is reversed, $\text{sex} = \text{God}$, we have the other direction.) We need not pursue this any further.

From Herbart, whose tradition was never completely interrupted in Austria, we have received the idea of species of atoms of imagination which struggle for admission on the "threshold of consciousness," sometimes inhibiting and at other times potentiating one another; from Herbart we also receive the idea of repression; according to him, all strivings are due to instances of repression. When this idea was linked together with Nietzsche's view, which attributes a decisive influence upon the course of the activity of consciousness to the urges, and not least to the urges for self-esteem, a mythology of the so-called unconscious arose to which we must allow the lure of the sensational, had not its inventors been wholly afflicted with imaginative blindness. For this unconscious has a curious resemblance to a well-prepared defense lawyer; its sole function is to use every kind of maneuver in order to persuade consciousness to believe in whatever would be advantageous to the obvious, and even more to the secret, interests of the conscious entity, and especially to shatter its belief in everything that might disturb his self-esteem. Nietzsche's subtle and profound investigations of the tactics of self-deception are here translated into a jargon that is appropriate to the tedious office politics that may be studied in modern business life or in the diplomatic ploys of our politicians. This method seeks a more prestigious status by calling itself "depth psychology."

But whatever may be the origin of all this, the psychoanalyst asserts that he is in possession of the truth, and points for confirmation to the innumerable "cases" of which he disposes, meaning his patients. However, two sides of the case must here be distinguished: the confession that the analyst elicits from the patient by means of an examination that is based upon what he imagines to be so-called associations, and successful cures by means of what is described by the precious word "abreaction" [Abreaktion]. With regard to the confessions, the entire history of psychoanalysis really spares us the proof that they either possess, or can possess, any demonstrative force. At first, we all recall, the data obtained through this species of confessional were taken at their face value; in other words, as being events that had really transpired in the life experience of the confessor. Later on, however, it was found necessary to take them partly for fiction, although they might have a certain symptomatic value; and today even this symptomatic value has undergone a change, because it is clear that such confessions are often merely expressions of how the "conscious" mind of the patient would prefer to see the meaning of his trouble (and hence himself) interpreted. But whatever is the proportion of demonstrable events, of supplementary material, and of unadulterated drivel, the insistent view that this method will lead to the discovery of the etiology of the disease overlooks the fact that the source of the disease is already presupposed as an x , if this confessional method (which is often extended through years) is to be possible at all. Further, it is necessary only to look more closely at any complicated example of analysis to see that the meaning of the case, which the

examiner requires for the validation of his doctrine, is imported by him, and that he achieves success by virtue of a method which has the rare advantage that it never fails: to the extent that the data that he elicits suit his view, he takes them literally; to the extent that they do not, he takes them metaphorically, or, rather, as phantasms that have been substituted for wholly different contents of imagination. For this purpose he has prepared a system of a sexual symbolic language that, without exaggeration, can be applied to any single object in the universe. (For, after all, one can pigeon-hole every object in the universe as being convex or concave in some manner!) One must share this faith in order to believe in this kind of imaginary demonstration.

There remain, then, the cures. In order not to involve ourselves in endless digressions, let us examine them point by point:

1. If we possessed statistics of unassailable accuracy about all patients who were treated by psychoanalysis, we might become skeptical about these healers. Apart from a certain proportion of persons who were relieved of the disturbing symptoms, we would find a large proportion of those who ran away from their examiners, and no small proportion of those who were all the worse for the confessional. We are aware of most serious cases of this kind.

2. It is certain that these classes exist; but the proportions remain uncertain, for we do not possess statistics. We will therefore confine ourselves to the cures. We disregard the fact that in the treatment of every patient, but especially of a neurotic, the personal influence of the healer (whether he is a declared hypnotist, or homeopath, or internist, or psychoanalyst, etc.) plays an incalculable part. We also disregard the fact that psychoanalysis was fashionable for a time and still is so to some extent, and therefore, for reasons that will be easily understood, carries with it, in the eyes of the neurotic patient, an aura which assists the cure. On the other hand, it does something that would retain its curative value, even if all of the reasons that determine it were false: it gives the patient a full opportunity for "having a good talk." Here it follows the approved methods of the Roman Catholic confessional.

3. In addition, it deals chiefly with hysterical patients. If we were right in saying that the hysterical type possesses abnormally small formative force combined with a highly developed desire to represent, then it encourages him even to tell tales, to lie, and to invent; it affords him an opportunity of forming his inner life.

4. It affects something greater besides. Probably more neurotic types, and certainly all hysterical types, suffer from secret feelings of inferiority, although they are not always aware of this fact. Although the psychoanalytical confessional may be a plague, it offers him a ten-fold recompense by showing him new possibilities for taking himself seriously — very seriously — internally. Whatever crackpot notion or thought may creep through his consciousness, it is seen to be significant; it may even turn out to be an enchanted prince! A curious method, though nonetheless efficient, for strengthening self-esteem.

5. Psychoanalysis also has its secret, which, however, we are unwilling to publish, for perhaps it is effective only because the psychoanalysts themselves do not know

it. Also, in order to reveal it, we would have to unfold the psychologist's psychology, which, though somewhat more entertaining than psychoanalysis, would also require a more lengthy exposition. If the author of these lines were a neurologist, he too would occasionally psychoanalyze his patients, and, perhaps, he too would be successful: not because he considers there to be any truth in the psychoanalytic chat, but because he holds that this prescription fits a contemporary variety of neurosis with amazing exactness. The two arise together necessarily, and will vanish together, for every epoch has its own neurosis, and no epoch that of another.

We trust that none of our readers will harbor the absurd suspicion that this effusion upon psychoanalysis is intended as an attack upon psychoanalysts. A genuine psychoanalyst cannot be refuted, and he is a fool who makes the attempt. It is true that there are many psychoanalysts who are not psychoanalysts at all. They do as Rome does — as the author, too, would do if he specialized in nervous cases. (In this matter the purse, too, can play a part.) But the real psychoanalyst — the man who holds the psychoanalytical worldview — is the true member of a religion, and as such cannot be assailed. If objections to personal immortality are raised before a strict Christian, he would not pay a moment's attention to them, but would ask himself what faults or even sins of the speaker prevented the light of the truth from illuminating him. If objections are raised before a true psychoanalyst, he does not attend to their value as proofs for a moment, but only asks himself what complexes or "repressions" (of sexual origin, of course) can be preventing the speaker from seeing and recognizing the light of truth — of psychoanalytic truth, that is. Predestination, beginning at the gene, determines the genuine psychoanalyst as it determines the genuine Christian. We therefore do not touch upon this matter; but we considered it proper to say a word about this scientific fashion, because we ourselves had an opinion to offer upon the nature of hysteria.

We would add expressly that there is one psychoanalyst to whom the above remarks about psychoanalysts do not apply unreservedly, namely, Freud. The man who founds a religion or initiates a new direction — and every direction has one initiator only — is of a very different stamp from his disciples, a fact which is not altered by feeble attempts at insubordination such as occur among all bodies of disciples: but Freud is a pioneer, and if any part of his work should survive, it will be associated with his name, and with his name alone. If he believes in the doctrine of psychoanalysis, he does so because he made, or, if it be preferred, created it: and although a pioneer can neither be taught nor converted, it requires no common degree of simplicity in order to confuse his obstinacy with that of a disciple. The psychology of the pioneer is of a different class, and does not here concern us. But we would say that this man has some of the true speculative spirit, together with temperament and stubborn tenacity. Unfortunately, he has an inferior soul and a narrow horizon. This is to be regretted for other than merely practical reasons, for such thoroughbred energy might have been expected to make real, and not only imaginary, discoveries!

On Academic Psychology and Characterology (1928)

The following reflections have a certain significance in the history of psychology; the scholastic methods of psychology that are here criticized still persist in wide circles even after the passing of many years: for these reasons we state what bears upon these points in much the same shape as before.

Suppose one were to ask of psychology what would be the minimum of knowledge to which it ought, in fairness, to offer a key: for example, what has been the nature of the change in mind since the Classical period; the distinction between civilized and “natural” man; of what vital facts the ruling religions, the various castes, and the different races are the index; what constitutes a statesman, a priest, a strategist, artist, or scientist; what are the laws which govern jealousy, greed, or selfishness; how to lay hold of a man’s enduring characteristics behind his changing actions, and how to lay hold of the true motives behind the mask of his politeness: suppose that these or similar questions were asked, then the inquirer would only be disappointed by the tendency of our day. He will undoubtedly come to the conclusion that he has been asking in the wrong quarter. For, to his disappointment, he would hear of sensations, perceptions, imaginations, judgments, strivings, acts of will, feelings — in short, of the commonest characteristics of mental existence, or of the nature of our organs of sense (the admirable nature of whose physical structure is not disputed). He would be instructed in the method whereby conclusions are drawn; how something is remembered; and how concepts are formed. His study of history, law, or religious consciousness, of the forms of mental sickness, or his interest in understanding practical life would be enriched, but little more than would be the botanical studies of a lover of flowers who might be instructed that these are spatial bodies fixed in their places, capable of growth, requiring certain food, and dependent upon light.

We do not desire to combat modern psychology and its openings (some of which show promise): the more so, as we shall invoke its assistance successfully more than once in the course of our argument. But, for reasons that will be touched upon later, it is certainly not what its etymology implies it to be: for it is not a science of soul. Nevertheless, we are fully aware of what modern psychology has accomplished, and of the analytical training, hitherto perhaps without parallel, which it introduced. In this connection the name of Theodor Lipps must be recalled. Quite undeservedly he has been forgotten, and in fact it is a difficult matter to do justice to this thinker. Of the results that he obtained, hardly anything remains, apart from some discoveries about the observation of space and the psychology of metrics. He had a tendency to view actuality as the phenomenal manifestation of a transcendent “world-ego,” a tendency that bears the imprint of the reigning liberalism of the 1860s, and so restricts his vision in such a way that one is tempted to say that it is bounded by his desk. But within a horizon that, so to speak, is spaceless, he has an eye of microscopic power, and this

eye is actually turned inwards. If the *Psychologie* of Wundt, with all of his reading, is compared with any of the works of Lipps, it will be abundantly clear after a perusal of a few sentences that the latter practiced genuine psychology, even if it is no more than the analysis of the contents of consciousness, while the former practiced everything under the Sun, but never psychology. (To put it somewhat forcibly, one might say that Wundt's psychology consists in the fact that he tosses in the adjective "psychological" half a dozen times on every page.) In short, although his world-view has already been forgotten, Lipps alone — so far as we can see — among the popular professors of the last generation was enabled by his method of self-examination to anticipate and prepare a way for the study of appearance, which now has once again become practicable. In order to give a name to his merits in this connection, however, we would recall that it was he who, with an accuracy hitherto unattained, taught how to distinguish that connection of facts of consciousness to which self-reflection bears witness and, again, their demonstrable dependence upon the peculiar characteristics of the conscious entity, from that causality by whose aid we make calculable the sequence of processes in the world of things. At any rate, he prepared an explanation of the assumption of causality by applying a certain manner of experiencing to extra-spirituality, namely, that of the activity of the will that causes action (his *Bewusstsein und Gegenstände* is especially valuable in this regard).

However, we feel that the time has come to remember that the course upon which modern psychology as a whole has entered never leads beyond a somewhat restricted range of questions; that it is possible to treat its subject by other methods; and that it runs the risk of exposing itself dangerously if it persists in raising those foolish objections to a loftier conception of psychology, the commonest of which will be disposed of now.

Under the influence of the curious belief that its favorite concepts — that sensations, imaginations, feelings, and the like are the psychically simple data — the atoms, so to speak, of which the mind is properly composed — psychology believes that it ought to reject as premature and unscientific any dealings with questions of characterology. We do not now ask whether it was ever seriously hoped to solve the problem that lies, for example, under the name of Napoleon, by analysis of processes of thought and of the commonest estimations of value. The objection in any case is invalid. For nothing is less immediately "given" to observation than the fact, simple enough in the meaning of modern psychology, of the perception of red. A red ball a yard distant from my eyes appears very different to a child and to an old man; to myself when rested and when tired; to instantaneous and to protracted observation; to a hungry and a full man, or to a merry and a sad one; it appears different under changing illumination, and if placed before a white, green, or red background; quite apart from the fact that unconscious — if not conscious — comparison is required in order that the same or even a similar redness shall be recognized in a raspberry, the evening sky, red wine, blood, a brick, a tiger lily, and a coral. Redness, and even a redness more closely determined, is a structure of thought; it is extracted through the elaboration

of contents of perception, but it is not itself a content of perception; and whatever we might succeed in establishing with regard to the perception of red, it would never furnish us with a brick with which to build personality.

But even if it were a conceivable task to translate personality into the language of such universal concepts as must be developed in order to elucidate the processes of perception, this would still demand the closest acquaintance with personality. Once we possess this, we may perhaps be able to derive peculiarities of personal color perception, and to test experimentally the correctness of our conclusions; otherwise we look for them in vain from any theory of color perception, however perfect. The case is similar to that of cytology, for it is certain that most of the processes with which that science deals belong to categories which are proper partly to physics and partly to chemistry, but which are much more complicated, from the standpoint of those sciences, than any chemical processes known to us. Here, too, then, a warning might be made against the study of cells on the ground that chemistry is not yet sufficiently advanced in order to cover with its formulae all the phases of germ-formation, cell division, and so forth. Fortunately, man's search for knowledge has disregarded such out-of-date impediments: with the best results, it has made the cell the center of a science of its own, which even now toys with a resurrection of the *vis vitalis*.

The concept of a cell can be defined as exactly and unambiguously as that of light, sound, heat, magnetism, chemical affinity, and so on; and it demands to be considered independently, because it appears as the medium of those innumerable processes the totality of which we call life, and which we must know before we can undertake their interpretation in terms of physics.

A comparison of the cell with the soul seems relevant in more than one sense. Like the cell, the soul is the substratum of certain processes of the inner life, of which the modern analysis of the facts of consciousness reveals little more than would be revealed of the life of a cell by a consideration that should demonstrate in it the laws of physics and of chemistry. Naturally the concept of a cell, like that of character, is reached through abstraction. But it would appear inconsistent with natural thinking to use the vital processes merely to illustrate chemistry, and similarly it must cause surprise and even amazement that the "science of the soul" does, in fact, do something quite similar, in neglecting all the qualities of character, and eliminating the nature of the substratum, and finally allowing validity only to those which remain as differential signs of mental existence. We ask with astonishment how it was possible, before making any attempt at the exploration of character, to proceed towards that maximum of abstraction that was so hostile to man's original interest in man. This remains to be explained later, and we now already remark that the unnatural direction of this development is the reason why the science of psychology and the soul-skilled wisdom of all times and peoples are strangers to one another today. Although the former direction may perhaps be justified, the latter is still closer to real life; a deeper need requires it and it admits of an unlimited progress. The dangers that threaten a scientific treatment of its material, as opposed to the objections that we have refuted, are due to the inclination to plant

the ruling notions in the ground that is to be freshly ploughed. But here we touch upon, and negate, certain instructive excrescences of modern psychology.

The more it was believed that unanimity existed about the fundamental facts of consciousness, the more attention was paid to the differences which must, in the nature of things, subsist in the capacities of individual minds for imagination, apprehension, striving, and the like. It was hoped to effect a reversion of the process, and to construct a kind of individual psychology from permutations and combinations of the universal characteristics. But here it appeared, as was inevitable, that the crucial question was unknown, and that the means for solving it were lacking. First, it was overlooked that it is not the distinction in these processes (a distinction which is generally unimportant) that is the goal of investigation, but the permanent disposition, which may be discovered through the distinction, but not through it alone. At this point a new branch of psychology was hatched that bore the name of “differential psychology,” which is about as reasonable as to call cytology a differential chemistry, or optics, acoustics, and thermics, a differential mechanics! A wrong track was inevitably reached, which led not to personality, but through a weary waste of its *disjecta membra*, scattered abroad (so to speak) in the shape of degrees of sensitiveness, operations of association, comprehension, of observation, combination, judgment, and reactions — showing no law which might unite them, and still less the “spiritual bond.”

At the same time the experimental method, whose validity in the mental sciences is generally open to doubt, was applied to the sphere of characterology, where it is entirely useless. The inevitable constraints even in neutral experiments for testing perception, judgment, and reaction may modify the mental disposition of the medium and invalidate the result; all security must vanish when it is no longer permissible to neglect the peculiarity of the object, since it is precisely this uniqueness that is to be ascertained. (French investigators made their own contribution to the confusion when they meticulously avoided the traditional nomenclature; they then made the grand discovery, based on descriptions given by pupils of pictures shown to them, that there are some four types of apprehension: the descriptive type, the observational type, the emotional type, and the learned type!) It must, moreover, be considered whether experiments can ever teach us what we ought to know first of all — whether a man is envious, covetous or devoted, whether faithful and true or capricious and flighty, whether of a happy disposition or gloomy, brave or cowardly, bold or timid — and what is the nature and operation of these and similar qualities.

The wrong formulation of the question produced a corresponding fiasco all along the line in the results — which we would pass over in silence, but for the fact that it seems more fitted than any other datum to reveal the traditional limitations of the modern handling of psychology. We select as our example no obscure light, but an authority rightly acknowledged by everyone. Kraepelin is a student who must be treated with great respect in his special field of psychopathology; he is also a master of the art of clinical classification. As fundamental qualities of personality he posits capacity for training, for stimulation, and for fatigue. (More exactly, we would present

the following categories: capacity for performance, for practice, for retention of what is practiced, special memory, capacity for stimulus, for fatigue, for recovery, depth of sleep, capacity for distraction and for habituation.) That is, the difference, for example, between Diocletian and Gregory VII must be reduced to differences in capacity for training, stimulation, and fatigue! Criticism is superfluous.

From this, not only is its fundamental estrangement from the facts of life of this kind of thought obvious, but also its particular interest. The question here is not the qualities of personality, but the inner causes of its effectiveness. And even effectiveness is not estimated in its totality, for if it were, then initiative, inventiveness, intuition, and everything else that borders on the sphere of creative impulses would have to be investigated: here the only quarry is the conditions of one's ability to work; as indeed is proper to an age which has long grown unaccustomed to the view of great individualities, and has replaced nobility of blood by the dubious honor of professional fitness. Man, as such, is no longer seen or known, but is only an intellectual mechanism, the servant of an external purpose, and having for its criterion a hypothetical "end."

This end was unknown to other ages. A Renaissance busied with psychology might perhaps have considered a man's faculty of action as worthy of investigation; a Medieval period, the strength of his faith; a Classical period — in part, at least — his capacity for happiness. Such traits have lost their value for the modern psychologist; they are not even regarded at all, and industry has remained as the only virtue, accompanied by its satellites, ambition and success — a complex, that is, which the Greeks and Romans would never have hesitated to relegate to the lowest of men, to pariahs and to slaves.

Others may applaud an advance to austerity: this is certain, that science should remain neutral, and turn a deaf ear to the suggestions of an ochlocratic idealism. But instead, it is completely hypnotized by the latter's standards of value, and the practical nature of its apparatus is completely in harmony with a tendentious partiality in the impulses which point the way. But this does not apply to psychology alone, but to all of the philosophy of the last centuries, insofar as it is attached to names traditionally famous. The development, briefly, was as follows.

After the Reformation had undermined Mediaeval piety, morality appeared as the true kernel of Christianity, and now it appears to be more potent than any idolatrous form of superstition. From it, not only all systems since the beginning of the modern period received a moral tincture — atheism most of all — but it also governed the exploration of the facts of the natural and mental sciences, which to this day denies, neither in method nor in results, its origin from the Christian dogma of the kingdom of God. But spirituality without metaphysics becomes a faith in reason and finds itself referred, both in truth and in error, to the two foci of logic and utility — otherwise known as the "good."

We do not, of course, here follow the development of rationalism, or the belief in the essential rationality of the world-process; which would mean to write the history of spirit from a wholly novel point of view; we only mention what is essential for an

understanding of the development of psychology. After the first assault of mechanistic thought, which was naturally directed against the universe, and won those great conquests of physics (Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Huyghens, Newton) which the nineteenth century could do no more than to perfect, there followed a self-reflection of the organ of thought, mediated by the question of the range of the use of understanding and the reasons for the inviolability of its results. The self-analysis of reasonableness, which sometimes took a speculative and dogmatic, and sometimes a purely analytic turn, was given the somewhat too narrow name of "critique of cognition"; and, since Kant, no small credit was taken for a renunciation of metaphysical desires. Now modern psychology in all of its manifestations is a particular form of this critique of cognition. Its object is not man, but rational man, in other words a being which can think logically and act in a utilitarian manner; and the mainspring of its investigation is not an interest in life — which is the proper province of psychology — but in the capacity for thinking and willing — which is that of logic.

But in view of the singleness of its fundamental aim, it is of little importance whether it finally masters its tasks with or without "soul," whether it attributes great or little importance to the gray matter of the cerebral cortex, and whether it clings to experiment or devotes itself to the art of definitions. Among the unpleasant results, we shall always find an amazing ignorance of the urges and passions which, as "lower," are hardly considered worthy of notice; helplessness in the face of the unconscious, or the psychical substratum even of reasonable actions, of which for years we learned nothing save the vague "laws of association"; uncritical acceptance of moral judgment, which at the least encourages a superficial classification; a foolish misinterpretation of every unsocial human type as a differential form of unnatural "freak"; and complete failure before the problem of individuality or the inner multiplicity of times, peoples, castes, strata of culture, and of everyday life. In part, it commands respect for its achievements in its critique of cognition and its masterly analysis of the processes of apprehension, but it appears as the sickly offspring of average common sense when it is taken as what it professes to be — a science of the inner life. The entire achievement of the so-called "science of psychology" in this respect is outweighed by a single page of Goethe's or of Jean Paul's; and it is impossible to evade the bitter truth which Novalis had already pronounced when he says that this so-called psychology is one of those false idols which have usurped that place in the sanctuary where the true images of the gods should stand.

But even today the "inner life" is somewhat deeper than it appears in the mirror of psychology, and consequently it gives individual impulses to the investigating mind which lie beyond its general considerations: in reality, therefore, it has not achieved the first thing which might rightly have been asked of it: to establish a critical foundation of the "sciences of the spirit." Philology, historiography, ethnology, psychiatry, and practical knowledge of mankind alike looked to it for help in vain — as was shown at the beginning — and therefore in time a new treatment of the material must come to

the front which, while retaining the more exact knowledge of the processes of cognition, makes it its task to understand the whole wealth of forms of the life of the soul.

But such a treatment lacks neither precedent nor yet a certain tradition, even if we neglect the sages of all times and peoples who never practiced psychology in the intellectual sense. The impulse of psychological investigation is most active in that epoch of German spiritual life that is called Romantic, whose later period contains the name of the physician and thinker Carl Gustav Carus. It suffices to mention this name, which, though not the greatest, yet denotes a man in whose nature the roaming element of those days found a caution prudent enough to allow it to condense into a doctrine that still awaits elaboration and extension, instead of exhausting itself in prophetic imaginings. But the research of Carus, and similar essays of contemporary minds, together with many fruitful germs of the 1830s and '40s, was swept away by the course of development, so that now the chain must be linked afresh and across a gap of time.

But all this could not be done with so sure an eye for every elective affinity without the mighty achievement of that man of the most recent past whose coming, even if it allows of no new hope, still crowns the decline of man with a proud luster — the achievement of Friedrich Nietzsche. Reasons, the analysis of which would here lead us too far afield, cause the ardor of metaphysical intuition to feed the stream of criticism in him almost exclusively, giving it a piercing quality never reached before. The instrument of his prophetic power is the gift, armed with the arrows of acutest understanding, of “discrimination of spirits.” For the first time since the Middle Ages, and in the more familiar forms of the most immediate present, he furnishes us with an example of that millennial flower, the great piercer of souls and reader of spirits, who, unlike the poets, does not bury under flowery meadows of fanciful sentiment the outlines of fire-born truths. It would require a separate section, if justice were to be done to his significance for a possible future psychology. (We have since written a whole treatise on this subject: *Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches*, J. A. Barth, Leipzig.) Here we merely state a fundamental fact, and now pass over to the next discussion by designating the essentially psychological attitude by that symptom which emerges most clearly, especially with Nietzsche.

The real scope of his philosophy is the devaluation not only of ethics but, further, of intellect, of which, for the first time in the known “history of the world,” paradoxically enough, the disposition, that is, in this case, the biological value, is scrutinized, without prejudice or favor, by the eye of spiritual hostility. “That it is false is no objection to a judgment” — a proposition the consequence of which may be followed in its more positive counterpart — correctness alone does not make a judgment valid, truth is no value in itself. Even the organ of thought, whose mainsprings are reasons and causes, proves to be conditioned by its urges, and its criteria are subjective. It is possible to side for or against logic, and (this is Nietzsche’s most important application) the latter is done when we take the side of life, which is unspiritual and non-logical. Life and spirit are distinct, and, as Nietzsche apprehends it, spirit is a diseased form of life.

It is possible to take a further step, and this will be done in the chapter which deals with the metaphysics of the distinctions of personality: and, although the shattered autonomy will be restored, this will be done only to widen the gap until it becomes the fundamental dualism (which appears as a necessity of thought) between life (element, soul) and spirit. In fact Nietzsche continually makes use of this, although he still takes spirit as a by-product and tries to treat it too anthropocentrically — as derailment and *lusus naturae*. Before him, there was no student of the soul whose analysis, however subtle, did not end with a new “rehabilitation” of man; for example, even the methodical skepticism of Stirner has for its ultimate pole an ideal of personality which (although alien to most) might be described as the “domination of the consciousness of uniqueness.” Nietzsche, on the other hand, takes up his position outside man, or, in the most literal manner, “beyond good and evil,” as is evidently fitting in one who makes man the object of his study. In this way alone he was able to unmask the envy of life (resentment) at the roots of every moral judgment and to lay bare the atrophy of instinct which, in the guise of numerous “ideals,” distorts the view of man — especially of modern man — when he looks upon the world.

We must stand opposed to that which we would understand; this is a necessary condition of all cognition, as the name object itself irrefutably proves. We remain within the metaphor (which in fact is more than metaphor) if we add that the survey is hindered if the object is too close and that philosophy rather demands a “distance”; however little we may like a name that, since the time of Nietzsche, has become a favorite with writers. For proximity fixes the eye upon one point and isolates the object of this contemplation at short range; it leads inevitably to that atomism of thought which was exemplified by the scholastics; whereas distance, as it widens the horizon, demands, so to speak, a roving eye, which opposes to the belief in the isolated entities of the objects the totality of an image.

We emphasize the meaning of the word “intuition” as a kind of cognition that is cognate to contemplation; next, there follows the “worldview,” which has now become somewhat rarer. The image, or vision, alone rises to the acid test of attention, and compels the spirit with an irresistible force of conviction. But distance causes the incomplete actuality of objects that have been merely “focused” to plunge back into a totality of contemplation; consciousness, whose eye merely distinguishes in the light of common day, borrows from it something of the synthetic foresight of the prophetic eye. The profundity of truth varies with the seeing power of the spirit that seeks it.

The study of the soul concerns itself with facts that in themselves are non-sensuous; the individual finds within himself the material needed in order to interpret them. Consequently the spirit must be able to achieve a relation of exteriority in order that it may experience the personality of which it is a part; in one sense it must dehumanize itself in order to look upon this human quality precisely; and it must even have the skill to remove itself so far from it that the individual traits of the inner life coalesce into an image for it, whence it may read partial characteristics as the corporeal eye reads the position of a particular place on a finished map. But images, whether they be dreamed

or perceived, are spatial-temporal actualities. Consequently we state the facts more exactly in saying conversely that a gift for studying the soul rests essentially upon a capacity for seeing its meaning in the phenomenal world. But to see the “meaning” in it means to see the phenomenon symbolically. And, indeed, it is an implicit trait of the philosopher’s vision, which it shares with that of the artist and poet, that, following an irresistible compulsion, it apprehends things symbolically: herein (in spite of the enormous difference) it resembles the spiritual disposition of the “savage.”

Now it is not only the fascinating, but also the essentially true element in Nietzsche’s mental attitude, that he thus sees individual persons as well as entire peoples, cultures, and epochs according to the analogy of pictures. For example, he speaks of the “Nordic gloom” of “haunting thought and thin blood,” he calls the southern soul “an abundant fullness of Sun and irradiation of Sun,” and discovers “clumsiness and peasant gravity” in the Englishman: in short, he uses convincing traits of its sensuous appearance to stamp each character, or rather he finds in the visible world the key to the invisible, and draws from the actuality of the symbol its conceptual element.

Formulated as a principle, this means that we must have the whole before we can successfully undertake to study the parts. It is possible, of course, to analyze the former into the latter, but to compose the former out of the latter is impossible, unless the idea that is to guide the process of composition has already been extracted from the whole. New and fruitful thoughts always arise at some point of that profoundest dividing line of the spirit where the symbolism of phenomena ends, and they begin to be symptoms. The Romantic philosophy is wholly dominated by the symbol — by the fact, if not by the concept. The world is taken as a vast symbolic language, which must be deciphered by speculative absorption; we do not observe facts, but look upon their face and ask what vital pulse, what secret constructive impulse, or what evolution of the soul seems to speak in these lines. The doctrines of the growth of plants or of crystals or of the motions of the cosmos are treated as a kind of physiognomics of the universe; and conversely Carus, characteristically enough, gives the name of “symbolism of the human form” to the physiognomy of man in the title of his chief work on that subject.

This leads us to revert to the importance of the image as a starting point for the study of the soul. In the sense that has been laid down by us, this must primarily be a morphology, or doctrine of the forms, of the soul’s anatomy. But forms in the proper sense are external forms, and no science of the inner life could afford to renounce to be guided by its sensuous manifestations without risking a lapse into amateurishness. We consider the psychological manner of contemplation as not only cognate to the physiognomical, but as fundamentally identical with it. The new intuition, whether reached by the most circumspect thought or by lightning illumination, always has its source in an extension of an understanding of the symbolism of the external world, or in the progress of the spiritual assimilation of physiognomies hitherto alien. However, we have thus given a shape to the contrast between our own and the traditional point of view that, detached from its place in the logical sequence, would appear as capricious

paradox. We therefore meet an impending misunderstanding, and end by throwing light upon this formula (which in truth must be taken literally) from another side.

A special effort on the part of modern students was needed in order to master the heresy that our knowledge of the inner life is increased by investigation into the nervous system. No more than twenty years ago it was seriously believed that a study of the anatomy of the brain afforded instruction in psychical processes. In proportion as this unphilosophic hope vanished, “pure” psychology grew up by the side of “physiological” psychology, and the provisional thesis of the “psychophysical parallelism” established itself. Our demand that the psychical is to be construed out of its phenomenal form might therefore be misinterpreted as constituting a relapse into a direction to which “pure” psychology stands much closer. For it is not of essential importance that we shall discuss extra-sensual facts in a preponderantly physical, or, on the other hand, in a preponderantly psychological language: the only question is whether such concepts have, or do not have, their origin in a view of the totality of the organism. Ganglia, nerves, the convolutions of the brain and the like are, within the body, only *disjecta membra*, so to speak, as, in the sphere of the inner life, are perceptions, imaginations, processes of sensation, and so on. The symbolism of the body is so far from coinciding with any concepts of the anatomy of the brain that the latter must be completely forgotten if we would reach the former. The soul does not reside in the brain, but in the form, and, if a paradox were permitted, we would recommend in place of a study of man’s nerves, a study of his superficialities. We will conclude with a sentence of Novalis, who anticipated the truth here as he so frequently did elsewhere: “The seat of the soul is at the point of contact of the inner and the outer world.”

On Consciousness and Life (1915)

The word “consciousness” is customarily understood as having a double meaning: first, the substance, or content, of experience; and second, the critical empiricism which observes that experience. In experience, we occupy a station within consciousness, whereas during the process of empirical apprehension, we stand outside experience. The first state possesses actuality for itself (*für sich*), whilst the second state can be said to approach actuality only insofar as it remains connected to the first. Life has no need for the process of comprehension in order to exist, although spiritual comprehension does require the presence of a living “event” (*Geschehen*) in order to commence its operations. Bearing these reflections in mind, it is of fundamental importance for the theory of consciousness that we indicate precisely which of the dual meanings is under examination. Ordinarily the word seems to suggest — for instance, as it is employed in the substantival infinitive of the declaration: “I am conscious of myself” (as of an object) — that it actually refers not to an object, but, rather, to an observation, and it certainly piques our interest to discover that current scientific terminology, in heart-warming conformity with popular usage, has endorsed the latter interpretation

exclusively. Unfortunately, this approach excluded consciousness itself from consideration so thoroughly that the whole structure of psychology almost seems to have been established upon a false fundamental principle, a procedure that would certainly entail ominous consequences for such derivations as had been drawn from it. But before we continue to develop our exposition, it is necessary that we now interpolate a brief digression.

Even if consciousness should be equated with spiritual comprehension, there would still be two distinct modes of non-consciousness: utilizing the terminology of contemporary thought in the narrow sense, these modes are the unconscious and the unobserved. Several instances, among the dozens that are available for our perusal in the relevant literature, may enable the reader to appreciate certain distinctions. No one possesses an instantaneous (immediate) consciousness of everything that he has ever learned, although certain items exist “unconsciously” in a state of readiness until, in response to a suitable question, they “enter into consciousness.” This provides the conclusive explanation of one of the inherently fascinating phenomena in the field of characterology, namely, our undergoing an experience that is apparently of the “unconscious” variety, only thereupon discovering that it has been, as it were, “deposited” in consciousness in a procedure analogous to a routine cash transaction at a banking institution. It is a somewhat different case when we have an instantaneous, or immediate, experience, although, paradoxically, we are unable simultaneously to observe that which we have just, in fact, experienced. Example: in reading a suspenseful novel, a person may, so to speak, “turn a deaf ear” to the clock’s striking of the hour even though the clock is in the near vicinity; with the reader’s consciousness focused so intently upon the story that he has had no time to observe that, while he was reading this novel, his feet became ice-cold. Nevertheless, he has certainly undergone both experiences. It might happen that our reader subsequently discovers that he can recall the clock’s striking of the hour. He thereby achieves some comprehension of an experience that he has hitherto attempted to explain to himself in vain. Let us glance at another paradox: the more an event moves us emotionally, the less we are competent to observe our condition as it is in itself; for one “forgets oneself,” to use a profound turn of phrase, out of concern, out of dread, or out of an excess of stormy bliss. With this brief survey, we are now sufficiently prepared to ponder one more puzzle, but this time we will draw our material from the area of world history, in order to precisely demonstrate the extent to which the concept of consciousness itself has served as the source of an endless proliferation of erroneous doctrines.

We do not err in tracing the birth of our modern intellectual tradition to the renowned formula of Descartes: *cogito ergo sum*. It would surely violate the intentions of its creator were we to translate this proposition as “I think, therefore I am,” without certain qualifications. We have, in fact, generally understood the Cartesian *cogitare* to comprise not merely the act of thinking, but also such activities as perceiving, feeling, willing, and even dreaming: in brief, we have come to regard the *cogitare* as the equivalent of consciousness in general. Still, there can be no doubt whatever that,

in this regard, the philosopher had in mind not only perception, representation, and emotion, but also the perceived phenomenon, the represented image, and the empirically observed emotional state. However, the thinker who has seen the decisive act of consciousness in critical comprehension, will, of course, be quite prepared to champion the proposition: “mind is thinking substance” (*mens est res cogitans*). But Descartes (on grounds the comprehensive exposition of which would lead us deeply into the evolution of the human spirit) stumbles badly in his treatment of this line of thought due to his inability to study these discrete entities separately; as a result, he necessarily confuses our consciousness of experience with experience itself, and Descartes has thereby allowed himself, as well as all succeeding posterity, to get bogged down before a Cartesian roadblock. This impediment has, in effect, barred the approaches to a fresh, sense-oriented philosophy of life ever since.

We have always considered the most startling aspect of the Cartesian formula to be the precedence that it accords to the self before the object. The philosopher discusses consciousness as if he were analyzing the content of experience, whereas what he is really doing is formulating critical judgments about experience. Thus, the faculty of judgment usurps the place of experience, and the upshot is that Descartes has effectively sacrificed the entirety of man’s inner life to mere cognition. With that superb logical consistency that was ever the hallmark of his thought, Descartes explicitly announces the inescapable consequences of his philosophical meditations: the whole world is to be reduced to the status of a nexus of quantifiable physical forces; animals are to be regarded as nothing but soulless machines; and the stirring emotions that characterize the nature of man are to be dismissed as *perturbationes animi*! Such frank admissions could hardly have failed to rouse the ire of a host of passionate enemies. But even the bitterest foes of the Cartesian philosophy endorsed their antagonist’s pseudo-antithesis of *cogitare* and *esse*, and once they had made this false start, they merely contested the predominance of consciousness over being in a procedure as fruitless as any counter-claim that arrogates to being the predominant rank as the foundation of consciousness. Thus the bitter strife continues to deepen between the two ancient camps of metaphysicians, the “materialists” and the “idealists,” behind whose inviolable fortress-walls, one might almost persuade oneself, an evil genius of deceitful plots to imprison the scientific impulse, which is, in reality, neither *cogitare* nor *esse*, neither spirit nor matter, but rather that which for beings inhabiting the temporal realm is far more important than either: life!

Whether we elect to derive matter from spirit (or spirit from matter), or whether we should in the end seek to solve this relational conundrum by regarding both entities as aspects of some primordial system of polarities, as in the procedure adopted by our current proponents of the doctrine of “psycho-physical parallelism,” all of these shifts will avail us nothing if, from the very outset, we have eliminated from our enquiries the actuality of life. Spirit knows and being is, but only life can live! Spirit and being dwell amidst generalities in a realm beyond time, whereas life participates in the temporal dimension that is also the realm of the individual. Without life, neither spirit nor

matter could enable us to understand the nature of the temporal creation that is man. Now, however, we must avert our gaze from these somewhat academic disputes, in order that we may focus our attention more closely on the question as to the nature of consciousness.

Consciousness is not the stream of experience, for consciousness as such arises only when it has been stirred to activity by the lightning bolt of comprehension. We can derive definite empirical confirmation of this proposition from an examination of the forms in which life, even in its most miniscule incarnations, achieves phenomenal expression. We now come to the world of the plant. No age and no people has ever entertained the slightest doubt as to the propriety of attributing life to the plant, and indeed, both abstract thought and primitive speculation are as one in their inclination to see in the prolific and luxuriant primeval forest a far more suggestive image of the wealth of life than either abstract or primitive thought could perceive in the restless immobility that characterizes the animal kingdom. The prehistoric world's almost universal reverence for trees has its roots in this very soil. For all that, no one who has managed to liberate himself from the false notions that we have dismissed *supra*, will attribute consciousness to the plant, for he is now equipped with the gift of comprehension, regardless of whether he chooses to focus that gift upon the ray of sunlight, or upon the light of his own experience. We must now proceed to another vantage point, namely, that at which cognition and life enter into palpable association with each other.

The structural element of both plant and animal is the cell. Life persists solely through the operations of the cellular body. However, life as such is now and forever completely excluded from the dimension of consciousness. In every one of the innumerable births and deaths endured by transient organisms, the life of the cell persists without the slightest interruption all the way back to the protoplasmic entities that flourished in the primordial terrestrial seas. In spite of the fact that our conscious memory can recollect nothing whatever of our embryonic development within the womb, the living cell silently preserves the accumulated experience of our remotest ancestors. Since the life within us at any given moment is the transitory façade atop an incessantly driving flood, which, without pause or hindrance, rushes back to the geological epoch during which such crystalline formations as the schists were deposited, we can see that the duration of consciousness, in comparison with such temporal immensities, is precisely equivalent to the miniscule life-span of an individual person. Still, could it not be the case that life and consciousness are interchangeable entities?

We do not require a second glance outside to discover an instructive analogy, for consciousness resembles nothing so much as the sheet-lightning that over and over again flashes and flames above the waters of life, and which, from time to time, ignites a tight, white circle that blazes briefly. And whilst the lightning relinquishes the distant horizon unto a darkness utterly alien to consciousness, we are liberated at last from the tedium of the quotidian round. The alleged psychology of today condescendingly dismisses the whole area of "the prophetic gift," from presentiment, dream, and instinct, all the way

to telepathy, clairvoyance, and visionary somnambulism (upon all of these things the Romantics speculated quite brilliantly; these thinkers grouped such phenomena under the comprehensive heading of the “nocturnal pole” of consciousness). Our contemporary psychologists are convinced that they reject all consideration of these matters in part because of their putative associations with the “occult,” and in part because of certain alleged associations with half-baked medical theories. This attitude is not merely the expression of a philosophical hollowness; such blindness can only have had its origins in an exaggeratedly intellectualistic misapprehension of life. In the first place, insight clearly indicates that it belongs to the very nature of consciousness that it subsists in a sort of subjugation to rhythmical alternations such as those that transpire between kindled blaze and dimming flame, between seizing and releasing, and between waking and sleeping. Indeed, although the life of man rushes by in an uninterrupted continuity, it too is subject to the same law, for the life of a man is fated to be but a brief moment in the rhythmical alternation between birth and death. On the other hand, we do have an intimate companion by our side for one-third of every day, for even consciousness experiences exhaustion, as it were, and must participate in our nightly slumbers; it is only then that we are aware neither of the ego nor of the world outside. No more conclusive evidence could be gathered to bolster our case on behalf of the radical difference of essence that characterizes consciousness and life, for whoever lumps the two together must logically conclude that the sleeper is, in fact, dead, until he is resurrected from death in the morning light. So untenable is the familiar notion that sleep and death are bound together as if by some strange affinity, that the healing, restorative, and constitutional powers of life are never more effectively enhanced than when we resort to the simple remedy of deep sleep! This truth is clearly communicated in the images that have come down to us from the legendary lore of Antiquity, for there we see characters drawn out of the dreams that came to them in the cavern of the Earth-mother, or in the temple of Asklepios, the sigils and premonitory visions of an ecstatic life as well as the regulations governing the procedures whereby the sickly could be restored to a healthy life. We all recognize these truths, even if many of us today seem to have forgotten their significance amidst the turmoil and banality of day-to-day considerations. Any man, no matter how consistently sober in demeanor he may appear to be, can certainly recall a moment during his youthful years when he awoke from slumber, feeling as if his soul had slyly slipped out of the protective maternal arms only to find itself exposed to the harsh glare of an inexorable light. He may well recall a mysterious emotion that grew within him, until he was overwhelmed by a feeling of homesickness on the part of the soul for its lost nocturnal life. The profound revelation that is communicated to us in the experience of such moods recalls the fairy tales (*Märchen*) that tell us of a lost paradise, and of those golden and silver ages during which, to employ an expression of Hesiod, men were like children or even like plants that sprout up from the soil. Afterwards, situated somewhat as Heracles was when confronted by the choice between life and spirit, mankind chose the road of

thinking and willing, and, like Heracles, man has found naught upon that road but sorrow, hardship, and frightful adventures.

We have indicated that life and apprehension are incommensurable entities, and we have likewise grasped the distinguishing criteria of consciousness. Let us now extend the scope of our enquiry in order to determine what implications these discoveries entail for the nature of life, and what modifications might be incorporated in the natural sciences as well should it ever become feasible to replace the current mechanistic scheme with a doctrine of life. Bearing this purpose in mind, we now proceed to refute the familiar dogma that proclaims that life is merely a mechanistic process, and that the living body in particular may be accurately described as an intricate machine.

We attempted on one occasion to transport our self completely outside the sphere of active comprehension; we therefore chose the most simple, as well as the most basic procedure: perception. Now what can we grasp as being really true? Of course, someone might well venture to object that there could scarcely be a satisfactory answer to such a question. Nevertheless, it is only to the extent that something impinges upon our senses that we will be able to achieve an act of perception. Thus, there are innumerable things that are accessible to us: in space, which contains all that exists as if within a reservoir, the illimitable manifold of objects, such as stones, plants, animals, men, houses, countries, mountains, clouds, seas, constellations, and finally the similarly multiform movements of these and other things. It seemed to us at the time that this answer, although we had not foreseen its implications, in turn raised a problem, the solution to which seemed to us to promise very interesting results. Everything, in fact, that we have enumerated, along with everything that we could ever conceivably enumerate, can be described as a thing or object. We perceive things and the processes in which they become involved, such as rest and self-motility, arriving and departing, coming and going, in such a manner that we cannot even begin to grasp how we are able to perceive one object in yet another perspective.

For those who have already familiarized themselves somewhat with the relevant questions, we would like to introduce one more parenthetical observation at this point. Ever since the time of Locke, there have been discussions from time to time regarding something called "inner" perception; it is alleged that, more or less in the manner in which we deduce information from the actions of ghostly visitants, we receive knowledge of the world by piercing through the exterior aspect in order to comprehend the inner reality of perceived objects. We are in opposition to the viewpoint of the majority of contemporary psychologists who hold that it is not through perception, but through self-scrutiny that we gain our knowledge of man's inner life. If our psychologists could only prove the proposition in question conclusively, they would once more have reinforced their doctrine that the character of actuality inheres solely in things. However, is it not the case that this theory logically entails that its adherents ignore spaces, movements, and bodies and devote their time instead to investigating spirits and their acts of judgment, opinions, and volitions? The problem involved in this situation is identical to that involved in the case of the thing, in that spirits and their acts

resemble things in that all of these entities “confront” us as fixed objects that somehow manage to remain unalterably the same even under the impress of the passage of time. So much for “inner” perception!

That which holds true for perceptive apprehension, likewise governs the process of apprehension in general; it links itself to objects and to nothing else. Therefore we must insist that, through mere apprehension, we can never obtain the slightest understanding of life. Were we to place ourselves before a spirit that is nothing but spirit, such as the god about whom the Christians inform us that he is omniscient, in that this god possesses the ability to predict the entire future, we should realize that this god is, in fact, subject to one significant limitation. Although this “spirit” sees and understands “all things,” he is and will remain completely ignorant of life. Now, such a spirit would indeed be able to accurately gauge the positions of bodies as well as their internal processes; he would also be endowed with the ability to penetrate with his sharp eye into the very core of such physical structures as atoms and fluids, substances whose exhaustive analysis would require centuries of diligent labor on the part of our scientists; but even when that much has been conceded, this spirit could never participate in the stormy agitation at the heart of the living substance. The hither and thither mobility of creeping, running, and flying animals would be to him utterly indistinguishable from such phenomena as the fall of a stone, the moaning of the wind, and the turbulent movements of the waves upon the ocean. To such a spirit, the structural transformations undergone by a growing plant would appear to be identical in essence to the alterations that subtly alter the contours of a gradually eroding mountain peak. Both living and non-living entities reveal to him only the existential alterations in form that occur in mechanically driven things and molecules. To be sure, other spirits might appear before his penetrating gaze, spirits who are candid even in communicating their most cherished secrets and their as-yet unborn impulses. Nevertheless, he would never stake his all on any belief that such spirits were in any way intimately bound up with living, physical bodies. Outside of space and without location as they are, they are everywhere — and nowhere. The spiritual appears neither as a living expression of a bodily substrate, nor, conversely, does the bodily substance appear as the radius of action of the spiritual entity. The world thus collapses, falling into two completely alienated halves: a bodiless spiritual half and an embodied mechanistic half. All that we seem to lack, to paraphrase Goethe’s poem, is “the living bond”!

The “divorce” to which we have just referred is not some idle fantasy, but rather a shabby rehash of a doctrine whose theoretical presentation was first formulated during Plato’s lifetime. Nevertheless, the most flagrant and dogmatic revival of this style of thought began at the Renaissance. On one side, there is “matter”; on the other, we have “spirit.” Now matter is spatial and embodied, while spirit is non-spatial and bodiless; matter obeys every law promulgated by our mechanistic science; spirit functions on the basis of an autonomous “freedom.” We are confronted here by the self-same splitting of the world-image that we encountered earlier in our discussion of the Cartesian *cogitare*

and *esse*, which we appropriated as our starting point on the road that has conducted us to our demonstration of the following truth: we can never formulate a concept of life if we insist on confusing life and concept. Let us now proceed by insisting that it belongs to the very nature of comprehension that it relates solely to the sphere of objects and mechanisms. Not only is thinking consciousness incapable of discovering life: it also possesses the ability to murder life. And whatever has been pierced by the searchlight of the intellect is instantaneously transformed into a mere thing, a quantifiable object for our thought that is henceforth only mechanically related to other objects. The paradoxical expression of a modern sage, “we perceive only that which is dead,” is a lapidary formulation of a deep truth.

However, even if the terms “mechanistic” and “lifeless” should come to be regarded as interchangeable, we would still refuse to endorse the views of certain well-intentioned contemporary biologists who compound the reigning foolishness in their field by attempting to locate the definitive proof that the living body is not a machine in certain processes occurring in physical bodies. It is a machine, to the extent that we endeavor to comprehend its workings, just as it will remain perpetually inconceivable to the extent that it is alive. Those who announce that dead matter actually possesses the capacity to generate life are not simply committing an insignificant error of empirical observation, for theirs is an error whose sheer idiocy can in no way be regarded as inferior to that of the crackpot who has managed to convince himself that the meters, kilograms, and atomic weights with whose assistance we are able to quantify various natural processes, are in fact the very causative agents that bring about the manifold transformations in nature that they had been designed for the express purpose of measuring! Just as the longitudinal oscillation is certainly not the tone itself, but merely the quantifiable substratum underlying the tone, so too is the chemical-physical process transpiring in the living physical cell certainly not its life, but rather precisely that which is relevant to the condition, governed by strict enforcement of natural law, of its “material” (*dinglichen*) bearer. Does it not then appear to be the case that we must renounce our quest to formulate a science of life?

We must, in fact, abandon any such attempt so long as we remain stuck fast in the empty *cogitare*, since in lieu of this there is only the *esse*. No type of insight can be considered feasible under such circumstances other than that which can be rigidly fixed in “exact” concepts. An individual student may even relinquish every one of these options if that which is still referred to as “science” should, in the final analysis, seem in his eyes to be more like an initiation into some mystery cult; the only requirement in such a case is that he must not confuse his unpretentious thirst for knowledge with ignorance or uncertainty. When we summon up a recollection that affects us personally, the revived memory immeasurably enriches our living substance; indeed, we may be so compelled by the alluring charm of our recollected vision that we can only feel pity for the conventional scientist who must surely be tormented to distraction when he must attempt to satisfactorily account for the phenomenon! Life is not “observed,” but it is felt with all of our darkest powers. And we are only able to achieve access to this

feeling of living actuality with complete certainty in our deepest inwardness; beyond that, nothing can be definitely asserted. Whether we judge, assert, will or wish, dream, or fantasize, each and every one of these activities is supported and penetrated by the self-same stream of elementary emotional life, which is incomparable, irreducible, and beyond the reach of rationalization or coercion, for we are apodictically certain that life can never, ever be “grasped” (begriffen). And since we feel ourselves to be filled with this vitality, we therefore bring ourselves into that most intimate bond with the substance of life: the image of the world. Briefly put: we experience the personal and participate in the experience of a stranger. From that standpoint, it surely follows that we can know of life only that which our vitality allows us to know based solely on how deeply we are able to immerse our being in the vital substrate; a profound immersion in the substance of life will endow us with the ability to revive a living memory even within an enfeebled consciousness. It is not in the objectivity of outer and inner percepts, with their endless inventory of categories (of things, forces, causes, effects, and movements), but solely and utterly in an orientation toward the realm of experience, that we can establish an anchorage for the science of life. But now asymptotic formulae have banished the science of life from the living depths of the national spirit until at last, like a growing plant that vainly seeks for nourishment on a deforested continent, the national spirit is likewise stunted and deformed due to the relentless pressure of a leveling age.

We now must explore a world whose philosophy regards mechanistic, quantifying thought as having no independent existence whatsoever, and which regards the results achieved by such formalistic modes of thought as merely the conceptual precipitate that has been prescinded from a living entity. No living cell could ever have arisen upon the Earth if the Earth itself, as well as the entire universe, were not, in fact, a phenomenal manifestation of life. Likewise, the fall of the stone, the formation of the clouds, the torrential downpour of the rain, are outward expressions of life, and surely in the first rank of such expressions is the Earth, just as in the second rank we find the grander modes of interconnected cosmic life. The planetary systems, the firmament of the fixed stars, and the other astral phenomena richly proclaim the presence of a vital unity whose temporal duration so far exceeds the scope of human judgment that its very longevity makes it appear as if the cosmos receded from our gaze, leaving behind the impression of an ostensibly unchanging state, the characteristics of which are preserved in the crude expositions of our mechanistic empiricism. Every truly profound system of metaphysics must perforce valorize the primal actuality of life, just as every system of mathematics must valorize its own fundamental truths. The mechanical forces can be comprehended from the side of the living substance in the analytic process of mere understanding, but there is no reverse direction of apprehension by which an authentic comprehension of the substance of life can be derived from an analysis of mechanical forces. The core questions will remain: what sort of event transpired that enabled the planetary mode of life to culminate in cellular life; what potential transformations are still in store for life; what does the vital and eternally rhythmical pulse-pattern of

“coming-to-be” and “passing away” mean to the planetary life; what is the meaning of death and life to the living organism; and how, finally, does the “macrocosm” effect changes within the “microcosm”?

In spite of all the chatter of yesterday and today on the topic of “progress,” there have been prophetic souls who have drawn our attention to the implications of the indubitable increase of man’s mastery (alas! along with man’s destruction) of nature. But even these prophets have not devoted sufficient attention to the equally blatant assaults on the values of the soul; and some even attempt to introduce a certain balance into their meditations by insisting that, at the very least, our increased scientific knowledge will eventually enable us to recover our health and dispel the shadows that loom over our future. But it is only when we ignore the profound truth that man can indeed increase his store of knowledge without increasing his wisdom, and that he can likewise establish order without experiencing a concomitant yearning for beauty, that we feel compelled to oppose with all of our power the unthinking respect that has been accorded to modern science as well as to the course that it has set for itself. Contemporary science has, in effect, erected a hypertrophic “world-mechanism” (in the broadest sense of the word), which, we freely admit, no earlier age could ever have approximated. But science has also blinded itself to the point of hopelessness before the incomparably greater and more widely ramified question: the question of life. And surely the world has never before witnessed the spectacle of individuals who have become so wounded by their experience of the modern world that they would actively seek to establish connections with an earlier wisdom and with their ancestors, as if their greatest hope was that they might somehow successfully reverse the ominous course that the world has for so long seemed intent on pursuing! And indeed, from out of the vanished nineteenth century, and in spite of all of its technology and positivism, we must hail — for the creative work of these men of the last century has somehow survived the years, like splendid oases resisting the onslaught of the spreading wasteland known as “progress” — we must hail, I say, the dream-rich doctrine of life formulated by the German Romantics, as well as the mighty religion of life devised by Friedrich Nietzsche. Nevertheless, even though these participants in the Romantic movement had been favored with a far more rigorous training than any scholar had ever received before their time, and although they were additionally equipped with a far more sophisticated inventory of technical implements than any of their forerunners could ever have envisaged, those superb resurrections of past modes of life, which comprise the loftiest achievements of the Romantics, had long ago been completely surpassed by a similar group of inquisitive students, namely the pre-Socratics, those semi-mythical trailblazers of European thought, whose system of thought culminated in the so-called “hylozoism.” The student who immerses himself, lovingly and wisely, in the symbolic language of the pre-Socratics must unfailingly conclude that no succeeding age — and especially not that of the pretentious twin peaks of Hellenic wisdom, Plato and Aristotle! — has matched, in sheer profundity and panoramic scope, those dazzling philosophical ruins that we continually visit in our quest for wisdom: Thales,

Anaximander, Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Pythagoras are their names. The least that we say of these giants is that they were well on the way to the epochal discovery that an authentic interpretation of the world must entail a doctrine of life. They also understood full well that the mechanistic aspect of reality should be reduced to the status of an insignificant by-product of the living world. Precisely what experimental tools, methodological advances, and theoretical frameworks may be developed to assist researchers in devising a reformed doctrine of life, we are in no position to be able to predict. Perhaps it will be possible on some future occasion to delve more deeply into some of these matters, and to examine as well the treasure-trove of fresh ideas discovered by the great scientific visionaries who, even now, seek to establish the foundations of a more profound doctrine, a true science of life, which may ultimately render today's narrow-minded biological teaching obsolete.

Carl Gustav Carus as Romantic Thinker (1930)

Ever since the author of these lines rediscovered the psychologist Carl Gustav Carus and was also able to demonstrate the profound relevance of his teachings for contemporary science, one does hear his name mentioned from time to time, but one must also ask: is anyone actually reading his works? It does seem, in fact, that in spite of the fact that many students now recognize his name, the true significance of his teaching goes unrecognized. Thus, before we can comprehend the intellectual situation in which Carus developed, we might mention some of the established facts in the story of his creative life.

Precisely four decades after the birth of Goethe, Carus was born in 1779 in Leipzig; his father was a master-dyer, and his mother was the descendant of a long line of brilliant natural scientists and medical men. His earliest conscious thought, he tells us in his *Denkwürdigkeiten* (Memoirs), occurred during the fifth year of his life, and his recollection is so characteristic of the man, that we now repeat it. In leafing through the pages of the old *Orbis pictus* of Amos Comenius, the boy stumbled upon an illustration bearing the inscription "The Human Soul." "There I saw the drawing of a table, upon which stood a triangle adorned with the eye of God and a sketch of a human figure." This chance event immediately caused him to turn his gaze to his inner world, and in a moment he was seized by the cryptic formula: "Even you possess a soul, even you are a soul," and for many days he was unable to get these words out of his mind; in fact, they were to haunt him down to the very day of his death.

In 1804, he attended the Hochschule in Leipzig, beginning his studies with botany, all the while sketching every plant species that he found in the district; finally, he devoted himself passionately to anatomical studies, winning his doctorate in 1811 with *An Attempt at a General Theory of Life*. In 1814, he became a full Professor and Director of the maternity hospital in Dresden. He established gynecology as a discrete discipline, worked on comparative anatomy (he provided his own illustrations for his

published work in this field!), and somehow managed to find sufficient time away from his medical practice to create brilliant oil paintings depicting the seasons, landscapes, and architectural monuments in which he took so much delight.

During this same period he became friendly with Caspar David Friedrich; in 1818 he inaugurated his correspondence with Goethe, whom he was to visit in Weimar on July 21, 1821. He traveled widely, visiting such places as Rügen, Prague, Switzerland, and Genoa. His studies, which were incredibly comprehensive in their scope, dealt not only with the biology of living organisms, but extended as well into such fields as geology, paleontology, craniology, physiognomics, "vital magnetism," landscape painting, epistemology, metaphysics, and research into the history of literature. His final tally of published works soars to 81, but that number does not tell the whole story of his productivity, for most of his works appeared in multi-volume sets!

In 1827 Carus was appointed to the prestigious position of personal physician to the king of Saxony, and he was to remain at that post until his death in 1869.

There can be no doubt that Carus was one of the greatest scientists to emerge from the period to which historians have given the unfortunate name of "Late Romantic." The so-called "late" Romantics were, in fact, the consummate Romantics, for the "early" Romantics did not fully deserve the name. Even now the name "Romantic" has led to numerous misunderstandings, which suggest comparisons with the pseudo-distinctions that have been alleged to exist between a "Roman" and a "Foreign" spiritual tendency. Likewise, one must occasionally endure the parsonic prattle of the enemies of the Romantics, who insist that the Romantic movement was merely a stopover on the reactionary high-road to a full-fledged revival of "Catholicism" (ignoring the fact that the charge holds true only for a mere handful of the movement's adherents). The heart of the matter is that the Romantics' greatest achievement was in developing a completely unprecedented vision of the world of actuality.

Likewise, the Romantics represented a completely Germanic mode of contemplation. No non-German land can seriously entertain the claim of precedence for one of their own candidates, for no non-German writer ever approached the lofty achievements of the great German Romantics.

The German Romantics formed a unified front against the mindless cult of "reason" that so agitated eighteenth century Europe, in large part because, unlike their rivals, the Romantics were never animated by the obsessive classicism of the Hellenic revival, preferring instead to examine their own German past; and in this process the Romantics rediscovered, and reaffirmed, the greatness of the Gothic Middle Ages just as they opened up a whole new field of study in their research into the cultural genius of the prehistoric Germanic world. And the Romantics were not merely a band of wandering poets and dreamers, for they also created a Romantic music and a Romantic style in painting, a uniquely Romantic style of historiography, a Romantic ethnology, and even a Romantic doctrine of political economy! Transcending all these achievements was their creation of an idiosyncratically Romantic school of natural science. In every one of the fields that we have mentioned, the German Romantics became the truly

significant pathfinders. Names like Niebuhr, Schlosser, Raumer, Ranke, Arndt, Jakob and Wilhelm Grimm, are just a few among the countless creators of that imperishable intellectual revolution known as Romanticism, and they have provided us with a rich legacy that even now is making brilliant contributions to cultural history.

And the same holds true in the scientific fields. The very first formulation of the cellular theory, in fact, was the work of Lorenz Oken. The theory of evolutionary development, which arranges all organic life into a series of transformations, has its source in the speculations of the Romantic “Nature-Philosophers.” Cuvier, Goethe, Geoffrey, and Treviranus were the forerunners, von Baer and — above all — Carus, were the most powerful preservers and extenders of this tradition of evolutionary theory, which has, of course, ruled the scientific universe ever since. Finally, let us dismiss the blatantly mendacious fable convenue whispered by those fools and faddists who insinuate that the Romantics never made a genuine discovery that was not preordained by a very partisan oracle, namely, their “wish-fantasies.” The Romantics justly preferred to regard them as inner convictions!

The Romantics knew full well that they had involved themselves in a bitter war of the spirit that was already raging ceaselessly and savagely between the vital worldview of the Romantics and the dictatorship of the Enlightenment saviors, who preached that perpended world-as-machine “philosophy” that these shamans of the mechanistic apocalypse insisted would be man’s salvation.

Sadly, the mechanistic apostles had already triumphed in one campaign after another from the middle of the previous century and down to the age of Carus, but it is only fair to recognize that the mechanistic movement’s publicists and prophets were themselves probably unaware of the sinister fact that their banal theories were being remorselessly exploited in order to enrich and empower one particular social class, specifically, the cash-crazed technocrats who were mounting the Industrial Revolution even as the Romantics waged their quixotic war against the machine-worship that was soon to enslave even the machine’s victims.

Admittedly, the Romantics had their own limitations (one of the few things that they possessed in common with the rest of “mankind”). They were also bogged down in the Platonic worship of “ideas,” a crippling error that they compounded by incorporating the equally disastrous notion — probably influenced by Goethe’s adoption of the same idea — that behind the unconscious processes that transpire within the living world, there exists a type of “World-Reason” that keeps everything in line. Nevertheless, their errors have perished for the most part, or at least the influence that their false doctrines once exerted has been diminished appreciably, and nothing can ever change the fact that it is to the German Romantics that we owe the imperishable treasures that they discovered within their own visionary hearts.

When we ask ourselves what was the source of that unique vision of the Romantics, the clear and unambiguous answer resounds: the Romantic thinkers sought to follow Goethe’s example by focusing their attention less upon the causes that brought about the phenomena before them, and more upon their meaning. However, they also

recognized — and in this area, in fact, they went far beyond the scope of Goethe's research — that the universe can only be comprehended as a realm in which phenomenal essences — souls — appear. As a result their natural science entailed an attendant psychology, just as their psychology entailed a comprehensive system of natural science. No Romantic had a clearer perception than Carus of the way in which science and art led to a unified existence at the deepest level of life, and this insistence upon the innermost indivisibility of science and art became a slogan that he employed on numerous occasions as a true description of his intellectual mission. Just as Carus sought to indicate the visible signatures that identify specific forms of planetary life in his landscape painting, so also did he employ the methods of natural science in order to inscribe the nature of that planetary life in the appropriate scientific formulae.

The richest fruit to emerge from these meditations was his treatise *Psyche: On the Developmental History of the Soul*. The first edition of this treatise, which he had begun to work on during 1843, was brought out by the publisher Michaelis in 1846. The second edition appeared in 1851 (Diederichs has recently brought out a reprint of this second edition).

Carus was well aware of the outstanding value of this work, which in later years he would always describe as the closest to his heart of all his published treatises.

Let us now present a brief sketch of at least the main points proclaimed in this treatise. If it is true that the soul is identical with that which the ancients called the “principal of life” (an idea, of course, that has been forgotten since the age of Descartes), then it must be the case that the soul cannot be divided into component parts any more than it can have received its nature from the addition of discrete components that can be assembled to form a whole. Since Descartes, however, a completely erroneous doctrine has infected the science of psychology due to the reigning superstition that psychology can only achieve results by basing itself upon a program of mathematical quantification — and this is something that has long been the established practice among researchers of the “mechanistic” persuasion, a school that prospers today beyond its dreams. Carus holds that just as the organism is formed from the fertilized cell from which developmental phase it begins to differentiate itself, thus every transformation of the soul is a process of development, and as such it has no conceivable resemblance to the mere collection of measurable points or to the process whereby a factory worker assembles a machine out of its discrete components.

If the soul is the principle of life, then we are justified in concluding that it cannot also be synonymous with consciousness. Every cell that makes up our body lives, but its life and experience is as devoid of the faculty of consciousness as a house plant. When we observe life in its antithetic relationship to consciousness, we discover something that Goethe was the first to comprehend and to which he gave the name “unconscious,” which is the reason why Carus explicitly states on the very first page of *Psyche* that “the key to an understanding of conscious thought resides in the realm of the unconscious.” Any thinker who sought to exhaust the implications of that proposition would soon

discover that a human lifetime is not sufficient to permit him to achieve his goal. We will restrict ourselves here to drawing your attention to just three points.

Since the age of Descartes, philosophers have directed their attention to the nature of moods, feelings, rages, and so on; and yet after all the time they have devoted to these matters, they find themselves precisely where the founders of the rationalist school of thought began: thus, feelings are *perturbationes animi*, or — to put it more cautiously — they are dark, chaotic thoughts. One may recall in this connection the elevation of feeling that occurs when we witness a sunset or when we listen to a Beethoven symphony. Nevertheless, there are defective doctrines at work here, all of which must be overturned before we can arrive at a purely philosophical analysis of these discoveries. It is at this precise point that one may first be struck by the intuitive conviction that the “cult of reason” and the cult of nihilism are thick as thieves with each other.

However, since the age of Carus, we are able to understand that feelings — and this holds true of every conceivable species — merge their substance with consciousness from moment to moment under the governance of the overall condition of the body, which in turn experiences transformations under the influence of the impressions that fall upon the senses. The inherently unconscious processes of life exert their influence upon consciousness, and the resultant effects we call feelings, and this fact satisfactorily accounts for the obvious ability of an access to joy to improve the condition of the organism, just as an increase in sorrow or melancholy limits and diminishes the organism. Why, for instance, do intoxicating beverages produce their familiar effects? Carus understands why, and he explains that the chemical processes involved link the living organism to the condition of the soul that results from the consumption of alcohol. Therefore, there does indeed exist a “spirit of wine”!

Further, all living processes occur rhythmically; one recalls the pulses, the respiration, the alternation between sleep and waking. In addition, we must understand that every consciousness necessarily sinks periodically into the unconscious, and it is at those times that the healing processes transpire.

There can never be an identical repeat of a so-called representation. It is much more accurate to say that a representation will either fade and disappear or it will elevate itself and thereby acquire a “nimbus.” One may recall the joyous blossoming of one’s youth, which remains in memory long after childhood has ended. Our consciousness bears the colors of our own nature, and our character reaches into our most sublime meditations.

Finally, the loss of awareness that accompanies a profound and dreamless sleep is not to be interpreted as a decrease in life, for in the most acute sense it represents a growth and an improvement in the vital powers. Meanwhile, the limits that divide the conscious life from the unconscious may collapse, resulting in the possibility that those limits which separate the organism from the life of the world will also disappear. It was in the pondering of thoughts such as these that the Romantics were led to investigate the phenomena of somnambulism, dreams, clairvoyance, presentiments, and also to

discover whether or not an infection of the soul could be alleviated by the application of the healing powers of magic. Still, Carus would not have been the grand Apollo of the spirit that he always remained if he did not carefully protect his mind from the influence of certain incautious exaggerations to which such meditations might lead.

Nevertheless, even in his most Platonic moments, Carl Gustav von Carus stands out as one of the greatest, as well as one of the last, of the authentic Romantic thinkers.

On the Value of Science (1930)

Before we can hope to answer the question concerning the real value of science, one would be well advised to prepare oneself, paradoxically, by asking another, more basic question; namely, what does one mean, precisely, by the word “science”? One must also evaluate with some judiciousness the nature and worth of those other extant values with which science competes for preeminence in our lives. When we overhear some naïve soul hold forth with such canting nonsense as “science has already decided...” and so forth, we must beware that we ourselves do not succumb to the false notion that science, as the highest of all values, is uniquely endowed with the capacity to generate categorically valid judgments. One can hardly conceive a more hollow proposition. On the other hand, of course, there have always been those truths that have managed to gain first the interest of, and ultimate vindication from, the scientific establishment only decades or even centuries after they were discovered. The more apodictically certain the scientist is as to the ultimate validity of the procedure whereby he has alighted upon his experimental findings, the less valid will his deliberations turn out to have been, in the final analysis. To an even greater extent, it is the experimental demonstration, or that which gives at least the appearance of being such, that makes of these researches something that most scientists feel fully justified in describing as true science; and the facts are, again, validated for these students when they have properly conducted the experiment in question. They seek some measure of experimental certitude through the utilization of the methodology of quantitative formalism, which, they insist, can provide a solid guarantee of valid results only if the researcher has ignored the influence of personal affects, or emotional stressors, in order to attend to the precise measurement of the quantities that constitute the sole aim of all experimental research. Bearing this notion in mind, the scientist must conform his behavior to the dictates of a code that values nothing in the world more highly than “factuality,” for it is this very attention to “factuality” on the part of the researcher that serves as the sole guarantor of the validity of his experimental work. Finally, we are more than willing to admit that every conceivable species of philosophical “irrationalism” currently on the market, whether the “irrationalist” seeks to substitute this brainstorm or that flash of inspiration, or some other stray burst of intuitive “insight,” necessarily possesses no more inherent truth content than a mere desert mirage or feverish hallucination.

Bearing these observations in mind, let us recognize also that the will-to-objectivity must never be erroneously promoted to the post of automatic guarantor that the student who possesses this invaluable volition will enjoy a successful outcome in every bit of research to which he devotes his time. For one thing, erroneous notions will persistently tempt the student to ignore certain inconvenient realities. One especially troublesome fact that often escapes the attention of the novice is that behind the conscious purposes that he assures himself are animating his mind even when confronting the most intractable difficulties (examples of which, of course, will block the path to truth for every researcher at one time or another), other purposes — the “driving forces,” to speak the language of characterology — a man’s personal “interests,” are oftentimes at work in the subterranean depths of the unconscious, from which emerge the honey-sweet and gently whispered invitations to false philosophy posted by those unconfessed and scarcely recognized messages transmitted by the “driving forces.” Such lures have clouded the will-to-objectivity and thereby compromised the intellectual probity of scientific investigators throughout Western history (one is compelled, paradoxically, to inscribe upon the list of these beguiled and self-deceived sages even one or two who even now occupy — and deservedly so — the very pinnacles of scientific fame). However, the quite savage criticisms that, even as we speak, are being launched against the sciences from every conceivable direction, turn out upon closer scrutiny to be aimed not against science in general, but only against the particularly tendentious and ill-considered manner in which science has developed in the post-Renaissance period. The direction that we are pondering has flourished so richly that it has at last become the one and only method that is regarded as universally valid. The inner meaning of this trend was perceived quite early on in the timeframe in question; thus, we find a thinker like Auguste Comte distilling the central doctrine until it has been reduced to his formulaic slogan: *voir pour prévoir*. It was only what was to be expected that since Comte’s time, the orthodox scientist explicitly assures us that he sees his mission to be the ultimate enslavement of nature to the demands of man’s will. It has not escaped the notice of alert students, however, that there is the very species of science that seeks to discover the laws that regulate nature; specifically, the analysis of physical forces and chains of causality whose solution is determined through the statistical analysis of the relevant data. The sole imperative governing this approach is the compulsion to quantify the whole natural world in order to constrain its processes under the governance of the will-to-cognition.

On the other hand, there exists a radically different perspective on cognition whose earliest, as well as loftiest, manifestation transpired during the golden age of Greek philosophy, and this achievement exerted a profound influence upon Medieval scholasticism, although speculative metaphysicians during the Middle Ages were constrained by the crippling influence of the regnant church authorities, who coerced thinkers into strict conformity with the superstitions and dogmas of their cult. Man seeks to develop knowledge as to the nature of the world, and he also endeavors to comprehend the forces that function as the foundations of that world; likewise, he is compelled to

delve into questions as to the origins of that world, which desires an answer to the question as to whether the workings of the world-process have been pre-determined under the constraints of a strict teleology that pursues, in some as yet undetermined manner, an ultimate goal whose attainment has been decreed by destiny, or, on the contrary, whether the world-process had no beginning just as it will have no end, and whose heartbeats pulsate in a rhythmic pattern that alternates between the coming-to-be and the passing-away of cosmic processes and telluric life-forms, a process that is analogous to the ceaseless, rhythmic swinging to-and-fro of the pendulum in a clock. Above all, when the initial question as to the primary object sought by the researcher is broached, we find that the experimental scientist, who brags insistently about his wide-open gaze on the real world, suddenly announces that his empire now embraces every conceivable formulation of distinctions which, we are stunned to be informed, must always remain beyond the sphere of man's non-experimentally-derived competence! How clearly this insight reveals the strange fear that obsesses materialistic scientists, namely, the haunting dread that every estimation of value and quantitative sanity will be shattered to a million fragments at the very instant when we admit the possibility that man may actually possess an intellectual faculty that enables him to make genuine discoveries of a metaphysical nature! The discoveries that have been achieved by scientists who espouse a methodological formalism based upon an alleged universally applicable quantifiability of everything that exists, are no more significant to the goals of genuine science than so many additional tools at a work-site. And it is precisely these "exact" findings that in truth provide the student with nothing more earth-shaking than an advanced yard-stick that should increase somewhat our extant store of cognitive data. On top of that, this whole formalistic methodology has never, and CAN never, succeed in any one of its attempts to engage in research into the mysteries of human consciousness.

If the student should be unable or unwilling in any significant measure to comprehend the broadly sketched outlines that we have drawn thus far, he will thereby have prevented his understanding from gaining access to a significant dimension of insight into our exposition of the matter at hand. It is important that we all bear in mind that, to the extent that any student involves his thinking brain in scientific research, he has thereby embarked upon a course of activity that he must regard as entailing his trafficking with a substantial reality, namely "actuality" (*Wirklichkeit*). From our historical studies, however, we know that it was comparatively late in the evolution of human development, such as in ancient Greece, or, more precisely, with the advent of Protagoras, that we find individual thinkers undertaking the first truly rigorous attempt to demonstrate successfully, by means of strictly logical procedures, that science could lay just and incontrovertible claims to possess firm foundation in truth's bedrock. Shortly after that epochal event, and building directly upon that very achievement, the Greek philosophers worked out a unique and unprecedented mode of research, namely epistemology (*Erkenntnislehre*), or, to put it more precisely still, "the science of cognition" (*Bewusstseinswissenschaft*), that modality of reasoning or medi-

tating upon processes or actions that examines psychical processes and spiritual acts as elements transpiring within the structured cosmos that houses man and enables him to conduct social action; now science would for the first time be able to shed some light on political man as well as natural processes. From these investigations, in the fullness of time, there developed even more astonishing branches of epistemological research, among which we may mention the “theory of perception” (*Wahrnehmungslehre*). If we seek for an example of the influence exerted by these epistemological advances upon the development of recent science, we have no need to look any further than the field of modern physics (taking the designation “physics” in the broadest sense of the word).

We have previously expressed certain reservations regarding what seem to us to be untenable and even counterproductive approaches to the larger problems involved in the striving for cognitive certitude. Not an insignificant number of scientists have recently responded to the perceived impasse with the novel claim that “actuality,” as well as such “truths” that we can pronounce regarding the nature of that actuality, can best be validated on the basis of whatever “works” for us at the time (“pragmatism,” they call it). Many proponents of this “philosophy” occupy their time with physics, since it is the most cherished conviction of this school that their beloved experimental work, when conducted in the modern laboratory under the most stringent system of controls and safeguards, forms the soundest foundation for any valid research program, while also furnishing the student with a guarantee that he is doing science in the strict sense of the word. Thus, armed with this experimental *sine qua non*, he is perfectly prepared to test the truth content (or lack of such) embodied in a particular hypothesis, and to determine whether or not the suggested hypothesis turns out to be a mare’s nest of flummery or a brilliantly constructed theory that should enable us to discover previously unknown truths. The philosopher of the pragmatic school derives additional satisfaction from the seemingly universal inability of rival scholars, who seem utterly incapable of mounting a credible critique of the claims by pragmatists that they have, finally and permanently, banished all “wish-fantasies” from laboratory work and from the refereed journals in which that lab work is preserved, like flies in amber, so that it may be rendered forever beyond reproach or cavil. To this conviction we must respond by insisting that the question as to the nature of actuality is indeed a metaphysical conundrum; the physical scientists have thus far sought to evade our attempts to acquire certain necessary clarifications from their hands regarding these matters, and they have resorted to the completely illegitimate importation of an obviously false doctrine into the debate, namely, their utterly wretched attempt to portray the living cosmos and man himself as if they were mere machines and no more than clanking mechanisms. When we scrutinize such highly ingenious experimental research, what we really discover is nothing but thousands of cases and countless instances of “potentialities,” every one of which can be formulated as follows: if you perform such and such operations upon the physical force or substance in question, you will inevitably encounter such and such results. But consider for a moment: would we not explode with laughter at the housewife who wanted to define water — without which, admittedly,

she could not produce her cakes — as “cooked liquidity”! But we indulge in a similar species of idiocy when we seek to reduce actuality to the status of a mere by-product, or epiphenomenal residue deposited by man’s manufacturing processes, an error that obviously results from the effects wrought by the very governing bias that helped to design the experimental operation in the first place!

We have already alluded to the belief that is so widely entertained by contemporaries that we now stand upon the loftiest peak ever reached by science, although we must qualify that notion by restricting that model of science to the somewhat constricted arena wherein pure cognition and quantitative formalism is monarch of all he surveys. We would be more than justified this once, I am sure, if we were to tap into our small reserves of cynicism at this juncture, however, for we all know that certain very earthly interests may play more than an insignificant part in conducting hostile interventions, to put it politely, into the researcher’s laborious campaign to discover authentic truths. Nevertheless, this insight has been resolutely ignored by the architects of every philosophical system of an idealistic cast since the days of Plato, who ascribed reality solely to his “Ideas,” as well as by every builder of mechanistic, or materialist, systems since the time of Democritus, who sponsored his own candidate, specifically “atoms,” for the office of most “real” being (subsequent office holders have been “ions,” “electrons,” and so on, until today we are treated to the ghostly doings of the illustrious “quanta,” which feature so prominently in current lectures on “quantum mechanics”). Now we wish to suggest, and we will be excused, hopefully, if we raise this concern with some vehemence at this juncture, that the proposition that we are about to adduce expresses no more than the absolute truth of the matter in hand: and with the aid provided by our access to the insight provided by this simple truth, we identify the agency whose operations result in every conceivable species of epistemological error as spirit (Geist). Every conceivable scientific interest that encourages us to consider “being” and “actuality” as perfect synonyms causes us, to the precise measure that our wishes are permitted to hobble our love for the truth, to decorate the self-mastery of the human spirit with the beautiful plumes that should actually adorn world-creative genius. The object of the idealist thinker’s cognitive strivings possesses no “actuality” content; in fact, the mill can of course grind corn into cornmeal, if we may employ an analogy, but the situation of the student of the “object” is a dismal one, for his “object” is no more than an unconscious product of the mill — the grinding, destructive mill — of understanding! But what value has this sort of speculation that alone deserves to be designated as the independent will-to-cognition? Indeed, one might even venture to inquire whether this rare mode of scientific apprehension ever existed on Earth in the first place!

This style of apprehension has indeed appeared at several junctures in the history of the West over the past three and one-half millennia, just as it has achieved great prominence in the Far East, and, in fact, it has not yet completely perished from the Earth even now. It is unfortunately not feasible for me to provide even the sketchiest historical outline of the lives and doctrines of the members of this select group on this

occasion. Nevertheless, I will make brief mention of a particular scientist, whose genius was such that his career, even when scanned in nuce, as it were, provides more than sufficient matter for our expository purposes. The man to whom I allude was, of course, the great German polymath Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. He was a poet, an artist, and a sage, among many other outsize accomplishments, although he was certainly not someone whom we could be comfortable in characterizing as a philosopher or even as a comprehensively trained scientist — in the technical sense of those terms, that is. In spite of these facts, it was Goethe alone who was able to envision the prophetic path upon which he would receive that inspired, and inspiring, ability that enabled him to distill the vital essence of the phenomenological approach to the study of nature, and to formulate the first draft of a biocentric worldview, regardless of his own admitted lack of a thorough grounding in the bare facts of the disciplines that he was, nonetheless, to enlarge and enrich with his wisdom and vision as no other contemporary could have done. Therefore, let us choose one of Goethe's statements that seems to express, with a finished flair, the type of science to which he was to devote so many of his later years: "Those who seek for truth behind the phenomena are condemned to an expedition in search of nothingness — the phenomena themselves are the living truth!" On other occasions, he speaks in a similar vein of the "primordial phenomenon" and a "visionary power of judgment."

We would be wise to remain attuned at all times to detect the return from obscurity of a species of thought that from time to time seems to resurface, although the revivals of this "science of the appearances" ("phenomenology" — in our own strict sense) have been, for the most part, short-lived and fragile. The biocentric version of phenomenology holds that the images themselves are the reality, and that there is no other vague entity lurking behind the images in order to substantiate their claims as realia — not atoms, not quanta, not ideas, not spirit, and not the laws of spirit. With this in mind, we should proceed to the next stage of our meditations, which takes us to the point at which we are able to comprehend the transitory nature of actuality; if nothing "real" stands behind or beneath "reality," as its ontological or transcendental guarantor, then there can be no unchanging substance perduring within phenomena throughout all of their existential transactions and permutations. Now Goethe was the archetypal man of the eye, a visually- and spatially-oriented person without a peer; but there were others, who had diverse styles of vision, among whom we may mention the late Romantic thinkers, and, somewhat later still, Friedrich Nietzsche, all of whom can be more accurately characterized as quintessential men of cosmic rhythms, those seers whose bodies and souls lived in such profound intimacy with rhythmic alternations that their inner worlds were linked with the pulsations of the cosmos surrounding them. We must follow these earlier visionaries and incorporate their ruling principle as our guide that the sole verities are, in fact, the images and their actuality, for only with this principle held firmly in mind will we be able to overturn the ever-mounting assault of the appropriative-purposive mode of thought that has grown into a veritable monster, in spite of all that so many obfuscators have done during so many centuries

to blind themselves and their pupils to this rock-solid truth. I need not remind the learned reader that no previous methodological reform that has been suggested in this area has ever managed to bear wholesome fruit; as a matter of fact, every previous candidate has unfailingly managed to land its champions in a hopelessly tangled web of contradictory propositions and dogmatic quandaries. Of course, we are willing to make an exception for logic, which has, we admit, made some genuine strides in recent decades, although we feel that none of our philosophers should be indulging in premature orgies of self-congratulation at this point in time (the student who wishes to probe more deeply into the issues involved here should consult the relevant technical treatises published by the author of these lines), since it is painfully clear already that the path on which philosophy has already set its foot is encumbered by dangerous obstacles that may turn out to be either useless timewasters in the best-case scenarios, or — in the worst — may well be wonderfully inviting vistas that lure the student ever further down lost highways from which he will never return.

We have already glanced at the “pure” form of the will-to-cognition in comparison with the other, radically distinct, scientific methodology, and our conclusion must be that these two species are, in fact, directing their energies toward two utterly discrete realms of actuality, a realization that, in turn, provides us with more than a mere hint that the one variety inhabits an intellectual domain that is incommensurable with the other. We have indicated which of the two paths is passable and which presents certain difficulties. One can, however, when confronted with pointed objections to the “uselessness” of genuine knowledge, respond by framing one’s own questions: why on Earth does man wish to acquire wisdom of the genuine sort if the very quest for such knowledge does not, and indeed cannot, in fact, provide him with what he feels to be a significant release from inner distress? And: might there not exist somewhere else another set of conditions to which we may somehow gain access; and further that, in that place, those very conditions might permit man to live out a much more complete or fulfilled mode of life than the caricature of life that he seems to have been thus far condemned to serve out as if he were some hardened criminal, by a criminal court whose judge decided upon sentences that were predetermined by the punitive demands of the will to cognition!

At this juncture, however, one must acknowledge the fact that our disputants are no longer seeking a solution to one rather narrowly delimited query as to the value of science. Rather they are beginning to question the very value of thinking consciousness itself, and that question, of course, opens up for investigation a far vaster region of the sciences of the spirit (*Geisteswissenschaften*) to the more analytical and curious natures among us. The particular response that each student will provide to the far more comprehensive query that we are alluding to here is not merely a matter of individuals and their tastes, to be the subject matter of a multiple-choice survey listing fool-fodder questions, the answers to which are determined by consulting vague whims and transient fancies, and then professionally vetted and “corrected” before publication in the daily rag.

On the contrary, we must realize that, in the end, we are here dealing rather with science, with spirit, and — with the darker voices and stranger stirrings that have their deepest springs in the power of our will. Therefore, the organism, although it is entitled by all means to its moments of rapture, must also be prepared to ask (and to answer!), among all the other persistent questions that confront it, such a simple query as how this individual is to live and breathe among so many other living beings! For it is certainly the case that in primordial epochs man was not quite the intellectual giant that he believes himself — and with justice! — to be today; and we must also realize that at some subsequent epoch in (“geological”) time, man will undoubtedly lose some significant portion of the power of that renowned brain-box of which he is so proud once again. In any case, although his past, primordial state or his ultimate future condition might seem, at first blush to imagination’s hazy gaze, as a more fulfilling state of being than does our own awkward betwixt-and-between status, we can be sure that, were we to experience life at such a (shall we say?) compromised niveau, we would certainly judge the experience to have been — at least as we are so constituted at this moment — as an almost inconceivably, unutterably impoverished one. So — let us at least share the hope that such an eventuality may not arrive prematurely, agreed?

Nature vs. Nurture (1935)

I wish to say a word or two on the omnipresent and indeed vexing question as to whether a child’s character is already formed at birth (“genetically pre-determined”) or whether it is environmentally conditioned (fully “plastic,” as in the *tabula rasa* (blank slate) in the strict style of English empirical thought); the woods are also home, as one might expect, to half-hearted and more tepid variants of these two which might be taken into consideration, and so we acknowledge the existence of those researchers who hold that the human personality is a little bit of this, but, refreshingly, also a little bit of that (partially gene-determined, but also partially “plastic,” in other words, subject to considerable environmental conditioning). Having noted their existence, we move on.

Therefore, for the most part, we shall find one educator saying, “The character of this child is inborn and unalterable”; and he will be quite correct. Likewise, another educator will assure us that: “This student’s personality is the resultant of the numerous societal and familial pressures and influences that have been brought to bear upon him during his childhood years”; he too will be correct!

We intend to tease you with no cheap paradox in endorsing both of these views; rather, we are merely seeking to draw attention to the fact that the rival authorities are in fact employing the substantive “character” in two distinct denotative, or “lexical,” senses. So let us clarify, as best we may, these contentious meanings, and let us see if we can do this without wandering from our psychological reservation.

We do all agree, I take it, that the character not only of man, but of every living organism upon our planet, is genetically endowed; but there are also, I believe we should also agree, other types of earthly formations whose structural integrity is an unalterable quality of their very being, as for example the molecular architecture of “rock crystal,” which we feel justified in describing as “pre-determined.” But the situation is very different indeed with the most highly organized form of terrestrial organism, namely the human being, since every person carries around with him, as if he were equipped with a virtual playing-field of evolutionary possibilities, whose precise dimensions and contours he has yet to determine. Just as surely as a man grows older with every minute that passes, and just as surely as an aged body is no longer that of a child, so surely is it that the nature of an aged man is not that of a young child. But what is it precisely that remains unaltered throughout all the changes that the body has endured as it passes through the changes from youth to old age? This is only one of those questions the answers to which will be found only after we have developed our finest powers of discrimination and our richest powers of observation in learning just how the characterologist formulates accurate judgments in his field.

One crucially important consideration must be born in mind by the student: every researcher and every educator who has been entrusted with the mission to teach the young must be strictly prevented, by the full force of the law, from illicitly gleaning information about his young charges from documents on file when his sacred trust is to be educating them in the classroom — in person.

A genuinely responsible educator devotes his life to the minds and souls of his pupils; he determines the nature of their dispositions and he estimates their adaptabilities; but — again, I must emphasize this point — he must never permit himself or anyone on his staff to employ a sneak-thief’s access to a file-folder in such a way as to prejudice a student’s future, such as by rumor-mongering about “degeneracy,” or by making cheap shots about “flawed character structure” rooted in “unfortunate ancestry” or “violent upbringing.” When a young student has come this far in his schooling, the chief question that should concern the educator is no longer whether nature or nurture rules the roost — not even the most blasé academic could feign an interest in the praxis here — all that we demand now is that the educator attempt to assist his student as he tries to achieve such results as are within his reach!

The Problems of Psychology (1952)

In pondering the “problems of psychology,” I will refrain from speaking of the “soul” according to the usages of those persons who have floated a doctrine of psychology whose sole connection with a genuine science of the soul is a matter of mere semantics. These psychologists ordinarily while away their hours investigating the connections that exist between sensory experience and neurological processes, or else they ponder

thinking, feeling, and willing, which are quite discrete processes, although our “psychologists” seldom seem to be able to grasp this fact.

A more authentic concept of the soul has existed since the dawn of Western thought, the ramifications of which are founded upon the hypothesis that man’s nature comprises a three-fold, or “triadic,” structure whose components are: body — soul — spirit. This doctrine constitutes one of the loftiest achievements of philosophical speculation among the ancient Greeks, and no subsequent thinker who has endeavored to evade the vital truth embodied in this idea of the “three-fold” has met with the slightest success in his philosophizing. In fact, the threefold has been a constant theme throughout the history of philosophy, at times becoming buried beneath obscure formulae, but nevertheless enduring in one avatar or another from the ancient Greeks, through the Middle Ages, and even beyond that tragic and blind age that convinced itself — as well as posterity — that such metaphysical niceties had, with one fell blow, been rendered obsolete upon the discovery of the philosophical system elaborated by the French mathematician and philosopher Descartes, whose predilection for dualistic schemes encouraged him to devise a doctrine that presented the world and man himself as divided between a bodily, or spatial half, and a spiritual, or thinking half.

There have been several significant campaigns mounted in the post-Cartesian epoch, whose proponents labored to revive a theoretical analogy to the tripartition scheme advanced by the Greek philosophers. For instance, an unconscious attempt to bridge the gap between ancient Greek speculations and modern thought was undertaken by Goethe himself during the course of his investigations in the field of biology, and these studies were subsequently developed, refined, and systematized by the philosophers of the German Romantic movement.

In the afterglow of the Romantic noontide, however, the soul either disappeared completely from the precincts of psychological research, or it was grotesquely confused with some other entity whose true nature was utterly alien to that of the soul. I believe that I can justly claim, on the basis of the relevant research that I have conducted over several decades, that I have been able to establish the reality of this “three-fold” or triadic division of man’s being upon a rigorous scientific foundation, and I believe also that I have achieved my results with such interpretative exactitude that we can now determine with great precision what proportion of our nature stems predominantly from the soul, what proportion from the body, and what proportion, finally, stems from the spirit.

Wherever we go today, we hear a lot of empty babbling about primordial mankind (Urmenschen), in spite of the fact that no one has ever encountered such a being. There have indeed been pre-historical tribes (aussergeschichtliche Völker), falsely called “primitives,” such as the pre-historical people to whom the Greeks gave the name Pelasgians, whose reign was ended by the great flood that preceded the advent of Deukalion and Pyrrha, and whose descendants became known as the tribe of Deukalion or the Hellenes; and finally we have the historical peoples in the proper sense, to whose ever-mounting numbers we ourselves belong.

Nevertheless, that which we have briefly alluded to as the Pelasgian race, was somehow able to transmit a meaningful portion of its influence to the generations that survived its disappearance from the historical record, and indeed traces of this unique culture have endured even unto our own generation, such as the Pelasgians' symbols, cults, myths, and other barely intelligible ritual observances. For all of the three races that we have mentioned, as well as for the prehistoric tribal groupings, the spirit is consistently regarded as being linked to a particular individual, just as we refer to a particular person's capacity for reflective cognition. However, we must now thrust this notion of reflective consciousness into the background of our discussion so that we may direct our attention to a very different type of process.

The necessity for this procedure reveals itself most clearly when we attempt to explain just what it is that we feel differentiates man from the animal, and what emerges with crystal clarity when we examine the thousandfold experiences and observations that fill the record is the obvious fact that the animal is devoid of spirit (in the precise sense in which we always employ that word). In fact, the animal organism represents the purest manifestation of the body-soul polarity to be discovered within the natural world. In utilizing the word "polarity" I am drawing attention to a process that is unrelated to the causal nexus, for neither are bodily processes the causes of psychical ones, nor are the psychical processes the causes of the bodily ones. In fact, this falsely dualistic scheme of causality was the very rock upon which Cartesian philosophy suffered its well-deserved shipwreck. There was even less truth, unfortunately, in a later theory that briefly found favor, which held, first, that the psychical (naturally confused with the spiritual!) and the body inhabit two completely discrete realms; and second, in numerous instances, a higher power introduces itself into the human organism in order to establish some type of connection between the psychical and the body. The true state of affairs is that the connection between the soul and the body is even more intimate than has ever been suspected, since nothing can transpire on the side of the body that does not coincide with an event on the side of the soul, just as no event transpires on the side of the soul without a corresponding event on the side of the body. In other words: the body and the soul subsist in a polar connection and the most concise formula that we can devise in order to express these relations is: the body is the phenomenal manifestation of the soul, just as the soul is the meaning of the living body. This can also be expressed by analogy: interpretation discloses the lexical meaning of a word, but the word is the external, or phenomenal, manifestation, of an inner meaning.

When we ponder the causal grounds whereby we have established the validity of the substrate-concept, or, to put this somewhat less technically, when we employ our critical judgment in seeking answers as to the true nature of this substrate, we must bear in mind every distinction between essences that we have drawn as well as every definition of terms that we have formulated. Now the body reveals itself in sensuous contacts and in its reaction to such contacts, and this undisputed fact alone conclusively demonstrates that the body possesses only the most tenuous of connections to the

phenomenon of distance. The soul, on the other hand, expresses its nature in vision, which enables the bearer of soul to focus upon purposeful behavior in the furtherance of achieving certain ends, just as one's urges are obviously under the permanent sway of one's feelings.

Let us introduce an illustration which may facilitate a comprehension of these matters: the stork in Mecklenburg has no need to acquire a road-map in order to undertake the journey of thousands of kilometers that takes it back to its African habitat. They are only following instincts, it is often said. However, although instinct is a word that everybody employs, it is in fact a word that conceals far more than it reveals. As we proceed on our everyday round, in the course of which we recognize the world and seek to conduct our affairs within that world, we have allowed ourselves to forget that instinct has its source in an unconscious mode of recognition that regulates with absolute certainty the constitution of its bearer, just as it regulates, to some degree, every terrestrial organism; and we must, of course, include ourselves in that grouping. The foundation upon which are established the bonds connecting an unreflective reaction with a distant goal is the soul.

Let us charitably ignore the great prejudice that seems to inflate the breasts of those who believe themselves to be endowed with unique abilities due to their status as bearers of soul. However, we mentioned a moment ago that there is a not inconsiderable disadvantage connected with the nature of the animal; specifically, the incontrovertible fact that the animal's inner life is almost completely confined to its drive-impulses, just as the animal is confined to its destined environment under the constraints imposed by its evolutionary station. However, even within the soul of the animal there occurs a rudimentary collaboration between its near-sense (physical contact) and its innate capacity for far-seeing (sense of sight), just as the animal is able to make certain behavioral adjustments or accommodations in response to transformations in his environment, although some organisms, of course, are more accommodating, and hence more viable, than other organisms.

Thus, we come to realize that even the most talented of the animals possess a capacity for far-seeing that is immeasurably inferior to that of man, and the crucial distinction that has to be drawn between the animal and "primordial man" is that only man is receptive to the ever-transforming visions of spaces and times, just as he is indifferent as to whether these visions do or do not originate in his urges. In sharp contrast with the animal, his inner world is that of the far-seeing soul and not that of the narrowly constricted proximity in which bodily contacts (sense of touch) can occur. The development of this far-seeing capacity extends through the millennia, and the details as to the specifics of this development can be no more than rough approximations.

But then something utterly unprecedented transpired, for into the substance of man irrupted the lightning bolt of spirit, a daemonic force that invades man and world from a realm outside the spatio-temporal realm. The progressive development of spirit took place by incremental steps that remorselessly potentiated the hypertrophic

development of goal-oriented volition in man, conscious purpose, and, finally, the will-to-business. This sinister tendency has now become a blatantly destructive will to plunder the living world.

However, at the dawn of history, and for many subsequent generations, spirit existed in a creative symbiosis with the soul. In the course of time, the balance of the poles shifted more and more towards the dominance of spirit over the soul. That development has continued all the way down to the present age. Among every people that we consider to be civilized, spirit eventually severs its ties with the soul. Grand ideas and technological discoveries have, of course, produced certain desired results; but these advances have brought a new danger in their wake. Modern man's conscious striving for power far surpasses that of any previous epoch. Today every nation is drawn deeper and deeper into this striving for dominance, without which each nation believes that it must ultimately perish. I am thinking less of the frightful wars that we must henceforth endure and more of the disturbing fact that within all peoples, this lust for power has so infected the most diverse groups that it has fastened manacles upon life itself. Woman has always been the mother and nurturer of her house, but today she sees herself so over-burdened by the demands of her career that she is threatened with the forfeiture of one of her deepest missions in life, namely to serve life by becoming the guardian and protector of life and tradition.

One result of this dreadful process is that man is now in danger of losing his traditional connections with his family, just as he is endangered by the conflicts that poison the relations between employer and employee, conflicts that are interrupted by truces that have only just been declared when the rancorous hostilities erupt anew.

In the service of human needs, the ever-increasing mechanization has brought about the desecration of the natural world. Just recall how many species of wildlife have been annihilated by man during the last fifteen years alone! And, finally, we must realize that behind all of the obsessive striving for power to which we have alluded, the most gigantic — and at the same time the most destructive — is that for which we can find no more appropriate name than: business (in English in the original text — translator's note). While our philosophers drivel away their hours in desiccated dialectical disputations that result in nothing more significant than hairsplitting irrelevancies, money has conquered the world, and there can no longer be any doubt that the vital power whose throne has been usurped by gold, namely the soul, is now threatened by imminent destruction.

I became convinced of the validity of these perceptions many years ago, and ever since that time I have sought to communicate my findings in brief essays as well as in comprehensive treatises. However, not even the strict adherence to philosophical principles, which has forced me to proclaim the unvarnished truth about these matters to my readers, will suffice to terminate the dangerous entity that menaces the living organism, for the dreadful things that our eyes can see are but the external reflections of perilous internal transformations that are ravaging the deepest substratum of the living organism. It is precisely at this substrate level that we situate the destructive

operations of that more than human power whose goal is the ultimate annihilation of the soul itself.

Goethe as Psychologist (1929)

In addition to his genius as a poet, Goethe was also a great sage whose insights into the human soul have assured him a prominent rank among the greatest psychologists in all of history. In this discussion we wish to present a coherent portrait of this man, who is alleged to have been a man whose inner life was marked by innumerable contradictions. We can best achieve our ends only after we have familiarized ourselves with the historical, as well as with the personal, context in which his unique style of thought came to fruition.

Three concepts ruled the spiritual landscape of Europe during the latter half of the eighteenth century: nature, personality, and freedom. In the Francophone sphere, of course, these elements profoundly conditioned and informed the discourse of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and in Germany the standard-bearer of these ideas was Herder.

On one side, this constellation of ideas encouraged a love of nature, which was embodied most especially in the cult of the natural landscape; while on the other side, there developed a growing emphasis upon the emotional life of man. Thus, the “heart” reigns over the “head,” just as melancholy and sensuality soon dominate mere reason and understanding.

It is this very obvious emphasis on the priority of the “heart” over the “head” that accounts for the astonishing influence exerted upon European culture by Goethe’s novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*. Likewise, this period saw a marked revival of the conviction that the vital center of the cosmos is located within the stronger personalities, a creed that was also a major component of Renaissance ideology. Once more, the loftiest development of every inherited disposition and talent within a man constituted the pinnacle of life for Europeans, just as ethical restraint and “self-discipline” began to be seen as mere hindrances and roadblocks that could only interfere with the creative unfolding of the vital powers within truly great spirits.

The young Goethe participated, of course, in the revolutionary movement that we know as the *Sturm und Drang* (“storm and stress”); nevertheless, the young Goethe soon convinced himself that there was also a danger in that chaotic indiscipline of the young disciples of the movement, a danger that might one day wreak havoc on those personalities whose inner life is not governed by the form-giving impulses that have their source in nature itself.

Thenceforth, Goethe will sing, as no one else has ever done, the melancholy side of life; in fact, all of his tragic heroes meet their downfall in the course of their struggles with destiny: Werther, Weislingen, Franz, Eduard, Ottilie, Tasso, Egmont, Faust, Gretchen, and so on.

In his own lifetime, Goethe was already hailed as the only genius who might well succeed in his mastering life-mission, which was seen as the reconciliation of elemental nature with the laws of spirit. Goethe sought to do this by harmonizing the poles of nature and spirit, unlike the procedure insisted upon by Immanuel Kant, who placed nature and spiritual law in the sharpest antithetical contrast that the mind of man could conceive.

As a personality, Goethe embodied in the most magnificent style the collaboration between the masculine, active pole and the feminine pole, characterized by a pathic receptivity. From that feminine component in his nature stems his intense feeling for actuality, just as from his masculine component stems his unprecedented ability to recognize and to reveal the sharpest critical distinctions.

A feeling for actuality and a highly developed critical sense were often treated as identical items in polite conversation during that period, although the state of affairs was quite otherwise in formal philosophical discourse. In that arena, actuality was viewed as the common possession of humanity, and one that had its source in our immediate experience, whereas the facts, on the other hand, are apprehended by the living person on the basis of the activity of spirit. Thus, as a mere fact, a stand of trees is one and the same, both when it is being gazed upon by the canny eye of the speculator who seeks to convert this segment of nature into profit or it is the living substance that forms the basis of the botanist's research. However, as an actuality, the stand of trees in question is perpetually renewing its phenomenal aspect, which is changed ceaselessly due to the influence of various meteorological factors, among which we will merely mention the action of the wind, and also under the shifting radiance with which the available light garbs each tree. We might even hear the claim of a landscape painter who seeks behind the immanent tree its primordial image.

Goethe's unsurpassed powers of visual discrimination led him to become the modern world's pre-eminent phenomenologist, and it may indeed be said that in Goethe we confront the essential "man of the eye."

In Goethe the operation of rational cognition transpired in harmonious accord with his feeling for the phenomenological totality. Spiritual cognition and perception of the world-image is an immediate and indivisible event, an "intuition" of fresh revelations communicated from the world without to the world within.

Whoever finds that he is able to comprehend this mode of perception and who is also able to establish his discoveries based upon the most primordial realities, will not restrict his scrutiny of life's deepest secrets to the domain of purposeful consciousness, for he is well aware of the fact that his observations are valid only while his cognitive forces have been brought into play. In fact, Goethe formulated the very concept of the unconscious, which he saw as equidistant from the pseudo-unconscious of the Leibniz school and from the verbal phantom bandied about by academic epistemologists. Goethe demonstrated that the unconscious was also not the working out of persistent physical processes within the organism that have merely eluded our notice, but rather processes that reveal themselves in talented individuals as well as in the highly trained,

for the unconscious was the very foundation upon which nature erected herself, to the precise extent that nature transmits “inspiration” to the conscious mind. Goethe called this unconscious power the “daemonic,” and he says of it that “every great thought that bears ripe fruit and leads to profound effects, stands far removed from the mind that would seek to control it. Man should look upon the harvested fruits of the unconscious as an unexpected windfall bestowed by Heaven above. It is our affinity with the daemonic that makes its advent seem something utterly overpowering, as it were, and often convinces an individual that this force arises from his personal impulses, whereas its primal source is actually in the unconscious substratum, a region over which, as we have seen, he exerts no control whatsoever.”

In another place, Goethe asserts: “The daemonic is the force that is immune to the ministrations of rational processes. It does not always reside within my nature, although I am frequently overwhelmed by it.” At one point, Goethe goes so far along this line of speculation as to insist that the unconscious is synonymous with life itself: “Man cannot abide for very long in the conscious state; therefore man must often yield himself to the impulse that lures him ever deeper into that realm of the unconscious, for it is there that man has his deepest roots.”

Far more significant than any evolutionist’s conceptualization of the unconscious substrata of life is Goethe’s scornful dismissal of the virtues of excessive self-observation. In the sharpest opposition to academic thought — at least as it has operated since the age of Descartes — but in consonance with the truly great psychologists of every epoch, Goethe regards the notion that we have access to immediate knowledge of the self to be a pathetic delusion: “In my opinion, man can never succeed in his attempts to know himself, since he can never install himself in the appropriate perspective from which he would be able to generate valid statements of the facts; others will always know me better than I know myself.” Again: “Man can never comprehend himself with anything approaching the accuracy with which he can comprehend the world.” As Goethe’s readers know full well, his collected works are filled with innumerable utterances of a similar sort.

We are now able to recognize Goethe’s discovery of these insights as being rooted in his unique capacity for perception. Now we turn our attention to the opposite pole, specifically of his masculine activity, for it was this orientation which irresistibly tempted him to involve himself in the active realm of public affairs, even though he retained his acuity of perception — situated at the feminine pole of his character — which never permitted Goethe to ignore (or even to forget!) that these activities (at the Weimar Court) were characterized by an almost grotesque superficiality. His watchword now is formulated in his mastering motto that claims, “To be active is man’s first duty... Whenever I cannot conform myself to the demands associated with that duty, I recognize such a peculiar situation as an indication that there is a circle of endeavor to which my vocation will not grant me entrance. And I have never envisioned myself as a somnambulist.” One should not too readily dismiss such utterances as expressions of Goethe’s infatuation with the whole idea of the “man of action,” for what is actually

at work within him during these times is Goethe-as-sculptor, Goethe as a creative man whose ideal is formal excellence; what he recognized with an almost divinatory penetration was the fact that spiritual apprehension depends upon spiritual creativity! "There is no conscious experience that is not productive, enriching, and creative." "Animals are instructed by their internal organs, said the thinkers of Antiquity, and I insist that man is himself in precisely the same situation."

This realization introduces us now to Goethe's representation of the "genius," one whom he regards as the bearer of a unique fund of creative power that, in its turn, arises upon the foundation provided by the self-renewing vitality of the genius. It is without connection to the management of our business affairs, just as it is unrelated to our relationship with fine art; creativity exists, in fact, quite remote from the quotidian round: the only exceptions to this rule come into play "when our thoughts, our connection with other people, and our deeds themselves enhance life itself." The person to whom we apply the name "genius" demands precedence before all others with all the irresistible force of eternal youth, for in him youth is a perpetual renewal of vitality that bursts forth like a volcano intermittently erupting with the hot powers of perfect youth. At such privileged moments, Goethe tells us, he experiences a "renewed puberty." These insights were to inspire the meditations of the German Romantics in subsequent years, and it would be the Romantics who were able to discover new territories for psychology, although their findings, sadly, have never been properly worked out due to the contemporary academic psychologist's superstitious faith in the all-creative power of spirit.

It is crucial to our exposition that the reader understand precisely how significant a role Goethe's marked will-to-form played in his perception of (and reverence for) the full wealth of soul inhering in a significant human character. Likewise, Goethe was, of course, completely justified in his recognition of the iron limits set by nature — not merely over personal volition (a matter of quantity), but also, and perhaps more significantly, over the idiosyncrasies of personal, "critical" judgment (a matter of quality). No person can perceive with his senses that which cannot be grasped by the character. "The French think precisely as they do only because of the character with which they have been endowed." Our own position in any meaningful ordering of rank is utterly and completely pre-determined. It is a false belief that inspires those who claim that the glove will always grow large enough to accommodate one's hand satisfactorily, as we must agree if the glove in question is crafted out of iron, for iron has an immanent shape. It is more correct to say that the fit is determined by the inherent characteristics of the person who is inserting his hand within the putative item. This vibrant consciousness of the iron fatality that rules our destiny is notably expressed in the first of the "Orphic Words." Likewise, to those who erroneously believe in the (imaginary) ability of education to bring about an authentic alteration in a particular character, Goethe retorts that education is but the inculcation of rational behavior, and each student's capacity for such education is strictly governed by the talents with which he was endowed at birth. "If outstanding capacity is a pre-determined

endowment, there will inevitably result the formation of an individual who is fated to achieve creative excellence in his life.”

While the Romantics (and later still, Nietzsche) awaited the loftiest of life’s joys in those moments when an ecstatic repression or limitation of the ego had been achieved, Goethe’s own limitations were never more clearly expressed than in the quatrain in which he affirms this very limitation:

Commoner and prince and hero
Lived and died in every age;
The highest joy bestowed upon the sons of Earth
Is found but in the personality.

This attitude of Goethe’s resonates quite nicely with his development of the theory of an immortal formative principle at work in nature, to which he gives the Aristotelian title of “entelechy.”

Just as intimate contact with a unique life may well draw lesser mortals into its gravitational field, as it were, within which these individuals find that they actually prosper under this beneficent influence, such individuals can only be comprehended if their living context is borne in mind. The result of the process to which we refer was, in fact, the development of the Goethe-type character as it transpired in the socialized personality. To us, no one can surpass Goethe in the global treasures of richer, gentler, and nobler vitality, from which all disturbing and painful emotions have been excluded, in an ongoing synergistic potentiation of both the society as well as the individuals that comprise its components. Goethe became the most prominent apostle of good ton (proper social behavior — translator’s note) in eighteenth century Germany, the most rigid adherent of the strictest morality that, ironically, would subsequently encourage the rise of the moralistic rabble to the stature of a significant force in history, for eventually the West’s codes of law were inspired solely by a purely human conception of Eros.

In the end, therefore, we must avoid any suspicion that there is even a trace of irony when Goethe, in his later years, proclaims such platitudes as “The proper study of mankind is man.”

On Love as Eros and as Passion (1922)

Let us direct our attention to certain phenomena arising from the affective stratum of life that have long been ignored by investigators. For instance, we all recognize those numerous associations that have, without exception, one interest in common, namely the employment of the group’s energy to connect up with that “will to power” whose inner essence is intransigently hostile to life itself. Likewise, we have encountered those people whose connection inheres in the emotional bonds that enable individuals to participate in the sense of community that may flourish, say, in the workplace; or we may recall those ties that arise in friendly affection, as well as those bonds

that are tied when sexual attraction draws two persons into more intimate connection. We finally draw attention to that which, at first glance, certainly seems to be one of the noblest attainable species of human association; namely, that intensely close union which transpires when a certain group's shared enthusiasm inspires its members to work collaboratively for the ultimate triumph of a particular enterprise, although the mission to which they have given their allegiance utterly transcends the personal, or selfish, interests of the people involved. This species of shared enthusiasm arises almost always in situations where those involved share a profound characterological affinity. Nevertheless, even this most intensely self-sacrificial form of human association, which can exist only when an ancient tribal sense of racial consciousness is intense enough to make the call of the blood potentiate the living bond of the associated persons, reveals itself, on closer scrutiny, to be dependent upon an obviously degenerate obsession with abstractions. Wherever this degenerate trend is discovered at work, as a matter of fact, the project will evolve in very short order into an entity that is soon seething with the least worthy species of partisan spirit, at which point the members become the creatures of their hollow doctrines, the most zealous missionaries preaching the most tedious ethical formalism imaginable. Utilizing the more colloquial, more "popular" lexical expression for that which had once seemed the most vital connection conceivable, we must conclude that these individuals have bogged themselves down in the phenomenon justly known as "idealism"! Since one remains protected when one stands before it, inwardly one must confess to one's belief in that which has been yearned for and anticipated in the earliest days of Eleusis, although apparently even in that place, the deepest experience could never have been brought unto its consummation: the renewal of the blood-brotherhood as it was fortified within the bearer of the mystery of Eros.

Suppose one were sought out by a person who wished to question us as to our personal recollections of a visionary revelation to which we happened to have been an eyewitness (in order to acquire additional details about the scene) — if, suddenly, we should learn there was a second witness to that very vision, we are bound by that event in a sympathetic connection with that other person. To that connection, we give the name of the cosmogonic Eros! That such an event has nothing to do with the physical expression of bodies goes without saying; but it may, however, come to pass that such an inoffensive connection might well result in a person's experience of so transformative a miracle that he feels himself transported among the gods. Events about which no one hears since they happened to have transpired between two individuals out of hundreds of millions, might actually break the fleeting power of the spirit, the destructive nightmare of "world history" might be shattered, and we might awaken in a world "blossoming with streams of light."

We wish now to clarify, in a few brief words, just what it is that inheres in the notion of a love that is "faithful beyond death," a species of passion, as it happens, about which the ancient world knew precisely nothing. The Epoptes, in fact, regarded the very condition of "bodiliness" as a potent symbol that enabled man to participate

in the stream of images that constitutes the soul of the world. Let us consider the case of one who is not “merely” loved, but rather that of the person whose innermost passion is to possess another utterly and to the deepest levels of that person’s life — we might recall Solveig’s love for Peer (Gynt — translator’s note) — he is necessarily viewing the object of his obsessive passion as if through a fog that renders his gaze identical in essence with the eye of the “world-creating” God, before whom the surface of the Earth is pulverized as the mortal coil of the flesh begins to glow with the penetrating radiance of the elemental soul. As if he were truly becoming a man on fire, he probes the humanity of his beloved, but with the ray of light that reveals merely the presence of his own demon. In this case — whose lineaments are common to the vision of Eros that was characteristic not only of Greek Antiquity but of the Germanic Middle Ages as well — it is nonetheless only to state that this standpoint did not exclude the possibility that a magical image might transmit its reflections while the image wandered from person to person. The least enduring experience of an erotic connection in itself cannot keep pace with the most fulfilling inwardness, and it is precisely in the midst of the most freely bestowed and most overflowing sexual experience that, without the slightest contradiction, transpires the payment of money to a member of the class of hetairas...

Ever more constricting, however, becomes this passion now that his ego consumes the object of love with its soul, until the nature of the “character” of the person so obsessed with this passion-as-exclusivity becomes more and more rigid and unyielding, so that in time there may even arise a serious danger that the lightning bolt of vision itself becomes increasingly constricted, until the only thing on the lover’s mind is the tormenting riddle of an individual’s personality. The person severs his vital bonds with the sensuous world of images, all of which are stripped away until the human being believes that the beloved has become a god to be worshipped in the place of a god. This mode of passion has now obviously metamorphosed into idolatry, and with its advent begins the ultimate tragedy of Eros. Whereas once the lovers were filled with rapture when they formed one interfused flame of vital imagery, the person now seeks the essence of love in the human “self” of the beloved, so that he may raise his beloved to the stature of a spiritual being whom he seizes fast in the dimension of duration, whereas only in the releasing of the beloved from all such chains may he live an eternity in an instant of time. Thus there transpires the pathos of a “grand passion,” which constrains the lover to secure for himself that passionate “loyalty unto death,” which even seeks to extend its domain beyond the borders of the tomb, and which, scrutinized from the standpoint of metaphysics, can only, and always, result in misfortune for both persons. Then, inevitably, the lover is demanding the pseudo-fulfillment of his passion as he commands that he be granted the sole access to the body of his beloved, so that, sooner or later, disaster occurs (Faust and Gretchen!); but no matter how much the lover torments her, betrays her, ridicules her, this same lover swears that he would, without hesitation, give up his life for his beloved; nevertheless, no matter how heroic is the deed of the martyr, by itself the martyrdom avails him

nothing in the face of all-powerful death! In every modality in which we encounter the “love unto God” there is always present a very deep share in the sacrament of Eros; but in the “grand passion” there is always an impulsive undercurrent that is seeking to build a bridge to the faith in immortality: whatever wishes of ours cannot attain to fulfillment “here” must be fulfilled to the limit of our hopes in the transcendent “yonder.”

However, “immortality” is only a pathological yearning for the fulfillment of unfulfillable wishes, and the entire history of our cosmos, in comparison with which the whole chronicle of mankind is merely a drop in the ocean of time, cries unrelentingly that even the beloved is doomed to be a thing of corruption and dissolution. The nimbus surrounding that wish, whose loftiness is perpetually rewoven — and quite rightly so — should not, however, blind us to the fact that this is a wish that life cannot fulfill without dissolving that self to nothingness in the very process.

And now we turn back from the melancholy image of the tormented greatness of man to the breathing brightness of the world of gods, as they once promised the following to the poet:

What fiery wonder transpires when the waves transfigure us,
As they shatter, one upon the other, in their coruscating radiance?
They glow and shift and shimmer ever onwards:
And the stars and planets are gleaming on their nocturnal paths,
And everything is ringed around by the fire;
This is the all-ruling Eros, begetter of everything that lives!

The Identity of Spirit in Every Bearer of Life (1920)

When I comprehend an existing thing, I am compelled to negate by means of a process of abstraction: first, the temporal dimension of that which is experienced; second, the spatial dimension of that which is experienced; and third, the uniqueness of that which is experienced.

One bearer of life is distinguished from all other bearers of life through the personal nature of that which is experienced; in other words, through the spatio-temporal uniqueness of that experience. If, however, the realization of this truth should evade one’s notice, then a particular discovery must necessarily be regarded as the self-same entity as it appears in different epochs as well as its appearance for various discoverers. Thus, when several individuals believe that they have perceived the self-same thing, they are, in fact, ignoring the vital fact that their sensory experiences are uniquely personal and therefore, one person’s experience is distinct from that of any other person. On the other hand, there must also be revealed in every single pondered moment of life and within all bearers of life the self-same disposition (Anlage), by whose agency the

act of understanding is consummated. We designate that agent, considered in itself and for itself, with the name spirit, and in our consideration of its manifestation within an individual person's living nature, we call it the ego. The justification for our choice of the name "spirit" is the result of simple reflection, especially when the discussion turns to scrutinize the faculty of judgment, which at the very least is indubitably a creature of the spirit. The justification of the name "ego" is founded upon the circumstance that every judgment necessitates a critically judging ego in order to be able to arrive at that judgment. I judge, as follows: here stands a tree, therefore I can judge: I judge that here is standing a tree; and so it goes through every conceivable case.

However, if the relation of the ego to the living organism transpires according to the disposition of the critically judging ego, and the critically judging ego acts in the living organism solely according to the activity of the spirit, then the spirit must be identical in every person. Therefore, spirit's determinations are necessarily binding upon every formulation of a correct judgment, as well as for every individual "without distinction of person" in his capacity as one who formulates critical judgments. And here again the ego is the self-same entity throughout every segment of a person's constitution; accordingly, it is demonstrably true that in every statement of the following type: I performed this or that deed, "then," shall we say, approximately fifteen years previously — both one's experience as well as one's experienced physicality was completely different from one's present experience and its physicality. Just as outside the "thing-point" there is a living self, there is within each person the "ego-point." We refer to the ego as the "manifestation" of spirit within the realm of life, just as we designate the thing as the "projection" of the ego into the sphere of actuality. Both things and egos are quantifiable; and that which we customarily quantify, we quantify with reference to them.

As soon as we have grasped these principles, we will likewise comprehend: it is the essence of the thing that it can never constitute an actuality that is independent of consciousness. The sole unconditioned actualities are the images...

The Poems

In the Distant West

The sun descends the western skies.
It flames and flares far in the west,
And heaven, in that far-flung west,
Gleams clear and bright as crystal.
Blue, so blue, the deepest distance
Now intoxicates my senses,
Till my soul is trembling, reeling,
Sundered by a sudden yearning.
Beams of light assail my eyes:
They press against the moistened lashes,
Forcing out, with sudden instancey,
One unaccustomed tear.

The Herd

O muffled echo of the bells. A shepherd
Leads his flock from off the hill.
Uncanny: from behind the woods, the west'ring sun
Shoots spears of flame through seas of mist.
Soon awkward gloaming abdicates,
And wilder weather takes the skies.
But where is now the flock, and where its shepherd?
Then — the rage of thunder in the night.

Runes

We've not the slightest yearning for the social world:
The storms and omens of the Cosmos will suffice.

Reverberation

Evening's chill blows softly from the hills;
The sun declines towards the tree-tops.
From the shadowed valleys all sounds perish.
Bitter yearning! Giant clouds glide down the sky,
As night, in mourning garb, enshrouds a deeper sorrow
Under ebon wings.

The Stream

Into the silence of the night,
There breaks the rushing, splashing stream;
Upon the purling waters
Breezes gently blow
And silver moonbeams dance.
Now wind-bowed poplars
Brew a sleepy potion in the depths.
Throughout the trees roar stabbing winds,
Until the swirling burden of the fallen leaves
At last can still the raging waters.

Runes

Massive and oppressive dome of heaven —
Timid glimmer from the cloudy vault —
O dark, close-woven web of night...
The deep-resounding clangor of the bells —
There lingers now in evening's red,
And on the lofty battlements, a final gleam...
A groan emerges from the darkling woods.
The fog is near — the world is far.

The Evening of Life

The evening of my life is fading fast,
And on the long, dour street are cast —
In yellow gleam of candelabra —
Shapes long lost in time.
The melancholy and the misery of things...

Song

And if it really was a dream,
Why should one suffer so?
As storm-winds roared,
The welkin raged
From sea to sea to sea;
And all the while
The evening sun shed
Wretched rags of light.
We die, and are forgotten,
Even by the grandsons
Strolling on our graves.
And if it really was a dream,
Why should one suffer so?
The storms are roaring,
And above the lands
The gloomy clouds sail on.
Whole nations die, and are forgotten,
And above the wreckage
Time prepares the entry
Of the coming generation.
And if it really was a dream,
Why should one suffer so?
The storm-wind screams,
The welkin shrieks;
The very stars will die
And be forgotten.
Still, there'll always be
Some novel bloom, which,
Nourished by the dust of the deceased,
Will one day wander far
On bright, celestial paths.

Windy Field

A damned soul, stripped by death, adorns
The ravaged field; tormented grasses moan.
The atmosphere soon fades to black,
As storm-winds wail in devastated forests.
Eyes stare, almost blinded, through the raging floods.

The night is raucous in its clamor.
Night looms high above your pallid captain —
Viking long-boats sail into the Nordic distance.

Melancholy Morning

It is a colder, sadder morning;
Brazen clouds hang high up in the heavens;
There they want to stay. No rain is falling;
Not a breeze disturbs the rigid hedgerows.
Morbid thoughts upon awakening...
As memories assume command,
The soul grows pale, its contours quake,
As if beneath a mountain made of steel and ice.
O night, break through! O sleep, descend!
Drown knowledge in a blacker flood!
From dream-tormented torture chambers,
Rouse yourself and radiate your eerie light.

Evening

At last the raging forces tremble;
Growing weary, soon they'll slumber.
Storm-winds fade, and everywhere
Is night, so black, so cold.
The darkly massive clouds are surging,
Sleeping through the humid night.
Now here, now there, on heaven's dome
A gentle star turns on its lamp.
Like buried slag aglow once more
When stirred to life by vagrant gusts,
My deep regrets take hold of me
When distant clocks toll out the hours.
Be still, my heart! Breathe easily;
The feeble clangor has been stilled,
And stars are shining silently
Above the quiet woods.

As the Candles Flicker

The candles flicker. Midnight bellows
From the tower. As the storm
Goes rooting through the night,
It roars with laughter.
Tremble — you are but an atom
Shot into the raging flux,
Wherein the ages whirl and toss
Forever.

Philosophy

Of what avail is all philosophy?
We'll never solve the riddle of existence.
In the end, look where you will, our thought
Is nothing but a game we play with words.

Life

Hectic movement, harried haste —
No time to pause, no chance to rest —
A warm embrace, a fervent kiss —
And then divorce and flight afar —
Divorce, detest, and reconcile —
And then split up again —
That's life! Yes, that is life.
It babbles in the rains; it riots in the clouds;
It flutters in the leaves, and sighs in winds of storm —
And all will be, is now, or was —
And all once was and will return —
As, without cease, life spins its whirling fabric
Through eternal aeons.
Gone forever — like the waves upon the shoreline —
Gone forever! Gone, but whence? And whither?
Life knows not the waves; it only knows the sea.
Life only knows the sea and will remain eternal and complete.
And yet it is the sun-glossed waves that murmur
As they storm the sandy shore.

Evening Song

Into the west, the distant west!
For that is where I long to be;
And if the clouds above were little skiffs,
They would descend and bear me off
On wondrous paths, towards
The purple-glowing sun
Within the distant west!
Is there a land, is there a life,
Where magic, flaming colors
Spark such scintillant reflections
On the gleaming waters?
Do you know? And nor do I!
Could Earth afford a rapture more profound
Than that which floods the heart
When our world sinks and dives
Into those flaming, sparkling seas?
Into the west, the distant west!
I must go forth, I must depart!
The sun is sinking, now it's gone.
My eyes but stare forlorn
Towards the fiery seas.
My yearning swells, I breathe so deeply
As the darkness grows apace.
But solar splendor still irradiates
The distant cloud-bank:
Westward ho!

Awaken

You awaken still within me,
Boundless cosmic soul!
And yet you hesitate, at first,
To loose me from the murk
Of mortal slumbers:
Then I am dissolved into
A million shining atoms;
Now the dull gray spider
Of deceit o'er-shadows all!
And still you would alert me,

For the onset of my madness is at hand.
I'm helpless,
For the demon ego
Locks me in the dungeon
Of the day's dim dream.
O sorrow, sorrow! Into lightless depths
You tumble downwards, cosmic soul!
The shadow of the ego thrashes wildly,
As it bursts forth from Lethean waters.
Hearken to the rush and roar!
The lying mask of life
Erupts into the holy darkness,
And the feeble rays of dawn are weaving now
Deceiving webs of being!
Now my ear can tell the sighing
Of the cold winds through the tree-tops
From the crowing of the cock.
O cosmic soul, you plunge me
Into fatal slumbers, whirling me about
Within the frenzied waves.
Once more, I am condemned
To think the mad thought of existence,
Whilst I struggle like some banished being
In the storm-erected tidal waves
Of ancient strife.

Yuletide

As wilding winds wail through bare branches,
Storm-clouds shroud with gloom the hours.
But soon our weary world is blessed; she sips
From glossy goblet sweet forgetfulness...
The saviour's name and nature maze and mystify,
So potent is the precious potion;
And then the arctic nocturne yields
Unto a glowing reverie of perfumed, rose-rich lands,
Where we watch wide-eyed as the kindled torches
Swift illumines a realm wherein the orphan knows no peril —
Spirit has no strength to bind our wings;
No wheezing whirlwind can impede our flight.
All's well! Spill forth now, cataracts of light,

Shine on imperiously, irradiated whirlwinds:
For we who shimmer with life's incandescence,
Fear no pale ghost spawned in fever-swamps of madness.

Birth

O gloomy night —
O night high-vaulted —
What uproots these winter-knotted trees?
Through heaven's cove
The predator is on the spoor,
And foam flies from the neighing chargers.
Gaping night —
Bright-glowing night —
A dazzling gleam lights up black hilltops.
Flickering and twisting —
Coldly sparkling —
Stars are shattered in a night of storm.
And time is rolling onwards,
Rumbling, roaring —
Hurricanes assail high crag and sodden woodland.
Cautious cries creep forth
From smoky trees,
And then drift to the heights
Where eagles sit on brood.

Lullaby

Listen to the splashing rain
That purls and pours upon the roof.
O sleep, beloved child of mine,
Though howling storms sweep high
Above our twilit homeland.
Listen as the clock ticks out
The minutes and the seconds —
As the night is fading fast away
And dawn's light adumbrates the day,
So too do you approach a life of sorrow now
With every step that you will take.
Yet sleep awhile, sleep long, beloved child.

Are you asleep, O heart of mine?
Or do you listen to the pouring, purling rain?
Attend to these great storm-winds whistling
All around our safe and solid home.
You do not know that all these tears of heaven
Signify but care and sorrow,
For with moaning and with lamentation
All the seconds of your life will throb:
Their shafts are aimed right at your heart,
To spill your scarlet blood in endless streams.
O hearken! Through the roaring storm
The watchman on the tower blows the warning blast.
How swiftly midnight comes to call.
But sleep, my little one: your mother shall stand guard!

Man and His God

Into uncanny loneliness
We're one and all expelled
From nowhere.
Yet within each mortal
Dwells his god.
The world must always master man:
But help me conquer loneliness!
That's all I ask of you, of you my god!

Remembrance, Darkling

In my darkest depths, the atom clouds
Recall a dreamily unconscious era,
When they rested in the hearts
Of flowers of the fields.
They yearn for swift release
Into the stream of life,
Once more to flood the world with sweet aromas —
Where they might ban utterly
All fraudulent display,
Companioned by most secret consubstantial powers,
Scattering their congregated throng unto
The infinite celestial vault.

And that which, deep within me,
Yet participates in waves ethereal
Hath intermingled with the heaven's blue.
The earthly portion yet residing in my frame,
Is incarnated as a clotted mist
That blots all distance out;
And what has most intensely pulsed
And throbbed within me
Shrieks and hisses like great leaping flares
Upon the surface of the sun.

The Clutching Talons

When I recall you, silent nature,
Deep within me magic pictures coalesce;
And that which rules me from without,
The merely melancholy satisfaction of my longing,
Lures me on to follow to the end
The dark, enduring traces of a world
That fades to nothingness whilst yet I gaze.
But is it just my own desire
That splits my heart in twain?
Two stressors drive the creature netherwards:
The one will drag him down
Into a boundless waste of dust;
The other rolls and tumbles him unto the void.
And carnal pleasure — as it will be, not as it is now! —
Disintegrates the creature's form.
Yet that which liberates, evokes no will in him
To brave the raging of the storms.
Instead, the creature merely craves
The clutching talons that imprison him.

Man and Dog and Bird

The rabid mongrel rotates in tight circles,
Straining to devour the raven.
Yet the cur achieves no purchase on the wings,
And all that's left him is a hollow boast.
The clumsy wretch is waterlogged without

And hot with rage within:
Since he himself can't fly at all,
His envy roasts his soul alive.
We humans also saw the bird,
Although we did not crave its wings.
We know: whatever soars so high above
Must ultimately crash into the dust.
The art of flight has also left us listless;
But the thought of our mortality
Comes in a blinding flash
As buckshot blasts the bird apart.

The Genius

Danger lurks within the surges
That divide him from the island of the yet unborn,
Till breakers toss him down upon
The ragged coastline of a storm-tossed realm.
The lamentation of the waves
Dissolves into the powdered stones.
Alone with his great love,
Not knowing his true name or nature,
He must prowl dark roads;
Must gaze upon bright-burning deserts
And at shadow-shedding welkin high above;
Must stand amid the strafing whirlwind
Whilst his love is stunned,
Constrained by outer darkness,
And his life's own inner fire incinerates
The noontide of his days.
But where his flawless flame extends,
All distances are glossed with gold;
And every dull gray land of storm
Is soon made lustrous at the sound
Of his tormented song.

Cosmogonic Reflections

Selected Aphorisms From Ludwig Klages
ISBN 978-1-910524-41-1

Foreword by Joseph D. Pryce

Soul and Spirit

The very title of Klages' metaphysical treatise, *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele* (The Spirit as Adversary of the Soul), refers to the ceaseless and savage battle waged by Spirit against the soul. The mounting onslaught of Spirit against the living soul has constituted the innermost essence of the life of man. Whereas Spirit once existed in a temporary and uneasy symbiosis with the soul, in the course of human history, Spirit's destructive power waxes ever stronger, until Spirit eventually abandons the symbiotic compromise that endured whilst the powers of life were still exalted, and erupts into the waning empire of the living soul as a savage and unyielding demon whose malevolent career reaches its grisly climax in our apocalyptic age of "virtual" reality, compassion-babble, hydrogen bombs, and racial chaos.

But just what is this "soul?" In the first place, the soul is not something exclusively human, for all phenomena possess soul, such as the sea, animals, mountains, the wind, and the stars. In fact, all phenomena are "en-souled." The soul possesses two poles, the archetypal soul and the substantial soul, or, to look upon these matters from a slightly different angle, a passive receptor pole and an active effector pole. The passive receptor pole is, in the thought of Klages, the truly characteristic aspect for the soul's life. From its birth, the soul leads a pathic, or passive, dream-existence, in which its life is filled with visionary images. The soul only becomes released for activity in the phenomenal world when the bearer of that soul is confronted by the polarity of another soul, which forces each soul to reveal its nature to the other. The original characteristics of the soul are night, dreaming, rhythmic pulsation, infinite distance, and the realm of the unconscious.

The "elementary" substances that constitute the earth originated under the complex influence of telluric and cosmic forces, and the symbiotic interaction of all telluric phenomena was required in order to bring the animate world into being. According to the doctrine of the "actuality of the images," the plant represents the transitional stage between the element and the living creature. (The botanist Jagadis Bose performed experiments that he felt conclusively demonstrated the capacity of plants to experience pain). The plant experiences life in the form of growth and maturation, as well as in the creation of offspring through the processes familiar to natural science. Spontaneous movements of various kinds are characteristic of plant-life, such as the turning of the leaves and buds to the light, the sending of the root-system into the soil in order to

extract nourishment from the earth, the fixing of supportive tendrils to fixed surfaces, and so on. Klages draws our attention to the fact that there are several varieties of plant that are indubitably capable of self-motility. There are, at this threshold of another realm of being, organisms such as sea squirts, mussels, oysters, sponges, and zoophytes, which become fixed in their habitat only after the early stages of the lives. (When Verworn published his experiments on the psychical life of the protista in 1899, he attributed sensation to these organisms, a position that certainly has much to recommend it. But when he attempted to demonstrate that even the will is in evidence at this stage of life, one can only shake one's head in disbelief, for that which this author adduces as evidence of volition in the protista is the simple phenomenon of reaction to stimuli! Thus, Verworn equates the reactive responses in the protista to the action of the will in man, in whom the "volitional" processes are more highly developed. This is certainly a case of blindness to a difference of essence.)

In the next developmental stage, i.e., that of the animal, the soul is now captured in a living body. The drives and instincts make their first appearance during this phase. The characteristic functions of the creature comprise physical sensation (as represented by the body-pole) and contemplation (the psychical pole). The living body is the phenomenon of the soul, and the soul is the meaning of the living body. However, in opposition to the realm of the lower animals, wherein sensation dominates contemplation, we find that in the higher animals, contemplation is strengthened at the expense of the physical sensations, as the result of Spirit's invasion of the life-cell, which occurs at this time. If one were to consider "the waking state" to be synonymous with consciousness itself, than one must conclude that consciousness is present in animal and man alike. According to Klages, however, it is only the capacity for conceptual thought that characterizes consciousness, so that we must attribute consciousness proper only to man. In the animal, the image cannot be divorced from the sensory impression. In man, on the other hand, the content of the visual image can be separated from the act of perception that receives that content through the sensorium. Therefore, although the animal undoubtedly possesses instincts, only man is truly conscious.

The biological processes that constitute plant and animal life are also operative in man, but with the intervention of Spirit (at least during the initial phase of development, during which Spirit and life maintain some kind of balance), he is capable of creating symbolic systems of communication and expression, such as art and poetry, as well as myth and cult. The processes of life establish the polar connection between the actual images of the world (or, the "macrocosm") and the pathic soul that receives them (or, the "microcosm"). The human soul comprises the totality of the immediate experiences of man. It is the soul that receives its impressions of actuality in the shape of images. "The image that falls upon the senses: that, and nothing besides, is the meaning of the world," Klages insists, and one such immediate act of reception can be seen in the manner in which one comprehends the imagery employed by a great poet or the skillfully drawn portrait executed by a gifted artist. The actualities received by the "pathic" soul are experienced in the dimensions of space and time, but they have

their coming-to-be and their passing-away solely within the temporal order. In sharp contrast to the traditional Christian insistence that virtue constitutes a valorization of the “Spirit” at the expense of a denigrated body, Klages sees man’s highest potential in the state of ecstasy, such as in the privileged state of rapture in which the connected poles of body and soul are liberated from the intrusive “Spirit.” What the Christian understands by the word soul is, in fact, actually Spirit, and Spirit — to simplify our scheme somewhat for the sake of expediency — is the mortal adversary of the soul. Another way to express this insight would be the formula: Spirit is death, and soul is life.

Spirit manifests its characteristic essence in formalistic cognition and technological processes, and in the hyper-rationalism that has pre-occupied Western thought since the Renaissance. Both mathematical formalism and “high” technology have reared their conceptual skyscrapers upon a foundation formed by the accumulation of empirical data. Spirit directs its acolytes to the appropriation and rigidification of the world of things, especially those things that are exploitable by utilitarian technocrats. Spirit fulfills its project in the act, or event, that occurs within the spatio-temporal continuum, although Spirit itself has its origin outside that continuum. Spirit is manifest in man’s compulsive need to seize and control the materials at hand, for only “things” will behave consistently enough for the Spirit-driven utilitarian to be able to “utilize” them by means of the familiar processes of quantification and classification, which enable “science” to fix, or “grasp,” the thing in its lethal conceptual stranglehold.

We must draw a sharp distinction between the thing and its properties on one side, and the “essence” (*Wesen*) and its characteristics on the other. Only an essence, or nature, can be immediately experienced. One cannot describe, or “grasp,” an essence by means of the conceptual analysis that is appropriate only when a scientist or technician analyzes a thing in order to reduce it to an “objective” fact that will submit to the grasp of the concept. The souls of all phenomena unite to comprise a world of sensuous images, and it is only as unmediated images that the essences appear to the pathic soul who receives their meaning-content. The world of essences (phenomena) is experienced by the pathic soul, which is the receptor of the fleeting images that constitute actuality (*Wirklichkeit der Bilder*). These images wander eternally in the restless cosmic dance that is the Heraclitean flux. The image lives in intimate connection with the poles of space and time.

The world of things, on the other hand, is rationally comprehended as a causally connected system of objects (*noumena*). In the course of historical time man’s ability to perceive the living images and their attendant qualities is progressively impoverished until Spirit finally replaces the living world of expressive images with the dead world of mere things, whose only connections are adequately expressed in the causal nexus, or, to use the language of science, the “laws of nature.”

In the final act of the historical tragedy, when there is no longer any vital substance upon which the vampire spirit may feed, the parasitic invader from beyond time will be forced to devour itself.

Paradise Lost

We see that the philosophy of Klages has both a metaphysical dimension as well as a historical one, for he sees the history of the world as the tragic aftermath to the disasters that ensued when man was expelled from the lost primordial paradise in which he once enjoyed the bliss of a “Golden Age.” When man found himself expelled from the eternal flux of coming-to-be and passing-away of the lost pagan paradise, he received in exchange the poor substitute known as consciousness. Paradise was lost, in effect, when man allowed his temporally-incarnated life-cell to be invaded by the a-temporal force that we call Spirit.

Klages is quite specific in putting forward a candidate for this “Golden Age” which prospered long before Spirit had acquired its present, murderous potency, for it is within the pre-historic Aegean culture-sphere, which has often been referred to by scholars as the “Pelasgian” world, that Klages locates his vision of a peaceful, pagan paradise that was as yet resistant to the invasive wiles of Spirit.

Who are these “Pelasgians,” and why does the Pelasgian “state of mind” loom so largely in Klages’ thought? According to the philosopher, the development of human consciousness, from life, to thought, to will, reveals itself in the three-stage evolution from prehistoric man (the Pelasgian), through the Promethean (down to the Renaissance), to the Heraclitean man (the stage which we now occupy). For Klages, the Pelasgian is the human being as he existed in the prehistoric “Golden Age” of Minoan Crete, Mycenaean Hellas, and the related cultures of the Aegean world. He is a passive, “pathic” dreamer, whose predominant mode of being is contemplation. He consorts directly with the living Cosmos and its symbols, but he is doomed.

The “Pelasgians” occupy a strategic place in the mythos of Ludwig Klages, and this “Pelasgian Realm” of Klages closely resembles the mythic Golden Age of Atlantis that looms so large in the *Weltanschauung* of E. T. A. Hoffmann. But who, in fact, were these Pelasgians? According to the prehistorians and mythologists, the Pelasgians were an ancient people who inhabited the islands and seacoasts of the eastern Mediterranean during the Neolithic and Bronze Age periods. Homer, in a well-known passage in the *Odyssey* (XIX, 175 ff), places them on Crete, but another writer, Dionysius Halicarnassus, could only tell us that the Pelasgians were *autokhthonoi*, or “indigenous” throughout Hellas. Homer also refers to “Lord Zeus of Dodona, Pelasgian,” in the *Iliad* (II, 750). Plutarch says of them that “they were like the oak among trees: the first of men at least in Akhaia,” while Pliny believes that Peloponnesian Arkadia was originally called Pelasgis; that Pelasgos was an aristocratic title; and that the Pelasgians were descended from the daughters of Danaos.

The most famous Pelasgian settlement was at Dodona, and Thucydides (we discover with relief) informs us that all Greece was Pelasgian before the Trojan war (approximately 1200 BCE): “Before the Trojan War no united effort appears to be made by Hellas; and to my belief that name itself had not yet been extended to the entire Hellenic world. In fact, before the time of Hellen, son of Deucalion, the appellation was

probably unknown, and the names of the different nationalities prevailed locally, the widest in range being ‘Pelasgians.’”¹ Homer mentions them in the *Iliad* (II, 840), and, in the *Odyssey* (XIX, 172-177), the poet describes them as “divine.” Racially, there seems to be no doubt that the Pelasgians were an Aryan people, and physical anthropologists inform us that the twenty skulls discovered at the Minoan sites of Palakaistro, Zakro, and Gournia turn out to be predominantly dolicocephalic, with the cranial indices averaging 73.5 for the males, and 74.9 for the women.² The historian Herodotus, like Thucydides, groups all of the pre-Classical peoples of the Hellenic world under the name Pelasgian: “Croesus made inquiries as to which were the greatest powers in Hellas, with a view to securing their friendly support, and, as a result of these inquiries, he found that the Lacedaemonians and the Athenians stood out among the people of the Dorian and Ionian race respectively. Of these people that had thus made their mark, the latter was originally a Pelasgian and the former a Hellenic nationality... As regards the language spoken by the Pelasgians, I have no exact information; but it is possible to argue by inference from the still-existing Pelasgians who occupy the city of Creston in the hinterland of the Tyrrhennians; from the other Pelasgians who have settled in Placia and Scylace on the Hellespont; and from the various other communities of Pelasgian race which have changed their national name. If inferences may be legitimately drawn from this evidence, then the original Pelasgians were speakers of a non-Greek language, and the Athenian nation must have learned a new language at the time when they changed from Pelasgians into Hellenes. At all events, the inhabitants of Creston and of Placia, who in neither case speak the same language as their present respective neighbors, do speak the same language as one another...In contrast to this, the Hellenic race has employed an identical language continuously, ever since it came into existence. After splitting off from the Pelasgian race, it found itself weak, but from these small beginnings it has increased until it now includes a number of nationalities, its principal recruits being Pelasgians. It is my further opinion that the non-Hellenic origin of the Pelasgians accounts for the complete failure of even this nationality to grow to any considerable dimensions.”³ The rest, as they say, is silence (at least in the Classical sources), and we can see why this obscure people should appeal to the mythologizing “Golden Age” bent of Klages. Modern authorities regard the Pelasgians as inhabitants of a purely Neolithic culture pertaining only to the area of Thessaly bounded by Sesklo in the east and the Peneios valley in the west (the area which is now known as Thessaliotis).

Although the philosopher’s alluring portrait of the Pelasgians was formulated before modern archaeology had completed our image of Aegean prehistory, the picture which Klages paints, in the *Eros-book* and in the “Magna Mater” chapter of *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*, of a vibrant, healthy, and physically beautiful people, in touch

¹ Book I of the *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Oxford text, edited by H. Stuart-Jones; translated by Arnold J. Toynbee.

² R. W. Hutchinson, *Prehistoric Crete* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962).

³ Herodotus, Book I, chapters 56 to 58.

with the gods and with nature, requires little — if any — correction in the wake of the new researches. The figures who move so gracefully through the enchanted atmosphere of the palace frescoes at Knossos, as they carry their brightly-colored gifts of vase, flowers, and pyxis, to the Goddess, are straight out of a poet's dream. This Minoan, or "Pelagian," world was characterized by a dialectical fusion of two strains of religiosity: on the one hand, we meet with the Aegean worship of the Mother Goddess, with all that that entails with regard to ritual and style of living; and, on the other, we confront the Indo-European sky-god, or Father God, and the two strains seem to coexist in an uneasy, unstable — but certainly fruitful — truce. Mythologists tell us that this heritage is reflected in the tales that indicate the marriages between the Indo-European sky-god Zeus with various incarnations of the Aegean Mother Goddess (in some of the myths, Zeus is, himself, born on Crete!). In time, of course, the Father God will achieve dominance in the Hellenic world, but Klages is more interested in traces of the religion of the Goddess as it survives from the Stone Age into the world of the second millennium BCE.

Our philosopher, in effect, merges the misty Neolithic and Bronze Age cultures of the ancient Aegean into a single magical world-space, wherein an innocent race lives at one with Nature and the Goddess. Klages treats the Pelagians as the primeval Hellenes, who worshiped the Goddess, as she was embodied in female idols in the form of figurines of the famous steatopygous Fertility-Goddess type, with huge belly and swollen buttocks (even though this iconographic image, represented most clearly in the Venus of Willendorf, proceeds from a much earlier cultural stratum, the Palaeolithic. The later Greeks celebrated Demeter, the Life-Mother, in the Eleusinian mysteries). The palace culture of Minoan Crete would exemplify the matriarchalist style of the (late) Pelagian world, especially as prehistoric Knossos had a far more sophisticated attitude toward women than did, say, the later Periclean Athens. For instance, in the legend of Ariadne, the fact that her presence is indicated at the funeral games shows us that women were free to mingle with men at their will, and the version of the myth which shows Ariadne as in charge of the palace in her father's absence shows the great value which the Cretans placed on women. This centrality of woman is indicated in all of Minoan art, which depicts her as beautifully-animated; in fact, one of the most elegant of the ebon-tressed, slim-waisted, and crimson-lipped women depicted on the frescoes on the Palace of Knossos, was nicknamed *La Parisienne* by a French visitor at the turn of the century!

Klages is drawn more toward the "pacifist," thalassocratic (sea-ruling) aspect of the Minoans of the second millennium BCE, than toward the covetous Bronze Age Greeks of the mainland with their heavily-fortified cities and unending wars (the Bronze Age mainlanders seem to have loved war for its own sake; another troubling element in their civilization is their reliance on slavery, especially of women). These are the Mycenaeans, who would eventually sack, and destroy, the Minoan culture. It is a notable fact that most of our evidence about the "Pelagian" religious beliefs and practices stems from Minoan Crete: very little material survives from Mycenae and the other mainland

sites. On Crete, however, we find the dove-goddess image and the snake-goddess image, the stepped altars and shrine models, in religious sanctuaries overflowing with such sacred items. Clearly, the Goddess ruled on Minoan Crete, and, in fact, the Goddess Potnia, whose name crops up repeatedly in the Linear B tablets, might indeed be the “Lady of the Labyrinth,” which is to say, the Lady of the Place of the labrys, or the double ax — the Palace of Knossos itself. Another Knossos cult-figure was the anemo ijereja, of “Priestess of the Winds”; there is also qerasija, which could well mean “the Huntress.” According to some historians, offerings to the Goddess were entirely bloodless, and were usually gifts of honey, oil, wine, and spices like coriander and fennel; sheep and their shepherds were associated with Potnia, but certainly not in the aspect of blood-sacrifices. On the mainland, however, we find the Mycenaeans slaughtering rams, horses, and other animals in their vaulted tombs. We also find the cult of the Goddess on the Cycladic islands (to which “Greek islands” American “millionaires” and other arch-vulgarians habitually cart their flatulent girths on “vacations”). The famous Cycladic figurines represent the Mother Goddess as well, under the aspects of “the divine nurse” or the “Goddess of Blessing.” In these figurines the Goddess is almost invariably represented with the pubic delta and the stomach emphasized.

In the early phase of Minoan religion, the relationship of ruler and deity was not that of father-and-son, but of mother-and-son. For Minoan Crete, the Mother Goddess was represented on earth by the priest-king. Some lovely manifestations of this reverence for the Goddess can be found in the faience statuettes of the bare-breasted Mother Goddess which were found by Sir Arthur Evans in the Palace of Knossos: one of them shows the Goddess holding up a serpent in each of her hands; the other statuette shows the snakes entwining themselves around her arms. These figures appear in both “peak sanctuaries” and in household shrines, and have been designated by prehistorians as the “Snake Goddess” or the “Household Goddess.” The “Household Goddess” is often associated with the motif of the double-axe, the emblem of the Palace at Knossos, and also with the horns of consecration, which associate her with the sacred bull of the Palace of King Minos. One inhabitant of the Palace of King Minos was the princess Ariadne, to whom we alluded briefly above. After the loss of Theseus, the fate of Ariadne would be intimately intertwined with that of Dionysus, the problematic Greek divinity whose cult excited so much controversy and such fierce opposition among the Greeks of the Classical Age.

Dionysus was the orgiastic god in whom Klages, following Nietzsche, locates the site of an untrammelled sensuous abandon. This Thracian-Grecian deity, whose nature was so brilliantly interpreted by Nietzsche in the latter half of the nineteenth century, and by his worthy successor Walter F. Otto in the first half of the twentieth century, becomes the ultimate symbol of heathen life in the Klagesian view, the epiphany of that frenzied ecstasy that the god’s followers achieved by means of the drunkenness and wild dancing of the maenads, those female adherents of the god of the vine, who experienced genuine enthusiasm, i.e., “the god within,” as they followed the progress of their far-wandering god, who gave to man the inestimable gift of wine. These maenads

celebrated their secret Dionysian cultic rituals far from the accustomed haunts of man, and any man was slaughtered on the spot if he should be apprehended whilst illicitly witnessing the ceremonies reserved for the gods' female followers. These maenads were alleged to be in the possession of magical powers that enabled the god's worshipers to bring about magical effects at great distances. And "all Eros is Eros of distance!"

Philosophical Roots and Biological Consequences

Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele contains a comprehensive survey of the philosophical literature that relates to "biocentric" concerns, and in these pages Klages closely scrutinizes the troubled seas and fog-shrouded moorlands of philosophy, both ancient and modern, over which we, unfortunately, have only sufficient time to cast a superficial and fleeting glance. We will, however, spend a profitable moment or two on several issues that Klages examined in some detail, for various pivotal disputes that have preoccupied the minds of gifted thinkers from the pre-Socratics down to Nietzsche were also of pre-eminent significance for Klages. One of the pre-Socratic thinkers in particular, Heraclitus of Ephesus (c. 536-470 BCE), the "dark one," was looked upon by Ludwig Klages as the founding father of "biocentric," or life-centered, philosophy. Klages and Heraclitus share the conviction that life is ceaseless change, chaos, "eternal flux" (*panta rhei*). Both thinkers held that it is not matter that endures through the ceaseless patterns of world-transformation: it is this ceaseless transformation itself that is the enduring process, which alone constitutes this ever-shifting vibrancy, this soaring and fading of appearances, this becoming and passing away of phenomenal images upon which Klages bestowed the name life. Likewise, Klages and Heraclitus were in complete accord in their conviction that natural events transpire in a succession of rhythmical pulsations. For both thinkers, nothing abides without change in the human world, and in the cosmos at large, everything flows and changes in the rhythmical and kaleidoscopic dance that is the cosmic process. We cannot say of a thing: "it is"; we can only say that a thing "comes to be" and that it "passes away." The only element, in fact, in the metaphysics of Heraclitus that will be repudiated by Klages is the great pre-Socratic master's positing of a "logos," or indwelling principle of order, and this slight disagreement is ultimately a trivial matter, for the logos is an item which, in any case, plays a role so exiguous in the Heraclitean scheme as to render the notion, for all practical and theoretical purposes, nugatory as far as the basic thrust of the philosophy of the eternal flux. Another great Greek philosopher, Protagoras of Abdera (c. 480-410 BCE), is fulsomely acclaimed by Klages as the "father of European psychology and history's pioneer epistemologist." When Protagoras asserted that the content of perception from moment to moment is the result of the fusion of an external event (the world) with an inner event (the experiencing soul), he was, in effect, introducing the Heraclitean flux into the sphere of the soul. No subsequent psychologist has achieved a greater theoretical triumph. The key text upon which Klages bases this endorsement

is Sextus Empiricus' *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* I (217): "...matter is in flux, and as it flows additions are made continuously in the place of the effluxions, and the senses are transformed and altered according to the times of life and to all the other conditions of the bodies." (218) "Men apprehend different things at different times owing to their differing dispositions; for he who is in a natural state apprehends those things subsisting in matter which are able to appear to those in a natural state, and those who are in a non-natural state the things which can appear to those in a non-natural state." Thus, the entire sphere of psychical life is a matter of perception, which comprises the act of perception (in the soul) and the content of perception (in the object).

This Protagorean insight forms the basis for the distinction between noumenon and phenomenon that will exert such a fructifying influence on Western thought, especially during the period of German Romanticism. Greek thought has a significant bearing on crucial discoveries that were made by Klages. We have learned that there are two forces that are primordially opposed to each other, Spirit and life; in addition, we have seen these forces cannot be reduced to each other, nor can they be reduced to any third term; body and soul constitute the poles of unified life, and it is the mission of Spirit to invade that unity, to function as a divisive wedge in order to tear the soul from the body and the body from the soul. Thus, Spirit begins its career as the disrupter of life; only at the end of history will it become the destroyer of life. We find a piquant irony in the oft-expressed view that accuses Klages of inventing this "Spirit" out of whole cloth, for those who have sneered at his account of the provenance of Spirit as a force that enters life from outside the sphere of life, dismissing the very idea from serious consideration by reducing the concept to a caricature ("Klagesian devil," "Klages with his Spirit-as-'space-invader'," and so on), offer quite an irresistible opening for a controversialist's unbuttoned foil, because such statements reveal, at one and the same time, an ignorance of the history of philosophy in our professors and commentators that should curdle the blood of the most trusting students, as well as an almost incomprehensible inability, or unwillingness, to understand a scrupulously exact and closely-argued text. This intellectual disability possesses, one must confess, a certain undeniable pathos. As it happens, the question as to the provenance of Spirit has always enjoyed a prominent position in the history of philosophical speculation (especially in the narrow field of epistemology, i.e., the "theory of cognition"), and the Klagesian viewpoint that has been so ignorantly and persistently excoriated is explicitly drawn from the philosophy of — Aristotle! It was Aristotle, "the master of those who know," who, in discussing the divided substance of man, discovered that he could only account for the origin of one of the components, Spirit (Greek *nous*), by concluding that Spirit had entered man "from outside"! Likewise, the idea of a "tripartite" structure of man, which seems so bizarre to novice students of biocentrism, has quite a respectable pedigree, for, once again, it was Aristotle who viewed man as having three aspects: *Psyche-Soma-nous* (body-soul-Spirit). The speculations of the Greek philosophers who belonged to the Eleatic School provided the crucial insights

that inspired Klages' masterful formulation of the doctrine of the "actuality of the images."

The specific problem that so exercised the Eleatics was the paradox of motion. The Eleatics insisted that motion was inconceivable, and they proceeded from that paradoxical belief to the conclusion that all change is impossible. One of the Eleatics, Zeno, is familiar to students of the history of philosophy as the designer of the renowned "Zeno's Paradoxes," the most famous of which is the problem of Achilles and the Tortoise. Zeno provided four proofs against the possibility of motion:

a body must traverse in finite time an infinite number of spaces and, therefore, it can never begin its journey;

this is Zeno's application of his motion-theory to the "Achilles" problem that we've just mentioned — if Achilles grants a lead or "head start" (analogous to a "handicap") to the tortoise against whom he is competing in a foot-race, he will never be able to overtake the tortoise, because by the time Achilles has reached point A (the starting point for the tortoise), his opponent has already reached point B. In fact, Achilles will never even reach point A, because before he can traverse the entire distance between his starting-point and point A, he must necessarily cover one-half of that distance, and then one-half of the remaining distance, and so on and so on ad infinitum, as it were;

the arrow that has just been launched by the archer is always resting, since it always occupies the same space; and

equivalent distances must, at equivalent velocity, be covered in the identical time. But a moving body will pass another body that is moving in the opposite direction (at the identical velocity) twice as quickly as when this body is resting, and this demonstrates that the observed facts contradict the laws of motion.

Betraying a certain nervousness, historians of philosophy usually dismiss the Eleatics as superficial skeptics or confused souls, but they never condescend to provide a convincing refutation of their "obvious" or "superficial" errors. Klages, on the other hand, finds both truth and error in the Eleatics' position. From the standpoint of an analysis of things, the Eleatics are on firm ground in their insistence on the impossibility of change, but from the standpoint of an analysis of appearances, their position is utterly false. Their error arose from the fact that the Greeks of this period had already succumbed to the doctrine that the world of appearances is a world of deception; a reservoir of illusory images. This notion has governed almost every metaphysical system that has been devised by Western philosophers down to our own time, and with every passing age, the emphasis upon the world of the things (noumena) has increased at the expense of the world of appearances (phenomena). Klages, on the other hand, will solve the "problem of the Eleatics" by an emphatic demonstration that the phenomenal images are, in fact, the only realities.

During the Renaissance, in fact, when ominous temblors were heralding the dawn of our "philosophy of the mechanistic apocalypse," there were independent scholars (among whom we find Giordano Bruno and Paracelsus) who speculated at length on the relationship that exists between the macrocosm and the microcosm, as well

as on the three-fold nature of man and on the proto-characterological doctrine of the “temperaments.” But the key figure in the overturning of the triadic world-view is undoubtedly the French thinker and mathematician René Descartes (1596-1650), who is chiefly responsible for devising the influential schematic dualism of thinking substance and extended substance, which has dominated, in its various incarnations and permutations, the thinking of the vast majority of European thinkers ever since. Descartes explicitly insists that all of our perceptions as well as every “thing” that we encounter must be reduced to the status of a machine; in fact, he even suggests that the whole universe is merely a vast mechanism (*terram totumque hunc mundum instar machinæ descripsi*). It is no accident, then, that Cartesian thought is devoid of genuine psychology, for, as he says in the *Discourse on the Method*, man is a mere machine, and his every thought and every movement can be accounted for by means of a purely mechanical explanation.

Nevertheless, there have been several revolts against Cartesian dualism. As recently as two centuries ago, the extraordinarily gifted group of “nature philosophers” who were active during the glory days of German Romanticism, pondered the question of the “three-fold” in publications that can be consulted with some profit even today. We have seen that the specifically Klagesian “triad” comprises body-soul-Spirit, and the biocentric theory holds that life, which comprises the poles of body and soul, occurs as processes and events. Spirit is an intruder into the sphere of life, an invader always seeking to sever the poles, a demonic willfulness that is characterized by manic activity and purposeful deeds. “The body is the manifestation of the soul, and the soul is the meaning of the living body.”

We have seen that Klages was able to trace proleptic glimpses of this biocentric theory of the soul back to Greek antiquity, and he endeavored for many years to examine the residues of psychical life that survive in the language, poetry, and mythology of the ancient world, in order to interpret the true meanings of life as it had been expressed in the word, cult, and social life of the ancients. He brilliantly clarifies the symbolic language of myth, especially with reference to the cosmogonic Eros and the Orphic Mysteries. He also explores the sensual-imagistic thought of the ancients as the foundation upon which objective cognition is first erected, for it is among the Greeks, and only among the Greeks, that philosophy proper was discovered. During the peak years of the philosophical activity of the Greek thinkers, Spirit still serves the interests of life, existing in an authentic relationship with an actuality that is sensuously and inwardly “en-souled” (*beseelt*). The cosmological speculation of antiquity reveals a profound depth of feeling for the living cosmos, and likewise demonstrates the presence of the intimate bonds that connect man to the natural world; contemplation is still intimately bound up with the primordial, elemental powers. Klages calls this “archaic” Greek view of the world, along with its later reincarnations in the history of Western thought, the “biocentric” philosophy, and he situates this mode of contemplation as the enemy of the “logocentric” variety, i.e., the philosophy that is centered upon the

logos, or “mind,” for mind is the manifestation of Spirit as it enters Western thought with the appearance of Socrates.

From Plato himself, through his “neo-Platonic” disciples of the Hellenistic and Roman phases of antiquity, and down to the impoverished Socratic epigones among the shallow “rationalists” of seventeenth and eighteenth century Europe, all philosophers who attempt to restore or renew the project of a philosophical “enlightenment,” are the heirs of Socrates, for it was Socrates who first made human reason the measure of all things. Socratic rationalism also gave rise to ethical schemes that were alien to life, being based upon a de-natured creature, as in the idea of man-as-such. This pure Spirit, this distilled ego, seeks to sever all natural and racial bonds, and as a result, “man” prides himself upon being utterly devoid of nobility, beauty, blood, and honor. In the course of time, he will attach his fortunes to the even more lethal spiritual plague known as Christianity, which hides its destructive force behind the hypocritical demand that we “love one’s neighbors.” From 1789 onwards, a particularly noxious residue of this Christian injunction, the undifferentiating respect for the ghost known as “humanity,” will be considered the hallmark of every moral being.

The heirs of the Socratic tradition have experienced numerous instances of factional strife and re-groupings in the course of time, although the allegiance to Spirit has always remained unquestioned by all of the disputants. One faction may call itself “idealistic” because it considers concepts, ideas, and categories to be the only true realities; another faction may call itself “materialistic” because it views “things” as the ultimate constituents of reality; nevertheless, both philosophical factions give their allegiance, nolentes volentes, to the Spirit and its demands. Logocentric thought, in fact, is the engine driving the development of the applied science that now rules the world. And by their gifts shall ye know them! The bitterly antagonistic attitude of Klages towards one of the most illustrious heirs of Socrates, Immanuel Kant, has disturbed many students of German thought who see something perverse and disingenuous in this opposition to the man whom they uncritically regard as the unsurpassed master of German thought.

Alfred Rosenberg and the other official spokesmen of the National Socialist movement were especially enraged by the ceaseless attacks on Kant by Klages and his disciple, Werner Deubel. Nevertheless, Kant’s pre-eminence as an epistemologist was disputed as long ago as 1811, when Gottlob Ernst Schulze published his *Critique of Theoretical Philosophy*, which was then, and remains today, the definitive savaging of Kant’s system. Klages endorses Schulze’s demonstration that Kant’s equation: actuality = being = concept = thing = appearance (or phenomenon) is utterly false, and is the main source of Kant’s inability to distinguish between perception and representation. Klages adds that he finds it astonishing that Kant should have been able to convince himself that he had found the ultimate ground of the faculty of cognition in — cognition!

Klages cites Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil* with approval, in which Kant is ridiculed for attempting to ground his epistemology in the “faculty of a faculty”! Klages

shows that the foundation of the faculty of cognition lies not in cognition itself, but in experience, and that the actuality of space and time cannot have its origins in conceptual thought, but solely in the vital event. There can be no experienced colors or sounds without concomitant spatio-temporal characteristics, for there can be no divorce between actual space and actual time. We can have no experience of actual space without sensory input, just as we have no access to actual time without thereby participating in the ceaseless transformation of the phenomenal images. Formalistic science and its offspring, advanced technology, can gain access only to a small segment of the living world and its processes. Only the symbol has the power to penetrate all the levels of actuality, and of paramount importance to Klages in his elaborate expositions of the biocentric metaphysics is the distinction between conceptual and symbolic thought.

We have previously drawn attention to the fact that drive-impulses are manifest in expressive movements that are, in turn, impelled by the influence of a non-conceptual power that Klages calls the symbol. Likewise, symbolic thinking is a tool that may profitably be utilized in the search for truth, and Klages contrasts symbolic contemplation with the logical, or “formalistic,” cognition, but he is at pains to draw our attention to the errors into which an unwarranted, one-sided allegiance to either type of thought can plunge us. Although Klages has been repeatedly and bitterly accused by Marxists and other “progressives” as being a vitriolic enemy of reason, whose “irrationalism” provided the “fascists” with their heaviest ideological artillery, nothing could be further from the truth. On occasions too numerous to inventory, he ridicules people like Bergson and Keyserling, who believe that “intuition” lights the royal road to truth. His demolition of the Bergsonian notion of the *élan vital* is definitive and shattering, and his insistence that such an entity is a mere pseudo-explanation is irrefutable, and might have been published in a British philosophical journal. In the end, Klages says, “irrationalism” is the spawn of — Spirit! Our ability to formulate and utilize concepts as well as our capacity to recognize conceptual identities is sharply opposed to the procedure involved in the symbolic recognition of identities.

The recognition of such conceptual identities has, of course, a crucial bearing on the life of the mind, since it is this very ability that functions as the most important methodological tool employed by every researcher involved in the hard sciences. Symbolic identification, on the other hand, differs widely from its conceptual counterpart in that the symbolic type derives its meaning-content from the “elemental similarity of images.” Thus, the process of substantive, or conceptual, identification confronts its opposite number in the “identity of essence” of symbolic thought. It is this “identity of essence,” as it happens, which has given birth to language and its capacity to embody authentic meaning-content in words. Jean Paul was quite right, Klages tells us, in describing language as a “dictionary of faded metaphors,” for every abstraction that is capable of verbal representation arose from the essentiality of the meaning-content of words. He draws a sharp distinction between the true symbol (Greek symbolon, i.e., token) and the mere sign whose significance is purely referential. The true meaning of

an object resides in its presence, which Klages refers to as an aura, and this aura is directly communicated to a sensory apparatus that resists all purely linguistic attempts to establish formulas of equivalence or “correspondence.”

The sensual imagination participates in an unmediated actuality, and intuitive insight (*Schauung*) allows us to gain access to a realm of symbols, which rush into our souls as divine epiphanies. Life resists rules, for life is eternal flux. Life is not rigid being, and therefore life will always evade the man-traps of mind, the chains of the concept. Life, comprising the poles of body and soul, is the physical event as phenomenal expression of the soul. There can be no soul-less phenomena and there can be no souls without (phenomenal) appearances, just as there can be no word-less concepts and no words without meaning content. The physical world is the image-laden appearance (phenomenon) that manifests a psychical substance. When the demonic object encounters the receptive, or “pathic,” soul, the object becomes a symbol and acquires a “nimbus,” which is a pulsating radiance surrounding the moment of becoming. This nimbus is referred to as an “aura” when applied to persons, and both nimbus and aura represent the contribution of the object to the act of perception. Non-symbolic, formalistic thought, on the other hand is irreverent, non-contemplative, and can best be characterized as an act that is enacted in the service of Spirit, which imperiously and reductively ordains that the act of perception must also be an act of the will. Thus the will attains primacy even over the de-substantialized intellect, and Klages — who has persistently been dismissed as an obscurantist and irrationalist — never misses an opportunity to re-iterate his deep conviction that the essence of Spirit is to be located in the will and not in the intellect.

As we’ve seen, Klages holds that the living soul is the antithesis of the Spirit. The Spirit seeks to rigidify the eternal flux of becoming, just as the soul, in yielding passively to the eternal flux, resists the raging Heraclitean spirit and its murderous projects. Body and soul reach the peak of creative vitality when their poles are in equipoise or perfect balance, and the high point of life is reached in the experience of sensuous joy. Spirit’s assault upon the body is launched against this joy, and in waging war against the joy of the body, Spirit also wages war against the soul, in order to expel the soul, to make it homeless, and in order to annihilate all ecstasy and creativity.

Every attempt that has been made by monistic thinkers to derive the assault on life from the sphere of life itself has misfired. Such troublesome anomalies as the supernatural visions and cases of demonic possession that transpired during the Middle Ages, as well as the crippling cases of hysteria so familiar to psychologists in our own time, can never be satisfactorily explained unless we realize that the souls of these unfortunates were sundered by the acosmic force of Spirit, whose very essence is the will, that enemy and murderer of life. The conceptual “Tower of Babylon” reared by monists in their ludicrous efforts to derive the force that wages war against life from life itself is no less absurd than would be the foredoomed attempt of a firefighter to extinguish a blaze by converting a portion of the fire into the water that will extinguish the fire!

There is, however, one privileged example of a manifestation of the will in the service of life, and this occurs when the will is enlisted for the purposes of artistic creation. The will, Klages insists, is incapable of creative force, but when the artist's intuition has received an image of a god, the will functions "affirmatively" in the destructive assaults of the artist's chisel upon the marble that is to embody the image of the divinity. Actuality (the home of the soul) is experienced; being (the home of Spirit) is thought. The soul is a passive surrender to the actuality of the appearances. Actuality is an ever-changing process of coming to be and passing away that is experienced as images. Spirit attempts to fix and to make rigid the web of images that constitutes actuality by means of conceptual thought, whose concrete form is the apparatus of the scientist. Cognition represents identical, unfaltering, timeless being; life is the actuality of experience in time. When one says of time that it "is," as if it were something rigid and identical behind the eternal flux, then time is implicitly stripped of its very essence as that which is "temporal"; it is this temporal essence which is synonymous with becoming and transformation. When one speaks of a thing or a realm that is beyond, i.e., that "transcends," the unmediated, experienced actuality of the living world, one is merely misusing thought in order to introduce a conceptual, existential world in the place of the actual one, which has the inalienable character of the transitory and temporal. It is within the "pathic" soul that the categories of space and time originate. A cosmic Spirit, on the other hand, invaded the sphere of life from outside the spatio-temporal cosmos.

Klages scorns the schemes of philosophical "idealists" who attempt to ground the structures of space and time in some transcendental world. He also distinguishes a biocentric non-rational temporality from "objective" time. Biocentric thought, true to its immanentist ("this-worldly") status, recognizes that the images that pulsate in immanentist time are excluded by their very nature from any participation in objective time, for the images can only live within the instantaneous illumination of privileged moments. Klages savages the platitudes and errors of logocentric thinkers who adhere, with almost manic rigidity, to the conventional scheme of dual-axis temporality. In ordinary logic, time is viewed as radiating from the present (that extensionless hypostasis) backward into time-past and forward into time-to-come: but the whole scheme collapses in a heap as soon as we realize that the future, the "time-to-come," is nothing but a delirious void, a grotesque phantom, a piece of philosophical fiction. Only the past possesses true actuality; only the past is real. The future is merely a pale hallucination flitting about in deluded minds. True time is the relationship that binds the poles of past and present. This union occurs as a rhythmical pulsation that bears the moment's content into the past, as a new moment is generated, as it were, out of the womb of eternity, that authentic depository of actual time. Time is an unending cycle of metamorphoses utterly unrelated to the processes of "objective" time. True time, cyclical time, is clocked by the moments that intervene between a segment of elapsed time and the time that is undergoing the process of elapsing. Time is the soul

of space, just as space is the embodiment of time. Only within actual time can we apprehend the primordial images in their sensuous immediacy.

Logic, on the other hand, can only falsify the exchange between living image and receptive soul. Let us examine the biological — or, more properly, ethological — implications of the doctrine of “primordial images” (Urbilder). Bear in mind, of course, the crucial distinction that is drawn by Klages between the science of fact (Tatsachenwissenschaft) and the science of appearances (Erscheinungswissenschaft): factual science establishes laws of causality in order to explain, e.g., physiological processes or the laws of gravitation; thus, we say that factual science examines the causes of things. The science of appearances, on the other hand, investigates the actuality of the images, for images are the only enduring realities. The enduring nature of the image can be seen in the example of the generation of a beech tree. Suppose a beech tree sheds its seed upon the forest floor, in which it germinates. Can we say of the mother tree that it lives within the child? Certainly not! We can chop down the mother tree and burn it to ashes, whilst the offspring continues to prosper. Can we say that the matter of which the old tree was composed survives intact within the younger tree? Again, no: for not an atom of the matter that made up the seed from which the young beech grew exists within it. Likewise, not an atom of the matter of which a man’s body is composed at the age of thirty survives from that same man’s body as it was on his tenth birthday.

If it is not the matter of which the organism is composed which endures through the ages, what then is it that so endures? “The one possible answer is: an image.” Life and its processes occur outside the world of things. On the contrary: life comprises the events in the world of the images. Thus, we see that the doctrine of the “actuality of the images” (Wirklichkeit der Bilder) holds that it is not things, but images, that are “en-souled” (beseelt), and this proposition, Klages tells us, forms the “key to his whole doctrine of life (Lebenslehre).” Things stand in a closed chain of causality, and there is no reciprocal action between the image and the thing, no parallelism, and no connection, and the attempts that have been undertaken by various philosophers to equate the thing and the image merely serve to rupture the chain of causality in its relevant sphere, i.e., the quantitative scientific method. The receptive soul is turned towards the actuality of the image, and when we say on one occasion that an object is “red,” and on another that this same object is “warm,” in the first case the reference is to the reality of things, whereas in the second case the reference is to the actuality of images. By using the name of a color, we indicate that we are differentiating between the superficial qualities, or surface attributes, of things; when we say that a colored object is “warm” or “cold,” on the other hand, we are pointing to the phenomenal “presence” that has been received by the pathic soul. In fact, there are a whole host of common expressions in which this attribution of subjective, psychical states to visible phenomena occurs. We say, for instance, that red is “hot” and that blue is “cold.”

In the *Vom Wesen des Bewusstseins* (1921), a treatise on the nature of consciousness, Klages adduces an astonishingly vast inventory of words that are routinely utilized in descriptions of subjective as well as perceptual phenomena. Someone will speak of his

a “bitter” feeling of resentment at some slight or injury. The expression that love is “sweet” occurs in almost every language. Likewise, joy is often described as “bright,” just as grief or sorrow are often referred to as “dark.” We also have “hot” anger (or the familiar variant, the “‘heat’ of the moment”). Images are the charged powers, or natures, that constitute the basis of all phenomena of cosmic and elemental life as well as of cellular, organic life. All that exists participates in the life of the images. Air, fire, earth, and water; rocks, clouds, planets and suns; plant, animal and man: all of these entities are alive and have souls that share in the life of the cosmos. It isn’t matter that constitutes the stuff of reality, for matter perishes; but the image, which remains alive as it wanders through the rhythmically pulsating cosmos, never dies. It changes through the processes of maturation and growth in the organism, and it transforms itself through the millennia in the species. The images alone have life; the images alone have meaning. The souls of those who now live are images that are temporarily wedded to matter, just as the souls of the dead are images that have been released from matter. The souls of the dead revisit us in their actual form in dreams (*Wirklichkeitsform der Traumerscheinung*), unconstrained by the limitations of material substance. The souls of the dead are not expelled from the world to live on as immortal “Spirits” housed in some transcendent “beyond”; they are, instead, demonically vital presences, images that come to be, transform themselves, and vanish into the distance within the phenomenal world that is the only truly existing world. The human soul recalls the material palpability of the archaic images by means of the faculty that Klages calls “recollection,” and his view in this regard invites comparison with the Platonic process of “anamnesis.” The recollection of which Klages speaks takes place, of course, without the intervention of the will or the projects of the conscious mind.

Klages’ examination of “vital recollection” was greatly influenced by the thought of Wilhelm Jordan, a nineteenth century poet and pioneer Darwinist, whose works were first encountered by the young philosopher at the end of that century. In Jordan’s massive didactic poem *Andachten*, which was published in 1877, the poet espouses a doctrine of the “memory of corporeal matter.” This work had such a fructifying influence on the thought of Klages that we here give some excerpts:

It is recollection of her own cradle, when the red stinging fly glues grains of sand into a pointed arch as soon as she feels that her eggs have ripened to maturity. It is recollection of her own food during the maggot-state when the anxious mother straddles the caterpillar and drags it for long distances, lays her eggs in it, and locks it in that prison. The larva of the male stag-beetle feels and knows by recollection the length of his antlers, and in the old oak carves out in doubled dimensions the space in which he will undergo metamorphosis. What teaches the father of the air to weave the exact angles of her net by delicate law, and to suspend it from branch to branch with strings, as firm as they are light, according to her seat? Does she instruct her young in this art? No! She takes her motherly duties more lightly. The young are

expelled uncared-for from the sac in which the eggs have been laid. But three or four days later the young spider spreads its little nest with equal skill on the fronds of a fern, although it never saw the net in which its mother caught flies. The caterpillar has no eye with which to see how others knit the silken coffins from which they shall rise again. From whence have they acquired all the skill with which they spin so? Wholly from inherited recollection. In man, what he learned during his life puts into the shade the harvest of his ancestors' labors: this alone blinds him, stupefied by a learner's pride, to his own wealth of inherited recollections. The recollection of that which has been done a thousand times before by all of his ancestors teaches a newborn child to suck aptly, though still blind. Recollection it is which allows man in his mother's womb to fly, within the course of a few months, through all the phases of existence through which his ancestors rose long ago. Inherited recollection, and no brute compulsion, leads the habitual path to the goal that has many times been attained; it makes profoundest secrets plain and open, and worthy of admiration what was merely a miracle. Nature makes no free gifts. Her commandment is to gain strength to struggle, and the conqueror's right is to pass this strength on to his descendants: her means by which the skill is handed down is the memory of corporeal matter."

The primordial images embody the memory of actual objects, which may re-emerge at any moment from the pole of the past to rise up in a rush of immediacy at the pole of the present. This living world of image-laden actuality is the "eternal flux" (*panta rhei*) of Heraclitus, and its cyclical transformations relate the present moment to the moments that have elapsed, and which will come around again, *per sæcula sæculorum*.

Thus we see that the cosmos communicates through the magical powers of the symbol, and when we incorporate symbolic imagery into our inmost being, a state of ecstasy supervenes, and the soul's substance is magically revitalized (as we have already seen, genuine ecstasy reaches its peak when the poet's "polar touch of a pathic soul" communicates his images in words that bear the meaning of the actual world within them).

When prehistoric man arrives on the stage, he is already experiencing the incipient stages of the fatal shift from sensation to contemplation. Spirit initiates the campaign of destruction: the receptor-activity is fractured into "impression" and "apperception," and it is at this very point that we witness, retrospectively, as it were, the creation of historical man. Before the dawn of historical man, in addition to the motor processes that man possessed in common with the animal, his soul was turned towards wish-images. With the shift of the poles, i.e., when the sensory "receptor" processes yield power to the motor "effector" processes, we witness the hypertrophic development of the human ego. Klages is scornful of all egoism, and he repeatedly expressed bitter scorn towards all forms of "humanism," for he regards the humanist's apotheosis of the precious "individual" as a debased kowtowing before a mere conceptual abstraction. The ego is not a man; it is merely a mask. In the place of psychical wishes, we now have aims. In the ultimate stages of historical development, man is exclusively devoted to the achievement of pre-conceived goals, and the vital impulses and wish-images are

replaced by the driving forces, or interests. Man is now almost completely a creature of the will, and we recall that it is the will, and not the intellect, that is the characteristic function of Spirit in the Klagesian system. However, we must emphasize that the will is not a creative, originating force. Its sole task is to act upon the bearer of Spirit, if we may employ an analogy, in the manner of a rudder that purposively steers a craft in the direction desired by the navigator. In order to perform this regulative function, i.e., in order to transform a vital impulse into purposeful activity, the drive impulse must be inhibited and then directed towards the goal in view.

Spirit in man is dependent upon the sphere of life as long as it collaborates as an equal partner in the act of perception; but when the will achieves mastery in man, this is merely another expression for the triumph of Spirit over the sphere of life. In the fatal shift from life to Spirit, contemplative, unconscious feeling is diminished and rational judgment and the projects of the regulative volition take command. The body's ultimate divorce from the soul corresponds to the soullessness of modern man whose emotional life has diminished in creative power, just as the gigantic political state-systems have seized total control of the destiny of earth. Spirit is hostile to the demands of life. When consciousness, intellect, and the will to power achieve hegemony over the demonic forces of the cosmos, all psychical creativity and all vital expression must perish.

When man is exiled from the realm of passive contemplation, his world is transformed into the empire of will and its projects. Man now abandons the feminine, unconscious mode of living and adheres to the masculine, conscious mode, just as his affective life turns from bionomic rhythm to rationalized measure, from freedom to servitude, and from an ecstatic life in dreams to the harsh and pitiless glare of daylight wakefulness. No longer will he permit his soul to be absorbed into the elements, where the ego is dissolved and the soul merges itself with immensity in a world wherein the winds of the infinite cosmos rage and roar. He can no longer participate in that *Selbst-tödung*, or self-dissolution, which Novalis once spoke of as the "truly philosophical act and the real beginning of all philosophy." Life, which had been soul and sleep, metamorphoses into the sick world of the fully conscious mind. To borrow another phrase from Novalis (who was one of Klages' acknowledged masters), man now becomes "a disciple of the religion of philistines that functions merely as an opiate."

Man finally yields himself utterly to the blandishments of Spirit in becoming a fully conscious being. Klages draws attention to the fact that there are two divergent conceptions of the nature of consciousness in popular parlance: the first refers to the inner experience itself; whilst the second refers to the observation of the experience. Klages only concerns himself with consciousness in the second sense of the word. Experiences are by their very nature unconscious and non-purposive. Spiritual activity takes place in a non-temporal moment, as does the act of conscious thought, which is an act of Spirit. Experience must never be mistaken for the cognitive awareness of an experience, for as we have said, consciousness is not experience itself, but merely thought about experience. The "receptor" pole of experience is sharply opposed to the "effector"

pole, in that the receptive soul receives sensory perceptions: the sense of touch receives the perception of “bodiliness”; the sense of sight receives the images, which are to be understood as pictures that are assimilated to the inner life. Sensation mediates the experience of (physical) closeness, whilst intuition receives the experience of distance. Sensation and intuition comprehend the images of the world. The senses of touch and vision collaborate in sensual experience. One or the other sense may predominate, i.e., an individual’s sense of sight may have a larger share than that of touch in one’s reception of the images (or vice versa), and one receptive process may be in the ascendant at certain times, whilst the other may come to the fore at other times. (In dreams the bodily component of the vital processes, i.e., sensation, sleeps, whilst the intuitive side remains wholly functional. These facts clearly indicate the incorporeality of dream images as well as the nature of their actuality. Wakefulness is the condition of sensual processes, whilst the dream state is one of pure intuition.)

Pace William James, consciousness and its processes have nothing to do with any putative “stream of consciousness.” That viewpoint ignores the fact that the processes that transpire in the conscious mind occur solely as interruptions of vital processes. The activities of consciousness can best be comprehended as momentary, abrupt assaults that are deeply disturbing in their effects on the vital substrata of the unity of body and soul. These assaults of consciousness transpire as discrete, rhythmically pulsating “intermittencies” (the destructive nature of Spirit’s operations can be readily demonstrated; recall, if you will, how conscious volition can interfere with various bodily states: an intensification of attention may, for instance, induce disturbances in the heart and the circulatory system; painful or onerous thought can easily disrupt the rhythm of one’s breathing; in fact, any number of automatic and semi-automatic somatic functions are vulnerable to Spirit’s operations, but the most serious disturbances can be seen to take place, perhaps, when the activity of the will cancels out an ordinary, and necessary, human appetite in the interests of the will. Such “purposes” of the will are invariably hostile to the organism and, in the most extreme cases, an over-attention to the dictates of Spirit can indeed eventuate in tragic fatalities such as occur in terminal sufferers from anorexia nervosa).

Whereas the unmolested soul could at one time “live” herself into the elements and images, experiencing their plenitudinous wealth of content in the simultaneous impressions that constitute the immediacy of the image, insurgent Spirit now disrupts that immediacy by disabling the soul’s capacity to incorporate the images. In place of that ardent and erotic surrender to the living cosmos that is now lost to the soul, Spirit places a satanic empire of willfulness and purposeful striving, a world of those who regard the world’s substance as nothing more than raw material to be devoured and destroyed.

The image cannot be spoken, it must be lived. This is in sharp contradistinction to the status of the thing, which is, in fact, “speakable,” as a result of its having been processed by the ministrations of Spirit. All of our senses collaborate in the communication of the living images to the soul, and there are specific somatic sites,

such as the eyes, mouth, and genitalia, that function as the gates, the “sacred” portals, as it were, through which the vital content of the images is transmitted to the inner life (these somatic sites, especially the genitalia, figure prominently in the cultic rituals that have been enacted by pagan worshipers in every historical period known to us).

An Age of Chaos

In the biocentric phenomenology of Ludwig Klages, the triadic historical development of human consciousness, from the reign of life, through that of thought, to the ultimate empire of the raging will, is reflected in the mythic-symbolic physiognomy which finds expression in the three-stage, “triadic,” evolution from “Pelasgian” man — of the upper Neolithic and Bronze Ages of pre-history; through the Promethean — down to the Renaissance; to the Heracleic man — the terminal phase that we now occupy, the age to which two brilliant twentieth century philosophers of history, Julius Evola and Savitri Devi, have applied the name “Kali Yuga,” which in Hinduism and Buddhism is the dark age of chaos and violence that precedes the inauguration of a new “Golden Age,” when a fresh cycle of cosmic events dawns in bliss and beauty.

And it is at this perilous juncture that courageous souls must stiffen their sinews and summon up their blood in order to endure the doom that is closing before us like a mailed fist. Readers may find some consolation, however, in our philosopher’s expressions of agnosticism regarding the ultimate destiny of man and earth. Those who confidently predict the end of all life and the ultimate doom of the cosmos are mere swindlers, Klages assures us. Those who cannot successfully predict such mundane trivialities as next season’s fashions in hemlines or the trends in popular music five years down the road can hardly expect to be taken seriously as prophets who can foretell the ultimate fate of the entire universe!

In the end, Ludwig Klages insists that we must never underestimate the resilience of life, for we have no yardstick with which to measure the magnitude of life’s recuperative powers. “All things are in flux.” That is all.

Editor's Note

This volume is the second in a series of translations of selections from Klages' oeuvre. A more detailed introduction to Klages' life and work is provided in the first volume, *The Biocentric Worldview*.

These texts were selected from several of Klages' works, and are denoted at the end of each text with the following abbreviations (all authored by Klages unless otherwise indicated):

AC = *Zur Ausdruckslehre und Charakterkunde* (Heidelberg: Niels Kampmann, 1926)

AG = *Ausdrucksbewegung und Gestaltungskraft* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1968)

LK GL = Hans Eggert Schröder, Ludwig Klages: *Die Geschichte Seines Lebens*, 3 vols. (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1966-1992)

PEN = *Die psychologischen Errungenschaften Nietzsches* (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1926)

RR = *Rhythmen und Runen* (Leipzig: J. A. Barth, 1944)

SW = *Sämtliche Werke*, 15 vols. (Bonn: H. Bouvier, 1965-1992)

Text in brackets was added by the translator for clarification. The footnotes were added by the editors.

Unfortunately, the current political climate necessitates this disclaimer, which should be a given but which must nevertheless be stated for the sake of clarity: the views expressed herein are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect those of Arktos Media or the members of its staff.

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June 2015

Selected Aphorisms from Ludwig Klages

Universal Morality. A man who cannot climb a tree will boast of never having fallen out of one. (RR p. 466)

Downfall. Today, those are outstanding spirits indeed in whom one can expect to find any independence of judgment. The great masses, who have never been, in the history of mankind, more subject to hypnotic suggestion than they are right now, have become the puppets of the “public opinion” that is engineered by the newspapers in the service, it need hardly be emphasized, of the reigning powers of finance. What is printed in the morning editions of the big city newspapers is the opinion of nine out of ten readers by nightfall. The United States of America, whose more rapid “progress” enables us to predict the future on a daily basis, has pulled far ahead of the pack when it comes to standardizing thought, work, entertainment, etc.

Thus, the United States in 1917 went to war against Germany in sincere indignation because the newspapers had told them that Prussian “militarism” was rioting in devilish atrocities as it attempted to conquer the world. Of course, these transparent lies were published in the daily rags because the ruling lords of Mammon knew that American intervention in Europe would fatten their coffers. Thus, whereas the Americans thought that they were fighting for such high-minded slogans as “liberty” and “justice,” they were actually fighting to stuff the money bags of the big bankers. These “free citizens” are, in fact, mere marionettes; their freedom is imaginary, and a brief glance at American work-methods and leisure-time entertainments is enough to prove conclusively that l’homme machine is not merely imminent: it is already the American reality.

Racial theorists seem cognizant of the fact that this will be the downfall of the white race, and that of the black and yellow races shortly thereafter. (Of the so-called “primitive” races, we say nothing other than that the few surviving tribal cultures are already at death’s door!) All of these facts are scarcely relevant, since the ultimate destruction of all seems to be a foregone conclusion. It is not this destruction that makes us sorrowful here, for no prophet can foretell whether a completely robotic mankind will survive for centuries, or even for millennia: what concerns us is the mechanization process itself. It is the tragic destiny of knowledge — of authentic knowledge and not of the imaginary sort, which provides the intellectual implements required by engineers and technicians — that it performs the funeral march that accompanies the disappearance, if not the burial, of a living essence. The only thing that we know is that we are no more. “Somnium narrare vigilantis est” (Seneca). (SW 4 pp. 408–9)

On the Psychology of the Drives. We are dealing here with a subject about which, bluntly speaking, nothing but a load of nonsense has hitherto been expounded. We have, in fact, said very little when we note that a psychology of the drives simply does not exist, because what has already been said on this topic, and said far too many times, demonstrates such a fundamental falsification of the facts that no further proof of the sheer ignorance of our ruling authorities is required. At least that is our impression when we turn our attention away from the pointless experimental research of today to the rich achievements of Romantic philosophy, and to the still considerable, but undoubtedly lesser, philosophical achievement of Nietzsche, whose deeply probing views on the drives were linked from the outset to his presentation of the “will to power” as it affects vital processes. Let us now attempt a comprehensive illumination of the drives, by means of a refutation of one well-known and suggestive point of view that has become a sort of classic example.

Those psychologists who have blinded themselves to the very concept of life and who still insist on investigating the drives, regardless of whether they proceed intentionally like [Theodor] Lipps, the dissector of consciousness, or whether, on the contrary, their purpose is to interpret volitional impulses as strictly analogous to drive impulses, like the thinker Schopenhauer, will always interpret them by analogy with the will. If these psychologists lack any insight into the essential difference which obtains between drive impulses and volitional impulses, then, since it is a rare thing for man to experience drive impulses without experiencing concomitant volitional impulses, they will, without fail, transport Spirit [Geist] into the non-conscious drives and will misconstrue the drives in the worst conceivable fashion at the very moment when they are attempting to interpret acts of will in terms of pure drive impulses. Because the will pursues purposes, the life impulse, in its turn, is also conceived as purposive, and, in the end, the whole of nature is interpreted as if it were a systematic constellation of purposes. Now, because volitional impulses are realized in achievements, and because we have grown accustomed to deducing the former from the latter, instead of the drives themselves, certain consequences arising from their activation, are studied, which are then imputed to the drives as intentions that are directed towards the achievement of an effect. Thus, since only an “ego” is capable of willing, i.e., an “ego” which asserts itself in every act of willing, the interest of the bearer of the will in its own self-preservation is transformed into a self-preservation drive possessed by all animate creatures.

Perhaps a few examples will help to clarify this problem. Our domesticated animals eat and drink just as we do. Although they don’t know, we do know, that nobody could survive at all, were that person to give up eating and drinking completely. And so we are conscious of nutritive purposes and are enabled to make decisions such as the decision to improve our diet or the decision to desist from unnecessary gourmandizing; and the conclusion that has been drawn from this realization is that eating and drinking are primordial and universal functions of a nutritive drive, and that in this nutritive drive, it is the self-preservation drive that is forcefully announcing its presence.

Now if someone were to say: but animals do not have the slightest idea that in order to live they have to take in calories; for even were we to assume that they are, in fact, capable of acquiring this knowledge, this would not dispose of the obvious fact that they perform these so-called purposive actions before they acquire it (e.g., the chick, which having just emerged from its egg, immediately pecks at the corn); nor, indeed, are these purposive actions restricted to the consumption of food, for they comprise a thousand and one other functions as well (e.g., the exodus of the migratory birds in the autumn). At this point, the faithful disciple of the self-preservationist creed, of sacro egoismo, will in all candor parade those phrases which, after they have been stripped of subterfuge and obfuscation, announce that all these phenomena are due to non-purposive purposes, thought-less thoughts, and unconscious consciousness! Just who is thinking here and who is not? The “self-preserving” creature does not think, but its inborn “nature” certainly has its preservation in mind. Within every unthinking creature, we are informed, there exists a planning, calculating “nature,” one that is doubtlessly well equipped with the requisite financial techniques, which conducts its operations on a long-term basis, and about which we shall be shortly hearing some truly amazing things! (SW 1 pp. 566–68)

On the Manifold Varieties of Love. In the case of just one major prompting of a drive impulse, the sentiment of love, we must demonstrate that it is not restricted to the exclusive love of one person for another.

In the first place, every person loves everything that he is capable of loving in a constantly changing manner during each of the first four seven-year stages of his life, whereupon, after a long period of growing equability, and with the gradual diminishing of sexual drive activity, a significant alteration again takes place, which is finally succeeded, during the more or less non-sexual phase, by a further transformation of the love impulse. Moreover, everyone experiences love in a different way during each period of his life, for he loves with a love that is appropriate to each father, mother, brother, sister, comrade, friend, superior, subordinate, fellow-worker, public figure, ruler, fellow countrymen, son, daughter, wife, lover, etc.; and with even greater differences, he will love things that are already tinged with love (e.g., memories); and utterly different will be his love for animals, plants, districts (like mountains, heath, sea, etc.), home, youth and so on, not to mention completely intangible love-objects such as career, science, art, religion, motherland, etc. But even within the specifically sex-colored drives, one and the same person in one and the same period of life is faced with a wealth of possible modes of loving which are seemingly inexhaustible. For apart from the fact that, due to the abundance of drive formations, this person is capable of alternately experiencing widely divergent processes as sources of sensual pleasure (the usual combinations: touching and feeling, facial perceptions of the most varied types, acts such as acts of suffering or of torment which the person inflicts or to which he submits), the love which this person bears for one person will differ in kind from the love he bears for another just as surely as the images of the two persons, which inspire that love, differ from each other. (SW 1 pp. 578 ff.)

Goethe and the Romantics. A living totality stands behind both: in Goethe it is Apollo, the god of individuation and, therefore, the god of materialization; in the Romantics, on the other hand, it is the dream-image of the Wild Hunter, the transcendent, drunken, reeling shade of Wotan...(RR p. 323)

The Rape of Mother Earth. In 1913, I composed (on request) for the celebratory volume of the *Freideutsche Jugend* on the occasion of the Centenary Festival on the Meissner Heights the address entitled “Mensch und Erde” (“Man and Earth”),¹ in which, on the basis of a terrible analysis of the rape of nature by humanity in the present day, I sought to prove that man, as the bearer of Spirit, has torn himself apart just as he is tearing apart the planet to which he owes his birth. (SW 2 p. 1537)

Cosmic Polarities. The cosmos lives, and everything that lives is polarized; the two poles of life are soul (psyche) and body (soma). Wherever there is a living body, there also do we find a soul; wherever there is a soul, there also do we find a living body. The soul is the meaning of the living body, and the image of the body is the phenomenal manifestation of the soul. Whatever appears has a meaning; and every meaning reveals itself in the appearance. The meaning is experienced internally; the appearance is experienced externally. (SW 3 p. 390)

Monism of the Spirit. Spirit’s essentially monotheistic tendency motivates those scholars who seem to be compelled to subordinate everything that exists to one regnant principle. Spirit aims at universal rule: it unites the world under the ego or under the logos. When Spirit attained to hegemony, it introduced two novelties: the belief in historical progress on the one side, and religious fanaticism on the other. The Spirit utilizes force to eliminate all possible rivals. Over the warring and agitated primordial forces, Spirit erected the tyranny of the formula: for some it announces itself as the “ethical autonomy of the individual”; the Catholic Church, on the other hand, still relies on the idea of holiness. (RR p. 306)

The Path of Spirit. Were we to comprehend everything that impinges on our senses, the world would henceforth be devoid of riddles. That, however, is the path of Spirit: the world of the senses is to be minted into the coin of concepts. (RR p. 466)

The Invader. The history of mankind shows that there occurs within man — and only within him — a war to the knife between the power of all-embracing love and a power from outside the spatio-temporal universe; this power severs the poles of life and destroys their unity by “de-souling” the body and disembodying the soul: this power is Spirit (logos, pneuma, nous). (SW 3 p. 390)

The Adversaries. Life and Spirit are two completely primordial and essentially opposed powers, which can be reduced neither to each other, nor to any third term. (SW 2 p. 1527)

Body and Soul. One thesis has guided all of our enquiries for the past three decades or so: that body and soul are inseparably connected poles of the unity of life into which the Spirit inserts itself from the outside like a wedge, in an effort to set them apart

¹ Available in Ludwig Klages, *The Biocentric Worldview* (London: Arktos, 2013).

from each other; that is, to de-soul the body and disembody the soul, and so, finally, to smother any life that this unity can attain. (SW 1 p. 7)

On Ecstasy. It is not man's Spirit but his soul that is liberated in ecstasy; and his soul is liberated not from his body but from his Spirit. (SW 3 p. 390)

On Maternal Love. The selfless maternal love of one woman resembles that of another woman to the point of confusion. Since every instinct has something of the "animal" soul in it, maternal love possesses a depth of soul; however, in no way does it have a depth of Spirit. Maternal love belongs equally to the animal mother and to the human mother. (SW 3 p. 367)

The Rhythm of Life. Whereas every non-human organism pulsates in accord with the rhythms of cosmic life, the law of Spirit has ordained man's exile from that life. What appears to man, as bearer of ego-consciousness, in the light of the superiority of calculating thought above all else, appears to the metaphysician, if he has pondered the matter deeply enough, in the light of an enslavement of life to the yoke of concepts! (SW 3 p. 391)

On Life and Spirit. Spirit and object are the halves of being; life and image the poles of actuality —

Spirit "is"; life elapses —

Spirit judges; life experiences —

Judgment is an act; experience is a pathos —

Spirit comprehends what exists; life experiences what comes to be —

(Pure) being is outside space and time, and so too is the Spirit; what comes to be is within space and time, and so too is life —

Being is fundamentally thinkable, but it can never be immediately experienced; what comes to be can be fundamentally experienced, but it can never be immediately comprehended —

The act of judgment requires experiencing life, upon which it bases itself; life does not need the Spirit in order to experience —

Spirit, as that which inheres in life, signifies a force that is directed against life; life, insofar as it becomes the bearer of Spirit, resists it with an instinct of defense —

The essence of the historical process of humanity (also called "progress") is the victoriously advancing struggle of the Spirit against life, with the logically predictable end in the annihilation of the latter. (SW 1 p. 68)

Knowledge and Poetry. A deep abyss separates knowledge and poetry. That which we have conceived, can nevermore be lived. This fact accounts for the "unwisdom" of poets. (RR p. 302)

Blondeness. The blonde man: man of the abyss, man of the night. (RR p. 315)

Stages of Human Development. Animal man lives on his instincts, unconsciously; magical man lives in a world of mythic images; spiritual man lives to spout moralistic platitudes. (RR p. 314)

On the Sexual Drive. It is a fundamental and willful falsification to call the sexual drive a drive to reproduction. Reproduction is only a potential outcome of sexual in-

tercourse, but it is certainly not included in the actual experience of sexual excitement. The animal knows nothing of it; only man knows. (SW 3 p. 371)

On the Unreality of the Future. Space and time, co-existing in a polar relationship, have this in common: each is extended between the poles of the near and the far. Just as nearness is only one regardless of where I stand; and just as, on the other hand, distance [i.e., the “far”] is only one, regardless of whether I look to the east, west, north, or south; in the identical sense there can exist only one distance in time relative to one and the same nearness in time. Were there two — i.e., in addition to the distance of the past, a distance into the future — then the nature of the distance to a future point of relationship must necessarily contradict the nature of the distance to a past point. However, since the opposite is the case, the alleged duality of temporal distance constitutes an illusion!

We now explain why we do, in fact, regard the future as a mere illusion. When I contemplate the past, I recollect a reality that once existed; when, on the other hand, I think of the future, I am necessarily thinking of something that is unreal, something that exists solely in this act of thinking. Were all thinking beings to vanish, the past — as it really existed — would remain an unalterable reality; whereas the name “future” would be utterly devoid of meaning in a world wherein there were no beings alive to “think” it. (SW 3 p. 433)

Blood and Nerves. The blood is the site of orgiastic life. What separates the ecstatic nature from the rational is not a refinement of the brain, but a condition of the blood: purple blood, blue blood, divine blood. Life resides in blood and pulse. (RR p. 246)

Seeking and Finding. He who seeks shall find, but only after he has surrendered his being to the guidance of the gods. (RR p. 253)

Logic and Mysticism. Logic is organized darkness. Mysticism is rhythmic light. (RR p. 253)

Man and Homeland. The man of instinct is devoted to his homeland. In this feeling for the homeland is rooted all art, nobility, and race. Only the man without a homeland can break with his past. The noble man attaches himself completely to the historical fortunes of his tribe. He will never repudiate his youth; he will never abandon his home. (RR p. 246)

Mankind and Race. We must draw a sharp distinction between the man who sees the world as divided between the “human” and the “non-human,” and the man who is most profoundly struck by the obvious racial groupings of mankind (Nietzsche’s “masters”). The bridge that connects us to the Cosmos does not originate in “man,” but in race. (RR p. 245)

On Literary “Critics” and the Bildungsphilister. We are assured that the latest concoction by some school teacher or literary hack is the finest work of the last decade, or even since the death of Nietzsche. A new novel is hailed as the most astounding book ever written on the subject of love. We are told that a recent play has inaugurated a whole new epoch in the art of the theater. We find nothing extraordinary in the claim that some current offering puts Homer, Aeschylus, Pindar, Dante, and Shakespeare

quite in the shade; that it inaugurates a completely original school of creative writing; and that the masterpiece under discussion makes all of the efforts of earlier geniuses seem faded and colorless by comparison. Of course, most of our book-reviewers have been well trained in American advertising techniques, and, as a result, their critical reviews have all the subtlety and depth of the blurbs in a publisher's catalogue.

And how readily our educated philistines have rejoiced at this grim state of affairs! (SW 2 p. 1543)

Sin and the Pagan World. The idea of "sin" was quite alien to the pagan world. The ancient pagans knew the gods' hatred as well as their revenge, but they never heard of punishment for "sin." The ancient philosophers did understand something of the "good," but when they employed this expression, they were certainly not endorsing the concept of the "sinless." Quite the contrary: they were actually speaking of the pursuit of every type of excellence. (RR p. 317)

Heraclitus. Heraclitus regards the flame as the symbol of actuality; thus, we realize that his soul was ecstatic. But he is also the representative of a rupture, and this realization enables us to perceive his affinity with ourselves. He was not truly a magician, nor was he a prophet or poet, but, rather: a dithyrambic thinker. There exists an insurmountable law that tells us that whatever evokes the greatest activity in our inner life is accompanied by the greatest affectivity: Heraclitus embodies the philosophical style that maintains a rhythmical mobility; therefore, he is more alert to the centrifugal movement of the flame, and to its hostility to the watery element, than he is to its pulsating incandescence. In a one-sided manner, he misinterprets the sea itself, its breaking waves, and the consummate rush of the maenads...The true fulfillment of the Heraclitean synthesis would be: a flame-stricken sea. (RR p. 314)

Cosmic Aggregations. The cosmic powers do not arrive as drizzling rain. They are rather a torrent, but one can choke that torrent with alien hordes. The torrent will be split up, like molten metal, into a thousand whirling pearls. The cosmic substance remains intact within scattered seeds of noble blood. (RR p. 254)

The Death of Paganism. Every collapse of cosmic creativity is brought about solely by two agencies: infection from without, and weakness from within. (RR p. 256)

Effects of Christianity. It was Christianity's great achievement to exhaust the soul by defaming sexual passion. But in prohibiting the urge — the "rune within the flesh" (Alfred Schuler) — it thwarted the very possibility of its renewal. And erotic satisfaction is the pre-condition for all cosmic radiance. (RR p. 243)

Life and Being. All human existence is connected somehow with life: this is so even when life is degenerating (as in a polluted race) and when it is parasitic (as in the Jew behind his mask). (RR p. 289)

The True Master of Secret Societies. In the forefront of our secret societies, we have the Rosicrucians, the Illuminati, the Freemasons, the "Odd Fellows," and B'nai B'rith. The educated classes are provided with such recent varieties as...the Einstein cult and Freudianism. For half-educated fools we have H. P. Blavatsky, Anny Besant, Rudolf Steiner, and Krishnamurti. For the poor in Spirit, there's the Christian Science

of Mrs. Eddy, the Oxford Movement, and biblical fundamentalism. All of these groups, along with innumerable lesser organizations, are humanitarianism's masks. Jewry is the center from which they are ruled. (LK GL p. 1345)

On Christian Philosophy. The values endorsed by Christian philosophical systems are either ethical or logical, i.e., functional values devoid of living substance. With that one statement, however, we have judged Christian philosophy. (RR p. 300)

Christ and Dionysos. Dionysus is the releasing god: Eleusis, Lysios. In him the spheres expropriate themselves through commingling. Death in him is eternal rebirth and the meaning of life. Here every tension releases itself and all opposites coalesce. Dionysus is the symbol of the whirlpool; he is chaos as it glowingly gives birth to the world.

In the ego-god, however, we find only an oppressive "truth," an emphasis on purpose (Socrates), and a "beauty of soul" that negates the beauty of the body (mortification of the flesh). Just as one rightly calls Dionysus the releaser, so should Jesus Christ be called the represser, because repression is the limiting power that enabled him to conquer so many nations, just as he will, perhaps, eventually conquer all. What Alfred Schuler called his "eagerness for love," can only repress; it can never release. The paradox here is that Jesus insists that he alone is the "redeemer," i.e., the one who releases! (RR p. 267)

The Christian Sickness. From the universal love of the wandering Germanic tribes, Christianity fashioned the insanity known as redemption. (RR p. 250)

Christianity and Wakefulness. Even in the garden of olives Christ begged his disciples to remain awake by his side. The saints indicate by their sleeplessness that nothing can harm them. Christianity is the war against sleep and dream, two states for which a reviving elemental life will always be yearning. Against the activity of astral wakefulness, elemental life places consummation and the pagan feeling for fate. True pagans regard sleeplessness as the most monstrous conceivable evil. In addition, the wakefulness of the Christian manifests a slavish impulse: the lurking wariness and prudence of submissive souls. (RR p. 253)

From a Letter Re: "Anti-Semitism." I've never endorsed the claim that the Nazi Bonzes belonged to a superior race. However, I must also add that I have consistently refused to accept the claim of a certain other race to be the "chosen people." The arrogance is identical in both cases, but with this significant distinction: after waging war against mankind for more than three thousand years, Jewry has finally achieved total victory over all of the nations of the earth.

Therefore, I will have nothing to do with the contemporary kowtowing on the part of almost the entire civilized world before the haters of all mankind (Tacitus spoke of Christians, but he certainly meant the Jews, as will be obvious to every alert reader of his works). I despise all this kowtowing to the Jews as an utterly mendacious tactical ploy. (LK GL p. 1350)

The Prophecy of a Jewish Friend. I might easily fill ten pages...with anecdotes concerning the life of Richard Perls. He was born a Jew, but he eventually abandoned

Judaism, a religion that he had come to hate. One year before his death, which occurred, to the best of my recollection, in 1897, he said to me: "Herr Klages, the ancient world was destroyed by Judaism, just as the modern world is about to be!" When I voiced my skepticism as to the accuracy of his prophecy...he merely responded: "Just wait — you will live to see my prophecy fulfilled!" (LK GL p. 196)

Paganism and Christianity. Life is instantaneous, death is duration: this truth must stand above the threshold of our paganism. With this truth we inaugurate the depreciation of Spirit... (RR p. 260)

Christian and Pagan. A pagan can become a Christian in his old age: the living substance disintegrates, and the rotting residue is barely functional. On the other hand, never will a Christian become a pagan. (RR p. 264)

Christianity and Self-Preservation. Christianity aimed at the preservation of the individual ego, in whose service it preaches "compassion." Christian compassion is hostile to life, because the laws of life are not the laws of the ego: therefore, Nietzsche was correct in spurning it. The paganism that he wished to proclaim, on the other hand, was a splendid surrender of the ego and, hence, a phenomenon of life.

Christian compassion, however, took on a more sympathetic form within the Nordic world, where compassion was felt towards even the animals and plants.

In addition, there is still another type: cosmic compassion (the erotic), which is a positive stirring of life and affection that we should never discourage. (RR p. 301)

Christianity and Time. Christianity first changed time into the historical "once and once only." (RR p. 303)

The Great Deceiver. To the Jew, everything human is a sham. One might even say that the Jewish face is nothing but a mask. The Jew is not a liar: he is the lie itself. From this vantage point, we can say that the Jew is not a man...He lives the pseudo-life of a ghoulish creature whose fortunes are linked to Yahweh-Moloch. He employs deception as the weapon with which he will exterminate mankind. The Jew is the very incarnation of the unearthly power of destruction. (RR p. 330)

How Yahweh Expresses Himself. Yahweh's medium of expression is the gesture. The meaning of all of his gestures, so far as they actually possess any metaphysical significance, can be interpreted as an ever-deeper subjugation of one principle at the hands of an ever-loftier one: consecration, blessing, etc., on the one side, and repentance, contrition, and adoration on the other. Semitic religiosity is restricted to adoring worshipper and adored deity. When this religiosity attaches itself solely to the personal, the emblem of worship becomes the individual person. Only the Semitic religions bow to the "One God." In adoration, the believer achieves the non-rational form of ego-consciousness. Pagan rationality glides right past the god to the ego; in the Semitic "service of God," however, the transcendental "One" brings destruction to the world of "appearances." Apollo is, so to speak, an ethically developed Dionysus; he works on the soil of blood-thinning. Yahweh is the all-devouring nothingness; he works on the soil of blood-poisoning. (RR p. 321)

The Cult of the Christ. It is impossible to conceive of a more fatal blindness than that of the cult instigated by this Jewish sectarian and his apostles and camp followers. Torn from the bonds of nature and the past, man must now direct his gaze at the wasteland known as the "future"; into that desert he stares, paralyzed by dread of the vengeful Jew-God. And before this insane masquerade of the "kingdom come," the "last judgment," and "eternal punishment" can be consummated, the true heroes and the real gods must first be made to grovel before the cross! (RR p. 285)

Eros. Eros is elemental or cosmic in so far as the individual who is seized by Eros experiences, as it were, a pulsating, inundating stream of electricity. (RR p. 387)

Eros (as Opposed to "Sexuality"). In the ancient world, Eros was always closely associated with ethos. The Christian era inaugurated the reign of "sexuality" and its necessary complement: asceticism. Tension and hostility begin to infect intimate relationships, until eventually we arrive at the "war between the sexes."...The Jew consummates the total victory of "sexuality," although, of course, he knows nothing of genuine sensuality, as he is a mere lecher. True Eros is eventually demoted to the status of a mere sexual "stimulant." (RR p. 349)

Nobility and Race. Nobility belongs exclusively to the man of race. There is no such thing as moral nobility, only a moral egoism. The downfall of a master caste is the very essence of tragedy. A sense of honor is inborn in every aristocrat, and the duel is the knightly principle incarnate. Only he who is without race can endure disgrace. The master scorns the very idea of a negotiated settlement. The master perishes from wounded pride. (RR p. 245)

Rome and Germania. One may be a fixed star or a planet; even as a fixed star one may be a planet, for there are both planetary suns as well as stationary ones. The Roman was the center, the German the periphery, but the German sphere was so distant that, to the Roman, it seemed to be a mere tangent point, an entity struggling on the margins of his world. The Roman sun is not the German's center, for Rome is itself a peripheral creation in the eyes of the German during the time of his colossal wanderings. But then he was given the Cross: now the need for redemption becomes his guiding star, and he is soon at work forging Judea's ring of power. (RR p. 252)

The Dioscuri. The Dioscuri of Mankind: the hero and the poet. The first one lives the primordial image; the other perceives and reveals it. They are sons born of the same mother: there is no other metaphysical brotherhood. (RR p. 288)

The Homosexual Character. Peripheral qualities: lack of conviction, self-flattery. Closer to the center: his personality is more selfish than that of any woman. In general, the homosexual has no sense for facts. Even closer to the center: the most peculiar form of megalomania. He even believes that he understands love, while he sneers at love between man and woman as merely a mask behind which lurks the breeding impulse. He sees himself as the center of the world, a world that he believes would collapse were his own surroundings to collapse. His house, his garden, and his crowd are for him the whole world. He cannot turn his gaze from his favorite playroom, which explains why his horizon is limited to himself and his highly talented associates. Psychologically, his

incapacity for abstract thought is consistent with his persistent identification with the feminine character. Alone, he manifests a propensity to confuse his own little world with the real one. Another way of expressing our view: in general, he doesn't believe in the external world at all, but in a world which is part of himself, and, so to speak, his private property. In the presence of his fellow men, the homosexual presents himself as a sort of patron; he wants to be everyone's father, ruler, and general authority-figure; he even values this relationship as a form of erotic satisfaction. Favorite hobbies: boys and Platonism. The salient secondary qualities are: sensitivity, ability to scent a change in the weather, a taste for politics, a knowledge of the ways of men, and an inability to commune directly with nature; he prefers aestheticism, culture, art, poetry, and philosophy. Although he has a predilection for trees, animals, and parks, etc., he has no feeling whatsoever for elemental nature. A tentative explanation: his whole being radiates exhaustion and disarray. He always stands on the outside, not in the sense of Judaism, but more in the manner of the paranoiac, who, although having some sort of vitality, has no involvement with the universal stream of life. That is why, in fact, his inability to love leaves him receptive only to what is loveable in life. Thus, he experiences every deeper association with another person as just one more variety of self-love, as if he were merely encountering a side of his own personality; he requires these fresh, counterfeit connections with persons and things so that he might enhance his own self-love (the "smugness" of every homosexual). While Jewish exclusiveness leads to life-envy and the drive to disintegration, the homosexual is led by a drive to contraction. Just as the homosexual carries within him his own little world, his overall horizon presents a closed "circle." He substitutes his finite world for the infinity of the real world. These compulsions once ruled the Rome of the Caesars as they still rule the Rome of the Popes. (RR p. 366)

Worship of the State. We hope that we need not emphasize that our denunciation of "state-thought" is not in the least an attack "Capitalism" from the standpoint of some variety of "Socialism!" "Capitalism," Liberalism," Marxism," "Communism," etc., are stages on one and the same path to the mechanization of all human associations, a path that leads — as only the blind would fail to see — to a collectivist destination. (AG p. 178)

Substantial Thought. The forbidding of thought on the part of ascetics speaks volumes in favor of thought. The substance of thought possesses the power to embody itself. The experience of thought can even rattle the gates to the empire of the sun, and set the world of images vibrating. (RR p. 306)

The Sacred. Suppose a thinker has convinced himself that the far-famed sanctity of the "three-fold" — the triad of Poseidon, the tripod of the Pythian Oracle, the three divisions of the world of the gods, the Christian Trinity, the Three Norns, and so many other items — is the genuine experience of a three-fold system of reality. He will (provided the Orphic Eros itself is a matter of living experience to him) likewise seek behind the three-fold phenomena embodied in theogonic myth an experienced actuality. The cosmic rush, as the loftiest of all chaotic intoxicants, must thus be understood in

its three unique forms. Many years have passed since the author of these lines first drew attention to the three basic modes of the rush, viz., the heroic, the erotic, and the magical...In the magical mode, the rush manifests its nature in a dual connection to the nightly firmament and to the realm of the dead. Its historical high point was reached in the "Magism" of the Medes and in the Egyptian funerary cult. Perhaps its purest conceptual precipitate is to be found in Chaldean astrology. The heroic-tragic rush...was embodied in that epoch of late "Pelasgian" humanity upon which historians have bestowed the title of "the heroic age." Among the four heroic peoples with whom we are familiar, the rush was embodied in the magnificent creations of the epic poets. The most striking characteristic of the epic lies in the fact that here the death of the ego is achieved through the death of the warrior's body in battle. Its most superb manifestation took place in the Germanic world...the doomed warriors experience death in battle as the kiss of the Valkyrie; the hero knew that he would soon awaken from the torment and darkness of destruction — in Valhalla's realm of the dead! (SW 3 p. 398)

Woman and Poet. The woman and the poet are close relations. He is the voice of her yearnings. In the wake of the poets moves the procession of the Bacchantes. Poets are the interpreters of Dionysus. (RR p. 262)

Affect and Life. Life incorporates the affect; the ego disembodies it. (RR p. 356)

The Western Light. "What a commotion is caused by light!" This is the western light, the showering bolts of light, the storm of radiance. (RR p. 303)

Idealism. Idealism is the poverty of the wealthy and the wealth of the impoverished. (RR p. 304)

Primal Imagery of the World. Every region of the world can instantaneously become the complete possession of the soul; the region's essential complexion remains the same. In that instant, one gains a glimpse of eternity. (RR p. 244)

On Possessing Wealth. Many first possess wealth, and are then possessed by it. Many lose their wealth, and, in turn, become the richer for their loss. (RR p. 253)

On Memory. It requires no experiment to prove that a content having meaning is more easily memorized, and is retained for a greater length of time, than, for example, a series of meaningless syllables; and that verse, especially rhymed verse, is more easily retained than prose. Further, we are all aware that repetition facilitated learning. If at one time I have studied physics, and, as I think, have forgotten everything about the subject in the course of time, then if I once more take up the laws of physics, I shall nevertheless learn them much more quickly than when I first studied this subject. Numerous experiments have shown that a distribution of repetitions over several days is more favorable to the process of memorizing than their immediate accumulation. Further, it also appears to be the case that a coherent whole is more effortlessly mastered if it is learned in one piece than if it is divided into parts to be learned in separate pieces: finally, that relatively quick learning is preferable to relatively slow learning. In these respects, at least, all persons are more or less alike, although there are a very few notable instances in absolute speed of learning and the length of retention, under equal

conditions, of memorizing. It should also be emphasized that typically quick learners are by no means also quick to forget. Thus, it is certain that some men have a stronger innate memory than others. (SW 4 p. 261)

Counterfeit Narcotics. The god of the modern age is "Mammon," and its symbol is money (paper, thus unreal; "capital," thus heartless). Mammon's temple is the Stock Exchange. Slavery and depravity are its servants: both are narcotics, both are counterfeit, both are perverted. (RR p. 354)

The Cosmos and the Earth. Though our yearning presses towards the most distant reaches of the Cosmos, we are nurtured only upon the earth. (RR p. 258)

Eros and Chaos. Eros without chaos: humanitarianism. Chaos without Eros: demonic devastation. Eros within chaos: Dionysus. (RR p. 265)

Pleasure in the Rain. In the fall of rain we find the marriage of the telluric and sidereal elements. (RR p. 265)

Element. The element is the ultimate manifestation of animated being. Perpetually, life drifts towards sleep — the road leading downward; endlessly, it transmits signals of war — the road leading upward. Gaia opens eyelids heavy with slumber to gaze upon the heroes and wizards in the distance. (RR p. 261)

No Exit. There can be no liberation through denial, but only through fulfillment. In despair, life is shattered, but this does not lead to a marriage with the Cosmos: the new state would be just as miserable as the old. (RR p. 273)

Rome and Germania. The Roman surrounded himself with walls, the German with falling rain and wind-blown trees: to them he sings, about them he thinks, and in their midst he dreams his inner dream. (RR p. 277)

Function of Time. In the life that rings us round, time and eternity are identical. Individual life ages, but essential life has the power to rejuvenate itself from within. (RR p. 277)

The eternal "Jungfrau." The summit of the "Jungfrau" is the symbol of the eternally fresh dew, the eternal morning, the never-ending and never-aging beginning, the perpetual today, the undiminished, radiant heights of the timeless first moment. (RR p. 281)

Meaning and Purpose. Everything purposeful is meaningless, and everything meaningful is purposeless. (RR p. 280)

A Note. The image that falls upon the senses: that, and nothing besides, is the meaning of the world. (RR p. 280)

The Deed. Only one connection to the future is authentic enough to vindicate the unreality of a "future": the deed that this future summoned into being. Anything else is the wishful thinking of pious fools. (RR p. 280)

History. History knows no tragedy, but only success and failure. The tragic view of historical events was a misunderstanding hatched by poets. (RR p. 280)

"Asiatism." Spiritualism is of Asiatic derivation, but there it has two origins: out of the revolt of the slave, and the debauchery of the king. The gruesome mania of

domination and the base servility of slavery are both symptoms of the excess that is characteristic of the Asiatic nature. (RR p. 302)

The Orient. The ardor of dream. The objective world trembles dubiously in the exaggerated blaze of the noontide desert. The soul respire as if in a brooding pregnancy. Finally, there strides out of the seething, vibrating blue, a mirage: the Fata Morgana. (RR p. 243)

Aphorism on China. China is the land of the deepest wisdom, and all of its wisdom teaches: learn to endure life, have patience! The wisdom of China is unmystical; it divides its attention equally between the soul and the real world. (RR p. 293)

The Opposed Will. Feelings of loathing are far more characteristic of man than are his preferences. Consciousness begets restraint. (RR p. 301)

Polarities. 1. Essential — Cosmic; 2. Telluric — Sidereal; 3. Fixed — Wandering; 4. Cell — Element; 5. Chaos — Wotan. (RR p. 318)

The Sun Child. Children of the sun have no history, for no child ever has a history. From the outset, however, the ego does have a history, in the individual as in mankind as a whole: it ages. (RR p. 318)

The “Finger of God.” In the “finger of God” as well as in the stigmata, I see the perversion of the “dactylology” [= “sign language”] of the ancient world. (RR p. 322)

The Road to Degeneration. Love is aborted by contemplation, passion by the deed. Contemplation degenerates into science, the deed into theatrics. (RR p. 342)

”Monism.” Every form of so-called “Monism” confuses unity and connection. It runs aground on such crucial concepts as extension, space, and time. (RR p. 362)

Destiny and Memory. That which inspires the deepest desire in us, arises through the medium of our darker childhood memories. (RR p. 474)

Flux and Movement. The flux is the image of the happening; the movement is its visible form. (RR p. 360)

Life and Flux. Life is flux, permanence is death. Life as endurance culminates in the faith in the actuality of things, in the madness of duration. The Cosmos incarnates the actuality of an unceasing process. Only in the interplay of fixed and wandering powers lies the guarantee of life. (RR p. 249)

The Cloven Substance. The soul is divided by border regions. Love becomes yearning. Rejected by the Cosmos, blundering mankind goes astray. (RR p. 251)

Pagan Love. Only love delivers us from the labyrinth of the world. Only love releases the individual to cosmic life. Cosmic man experiences nothing human other than his love, and his love incarnates his melancholy-joyous revelry. (RR p. 255)

Evolution of the Image. The primordial whirlpool deposits images in the blood. These images will themselves into visibility. The awakened man forges the images out of rock and ore. Dream-dark knowledge shackles them with decree and edict. Cosmic Eros lives within a molten ring of imagery. (RR p. 254)

Willfulness. Willfulness knows no end. It is the spawn of want and need. It is an empty belly that gobbles up the Cosmos. “You must will,” says every moralist from Socrates to Kant... (RR p. 258)

Soul and Individual. In the soul, the individual is not truly an individual, but a cosmic wave. The soul is able to bypass its bodily-spiritual uniqueness, to go beyond, to become a whirlpool of universal life. Within the blood of those who are rich in soul-substance, atoms of fire circulate: the pores, the mouth, and the sexual organs are the portals of life. (RR p. 263)

Roman and Barbarian. Only the barbarians (Germans, Muslims, and Tatars), and not the men of classical antiquity, understood the rush of battle. When the Greek or Roman warrior met the barbarian on the field of battle, astuteness conquered the rush. (RR p. 317)

Concept, Name, Thing. The origin of thought is not to be found in the duality: concept and thing, but in the trinity: concept, name, and thing. The name embraces the totality, but concept and thing are its poles. This enables us to clarify the magical effect that the word can have upon a consciousness that is receptive to the symbol. (RR p. 361)

Discovery and Observation. We do not make discoveries through observation; we only confirm them. (RR p. 362)

Rhythm and Measure. The entire phenomenal universe is organized upon a rhythmic basis. Science has correctly discovered — although it has had some difficulty in comprehending its discovery — that sound, heat, and electricity all have a rhythmical nature. (SW 7 p. 329)

Song and Rhythm. Every song has its rhythm and its measure. Perhaps, it was only by means of the erroneous identification of rhythm and measure, that it became possible strictly to separate them. Although rhythm and measure may seem to be as intimately intertwined as a pair of dancers, they are, by nature and by origin, not mere opposites, but opposites striving against each other; in all of nature only man has thought to make one substance of rhythm and nature, and in this attempt he has had to use force. (SW 7 p. 330)

Animals and Rhythm. The flapping of a bird's wings in flight is rhythmical, as is the wild horse's stamping, and the gliding of the fish through the water. However, animals cannot run, fly, or swim according to measure; nor can man himself breathe according to measure. (SW 7 p. 336)

Life and Self-Preservation. The laws of life are not the laws of self-preservation. This is the dreadful side of life, and it serves as the basis of all tragedy. (RR p. 246)

Beauty and Ego. Neither the ego nor its deeds are beautiful. Man is beautiful only to the extent that he participates in the eternal soul of the Cosmos. Beauty is always demonic, and the proper objects of our adoration are the gods. (RR p. 246)

Work and Wonder. Deed, work, and system belong to the realm of Spirit. What cannot be wonder will become work. Unconsciously, the maternal ground of the soul generates the shining purple blood; the imagistic force, however, is masculine, sunny, spiritual. (RR p. 256)

Festivals. Every festival will be a play between distances. (RR. p. 269)

Viewpoints.

The logocentric ascetic. His view emerges from one point and directs itself to one point. He discovers neither the colors within him nor the things without. He sees only radiating points.

The cellular-microcosmic man. He sees within him the colors of plants and animals, or he sees columns, screens, and hanging lamps. He celebrates his festival in the purple vaults of his soul.

Macrocosmic-heroic man. He is utterly outside himself, in rain, burning sun, forest, ocean, and open country. He knows no self-consciousness. He experiences the signals of heroic battles, whilst his gaze dreams with the sapling in the fireplace. His dream-laden view is analogous to physical blindness. Indeed, Homer is blind.

Teleological man. His view emerges from out of the ego, and is directed straight back at the ego. He never contemplates; he merely observes. (RR p. 305)

Creation and Politics. Politicians compulsively spread the news that they are making sacrifices every minute of the day; this is, of course, the most idiotic type of verbal pomposity. We can identify here the frightful egomania of our politicians and their deficient spirit of sacrifice. Behind all of the turgid tirades of our politicians there lurks an utter lack of principle.

Why should one use the word “cultured” when speaking of those who, in lieu of courage or soul, have matching volumes of memoirs brewing in their bellies? (RR p. 307)

The Dreamer. Eros holds absolute sway only within a magical actuality. The world-image passes through the magical stage to the second condition of consciousness, one that is no longer disturbed by experiences of “near” and “far.” Already, the dream-laden Eros is becoming a weaker Eros. In moralistic civilizations, cosmic man tears himself away from an actuality that has become commonplace. Because he has “received a shock” in contact with this tiresome reality, he becomes a “dreamer.” We are closer to things than were the Romantics, which may account for the fact that our sorrow has a more acrid savor. (RR p. 311)

The Meaning of “Ratio.” In ratio, life is a synonym for calculation. God is the greatest number...Time realizes its potential on the line of progress. Yahweh, the “devouring flame,” cancels out the moment. God is a mere word, a predicate without a subject. (RR p. 275)

Two Primordial Spirits. There is a gloom that shines on the outside, and there is an inner light that sheds an outer darkness. That one brightens and redeems, but is itself blind; this one sees and understands, but sheds no light. That one comprehends a world without understanding himself; this one comprehends himself, without understanding the world. (RR p. 285)

Two Discoverers. The thoughtful: he cannot leave his place, although he has the walking stick that reaches into every distance. The farseeing: he has no walking stick, and yet he wanders. (RR p. 285)

Man and Death. In all of creation only man lives in opposition to death. Although the doctrines of every mystagogue aim at stripping death of its power, they all go

utterly astray: instead of encompassing the downfall of the ego, they encourage the belief in the prolongation of the ego's existence into infinity. (RR p. 287)

Wisdom of Life. What befalls every man is that which belongs to him, and we can only lose that which we no longer possess. (RR p. 287)

On the Primordial Word. In the primordial word, showing and working co-exist. The wave of the Cosmos reaches its highest crest when it displays the soul in the garb of the word. (RR p. 287)

On Beauty. Beauty is but the cloak of happiness. Where joy tarries, there also is beauty; however, beauty itself may become ugly in our moments of repugnance. (RR p. 468)

Man and Woman. Woman lives more in being, man more in consciousness. To woman belongs the present, to man the future or the past.

Masculine logic corresponds to woman's feeling for measure.

Man strives, but woman lives.

Man is centrifugal force, but woman is weightier.

Woman is short-sighted regarding the "far," man regarding the "near."

Man always sees aims and, thus, the abstractions at hand; woman first teaches him the joy in the real world. (RR p. 468)

Invulnerable. At the summit of his vitality, man is invulnerable. In the moments of our greatest certainty of being, we are stronger than external destiny. No one and nothing can slay us. (RR p. 473)

Knowledge and Proof. The most essential knowledge is not susceptible to proof. (RR p. 474)

Shadow. You shoot up like the shadow of a body that flees before the light. (RR p. 463)

Soul of the World. Whenever we destroy something, we destroy along with it part of the soul of the world. (RR p. 462)

Grief. Grief drags his dread through the Cosmos. (RR p. 436)

On the Poet. One misleads oneself regarding the poet if one sees the essence of his art in depth of feeling and passion. Whoever finds inside himself a spark of the poetic Spirit can only become a true poet if that which has moved his soul since the days of his youth is the word, the word as expression of the connection between his soul and the images of the world. (RR p. 472)

Roots in the Past. The roots of my nature reach into antediluvian pre-history. There exists within me a sympathy with the most distant past, with the longest vanished stages of development, with the primitive basalt, with the oceans, clouds and storms. (RR p. 472)

Feelings and Speech. When our feelings were most intense, our speech was still constrained and bound. Now, as we think of more audacious words, the waves of feeling have already receded. (RR p. 472)

Tears for the Dead. We believe that we weep for the dead; in truth, we only pity ourselves for being eternally separated from the deceased. (RR p. 462)

Formula for the Ethos of Character. The egoist: I will. The altruist: I shall. The sentimentalist: you will. The ascetic: he wills (I must). Animal man: it wills (I must). Elemental man: it happens (I must). (RR p. 481)

Life and Philosophy. To pour life into concepts at a venture: that is the mission of philosophy. (RR p. 478)

Sentimentality. Sentimentality is the yearning for images on the part of those who are unfit to behold them. (RR p. 475)

The Recluse and the Active Man. Were we to resign all [social] intercourse with mankind, we may become mystics, pedants, or hair-splitting metaphysicians, but we could never become masters of characterology; and the danger of self-deception to such a recluse may become enormous. The famous *tat tvam asi* does perhaps strike some prophetic chord or other; but only weary souls' love of solitude could help to spread a saying whose delusive profundity conceals the fact that the world is immeasurably greater, richer, and more manifold than that part of it which fits into a single impoverished formula. Qualities that are to enter into our consciousness must receive their daily exercise; and the most important are only exercised among our fellow men. A man may have a greater capacity for jealousy than most, and yet he might never have the slightest awareness of this fact until day when he falls violently in love. Many inhabitants of the big city overestimate their physical courage, because city life rarely gives occasion for serious tests of courage. Goethe never tired of insisting that only the "active" man can accurately estimate his strengths and weaknesses. (SW 4 p. 212)

Macrobiotics. The loftiest morality of macrobiotics: be courageous, serene, and cautious. The only problem is: either one already possesses these three qualities, or one can never possess them. (RR p. 456)

Understanding and Will. Understanding is the emergence of Spirit out of itself; the will represents its return into itself. In its conceptual, rational, explanatory mode, Spirit loses itself in the world, is "just" to the images, and, thus, is centrifugal. In its volitional mode, on the other hand, Spirit takes the world into itself as if it were plunder and, thus, Spirit is centripetal. One can refute proofs, but not purposes. (RR p. 362)

Thinking and Breathing. In the proper sense, thinking is volitional; thinking, however, is an interior speaking. Therefore, excessive thought leads to shallow respiration and shortness of breath. This is especially true of emotional thinking: it takes one's breath away. (RR p. 353)

Plagiarism. There may indeed be more profound thinkers among my contemporaries, as well as more learned and more successful ones; but in one area I have certainly achieved the world-record: I am the most plundered author on the contemporary scene. (SW 2 p. 1535)

Dead Things. That which has been pierced by the searchlight of the intellect is instantaneously transformed into a mere thing, a quantifiable object for our thought that is henceforth only mechanically related to other objects. The paradoxical expression

of a modern sage, “we perceive only that which is dead,” is a lapidary formulation of a deep truth. (SW 3 p. 652)

On Normative Ethics. From Socrates through Kant and into the present, the command is reiterated, in the hundreds of refractions and metamorphoses that constitute every normative system of ethics, that man’s task is to “control himself,” to subjugate his desires to the rule of reason, to moderate his feelings, if not to extirpate them entirely. (SW 4 p. 552)

The Egoist. His formula is not the “will-to-power,” but the *noli turbare* [“do not disturb me”] of Archimedes. The sympathetic feelings in the egoist are inverted, and they assume the morally colored drives: to accumulate “honors,” to hate, and to envy. He possesses a thoroughly “cold” nature, inclines to solitude, and chooses only such occupations as will permit him to remain alone within himself. He is inartistic, his soul is devoid of the feminine element, he will never attract disciples, and he always chooses himself as his favorite field of contemplation. (SW 4 p. 5)

Knowledge and Actuality. The knowledge of life is not life, just as the knowledge of death is not death itself. (RR p. 280)

On Language and Vision. Among older students of language, Lazarus Geiger, in his book on the Origins and Development of Human Language and Reason (1868), which, unfortunately, remained a sort of “torso,” held the view (which is correct in fact, though badly worked out by him and, until today, unappreciated) that the development of language, as well as the development of all human thought, takes place under the overwhelming influence of the sense of sight. Now, if it be granted that, for reasons connected with the theory of consciousness, we held this assertion to be correct, we will certainly not reject the confirmation of this position that the testimony of language provides in the following cases, which are merely a few among many. The German “Wissen” (to know) leads us back to the Indo-European root *wid*, which in almost all of the Indo-European languages means interchangeably “to find,” “to cognize,” or “to see”: Sanskrit *vid* = “to find”; Latin *videre* = “to see”; and Gothic *witan* = “to observe.” Thus, in German the chief words for the most crucial functions and results of the intellect are taken from the sphere of sight: view, insight, intuition, and also aim. On the other hand, the development of the Latin *cernere* passes from “to sever” through the abstraction “to distinguish” to “perceive with the eyes” and to “see a thing clearly.” Such examples, which can easily be multiplied, shed light on the inner connection that connects the power of judgment and that of sight: that is, of course, according to the “spirit of language.” (SW 4 pp. 234–5)

Formula and Meaning. Characterological terminology must do justice to the present meaning of words and not to that of some past era; nevertheless, it will do its part to prevent the mechanization of terms of speech that once were important, and to maintain intact the best part of its original content in a more rigid framework. “While the formulae remain, the meanings may at any time revive,” says John Stuart Mill in his magnificent chapter in the *System of Logic* on the pre-requisites of a philosophical language. “To common minds only that portion of the meaning is in each generation

suggested of which that generation possesses the counterpart in its own habitual experience. But the words and propositions are ready to suggest to any mind duly prepared the remainder of the meaning." This pronouncement outlines a plan, the execution of which would constitute the achievement of a comprehensive characterology. (SW 4 p. 236)

On the Delusion of "Progress." The greatest sage living ten thousand years ago, and who passed through all of the earth's prehistoric tribes, could not have calculated that after so many centuries or millennia the historical process would be initiated in one or another of them. In fact, no sage of classical antiquity predicted the Christian process, which had, in fact, already commenced with Socrates. If we were acquainted with Western man only, then, however profoundly we examined the conflict of Spirit and soul within him, we could never derive the Indian species of the same conflict, still less its manifestations in the cultures of the Far East; for, without experience, we could not be acquainted with the vitality of the Far East. Those who imagine that the study of the customs and especially the history of mankind enables them to predict a series of concrete manifestations, should foretell for our benefit what would be the appearance of buildings, costumes, and languages three thousand years into the future; or let them predict the direction of change of these and other crystallizations of human nature just thirty years ahead. If they cannot do these things, or if they consistently miss the mark, let them confess to themselves at least that, misled by erroneous and shoddy notions spawned by a delusive belief in "progress," they have undertaken an impossible task. For we know of no "progress" other than that which results in complete dissolution and final destruction, in so far as things continue on the straight course down which "civilized" humanity has been racing since 1789 at an ever-accelerating pace. Likewise, we know nothing of the capacity of life to generate new formations, nor do we understand life's "emergency reserves." We know of no clearer manner of formulating this view than by borrowing the phraseology of science, and stating that it is necessary to become acquainted biologically with the notion that at certain stages of a living series new forces emerge whose development cannot be forecast from previous forms. (SW 4 pp. 238-9)

On Resistance to Expression. Every animal, and man in particular, has an interest in not revealing certain mental processes. A man in love seeks to conceal that love in public, a shy man his shyness, an ambitious man his ambition, an envious man his envy, a jealous man his jealousy, etc. Many will do more than hide their true inclination, and they will seek to simulate the opposite, as we all do a thousand times semi-automatically when we treat a person, towards whom our sentiments are anything but friendly, with conventional acts of courtesy. Originally, all self-control served as self-protection. Now if we consider that man has been forced during innumerable centuries to practice self-control in order to preserve his life and well-being intact, we would be forced to consider it to be a miracle if no organic resistance to expression had arisen within him.

We can discover countless prototypes of this resistance in the animal world. When many animals feign death if they imagine themselves to be in danger, this is no action, but a reaction that occurs necessarily, and which is rooted in the instinct for self-preservation; and it takes place at the expense of the fear that without a doubt possesses the animal and which might otherwise result in flight. But the technique of deception and the drill in maintaining a countenance received an intensification far beyond all such cases in the animal kingdom from the fact that man's communal mode of living by prehistoric times had come under the dominion of cultic customs whose sphere of influence, diminishing progressively in historic epochs, was replaced by no milder set of ethical commands. An infraction of customs, and, at a later time, an infraction of ethical rules and a sense of right, resulted at the least in temporary or permanent exile from the community, and hence, among primitive peoples, in almost certain destruction; among civilized peoples, such an infraction would result in an ostracism that in extreme cases seems to have been hardly less fearful; to say nothing of the bloody side of criminal justice, which transcends any notion that an individual may have formed of hell itself. If it could be determined with dynamometrical precision whether men fear more the loss of life or the loss of reputation, we might discover quite a few slaves of their honor, who would be ready, if necessary, to risk their lives in order to preserve it. Many soldiers have found the courage required to face a storm of bullets only through the dread of being tainted by an imputation of cowardice.

We arrive at the root of the matter when we consider that the need for self-esteem, which is omnipotent in man, was necessarily fused with the demands of the community. Thus, from prehistoric times, man cultivated his peculiar sense of honor, which fundamentally distinguishes him from the rest of the animal kingdom. (SW 4 pp. 315–6)

Nature of Consciousness I. Death only attains to being as the correlative of life. Where there is no contemplation, there can be no distinguishing between the living and the dead. (RR p. 299)

Nature of Consciousness II. Destiny is never housed within the individual; high above the tragedy of the past stands the poet and his deeper necessity. Every philosophy that holds the individual's suffering as the weightiest matter, that recognizes the overriding importance of purposes and aims, is merely physics; such a philosophy is not admitted to the forecourt of true understanding. Thought and transient existence are inferior things, shadows of actualities. But whence the shadow and whence the slag of the primeval fire? What is the meaning and origin of our conceptual consciousness? (RR p. 247)

Nature of Consciousness III. The real presences in the soul are not feelings, but images. Feelings are attendant phenomena of the coming to consciousness of psychological processes that become more weighty as matter attains to independent existence. Consciousness recognizes no qualitative distinction between the simplest act of observation and the strongest affect. On the contrary, the sober soul can manifest itself in the simplest display. So it was for the "childhood"-phase of Spirit; with the maturation of Spirit, it is no longer the case. We err when we ascribe the feeling of the "rush" to

the Mycenaean epoch. Homer knew it not, and even in our fairy tales we find ourselves witnessing the violation of the soul. Those who must break through the defensive bastions of consciousness in order to renew the powers of life, will experience the authentic immersion in the force of the rush. (RR p. 247)

Nature of Consciousness IV. A platitude holds that ignorance increases as one accumulates possessions. Nevertheless, all thought occurs as restraint. For this reason, negative decisions — as in matters of taste — are more significant than the positive ones. Whatever our mouths shout most loudly will unfailingly be found to occupy the smallest area of our inner world. The “idea” represents stress, and not the Heraclitean flux. The man who summons the troops to battle is seldom a warrior, for orators tend to avoid combat. Within the true expert, there flows an unconscious stream of life; within the intellectual, on the other hand, one finds only pipe-dreams and ideas. (RR p. 301)

Body and Soul. To “de-body” and to “de-soul” are one and the same thing. The body is the soul, or at the very least its womanly half. (RR p. 343)

Volition. From the standpoint of biology, every volition presupposes the existence of a binding force within the stream of the soul. (RR p. 478)

World and Experience. That which we call the world, or, with more advanced reflection, the outer world, could never be experienced, still less could it be known, as that which it is without its alien character; and if Goethe is right when he declares

The eye could never see the sun,

If it had not a sun-like nature

then it is no less true that seeing and shining are as certainly and as fundamentally separate as it is that they must, in spite of this, be cognate. Accordingly, when we said that originally man rediscovers himself in the external world, this means precisely that he finds, by means of self-mirroring, the significance of the content of an intuited image, i.e., one that is alien to himself, and therefore immediately different from him, e.g., in the quantitative aspect. We immediately take the next step, however much it may seem to turn us from our goal. The saying that tradition has handed down to us from earliest times, that “astonishment is the beginning of all philosophy,” announces with epigrammatic brevity the indispensable truth that it is precisely the unexpected (that which is dissimilar to the content of an explanation) which is pre-eminently fitted to stimulate reflection and, perhaps, to prepare it for discoveries; and the whole history of thought is there to demonstrate this truth. In a special sense, a fresh understanding of an alien character is invariably due to the fact that some animal or man did on some occasion behave in an essentially different manner from that which would have corresponded to our instinctive assumptions. (SW 4 pp. 209–10)

On Schopenhauer. “The World is my Representation!” But how do I go about employing a representation to create that which our philosopher, with such a parade of reasons, has utterly failed to demonstrate: the world?! (RR p. 360)

The Polarity of Life. Life comprises the polarity of centripetal and centrifugal forces: this constitutes the true meaning of the terms wandering and fixed. Sometimes it entails

conflict, as in the strife between the Amazonian element and the established-maternal one. Sometimes it is restricted to the ring forged by the sacred triad; at other times the pursuing elements embrace the incandescent horizon of the world. (RR p. 271)

Mechanism and Metaphysics. Mechanistic materialization can never be metaphysical. Whoever takes a balloon-flight into the atmosphere does not merge himself with the elements, as does the soul of the wanderer who communes with the clouds whilst his conscious body yet abides upon the soil of the earth. Herein lies the launching-point for the comprehension of a myriad mysteries: the far. (RR p. 305)

Types of Knowledge. There is a knowledge that kills and a knowledge that awakens. The first can be seen in the verbal jugglery of our intellectuals; the second blossoms in the dithyrambic creativity of the poet and the visionary. As has been said of the latter type, he lives his life to the full as long as he inhabits the earth. He renews himself as if by a perpetual series of rebirths. The other sort is merely the mummified ash-heap of a once-living fire, the fossilized relic of a perished substance. His knowledge does produce mechanized results, but as he manipulates his carcasses, he speaks as if this dead matter were yet among the living. One sees with horror how he deludes himself into believing that he finds life only within his clockwork mechanisms. (RR p. 309)

Historical Model. Threefold model: the primordial-sleepwalking state in which decision and volition...have not yet been sundered; perhaps the best word for this stage would be plant-like; the second stage is the magical, during the course of which the priestly caste emerges. The third stage is the mechanized, which is dominated by deed, work, and science. (RR p. 311)

Sanctity. Sanctity is always a symptom of physical pathology. The Christian saint: he has the look of a stage hypnotist, and his head is encircled by a faded ring! (RR p. 300)

Concept and Life. In every profound human countenance we see the traces of fear, horror, and sorrow. Modern man can reach no further with his concepts than he can with his experience. Everywhere life is without depth and dread, and all modern art is hollow. No man of depth can comprehend himself conceptually. Life is mystical. Life can never be frozen into rigid concepts. (RR p. 301)

Weeping Life. Symbol of the highest rapture: the tear that bursts forth uncontrollably; the tear that "overflows" the eye. (RR p. 302)

The Western World. Light and sound are the contrary poles of life. Sound binds the soul to the body, forming an essence that is proof against the opposition of the masses. Light is bodiless soul, eternal rest, and timeless being: Nirvana. — Light is Asia, sound is the West. Mediating between the two poles: color and ardor; they also mediate between Greece and Rome (RR p. 302)

Primordial Images and Mechanization. The primordial images live; this also means: they are powerful enough to ensure that no chance conceptual scheme will ever imprison them; it means also that they can incinerate, with the eyes of the sun, all those who would even attempt such a thing. On the other hand, nihilistic reason confuses the signs that accompany the inclusion of the primordial images with the content of this

process; reason then beholds — instead of the image — a shape without substance. (RR p. 307)

Rome and Germania. In the substantial sense there is no “will to power.” What has been falsely called by that name is actually the will to expansion. Rome’s expansion was its will to power, and to a certain extent Rome’s expansion manifested its egoism and self-interest. Rome’s nature could not be approached, and it could never be conveyed beyond her borders because she demanded that everything had to be transported into Rome. The Roman will subjugated and wrecked all of her neighbors. The Germanic tribes arrived upon the scene too late, and that simple fact has decided the very destiny of the West. The Germans, the only people who had never known the meaning of the word “no,” entered an already finished world. (RR p. 313)

The Language of the Oracles. The future reveals itself only in images and symbols...But images and symbols communicate manifold meanings, and therefore they are often misunderstood. The history of the ancient world is replete with instances of falsely interpreted oracles. — The nature of the oracle is profoundly akin to that of poetry. (RR p. 317)

Sapphic Wisdom. Sappho prohibited all dirges and lamentations. This is how I interpret that fact: she prohibited the self-denial of the individual. The individual possesses the same abstract reality [Realitaet] as can be found in the conceptual generality. Only in the instant can there occur an unbounded actuality [Wirklichkeit]. (RR p. 317)

The Time of the Dead. The time of the year when ghostly visitations occur is just before the onset of spring. The Greeks believed that the dead then strove to step once more into the light. (RR p. 318)

The Nature of Space. The feeling for distance of the Romantics was the soul’s awakening. Space is the visibility of the unified stream and its living resonance; the soul is itself the very tone of space. The Romantics’ gazing into spatial distance constitutes a form of clairvoyance. In magical displays also, the far remains receptive to every near. (RR p. 320)

Priests and Schoolmasters. In Christianity, the priest conquered western mankind; in Socratism, this role was performed for us by the schoolmaster. That the Germans even now cannot relinquish Platonism is a consequence of the schoolmaster’s spirit, in which Platonism has been planted so deeply. The priest gathers about him all the downcast natures. He attempts to elevate his flock by poisoning life itself. The schoolmaster gathers about him those who are vitally impoverished, upon whom he bestows an ersatz “rationality.” In this way he empties life of its substance. (RR p. 346)

On the Wisdom of Life. Commandments are always delivered first as prohibitions; eventually they receive an affirmative formulation. (RR p. 350)

On Connections I. The door to the room, towards which I gaze attentively, is referred to me, although I am not really connected with it; if, on the other hand, my wrist and the door knob were to be joined by a length of tape, I would then be connected with the door, regardless of whether I contemplated the door in question, or conjured up another within my imagination. The doorknob and the chair could be linked as

well, although this connection would entail no relation. In order for me to conceive of the moon, I must first experience its light, and this is the case whether or not I am consciously aware of the fact. However, the moon is not influenced by the astronomer who scrutinizes her image. This applies to every object of perception in relation to the process of perception. (SW 2 p. 1143)

On Connections II. Whenever we find examples of connections that bind physical entities together, we always discover the mutuality of those connections. If I tug at the tape [that joins my wrist to the door knob], there occurs simultaneously the act of pulling at the tape and the effect that my action exerts upon the object with which the tape connects me. There is a marked difference between the aspect of an island as the sail boat approaches it, and its aspect as the sailor sets his foot on the island's shore. But in this case, only the bearer of perception can draw this distinction; the island cannot, of course, perceive the alteration of perspective, and the only evidence that any connection ever existed might be the sailor's footprints in the sands. (SW 2 p. 1143)

On Connections and Relations.

Connection is not relation.

Connections are inconceivable without reciprocal influences; relation does not entail influence.

Every connection is real; every relation is mental.

Connections are experienced directly, but cannot be comprehended; relations are comprehended, but cannot be directly experienced.

Connections are grounded in the actualities of the spatio-temporal continuum; relations are governed by Spirit, which is outside the spatio-temporal continuum.

Connections can occur without a cumulative series of relational steps; relations are never found without pre-requisite connections.

In order for a relation to occur, connections must be dissolved. (SW 2 p. 1144)

The General and the Particular. The expressions "the tree existing absolutely" and "this particular tree in this particular place" are utterly unconnected, although there is a relationship between the general term and the particular. Thus, there is a relationship between the term and the object, but neither term nor object can be inferred from each other. The most penetrating critical sense runs aground when it attempts to derive the relationship of the terms from that of the objects; or, to reverse the direction of apprehension, to derive the relationship of the objects from that of the terms. The unavailing vehemence with which Plato attempted the latter procedure — and the attempts of his successors have fared no better than those of their master — has created difficulties for western philosophy throughout its history, for by utilizing thought's access to connections, Plato converted thinking into appropriating.

There are individual natures as well as elementary souls, which permit meaning to arise through the medium of their phenomenal appearance, without whose secret working power the very idea of connection would be restricted to the precincts of the "other world" of space. General terms can be applied to particular cases, since

the meaning of the name, from which the concept is segregated, is, as it were, the promissory note of an essence, for which the boundary in question does not exist.

To the extent that the non-conceptual meaning concerns phenomenal characters, the area in which such entities operate already exists within them. It is only with the separation of the nature of the tree from the appearance of the tree, that the phenomenal tree can be distinguished from the noumenal; henceforth, conceptual relations usurp the place of real connections. The ground of their connection no longer lies within, nor can it be recovered once the entity has been stripped down to the status of a concept. That lost ground is: actuality. (SW 2 p. 1145)

Relation and Pattern. The error that arises when we confuse real connections with merely conceptual relationships in representational forms, on which all remaining forms and cases equally depend, is the gradual, ceaseless disempowerment of the name that is promoted by the “logocentric” school of thought, during its 3,500 year quest to consummate the destruction of thought. Logocentric thought always pronounces its verdict in favor of the alleged reality of the concept or of the fact. In order to be able to preserve its faith in the reality of things, “naturalism” bases itself upon an unconscious (or conscious!) acceptance of the unification of name and concept through the agency of the thing.

In order to maintain its faith in the reality of concepts, “idealism” unconsciously (or consciously!) insists on the unification of name and thing through the agency of the concept ...

The following facts are easily comprehended: as mere noumena, concept and thing are related to each other, although they are not connected. The concept never relinquishes its nature, but the thing can so relinquish its nature, but only to the extent that it is visibly represented, since appearances that attain to the act of representation have the images at their disposal...There is a more spiritual act of apprehension, through which the fact and its concept arise together, i.e., in the act of will by which the name-meaning is severed from the name’s conceptual sign. We may have an intuitive grasp of meaning, and we are free to choose any number of examples of such a grasp from the history of the sciences. Could we completely detach ourselves from the intuition of meaning (any attempt would certainly fail), then the name would have no more authentic connection than does a property label, a trade mark, a publisher’s insignia, an “ex libris,” or a badge of rank. This is, perhaps, an exaggeration, but it contains a measure of truth.

Assuming that the foregoing is true, we can easily show that both the “materialist” and “idealist” are willing to employ the idea of relations, in spite of the fact that they are unable rationally to account for their procedure. The scheme employed by the “idealist” at least deals with genuine contents of perception; but he cannot tell us just how it is that a perception arises. He is likewise unable to inform us as to just what links the perception and the name...(SW 2 pp. 1149–50)

Thought and Symbol. In symbolical thinking, the substantial entity and its type are identical. Along with the particular bird that has been chosen as a sacrificial victim,

every bird belonging to its species is sacrificed, and the body of God that is eaten in the form of the communion wafer is one and the same, regardless of the fact that each believer partakes of a discrete wafer. (SW 2 pp. 1145–6)

Similarity and Perception. The world of perception is originally like a mirror that reflects man's image a thousand-fold, and therefore we must be on our guard all the more not to enter the blind alley of the so-called "projection" theory. In point of fact, that which we project into a phenomenon serves only to deceive, and only that which we correctly extract out of it serves the true interests of cognition. A lover returning from a happy encounter finds that all of the people whom he meets are more happy and more attractive than would ordinarily be the case: he has projected into them his own happiness and perfection, and has deceived himself just to this extent as to their real psychological disposition. Rightly considered, the phenomenon of "mirroring" shows us something utterly different. Essential cognition, or, more briefly, understanding, is possible only by virtue of some similarity between the perceiving self and the object of perception; as dissimilarity grows, understanding yields its place to a failure to understand, which at first is only felt, but later comes to be known (except in so far as by virtue of mere projection the gap is filled by misunderstanding). Hence, we cannot be immediately certain whether the "savage" adores stones, trees, and animals; nor can we be sure that, instead of having projected something non-existent, he does not rather manifest a deeper understanding than our own. For it may be that his vitality is more vegetative in proportion as he has less personality than we; in that case, his judgments, or rather his attitudes, would have arisen on the basis of greater similarity or closer kinship, and this would have expressed something about the nature of stones, trees, and animals — albeit in mythical language — to which we later men have no access, because we have alienated ourselves from the mythopoeic realm. (SW 4 p. 208)

Meaning and Image. It seems that no one desires to comprehend the powers that are really at work in our world; nevertheless, one can name them, and, assisting in this naming (or, as would have been the case in earlier times, in the creating of symbols, a subject that must remain beyond our purview in this place) are those persons who have suffered the violent attentions of those powers to such a degree as to enable the victims to "summon to their memory" the events in question. What is revealed here, as the very idiom betrays, is the name-meaning (or the language-content). However, the mode of expression must be altered when we employ language to communicate the images that embody our most profound experiences. (SW 2 p. 1146)

The Magic of the Images. Magic has always been essentially a magic of images, and of all the forms of image-magic, the most popular is the one that has long been known throughout the world as the charm, from whose influence, even today, hardly anyone is completely free. (SW 2 p. 1146)

The Names of Power I. For the ancient world, it was considered quite normal for even the most powerful of the gods to possess, in addition to their customary names, yet another name that had to be kept secret, for if anyone were to pronounce the secret name aloud, its very sound would annihilate the god. Ra, one of the highest gods in

the Egyptian pantheon, announced to the world that he had summoned himself into existence merely by the act of pronouncing his secret name! Ra was eventually toppled from power when Isis tricked him into surrendering his secret name to the goddess. (SW 2 p. 1147)

The Names of Power II. The Islamic prophets who were in possession of the “great name” of their deity were powerful indeed. The name of Rome’s guardian divinity was maintained in strictest secrecy so that no enemy, by hearing the name pronounced, would be able to press the god in question into the service of aliens who would thereby be enabled to seize control of Rome itself. (SW 2 p. 1147)

On Naming in Tribal Cultures. The phenomenon [of the “names of power”] is encountered even today in a thousand shapes among the world’s primitive and semi-primitive tribal cultures. Parents need not look far afield when selecting a name for their newly born baby, for the name is actually chosen, after investigation, by a member of the hereditary priesthood. In many cases, the name may not be pronounced, because this action might endanger the welfare of the child, who is therefore given a second name; even at the burial-site the names of totems are found far more frequently than the names of individuals (Tylor). In addition, should the name of the deceased be spoken aloud, the dead person would return as a spectral vampire. In that event, the name of the deceased, along with all similar-sounding names, would become taboo. Researchers have examined in great detail the significance of these facts as they affect the development, and the rapidity of transformation, of tribal languages. (SW 2 p. 1147)

Word Magic. Certain parties have pretended to locate the source of the phenomenon that we call “inspiration” in unseen forces, because the identical demand when pronounced by one mouth achieves results, and when pronounced by another mouth issues in failure. However, this phenomenon is certainly caused by accessory circumstances, such as the style of expression, the appearance and bearing of the speaker, and the “atmosphere” that colors the environment. In addition, there might be (not must be!) “fluids” exercising an influence in such cases. The Romantics considered such fluids to be manifestations of “life-magnetism.” (SW 2 pp. 1147–8)

Word and Song. When we witness the effect of the printed word, whether in diplomatic communication, in parliamentary negotiation, or in the oratory of the demagogue, we realize that there is very little direct influence at work in these instances. In primordial ages, the true power of the word resided in the performances of singers...Even during historical times, a condemned felon could often sing his way out of the prison cell and, on occasion, he might even receive high honors in recognition of his vocal talents! (SW 2 p. 1148)

Love in the West. Only those of Germanic blood can understand the true depths of love. The Oriental is too sensuous, the man of antiquity too self-controlled. The Greeks understood the inwardness of love better than did the Romans; nevertheless, the Greeks imprisoned Eros within forms. Love, not as passion, but as the harmony pervading the entire being of two persons; love, as the deep joy in another; and love,

as warmth of heart and complete and devoted intimacy: that kind of love is Germanic. In Germanic man also there appeared for the first time true tenderness, the marvelous third element issuing from Spirit and desire. Here is devotion without dissolution of the self, mildness without weakness, pity without cruelty.

The Germanic nature, that perfect blend of every earthly element, was then ensnared and seduced by the Nazarenes' misuse of the word love... (RR p. 249)

Western Summer, Western Winter. In summertime, the heavenly sky extends itself above our earth like a canopy. Palely gleaming stars are suspended from the shining dome, and the sickle moon dips low behind the horizon. No longer do the colors that radiate distance blossom in the western twilight. Warm and bright are the streaming rains that soon shroud the heavens. Now everything belongs to Gaia. It is the time when she feasts upon heat, electricity, and light. The ardent sun is sinking into her maternal waters...The Heraclitean fire sets out on his voyage from the universe to the earth.

In wintertime, the depths of nocturnal space are stirred. Through the violet-black wilderness of darkness roll the images of the stars. The cold, twinkling whiteness of the moon seems somehow drab; and, lost in the universe between the shifting constellations, Gaia plummets into the eternal night. The slanting sun sinks through a distance that seems as if it had been drained of its blood. At the North Pole, the Aurora Borealis blazes brightly. So we see that the earth is but a reeling ball thrown into the Uranian abyss. And as earth's fiery core thrusts outwards, the Heraclitean essence streams downwards. (RR p. 251)

Pagan Voices. Dark voices that speak out of the wind-tossed trees to the soul of the child, voices sounding like noisy children sharing a cart that jolts across the nocturnal heath. O dark voices: no one fears you now. (RR p. 255)

Man and Earth. From the outset I choose the people that will be important to me based on my ability to view them as if they were fragments of the earth, as if they will be to me as soil, forest, cloud, rock, noble blood, smoldering summer, or spring breeze. Other sorts must remain outside the telluric round-dance, for they are anthropocentric, and, therefore, they themselves constitute the sickness that infects the earth. The Moloch's belly in which these spiritually diseased characters house themselves is — the big city. (RR p. 256)

Eros of the Distance. The essence of all true love is: the Eros of the distance ([Alfred] Schuler). Love is the most profound strangeness, the utterly vexing riddle, the flaming vision approaching from unknown horizons, the eternal mystery. Love perishes when one removes the veil that conceals its secret. Yearning, which dreams of possession, is the essence of love. Nothing earthly can compare with our first thrilling encounter with the beloved...(RR p. 258)

From a Diary Entry. How do these people manage to thrust themselves between me and the universe?! (RR p. 265)

From Eros to Plato. With the advent of Eros at the second creation of the world, there also appeared a fresh danger for life. Erotic life is psychical, and psychical life is

richer in woe and closer to death than is the life that yet remains within an incoherent chaos...The breakdown [of erotic life] took place in Greece. The same stream leads directly from Thracian Dionysus to Orphic Lesbos; but between Lesbos and Plato a great abyss has opened up. That which was formerly viewed as the release of demonic powers from the chains forged by things, has, in Plato, become the liberation of the transcendental ego from the bonds of the body. (RR p. 268)

Life in the Individual; Life in the Stranger. There may be a peculiar strength in one who experiences only himself. His inner radiance may at times even cast the light outside him into deep shadow. Nevertheless, we often find that this is accompanied by limitation, weakness, and an excessive ardor that may eventually separate him from the totality and render him incapable of movement. How the universe is experienced by the individual means: how he participates in its eternal flux. This is the reason why we find authentic symbols of life in such kindred phenomena as high spirits, warmth, heat, love, respect, and devotion...Such phenomena arouse a pulsating current between ego and world. In willing and yearning, on the other hand, there is merely tension. (RR p. 316)

The Duality of Feelings. Every feeling bears its polar opposite within itself. The man who strives to amass power obviously wishes to enjoy the feeling of domination; but in order fully to understand the feeling of domination, he must at the same time understand the feeling of subjugation to another's power. In every feeling, there is a striving from something here to something there. The first point and the last point determine the direction of the striving. (RR p. 331)

The Poison. From the outset, Christianity poured the poison of transcendence into the waters of the pagan underworld. (RR p. 290)

The Seven Basic Dispositions of Individual Life. First, the still undivided substance; second, the substance bifurcates into the life of matter and the life of Spirit; third, the substance with a ruling direction towards Spirit; fourth, the substance with a ruling direction towards matter; fifth, an insubstantiality joining matter and Spirit; sixth, insubstantial matter; and, seventh, insubstantial Spirit. (RR p. 481)

On the Doctrine of Life. The metaphysics of life rests upon three pillars: life is eternal distance (symbolized by the wheel); life is the *panta rhei* (symbolized by the flood); and life is image (symbolized by the mirror). (RR p. 295)

On Melchior Palagyi. We would be hard-pressed to improve upon Palagyi's monumental proposition: "The one source from which springs every possible human error is to be found in our seeing the spiritual in what is actually living, and in seeing living substance in what is merely spiritual." Scornful of both "rationalism" and "sensualism," from the outset he centered his research upon the separation and distinction of Spirit from life. He, and nobody else, re-discovered the natural-scientific theory of life (also called "neo-vitalism"), which he first elaborated as a counter-position to every possible theory of Spirit. He banished the drab twilight of so-called "epistemology" with the penetrating clarity of his research into the underlying grounds that render consciousness possible. (SW 3 p. 741)

The Legacy of Paganism. The pagan urn is shattered; war has raged around the shards, and the fragments have been scattered to the winds. Now the vampire of mankind, the Jew, appears on the scene. He knows not the meaning of this urn, and he certainly cannot restore it to its original condition. But he is aware, of course, that it represents a priceless treasure. So he makes off with the melancholy and lovely fragments, which he then arrays in a gaudy, vulgar setting. It will end up adorning some Jewess. (RR p. 281)

Types of Anger. The anger of the Asian is black, that of the German is blue; the first appears uncanny, the second profound. Asiatic anger occurs sporadically, either in silence or accompanied by the most inhuman screams; he stabs, he impales, he crucifies, he gluts himself with cruelty and torture, before he kills. The angry German is like a tempest of crushing blows, he is convulsed by a roaring frenzy, and he will run out of steam only when everything within reach has been smashed to pieces — recall Thor and his hammer! (RR p. 286)

Thought and Spirit. Spirit is silent. Whenever a concept appears it is cloaked in the spoken word — there are no unspoken or non-symbolic concepts. The concept is akin to Spirit in that both are alien to the world of images. Only when Spirit is cast out of the body can radiance emerge into the visible realm; only in the mediated element will Spirit become thought and, finally, concept. (RR p. 286)

Essence. The essence is the garb of the cosmic fire; the process comprises its inner assimilation and elimination through the individual nature; and its road leads from the universe into the ego. The inner accumulation of the essence occurs through the sensuous satisfaction of intense passion. The cell performs the essential work of assimilation, and its symbols are the hearth, the site of the nurturing fire; the house, the family vault, the crypt, the catacombs: in brief, everything maternal. The cell is cosmic in so far as it divides its substance, and allows its life to stream outwards. (RR p. 250)

Symbols. False doctrines are the culprits that first instilled the poison of mistrust and unbelief into the gentle, weary souls of the Hellenes, and ever since that time the gallows and the torture-rack have stood as the threatening symbols before the gates of life. (RR p. 243)

Cosmic Flame. There is a profound difference between the yellow flame and the livid blue one, as there is between the naphtha-flame and the lightning, or between the will-o'-the-wisp and St. Elmo's fire. This is the opposition between essence and void, between the body pulsing with blood and the astral body, between earthly and celestial fire, between phlogiston and ether, between the hot flame and the cold. Out of the union of aether and gravity arose the essence-as-body. Christianity was the process of separating aether from gravity, light from heat, celestial body from telluric body. Christianity turned the ancient gods into sorcerers and ghosts. (RR p. 244)

The Rush of Intoxication. Only during highly cultured epochs can Eros be experienced as the rush. Certainly, the constant intoxication that characterize "primitive" cultures differs profoundly from the second degree of intoxication, which is felt to be an overwhelming, turbulent, and shattering invasion of consciousness. (RR p. 245)

The German Tragedy. Germany did not take her soul from the integral Cosmos, but she did take her disposition from a half-strangled one: the fractured lines of its medieval style, the fruitless struggle of her thinkers with the object, and the gigantism of her modern cities. On the other hand, one can discover the darkly groping, pulsating side of her cosmic soul in Germany's villages, in her isolated farmsteads, and — most of all — upon her moorlands. (RR p. 254)

Epic Artistry. The genuine artist does not traffic in fictions. The demonic powers that he sings, speaks, or forms, are there. In plastic embodiment the wave is image and event. — The cosmic epic poet reunites that which has been sundered: the epic world-poem to the “ardor of the eye.” He steps out of the modern age and spins the golden threads of the eternal flux. A god and a lightning-bolt will not suffice — the entire history of the gods must unfold before his gaze. (RR p. 254)

The Poet and the Man of Action. We are not men of action; we are not obligated to lay siege to forbidden realms. We live in accord with the necessities of nature, we struggle in accord with the necessities of the day. Our blood may beat against the stars, but it spills itself fruitlessly in the dust of the gutter.

The man of action pays no heed to chatter about obstacles in his path; he sees only ever-new objectives that he must conquer. He is aroused by opposition, since he anticipates the intoxication of conquering his foes.

The dreamer and the man of action will always be opposites. (RR p. 254)

On the Artist. Work is act and act is Spirit. Art is an activity and, hence, derives from Spirit. The artist may become an eccentric individualist with a gigantic ego, but he remains bound to the heart of the earth. We employ two criteria in estimating his artistic power: the quantum of artistic fire that he has summoned from the earth, and the extent to which he has distanced himself from mediocrity. (RR p. 257)

Through Life. After endless searching, one trembles to discover: the painted exterior of things, their meaning and nature. Through a transparent veil one sees a second world that becomes a metaphysical reality. Causes and effects constitute a puppet-show for the blindness of our thought. Behind it all, however, there is the living universe, stirred by the beating wings of the gods: I experience it in the storms of youth, I lose it during the age of temptation, I comprehend it in the autumn of my thought. (RR p. 255)

The Nature of the Poet. Although the poet remains an individual, he remains still an aspect of the cosmic flux: he is animal, star, sea, plant; he is the eye of the elements; he is matriarchal and earthly to the core. The praxis by which he expresses his inner vision is magic (RR p. 261)

Jean Paul [Richter]. Jean Paul is a texture, not a structure. (RR p. 307)

On Dualities. One duality is that of subject and object. The growing emancipation of the object is intertwined with the weakening of the instincts. — The duality of body and soul is a completely different matter, however. The origin of this duality lies in sexuality, and it intensifies with the division between the sexes, until, finally, our species is split into two halves. The first symptom of consciousness: that man

differentiates between himself and his sexual organs and, thus, between his higher and his lower drives. (RR p. 303)

False Symbols. What could be an emptier production than the Symbolists' anthropocentric interpretation of the cosmos, or their compulsion to dress up ugly bodies in the vacant remnants of life! The whole Symbolist racket is a usurpation of the throne by the spawn of bankers. It began with excessive ornamentation, and with such excesses it will end. First: you build your house. Second: you hang up your tapestries. Then Stefan George moves in. (RR p. 304)

Mechanistic and Magical Philosophy. Magic is the praxis of our philosophy, and our philosophy is the theory of magic. The philosophy that is taught by the professors is invariably mechanistic, and the attendant praxis is always mechanical. — Magical philosophy repudiates the thesis of identity; consequently, it repudiates unity, thing, duration, repetition, and mathematics. My philosophy also repudiates concept and causation, for causation is the theoretical parallel to the logical nexus. — Magical philosophy works with images and symbols, and its method is that of analogy. — The most important names here are: element, substance, principle, demon, cosmos, microcosm, macrocosm, essence, image, primal-image, whirlpool, the orb, and the fire. — Its ultimate formulas are incantations that have all of the power of magic at their disposal. (RR p. 312)

Love and the Far. We love what is strange, but only to the extent that we glimpse within it the person that we once were in the most rapturous moments of youth, or in a superhuman, or even a godlike, previous life. All love is Eros of the distance. (RR p. 289)

Downfall. The ancient world shattered the primordial order of things when it imprisoned the demonic matriarchal powers in the chthonic depths and elevated the daylight masculine world of Spirit to supreme power. (RR p. 290)

On Bachofen as "the greatest literary experience." In Bachofen we have to recognize perhaps the greatest interpreter of that primordial mentality, in comparison with the cultic and mythic manifestations of which, all later religious beliefs and doctrines appear as mere reductions and distortions. ("Appreciation" [Wuerdigung] in J. J. Bachofen, *Versuch ueber die Graebersymbolik der Alten*, ed. C. A. Bernoulli [Basel: Helbing & Lichterhahn, 1925], pp. x-xi.)

On the "Mortuary Symbolism" of J. J. Bachofen. I rank this book among the supreme spiritual achievements in the history of mankind. For more than twenty-five years, I have found in Bachofen the man who has guided the course of my life. (LK GL p. 225)

Bachofen's Greatest Achievement. It was J. J. Bachofen who, in his two masterworks *Mother Right* and *Mortuary Symbolism* (along with the scarcely less important *The Lycians* and *The Myth of Tanaquil*), was able for the first time successfully to interpret the entire prehistory of the West from the standpoint of the battle between "matriarchy" and "patriarchy." (SW 3 p. 494)

Bachofen's Duality. The matriarchal and the hetairic principles. The first is fixed: tribal, established, and traditional. The second is wandering, solitary, hostile to all

settled modes of association. The first, by necessity, experiences the eternal and encompassing destiny that governs all happenings. — The second lives with doom and the annihilation of all at the hands of death. The disentangling of these antitheses can reveal a higher unity than may be apparent amid all the struggle and destruction. So, the settled-matriarchal principle struggles against the wandering-hetaeric principle. The transformation into morality occurs steadily; it happens more effortlessly for the fixed principle than for the wandering one. (RR p. 312)

The Work. Whatever within us becomes embodied in our work, no longer belongs to us. The insight, the work of art, and the deed must henceforth live only for themselves. (RR p. 300)

Time and the Primordial. As against the customary notion of time, primordial time incarnates the primal flux. Whatever has been immersed within this flux will shine with the aura of the elemental and the eternal. Death first came to those born in the primordial world not as the result of a great flood that somehow severed modern man's ties with the primal order: that task was performed by the invasion of the world by the void known as "transcendence."

That "transcendence" severs subject from object and body from soul, just as it rends the body of time. One half of time foists upon us that false "eternity," which, in truth, is an "always" that is forever outside the temporal dimension; whilst the other half is divorced from the spatial dimension. In this way, space is stripped of its soul, and time is stripped of its body. (RR p. 351)

"Monism." All of historical mankind has been raised in the philosophy of "monism." The belief in the laws of causality, and in legality generally, is monistic. All thinking activity is monistic...The monistic philosophy easily explains the origins of all of the world's religions, the distinctive qualities of human societies, the causal laws that govern our dream-life, etc. And every one of us is infected by this madness! (RR p. 351)

On Hysteria. The hysterical person lives within his dreams, day and night, and he is powerless and lifeless throughout his waking hours. One peculiar manifestation: his sexual life, because it is devoid of Eros, is compelled to produce disturbances in his conscious mind as well as in his body...His life, as it were, belongs to dreams that have no basis in perception, and, thus, his life belongs to phantoms. He can only be released in one of two ways: through the destruction of his dream world, or through his entry into the real world. The task of the therapist should be to realize the Eros of the hysterical character. (RR p. 357)

On the Achievement of C. G. Carus. Today we live in an age of joyless haste, an age that more or less shatters everything in its savage maelstrom. Faint of heart, and scarcely comprehending what we see, we stand before such an abundantly fruitful life as that of Carus, a life that required no monastic seclusion, a life that resembled a gigantic tree that shoots out branches on all sides without degenerating. We may remind ourselves at this time of similar monuments of the past, and we understand

clearly that the gains accruing to our power-crazed rulers must infallibly entail heavy losses in the soul and in creativity! (AC p. 310)

The Pelasgian State of Mind. Just as no one can determine precisely how much of the story of the Trojan War as it is told to us in the Iliad, along with its prologue and sequel, is founded upon strict factuality, so no one can determine precisely how much of that which we are told by the ancient writers about the “Pelasgian World” is founded upon strict factuality. However, even were historical criticism to demonstrate conclusively that the Pelasgians existed only in legendary lore, one thing would still be established beyond the shadow of a doubt: that the “Pelasgian” state of mind, among other things also found in the myths, belongs to the irreducible facts of prehistory. Just as according to our doctrine of the “actuality of the images” every individual, as well as every cultural period, participates in the world-image through the image-shaping powers of the soul, we must, therefore, establish every manifestation of man’s inner life within the realm of facts in order to understand the world-image and, with it, the religious beliefs of those whom we are studying...Indeed, without a knowledge of such inner realities and their formal operations, we cannot understand even the brute facts of ages to which scholarship has applied the prejudicial epithet “historical.” (SW 2 p. 1251)

War and the State. Man has existed in an uninterrupted state of war ever since the first state was founded, and the horror of warfare has grown along with the growth of the powers of the state, regardless of whether a particular war is waged between states, races, classes, vocations, sects, or discrete groups within the state. Obviously, the *bellum omnium contra omnes* (“the war of all against all”) is not something that characterizes the state of nature, for it is only since man has taken up residence within the state that he has waged that endless series of wars that constitutes “world history.” Hegel was quite correct when he said that the Spirit could only realize its potential within the state; but Nietzsche was also correct, from a different perspective, in saying that he found in Spirit the “will to power,” and in saying that the state was the “coldest of all cold monsters.” (AG p. 177)

The Machine. The English “Deists,” led by Sir Isaac Newton, that master of the mechanistic apocalypse, openly proclaimed that the world must have had a divine origin, since it so obviously possesses the character of a purposeful machine (recall that Kant was still impressed by the so-called physico-theological proof of the existence of God!).

We know of no better way to illustrate the appalling unnaturalness of our apostles of political and moralistic “progress,” who are so intoxicated by the pseudo-life of the machine, than to adduce two words of wisdom which were attributed to Zhang Zhou, and which encapsulate more than two millennia of Chinese philosophical culture: A conceited traveler sees a gardener in a trench drawing buckets of water with which he is irrigating his plot of vegetables; the traveler advises the gardener to invest in a machine that will do his work for him. The gardener laughs and says: “This I have heard from my teacher: the cunning have tools and show their cunning in business, and those who

are cunning in business have cunning in their hearts, and those who have cunning in their hearts cannot remain pure and uncorrupted, and those who do not remain pure and uncorrupted are restless in Spirit, and those who are restless in Spirit are those in whom the Tao can find no dwelling-place. It's not that I do not understand the tools of which you speak. It's just that I would be ashamed to use them." The other anecdote goes as follows: The Spirit of the clouds asks the whirlpool why everything upon the earth has ended up in such a disordered state. The whirlpool answers: "That the order of the world is shattered, that the conditions of life are thrown into confusion, that the will of heaven is without effect, that the animals of the field are driven away, that birds screech in the night, that mildew rots the trees and the plants, that destruction overwhelms everything that crawls upon the earth: all that is the fault of government." (AG pp. 181–2)

The "Tuist" (Opposite Pole to the "Egoist"). The relationship of the "tuist"² to his fellow man makes up the most essential part of his life. From the outset he makes his position clear to his associates and he lives in a conscious sense only for others. What he means to them is decisive for him: he will be loved or he will rule. Passionate desire alternates with tyrannical will. His personal feelings are revealed in all of his actions, and so he will show the greatest interest only in those sorts of activities that provide him with the opportunity to take a personal part in the arrangements. He inclines to artistic and quasi-artistic vocations; should he devote himself to science, his decision would result from deep needs arising out of his personal ambition. In addition, he will occasionally devote his efforts to political life, the public welfare, and economic conditions; then we get the propagandist, the world-improver, and the prophet. He is not in the least indifferent to outward appearances, and when he gets the opportunity he will indulge in theatrical behavior. In many ways, his bearing resembles that of a woman. The typical woman is always a "tuist." (SW 4 p. 4)

On the Progress-Philistine. Listen to him chattering about how far "we" have come, how wonderful is the time in which "we" live, and how delightful are the gadgets that are available to "us"...Everything that he says sounds like the babbling of a carnival conjuror; everything that he says reveals the utter impotence of his Spirit! (SW 2 p. 1543)

Apollo's Cult. The cult of Apollo is the cult of the beautiful. This phenomenon occurred only once, if we are not mistaken, i.e., in Greece; it lasted for a mere three centuries; and no other people and no other time has managed to achieve anything like it — not even the "Renaissance" — although the yearning for the Greek ideal of beauty has persisted down to our own time. (AC p. 382)

Wilhelm Jordan and Schopenhauer. From our earliest days we have delighted in the poet Jordan's essay "Encounters with Schopenhauer," which was published in the

² Tuist is a term coined by Klages. The distinction between tuist and egoist entails a recognition of the characterological distinction between those whose drives and affects are focused on the "you," as opposed to those who are centered solely upon their own ego.

collection entitled *Letters and Lectures*. All those who admire Schopenhauer (and all Schopenhauer scholars as well) will profit from the reading of this dazzling memoir, which, along with many verbatim transcriptions of Schopenhauer's speech, provides us with the most perceptive portrayal of the person and the life of the thinker. The author also recounts discussions that took place when Schopenhauer and Jordan were joined by Friedrich Hebbel! (AC p. 385)

The Manifold Voices of Goethe. Occasionally we hear of certain similarities between Nietzsche and Schiller. We admit that it is always possible to establish connections between the works of important authors. Thus, it is true that both Schiller and Nietzsche consistently employed dramatic rhetoric (although the differences between the characteristic rhetoric of the two men are enormous); it is also true that everything that the two men wrote reveals a consummate mastery of style. Now we ordinarily think of a stylist as one whose language possesses an unprecedented force and unity. But there is another approach to this matter of style: Goethe's. Goethe's narrative prose in *Werther* — which is well-nigh incomparable — deviates perceptibly from the narrative prose of the *Elective Affinities*; and his deftly controlled speech in the "Fueallest wieder Busch und Tal" and Mignon's *Lied* deviates sharply from that of the *Diwan* or the second part of *Faust*. (AC p. 388)

Morality. Moralistic activity, properly speaking, is reactivity. Only instinct that attains to consciousness is truly productive. — Likewise, the nothingness [das Nichts] that is the ego possesses the drive to permanence and the "will to power." The function of that will is to convert everything into thought. (RR p. 300)

Consciousness and Life. The ultimate depth is naïve; it is the immediate, instinctual now. Whatever is completely alive cannot comprehend its true nature. Every increase of consciousness entails an abandonment of life. (RR p. 300)

Dionysian Radiance. Dionysian man lives his dream-images. Rays of light stream forth from his soul into the world, and whoever wanders into his radiant sphere shines with his love. (RR p. 300)

"Matter and Form." Spirit disintegrates substance into "Matter and Form." Birth alone is the primordial; birth alone is the cosmic substance [Hyla] itself, the primeval mother. The sculptor, however, seeks to ensnare the two halves of the duality [dyas], to re-unite matter and form. He is seized by an instinctual compulsion, and his Spirit strives to revert to the primordial womb out of which substance emerged. But his aspiration is a fatal option, doomed to a perpetual perishing. (RR p. 309)

The Germanic Instinct. The instinct of other peoples is weak or non-existent; the German has instinct, but it is blind. On this account, he becomes the man of science, the man of firm convictions, the man of principles, the man who derives his steadfast faith in morality from books. He must remedy his lack of knowledge through study; he is compelled to surmount his insecurity of will through partisanship. (RR p. 339)

Science and Metaphysics. There has never been, nor will there ever be, a truly great scientist who is utterly devoid of metaphysics. And the scientist is never more deeply

under the sway of his metaphysical presuppositions than when he is unaware of their very existence. (SW 6 p. 539)

Faith and Doubt. Knowledge does not arise from faith, but from doubt, i.e., the very negation of faith. (RR p. 352)

"Idealism" and "Realism." For those students who find the technical philosophical terms in current use to be somewhat alien, but who are somewhat better acquainted with the various warring "isms" of the day, we will, for obvious psychological purposes, simplify somewhat the various points of view at issue by arranging the diverse schools of thought under the two headings of "idealism" and "realism." On the side of "idealism" we have: rationalism, criticism, subjectivism, "logical positivism," "fictionalism," "solipsism," etc.; on the side of "realism" we place: "sensualism," "empiricism," "atomism," "materialism," etc. The representatives of "idealism" always claim that they understand the inner life — and even life itself! — from the standpoint of Spirit; the representatives of "realism" are equally certain that they understand these things by examining impressions and experiences and, ultimately, being. But since Spirit and being are intimately connected as subject and object, the opposition between the two groups of "isms" is utterly irrelevant (except, that is, for those who insist on rehashing empty controversies regarding the existence — or non-existence — of "innate ideas"). (AC p. 384)

The Sentimental Egoist. There is one type of egoism that we will call "the egoism of the sentimental." The egoism of the sentimental person manifests itself most blatantly in an overwhelming desire to be loved. Such persons are usually contented with their worldly wealth and status; but when it comes to affairs of the heart they will reveal an extreme pretentiousness. Quite often they will be driven by a dangerous compulsion to rely excessively on others, a condition that can develop into species of psychical vampirism that can suck the life out of those to whom they have attached themselves. The reactive manifestation of this egoism is a capacity for intense jealousy. (AC p. 377)

The Dionysian. The body is the day-pole of the inner life, or the center of vision and appearance. When perception governs, the dream-image must, perforce, fade away. Not only the Spirit, but the body as well, stands in opposition to the untrammelled growth of the soul. For that reason, the authentic expression of Dionysian ecstasy is the rending of the god's body. (RR p. 288)

Romanticism and Polarity. The Romantics distinguished between the day-pole and the night-pole of the soul. This distinction pointed to the polar relationship between the dreaming and the waking states of consciousness. In the night-pole, instinct, yearning, clairvoyance, telepathy, sooth-saying, dream, poetry, art, and magic have their roots; in the day-pole, we locate thinking and willing. The night-pole bespeaks woman, left, night, moon, and ganglion; the day-pole bespeaks man, law, day, and the brain. But what the Romantics were unable to clarify is the central capacity of the night-pole: the gift of vision, out of which, as from an ocean, emerges a primal flux, an unending stream of influences and impressions...(RR p. 288)

Day and Night. In day-consciousness we perceive, but in night-consciousness we experience visions. Only into day-consciousness could the a-cosmic Spirit erupt. (RR p. 289)

Rococo as “Virtual Reality” (*virtuelle Realitaet*) [Written in 1913]. Rococo has the virtual reality of a mirror image, the mere appearance; every sound, scent, and shimmering light of its landscape is the reflection of a mask. (RR p. 292)

So-Called “Synthetic Thought.” Every so-called synthesis of thought arises from the impulse to revive distinctions that analysis has already enforced, and thus, this impulse is only one more expression of the monistic compulsion to force the vital manifold into the unity demanded by Spirit. (RR 364)

The Wisdom of the Romantics. Although the Romantics were not completely free of logocentric errors, the bright atmosphere of their soul-born wisdom shone more deeply into the nocturnal depths of the cosmos than the efforts of all previous mystics; it is, above all, the Heraclitean concept of polarity which enabled these vibrant spirits to clarify not merely the millennial traditions of myths and symbols: the Romantics also sought to undermine the threat of an arrogant materialism by their employment of the *alkahest* [“universal solvent”] of the soul. When, therefore, the Romantics utilized the magnetic electric pole as an illustrative example in their speculations, we must not forget that the discovery of this type of polarity, which was credited to Volta, although it actually belongs to Ritter, was, in fact, a Romantic achievement. (SW 2 p. 890)

Germanic Romanticism. Romanticism flourished in the Germanic world, and only in that world. Romanticism reached its highest peaks, and sent its roots most deeply into the earth, in Germany... We must always bear in mind that the greatest achievement of the Romantics was to embrace every field of the Spirit, and especially the philosophy of nature, within its charmed circle. There was a Romantic astronomy, physics, chemistry, mineralogy, geology, paleontology, botany, zoology, osteology, physiology, medicine, pharmacology, and even, to a certain extent, a Romantic mathematics. Now what has any of that to do with “foreign” influences? (SW 2 pp. 888–9)

Goethe and the Romantics. Literary Romanticism began with the *Sturm und Drang* of the late eighteenth century. Romantic entries — along with other material of the most superficial quality — can be found in Heinse, Herder, and Hamann, as well as in all of the vitalistic nature-philosophy of the period. On the other hand, there appears even in Goethe’s universalism a component that is recognizably Romantic, and of which he was most certainly aware, for this component had a profound impact on more than one Romantic philosopher of nature; it would one day function as the guiding principle of C. G. Carus’s world-view. Goethe was always impressed by the concept of the primal phenomenon, a concept that enabled Goethe to direct his scientific attention not to primal things, but to primal images. In opposition to the mechanistic philosophy of nature, and to rigid explanatory schemes in general, it was the living content of the perceived entity that preoccupied Goethe; his worldly sensuality enabled him to focus upon the visually grasped images, to which his words of truth always referred. No doubt, he was interested in every aspect of nature, but his studies always led him back

to that which he had “perceived through the senses.” His studies of nature, he says elsewhere, rested “on a purely experiential basis”; and in the Proverbs in Prose occurs the following brilliant proposition which, at one stroke, shatters the idealistic errors of the millennia: “People seek only nothingness behind phenomena: for the phenomena themselves are the theory!” (SW 2 p. 889)

The Arrogance of Rationalism. The modern disciple of the faith in the omnipotence of reason can hardly restrain his joy as he babbles into our ears his conviction that he now possesses a logic of the “unconscious!” (SW 1 p. 231)

Literature and the Pathic Soul. Peer Gynt, Ibsen’s great creation, although not purely poetic, certainly unfolds the shifting panorama of a thoroughly pathic approach to life. The characters whose psychical abysses are illumined by Dostoyevsky are, without exception, pathics, who go marching straight to doom. Here we have everything that the student of sick souls could possibly desire: from the “flight” into the night of forgetfulness, through the “twilight condition,” to the “split personality,” unconscious behavioral tactics, somnambulism, and seeming acts of unsurpassed purposefulness, without — or even against — the will of the actor.

One example: Raskolnikov [in *Crime and Punishment*], shortly after his murderous rampage, staggers around his city, utterly without purpose — or so he thinks — driven by hostility to all human associations. “Every encounter aroused his loathing, the faces of people were as abhorrent as their gestures and their movements...When he arrived at the quay of the Neva on Vasilievsky island, he stood upon the bridge. ‘Here’s where he lives, in this very house,’ thought Raskolnikov, ‘but I have not come here of my own accord to Rasumichin!’”...Who can read this chapter through without being struck by its precise rendering of “post-hypnotic suggestion?” (SW 1 p. 233)

On the Heraclitean Flux. Just as the Eleatics had discovered being, it was Heraclitus who discovered actuality, which he renders in the world-renowned formula: “All things are in flux” [panta rhei]; the flux is the very essence of the world, or, in other words, the world is a happening without a substrate. Heraclitus is not, however, content merely to theorize about the eternal stream, for he also discovers in the world-process the phenomenon of rhythm; in other words, he is the discoverer of polarity. With the aid of that concept, he clarifies the semblance of existence [Dasein] of that which endures as analogous to what we today would call “stationary equilibrium,” i.e., the equilibrium of two contra-directed processes.

For Heraclitus, everything is alive. To him both the living and the dead truly live. Both the living and the dead are but formal manifestations of the primordial life of the world itself. And here we encounter a discovery which distinguishes the speculations of this outstanding philosopher from those of all previous thinkers: the idea that individual life, as the form of arrested, or deficient, life — which takes the “road upwards” to attain to dissolution — can, on the other hand, lead to the highest liberation and to the greatest vital plenitude as well. Thus, death appears as a liberation to a loftier form of cosmic life, as opposed to a temporally-restricted organic existence [Dasein]. Furthermore, sleep as the mediating transition to death, can be seen as a prototype

of a fulfilled vitality...Hitherto, the doctrine of Heraclitus has been seen as emerging "all of a piece," and this doctrine is, admittedly, the most profound of all philosophical systems. Sadly, however, even this philosopher of cosmic life went off the rails when he dragged in the theory of the logos...which he calls an ordering, rationalizing, regulating power, a "law" decreed by the transcendent ruler "Zeus." And this is not just the misuse of a word! (SW 6 pp. XVII–XVIII)

Character and Ideals. The common viewpoint that holds that we can derive a person's ideals from his character, stands opposed to the conviction that a person prefers and seeks precisely that which he does not possess; without a doubt, the second viewpoint holds the greater measure of truth. The gentlest woman desires a man who is courageous, strong, and heroic (and vice versa); the poet who delights in the narration of orgies worthy of Messalina, is often found to be living on bread and water in an attic chamber; and a scholar of genius like Mommsen, who scrutinizes the deeds of great statesmen with the most rigorous and critical acumen, is himself the most superficial and mediocre politician on the planet. (SW 6 p. 28)

Pious Ideals. With "good intentions," pious wishes," and enduring illusions, we arrive at those abstractions that determine the limits of the outer, as well as the inner life. Ideals are undoubtedly elements of character, but they are elements torn from natural connections of every sort, and for that reason they are divorced from the facts...Man's ideals clearly reveal how rich he is: in poverty. (SW 6 pp. 28–9)

Spirit and its Manifestations. The Spirit, as it functions in modern scientific research, is only one division — or, more correctly, one phenomenal manifestation — of the identical Spirit that has ripened into the modern state and modern capitalism. (SW 1 p. 128)

Nihilism. "Panlogism," Kantianism, and Sensualism: they are but three varieties of one and the same nihilism, three modes, or methods, whereby an invading force from outside the cosmos annihilates the cosmos of images. (SW 1 p. 173)

The "Last of the Mohicans." The hour of reaction has been missed; there are those among us whose passionate love of life has made them see just how wretched the world has become: we are the "last of the Mohicans." Whoever still has it in him to express a wish, must wish for one thing above all: that the consummately vile mankind of today may drown, die, disappear as soon as possible, along with his wretched arsenal of murder, so that once again the forests may resound with the roar of purifying and self-renewing winds. (SW 1 p. 768)

Philosophical Confusion. The Eleatics were guilty of confusing actuality with being; however, the logician manifests an even greater confusion when he mistakes actuality for truth. The logician is led by his Parmenidean impulse to the most arrogant of all errors when he equates actuality itself with the mere thought of actuality. There are no independent "propositions-in-themselves," such as Bolzano desired, just as there are no "truths-in-themselves," such as his modern acolytes craved. Within the thinking consciousness of the individual there are neither truths nor propositions, but only fleeting manifestations of inconceivable happenings. (SW 1 p. 86)

"Psychology" and "Epistemology" ["Theory of Cognition"]. Basically, everything that our professors insist on calling "psychology" is an unavowed "epistemology," just as the so-called "epistemology" of the professors could, with equal justice, call itself "psychology." The whole matter shall not have been devoid of a certain humorous flavor should the discussion ultimately come to focus upon the question as to where, in fact, the precise boundary between the two disciplines is to be drawn. (SW 1 p. 218)

The Limits of Education. The individual's capacity to acquire education is governed by natural limitations, and no amount of study will enable him to transcend those limitations. One can discern the intellectual capacity of a person, but one can never increase that capacity any more than one can transform a talentless person into a great musician or sculptor. These considerations also apply to the capacities of different races. (SW 6 p. 663)

Language Precedes Concepts. The child can already speak and understand his native language by the age of one, without employing concepts. Prehistoric man spoke and understood speech for untold thousands of decades without ever having utilized a single concept. It is not mankind as such, but solely historical mankind who announces his arrival when he discovers the first concept. Concepts could only be formulated for the first time when the meanings of words had already been established. (SW 6 pp. 657–8)

On Eugen Dühring's Contribution. Dühring, above all other modern thinkers, is to be thanked for drawing our attention to the profound significance of the Eleatics. He is to be thanked as well for the unsurpassed clarity and sharpness of his demolition, in his *Critical History of Philosophy*, of the arguments of the Eleatics...which he achieves by means of a fundamental critique of the concept of infinity that certainly deserves the highest praise. (SW 1 p. 51)

Eros Cosmogonos. There can be no doubt that the triumph of the spiritual and personal gods over the chthonic and elemental divinities was achieved in the Ionic cities on the hither-Asiatic seacoast long before the Greek motherland was affected. Thus, we should not hope to find in Homer any very pronounced indications regarding prehistoric religiosity. We must, in fact, seek the signs of the earlier beliefs, in part, in Hesiod, and also, in part, in the heritage of the sects and mystery-cults, which, out of the struggle of various strata of Greek religiosity, were able to precipitate the flood-tide of Dionysian worship that extended from the eighth century BCE to the sixth century...Now in Hesiod, although he scarcely mentions Eros, we certainly come upon the god, although the poet's Eros is not strictly cosmogonos; the Hesiodic Eros, the "most beautiful of all the immortal gods," joins Gaia and the antecedent pre-polar Chaos to constitute the primordially creative Triad out of which issue all earthly happenings. The idea of Eros as cosmogonos is definitively achieved in the mythic teachings of the Orphic sect; for our purposes, the most important doctrine of the Orphics tells of how Chronos, "never-aging time," fashioned the silver world-egg out of the aether and the unfathomable void. From this world-egg there emerges the shining god Phanes-Eros-Dionysos (also called Metis and Erikapaios); this is Eros the hermaphrodite divinity, the god who bears within him the seeds of all the other gods. (SW 3 p. 376)

The Body of Love. Love may be aroused by the visible, discrete attributes or characteristics of another person: by beautiful or unique hands, feet, body-type, shape of the neck, nose, complexion, scent. The preference for blonde hair or for dark, for blue eyes or for brown, may even indicate...that the natural predilections of an individual arise, in large part, from racial considerations. (SW 3 p. 365)

The Death of the Ego. The “wise man,” as Goethe has told us, yearns for a death in flames, for only he understands that before the gates of life can be opened, the ego must first be slain. (SW 3 394)

Forms of Love. The “materialist” desires to possess and master man and all of man’s powers. He “loves” dependability and so-called character.

Christ saw himself as being near the center of things; he searched for God; and his most profound yearning was that he might merge himself with “higher things.” He craves the outside and the up-there, and when he loves, his sentiment is aimed in just those directions.

Eros, on the other hand, is the love of creation. For Eros, the boundless universe is alive. A flood of shimmering light breaks forth. The entire environment glows, the distance resounds: the beloved becomes a flame afar. (RR p. 264)

Images. Images plunge into the mysterious darkness; they drift into a magical distance. Images are never impoverished, never permanent, never to be seized in a coarse grip; a joyous spectacle blazes up, and then it sinks into the night. (RR p. 272)

The Veil of Maya. The nineteenth century, more than any previous one, set out to tear the “Veil of Maya” asunder. With sacrilegious inquisitiveness, it probed into everything that exists: the darkness of the void, the metallic sheen of distant oceans, the wondrous song of the atmosphere, and the sublime gloom of temple and cathedral. Its reality...was merely a shield of lies behind which it concealed its lust for destruction. (RR p. 272)

The Golden Age. Life’s gaze is always directed backwards, and where life is embodied in thought, its thought is always a contemplation of the return of vanished beings. Indeed, the collected legendry of the pagan world places all greatness, beauty, and radiance in a far-distant prehistoric world: this is the “Golden Age” of the heroic founders of noble clans. (RR p. 285)

On the Soul. The soul is the fulfilled vitality, the self-incinerating flame. That which limits and constricts itself in the waking state, becomes, in sleep, a bottomless sea.

Matter (Hyla) is the sleep of the soul. Its waking has the actuality of the dream: shining images glide past, and then they plunge again into the darkness.

The ocean is the symbol of the universal soul, and the ocean’s phosphorescence manifests its highest vitality. Profound life blossoms only within the womb of night, and the ocean glows only nocturnally. Life is the self-rolling wheel, the perpetuum mobile, the mill wheel through which the waters of time must pass. (RR p. 262)

Anima Rerum. Lightning is the soul of the landscape just as the shimmer is the soul of the crystal, the scent is the soul of the flower, and the eye is the soul of the

animal; man is even more eye than is the animal, and the world in him becomes more image. (RR p. 263)

Romanticism and the Soul. The Romantic period was wandering and exploratory, just as our own time is. Strangeness, distance, the thrill of life and the threat of storm, rapture, emotional transport, yearning for the stars: many names for the self-same essence, which is the soul. (RR p. 259)

The Gorgon and the Night. There are three vital perspectives: the erotic, the heroic, and the magical. In the world of images these types are manifest as: the beloved, the hero, and the wizard. My own experience was magical (to a chaotic extreme); it was the Gorgon and the dread of universal night. I tried to approach Eros through love...But before the metallic night could extend its cloak over the house of love, love's home sank into the earthly morass. (RR p. 261)

Elemental Nature. The elemental is not a striving towards the animal condition. It is something that is beyond man and, at the same time, close to the realm of the plants. (RR p. 261)

Lenau and Meyer. The two most highly endowed Dionysian poets of the nineteenth century, Lenau and Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, led — one buried in his books, the other in tobacco smoke and violin music — the most secluded lives imaginable. (SW 3 p. 400)

Spirit and Soul. Only when Spirit sleeps does the soul awaken. Spirit sleeps most deeply when the senses slumber. But even in the waking state there is a sleep of the Spirit. In every act there are moments when Spirit nods and the soul opens wide its eyes. Ever richer is our life at the moments when Spirit passes through the realm of sleep. Then we are more profoundly alive, as each moment passes into the next. At such times, our eyes shine...(RR p. 264)

The Symbolism of the Wheel. The polarities that constitute life were once symbolized by the wheel. We see this clearly in the myth of Ixion, where sometimes the head is above, and sometimes it is below...All of life is, in fact, polarized: we have an under and an over, a black side and a white, an ending and a beginning, and so forth. Polarities are revealed between rising and falling, between birth and death, and between the fixed and the wandering. Indeed, we may even see in the wheel the tragic symbol of the cosmogonic Eros. (RR p. 330)

Thought and Image. Thought is the medium of philosophy, the handmaiden of poetry, and the elevating background of art. In the absence of thought, only the primordial image endures intact, for in the image a more profound incandescence consumes the cold light of empirical observation. The primordial images are like weighty gold or crimson enamel, whereas thoughts are like penetrating flames or lightning reflexes.

The contemporary world knows nothing of authentic images or genuine thought. Its art is without background, without atmosphere, vapid; its poetry is unfinished, harsh, arid, and destitute, or it is gaudy and absurd; and its philosophy is but an asthmatic critique. (RR p. 284)

On the Creators of the "Folk Song." For many reasons, we regard the expression "the folk song" as somewhat ambiguous, since the implication of the phrase is that its creators have been drawn exclusively from the lower classes. However, genuine folk songs have also been crafted by aristocrats and even by kings. The superb poetic ballads of Scandinavia, for instance, were largely the product of knightly and courtly circles, and these ballads are certainly authentic "folk songs!" (AC pp. 199–200)

The Wheel of Life. Ceaselessly, the moment sinks into the past: the wheel of life is turned by death. Ceaselessly, the past darkens the purple dome of the fleeing moment: out of the realm of Hades springs the flower of Persephone. (RR p. 270)

The Eros of the Distance. In a mystical rotation, all that passes returns unto the night of birth. Earth drinks up the rains shed by water-born clouds, and, as the rain-drop enters the sea, so, without ceasing, dies the daylight of the present into the darkness of the past. Just as the world is girdled by the Midgard Serpent, so all that transpires is bound by the pulsating wave of the cosmic sea; and that which appears in the raging storm that hurls itself against chimney and tower outside, becomes the protective heat of the hearth-fire within. As if collected within an urn, it becomes that blood-glow of Eros that already stirs within the animal; it dreams within its blood. Unfettered, it becomes the Wild Hunt. But it is also revealed in the sweet dawning of that dazzling distance, wherein a wild darkness joins forces with alluring lamentations from afar. The crossing of gold and gloom as inseparable twilight: Eros of the Distance. (RR p. 271)

Inner Drive and Outer Expression. Every driving-force is at the same time a disposition of the body; and alongside every activity of a drive there occurs a physiological, physiognomical transformation of the body. (AC p. 16)

Paradox. Shame is the dread that one feels before the prospect of one's true self being exposed. Thus, shame is, without a doubt, to be classed with those emotions that are ordinarily called egotistical. (AC p. 17)

The Wise Man and his Wisdom. No sage has ever lived his life according to his wisdom: in the truly wise man, his wisdom is the philosophical expression of his life. What we call "self-mastery" is always but one specific mode of the momentary preponderance of a single impulse. Obviously, there can be no authentic mastery over our passions, any more than there can be a genuine "freedom of the will." (AC p. 17)

On Cruelty. Cruelty belongs to the most "forbidden" elements of the affective life. We can scarcely pronounce the word cruelty without arousing in the listener a dark, and therefore so much more intensely felt, loathing for that train of phantoms that our long religious training of the heart has clothed with flesh and blood. (We can best clarify our thoughts regarding these difficult matters by consulting the works of the great German thinkers of the nineteenth century.)

But as to how matters stand in the real world, we must understand that the yearning for violence and suffering belongs not to "man in general," but solely to historical man. Let us recall — without veiling the eyes, if you please — the gladiatorial combat of the Romans, the naïve maliciousness of so many children, and the Spaniard's delight

in the bull-fight. In addition, however, we must not ignore the ingredient of cruelty in the pleasure that people derive from attending a great theatrical tragedy; in the breathless anticipation with which many people listen to chronicles of atrocities that transpired in far distant ages and cultures; in the love of scandal and gossip; in the everyday amusement that some experience in the misfortunes of others; in truculence and “braggadocio”; in the longing to make an “impression” on the world; and in the great delight that so many people take in witnessing the downfall and disgrace of their fellow man. (AC pp. 17–18)

Christian Lust for Self-Torture. The major achievement of Christianity was in relocating the arena within which man conducts his operations from the world outside of man to the landscape of the human soul within...The admitted cruelty of the ancient world was then forced to don the guise of the contrite penitent. Antiquity took what was perhaps an excessive pleasure in battle and death; but the self-same lust has characterized the entire Christian era as well, although the Christian has sought to hide his suicidal impulses behind such masks as self-flagellation and asceticism. (AC p. 18)

Truth-Criterion. Throughout the ages many thinkers have attempted to answer the nagging question regarding the criterion for determining truth; but the problem can never be solved adequately, as any answer would presuppose the truth of the procedure whereby the problem had been solved!

There are also, however, occasions when such quests for a truth-criterion are unnecessary, since there are several propositions, both factual and philosophical, that we are told are universally compelling (“immediately evident”). On the other hand, it is important that we bear in mind that the predicates “true” and “false” pertain solely to our judgments. In the absence of a thinking consciousness, truth and error simply cannot exist. (SW 3 720)

Judgment and World. Our critical judgment cannot perceive red, blue, or any color whatsoever in general; nor can our judgment perceive sounds, tastes, musical key-signatures, thirst or hunger in themselves; our judgment cannot perceive discrete feelings of hope, yearning, expectation, and so on. What our judgments of the world can achieve is this: the perception of the manifold of qualities, both internal and external, that enable us to distinguish one thing from another. (SW 3 P. 721)

Back to the Romantics! We live in an age when empirical science and its monuments are overrated. A mere knowledge of the facts in the case now passes for something substantial. Certainly, a well-founded science should perform its operations with the aid of just such facts as are necessary to prove its theories. Everything else is useless ballast. Originally, this method was fitting and proper when considered against the background of a reaction against the debauchery of the Naturphilosophie of the early nineteenth century. But today there is no longer any need for such a negative viewpoint. The ceaseless defamation of speculative ideas now permits fashionable writers to ignore even the uncontested advances that Schelling, Oken, and others contributed to the advancement of science. It is high time that we recall the achievements of the

Romantics, so that we may cease traveling down the path of an obtuse “induction.” (LK GL p. 147)

Science and Metaphysics. Science is not a matter of collecting facts, but of asking the right questions. The history of science demonstrates this quite clearly. It also shows that the truly great discoverers always achieved their crucial results with the aid of speculation (the data upon which they based their theories was often quite limited)...Think of a Dalton, of a Robert Mayer, of an Avogadro. These are the three great names of their age in our own field of study, and all three strikingly bear out the truth of our contention. And, nota bene, all three were forced to live their creative lives in mortal combat with their contemporaries! (LK GL p. 148)

From “Manly Loyalty” to “Homosexuality.” The attempt to saturate the sexual instinct with the erotic essence has often resulted in the downfall of the lovers; on the other hand, the contrary attempt — to sever the instinct from the essence — has led and still leads initially to the poisoning of Eros, and ultimately to its death. Here we must emphasize the fact that displays of sympathy are oftentimes more profound between members of the same sex than between man and woman. The eternal icon here is the Dioscuri [the mythological twins Castor and Pollux]; this sympathetic bond celebrates its highest festival in honoring friendship as much as it honors affection...When we recall the “manly loyalty” of the ancient Germans, we also summon to our mind’s eye the original “manly affection” of the ancient Greeks, which likewise had scarcely anything in common with contemporary “homosexuality.” The Greek sentiment first began to degenerate as a result of the evil entanglement of the impulse to heterosexual union with a banal love of boys...The Eros of the West stands under the sign of “Blood-brotherhood,” of which the “sacred league” of the Thebans is perhaps the best world-historical example. (SW 3 pp. 406–7)

Nature and Soul. In spite of all of the idle chatter about “progress,” there are still prophetic souls who draw our attention to the implications of the indubitable increase of man’s mastery (alas! along with man’s destruction) of nature. But even these prophets have not devoted sufficient attention to the simultaneous and equally blatant assaults on the values of the soul! (SW 3 p. 654)

From Things to Images. Although to our human senses it might seem to be merely a promise of bliss, we receive much more when we drink our fill from the beaker that is offered to us by the Eros of the distance, which releases us from the tangible world of things, and transports us to the ungraspable actuality of the images! (SW 3 p. 412)

Back to the Pre-Socratics! The student who immerses himself, lovingly and intelligently, in the symbolic language of the pre-Socratics, must unfailingly conclude that no succeeding age — and especially not that of the pretentious twin peaks of Hellenic wisdom, Plato and Aristotle! — has matched the profundity and panoramic scope of those dazzling philosophical ruins that we continually visit in our quest for wisdom: Thales, Anaximander, Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Pythagoras are their names. The least that can be said of these giants is that they were well on the way to the discovery that an authentic interpretation of the world must entail a doctrine of life. They also

understood that the mechanistic aspect of reality should be reduced to the status of an insignificant by-product of the living world. (SW 3 p. 654)

In a Nutshell. Our position is that the primal Trias, from which every authentic triad has descended, ordains that body and soul are the poles of life; into the substance of man — more precisely, into man as he rides the wave-crest of “World History” — there possibly erupts a force from outside the spatio-temporal realm (acosmic). That force is named Spirit, and Spirit’s mission is to sever the poles of body and soul and thereby to murder the living substance of man. (SW 3 p. 565)

Terminus. The spiritual will to conquest is the ultimate offense against life, and the offender must be prepared to endure life’s harsh retaliation in consequence. This proposition will remain in force so long as mankind exists, and it will have demonstrated the full horror of its ultimate implications when a degenerate mankind finally evolves into a completely rationalized and desecrated counterfeit of life. (SW 3 p. 479)

Sex and Eros. We can liken sex to the harsh light of a glowing electric wire. Eros, however, is more like the intense and frosty shimmer of opalescent glass...Erotic vitality resembles an elegant lamp that discharges its radiance symmetrically throughout one’s entire study. (SW 3 p. 490)

God as Suicide. For two thousand years the Christian religion, with its hatred of the world, has found its symbol of life in the self-crucifixion of the creator of that world! (SW 3 p. 481)

The Great Achievement. It was Aristotle who first realized that the pure, i.e., functioning — albeit not suffering — Spirit (nous) is an entity that has erupted into the cosmos from outside the cosmos: we endorse this formulation. (SW 3 p. 736)

Actuality and Experience. Actuality is experienced, but truth is thought that is based upon experience. That which we contemplate conceptually is not actuality; but the conceptual dimension can aid us in our efforts to comprehend that actuality. (SW 3 589)

The Mystic and the Eros of the Distance. Human drives are blessed by Eros to the extent that they participate in the cosmic Eros; and cosmic Eros is always: Eros of the distance. Thus, whoever seeks to negate distance is characterized by a possessiveness that is fatal to Eros, to the glowing nimbus of the world, and, ultimately, to actuality itself.

Nevertheless, the real secret endures, as does the sacred wisdom of the mystic: the holy image is only revealed from afar, even as the mystic merges himself with his vision. The mystic alone sees “the sun aglow at midnight.” (SW 3 p. 482)

Above and Below. The necessary counterpart of “salvation in heaven” is hell on earth. (SW 3 p. 468)

Image and Symbol. The actuality of the image — the most intense (perhaps the only!) actuality to which we have access — is an eternal coming to be and passing away, a perpetual waxing and waning, the kindling as well as the extinguishing of the light. In sharp contrast to the time-bound rigidity of modern existence, the actuality of the

image cannot be trapped in concepts. Instead, it communicates more and evermore to us through the language of the symbol. (SW 3 p. 469)

The Etiology of "Humanitarianism." Starting out from the time when a combative chorus of voices strove to determine who should rule the heathen tribes during the Germanic migrations, we end up today with the exaggeratedly sympathetic nature of the Nordic race, which we have to thank for the disastrous gift of a syrupy "soul love" (as confusing and fatal as any gift could possibly be: because the combative chorus of the heathens degenerated through the collapse of the capacity to discriminate; then it became the perfectly achieved, universally tolerant harmonization. Tempted by Christian catchphrases, that tolerance became, in turn, exclusive passion, about which we still hear so much today. Ultimately, "soul love" transformed its substance into the destructive specter of universal "humanitarianism," which is, in fact, the murderer of love). (SW 3 p. 404)

Monist and Dualist. Whether we hold with the materialists that the ultimately "real" substances are atoms, or electrons, or protons; or with the idealists that the truly real is mere "being," Spirit (logos), reason (nous), the "absolute," or the transcendental place that houses ideas or non-extensible monads, etc.: all of these viewpoints agree in situating the "real" beyond the world of phenomenal images, in comparison with which all of those candidates fade into oblivion. And it is no different in the merely apparent opposition of "dualism" and "monism," since behind the former's "duality" there always lurks a pure "one," to which, at the end of the day, even the "dualist" feels compelled to grant the status of the ultimately "real." (SW 3 736)

Pseudo-Psychologists. Although they call themselves psychologists, our academics appear to us to be, in fact, epistemologists, for it is immediately apparent that their researches consistently deal with such matters as feelings, perceptions, representations, etc. They never seem to have pondered the fact that it is not consciousness alone — and without certain presuppositions regarding consciousness, all of their systems would immediately crumble to dust — but the "activity of the senses" as well that is subject to periodic alternations between existence and non-existence. They speak so dispassionately about a "stream of consciousness" where they should be studying the stream of life; what's more, many of them are intrepid enough to draw the inexorable conclusion that there is a stream of sleep-consciousness as well.

Everyone laughs and considers himself entitled to ridicule as mere sophistries the doctrines of the Eleatics, who held that events were "deceptive illusions." But even serious thinkers today advance the view that perhaps our sleep-consciousness also merits the name of consciousness, without realizing that they have thereby plunged themselves into a counterpart of the Eleatics' error. The Eleatics disavowed the continuity of events, on the grounds that this continuity was conceptually untenable (by reason of the discontinuity of comprehension); the other school affirms the continuity of consciousness inasmuch as, without it, one would be unable conceptually to grasp the continuity of events. Thus, one school avoids contact with actuality, while the other is divorced from the experience of actuality; fundamentally, however, both schools are

united in assenting to the proposition that consciousness alone is the “true” reality! (SW 2 p. 804)

Dream and Pain. The dream-experience is an experience that is not susceptible to suffering. (SW 2 p. 809)

Vital Rhythm. The rhythm of life undoubtedly differs between one person and another; this is even more the case when we examine different races and species. (SW 2 p. 825)

Before the Altar of the Pelasgians. The illustrious historian Herodotus tells us that at Dodona he learned that the original inhabitants of Hellas, who were called the “Pelasgians,” had certainly honored the gods and offered sacrifices to them, but they did not know their names, which were only later discovered by the Egyptians. After these divine names were recognized by the Oracle at Dodona, they were in due course transmitted to the Hellenes. What is the deeper implication of this account of Herodotus? Consider the following: for the Pelasgians, as for any similar people in the primordial phase of cultural development, all of the following entities possessed a sacred character — heaven, earth, the sea, the stream, the mountain, the tree, the soil, the animal, the stone, the rustling of the treetop, the moaning of the wind, the passing cloud, light and darkness, the fructifying rain, burning passion, sun and moon, the orbit of the star, the arrival of the seasons, morning and evening, brightness and darkness, the house, the herd, the kindling of the flame, the livestock and the harvest, the bath, drinking and eating, the nuptial feast, pregnancy and birth, the bond between parents and their children, dying, sleeping, dreaming, quarrel and atonement, promise and betrayal, coming to be and passing away, melancholy and joy, welfare and misfortune, longing and loathing, the blessing and the curse, guilt and revenge, health and sickness, high spirits, madness, and so very much more! (SW 5 p. 371)

On the Ontological School. If the ontological school had been relentlessly serious in its attempt to develop a logic without a subject, then ontology itself, if we do not err, would have perished in the very hour of its birth! (SW 5 p. 369)

The Key to Spirit. In our metaphysics, we separate the life-cell from the Spirit — that power from outside the world — and, with Nietzsche, we find the key to the nature of Spirit not in the intellect, but in the will. (PEN p. 144)

Goethe on Passion. Goethe has no rival as the poet of passion and passionate love; but he permits his disciples of passion, almost without exception, to experience a tragic downfall: recall Werther, Clavigo, Eduard, Ottilie, Egmont, Tasso, Faust, Gretchen, Weislingen, and so on. He never wearies of assuring his readers that limitless passion results in misfortune. (SW 5 p. 228)

The Foolishness of “Panthéism.” Pantheism, taken as literally as so many people appear to take it, is certainly the most idiotic of all the “isms” that have ever been concocted. According to this doctrine, the greatness of heroes is divine, the lying of the hypocrite is divine, the treachery of the plotter is divine, the malice of the slanderer is divine, the scent of the rose is divine, and even the stench of acetylene is divine! Now if the pantheist is utilizing such terms as “God,” “Godhead,” and “Godliness” as mere

synonyms for being, then he would be well-advised to come right out and say so! (SW 5 p. 228)

Thought and Wisdom. The oldest wisdom of mankind was the possession and sole prerogative of woman, as we can see from the tales of the Pythia, the Sibyls, the priestesses of Ida, the swan-maidens, and the Valkyries. That which the unique disposition of woman has contributed to our attempts to discover wisdom is betrayed even now in the expression “mother wit” [Mutterwitz]. The exaggeratedly masculine West created a culture of thought, whereas the more feminine Asian world (China especially) gave birth to a culture of wisdom, whose most delicate bloom is Taoism. (SW 5 pp. 221–2)

The “Mysterious Road.” When Novalis contemplated the unique research conducted by the Romantics (which proceeded along the same lines as the research of Goethe, but which also went beyond it), and pronounced the strangely Sibylline sentence: “The mysterious road leads inward,” he did not mean to say that, like someone staring at his own navel, we should focus our gaze upon our own person and away from the phenomenal world. He did mean to say that only through devotion to the world of images could the eye of Spirit be opened, whereby it could perceive amid the appearances the soul to whom they appear; and in the same way it could perceive in the outer world the inner life that expresses its ever-changing vitality there. (SW 5 p. 234)

Tones and Noises. The science of acoustics treats of tones and tonal combinations; but in reality we never truly hear tones, but exclusively noises, since even the pure tone of the tuning fork can only strike the ear as does any other noise. Thus, language has no precise notation-system whereby it can denote tone-qualities in general, although language is indeed able to differentiate between innumerable noises: howling, rolling, roaring, booming, thundering, bellowing, cracking, clattering...and so forth. (SW 1 p. 180)

Image and Thing. The perceived image...constitutes an event; the thing figures in the event, but only as the unchanging fragment of duration inhering in that event. (SW 1 p. 181)

Time and Space, Images and Things. Events are species of happenings, and all happenings entail a spatio-temporal aspect. In the perceived image, whether it is seething and hissing, or only a fixed, linear array, the image comes to us as an immediately present spatio-temporal actuality, in which space and time are the connected poles, indivisible and without location, formed but without limit. Before things comes to us, on the other hand, space and time must be mediated by the connectedness of extra-spatio-temporal points existing in-themselves and for-themselves [an und fuer sich]. (SW 1 p. 181)

Dead Things, Living Powers. In the world of things, whatever is moved necessarily receives that movement from without; thus, the thing is never self-moved. This insight may provide a hint as to why physics neglects, as it must, a consideration of the distinction between activity and passivity (just as geometry omits the distinction between right and left).

"Powers," on the other hand, initiate movement from within. Only they can act; only they can suffer. (SW p. 187)

Knowledge and Mortality. The consciousness of existence is one and the same with consciousness of mortality. We can acquire foreknowledge, but we can only purchase it at the price of our conscious anticipation of death. (SW 1 p. 448)

Formalism and Substantialism. Formalism rules physics, just as it rules the human sciences. The apparent successes that formalism can display have more or less enabled it to drive true science out of many areas of research. But formalism is debarred from one particular field: that of psychology and characterology! Here in fact we must walk upon the soil of experience. One can expel experience from formalistic thought, but formalistic thought cannot interpret experience!

Two types of thinking thus stand in an attitude of mortal enmity: the formalistic type, which claims to celebrate its supreme triumphs in mathematics — and finance; and substantial thought, which is on the verge of extinction, and which has its homeland, so to speak, in — the soul. Thus, I am one of the "last Mohicans" of substantial thought; [Melchior] Palagyi sought to introduce substantialism into physics; the attempt was doomed to failure. Physics will die — after the final paroxysms of technology — and it will die at the hands of relativistic formalism. (LK GL p. 1105)

The Death of Germany (From a Letter Written in 1947). An evil star reigns over this year. A great shadow has darkened my world since I learned on January 23 of the death of my beloved sister, a death that was her final release from dreadful suffering. Her loss has been unendurable, and I see her death almost as an impersonal and tragic symbol of my dying homeland. Both of us had requested permission to say our sad farewells in person, since we both knew that delay would be fatal. In vain! The Allies are granting passports only to industrialists, known collaborators, and, finally, to those creatures who, in lieu of visas, brandish the slanderous diatribes that they have written against Germany. (LK GL pp. 1361–2)

On Will as Servant of Life. The expressive potential in the formative movements of talented individuals is in sharp contrast with what we find in the merely mechanical movements of the willful, in whom Spirit has released itself from its connection with the soul; and the expressive movements of the talented also differ from the restless, rhythmical motions that we find in primitive peoples, in that the talented individuals have been able masterfully to press the will into the service of life, so that even in the historical phase, the "head" spontaneously avows its adherence to the "heart," to the extent that it is energized by the pulsation of the heart. (SW 6 pp. 654–5)

On Expression-Research [Ausdruckskunde]. Expression-Research is the scientific discipline that investigates the psychical content [vom seelischen Gehalt] of the functional transformations occurring in the bodily constitution of man and animal. Among such transformations we have: the acceleration and the retardation of pulsatory and respiratory movements, the prolongation or the shortening of the pulse rate and respiratory rate, the dilation and contraction of the pupils, changes in digestion, muscular spasms, the emission of sweat, and so on. Many of these phenomena can be satisfactorily inves-

tigated only within the controlled conditions of the experimental laboratory; others are readily visible in normal environments. Among the latter we have changes in pulse and respiration, blushing and becoming pale, and so on. Among the most visible and, therefore, the most easily dealt with conceptually, are the involuntary expressive movements. Basically, these movements pervade the entire body (along with other functional alterations). Joyous excitement can find expression in such phenomena as: the acceleration of the gait, the liveliness of the gestures, the raising of the voice, the lifting of the head, the easing of the facial musculature, the heightened gleam in the eyes, an elevated redness of the complexion (resulting from the distention of the blood-vessels), and so on. Then we have the contrasting group of expressions that accompany the condition of sadness (the relaxation of the muscles, bowed posture, the retardation of movement in general, increased pallor, and so on). Above all, this science has turned its attentions to the investigation of the expressive movements associated with the sentiments (rages, affects, emotions).

Among the host of researchers who were involved in expression-research in the latter half of the nineteenth century (Duchenne, Gratiolet, Spencer, Bell, Mosso, Lehmann, Wundt, Lange, James), the two towering figures are Darwin and Piderit. It was Darwin who first established the essential equivalence of emotional expression in all of the human races, by means of an ingeniously designed questionnaire, which he distributed to thirty-six explorers, colonial officials, missionaries, etc. In addition, through careful observation of the behavior of a multitude of animals, Darwin demonstrated — at the very least — the comprehensive similarity that exists even between the expressive movements of man and those of the animal. He was, unfortunately, less successful in his theoretical forays. Here, Piderit was more effective, although he limited his investigations to the study of facial mimicry. These studies anticipated the most recent work in the field, which goes beyond an analysis of merely transitory conditions in order to arrive at a comprehensive study of the organism that produces the expressive movement. In our own publications, the author of these lines has transformed expression-theory into a comprehensive physiognomics of functional transformations. (SW 6 pp. 687–8)

The Symphonic Rhythms of Earth. Whoever attends to the great symphony of rhythms, sooner or later has occasion to observe that organic and cosmic tides constitute polarized forms of a rhythmical totality that corresponds to rhythms that occur in both the organic and the super-organic realms. At the very least we can affirm that our earth stands under the sign of an enduring pulsation. We think of the rhythm (never regular!) of the melting of winter's snow, of the annual rhythm of rising and falling rivers, of the rhythm of commingling waters as springs pour forth their floods, of the rainy seasons in tropical regions, of the periodic fluctuation in the depth of the water-table, of the day-to-day periodicity of atmospheric pressure, temperature, humidity, and electrical conductivity, of the daily, yearly, and centennial rhythms of magnetic declination and inclination, of the monthly, biannual, and yearly periodicity of the polar aurora, of the periodicity of windless "doldrums," and so on. When we consider the rhythms in forms, it is impossible to ignore the fact that the rhythm (never

regular!) of the oceanic tides provides an apt paradigm for a whole host of telluric formations. We recall sand dunes (both consolidated and shifting), the oceanic interior of continental deserts, the wave-like patterns formed by cirrus clouds, the wave-crests of mountain and mountain-chain.

Typical plant-forms recur in certain classes of animals as they do in the contours of the earth itself. Who can be unaware of the similarities between the rhythmical branching of the tree and the ramifying of the great river networks, or the tree-like ramification of the human nerve-centers! (SW 2 p. 827)

False Philosophers. Restless, rambling, enthusiastic spirits invariably lack the slightest trace of a profound originality. Their speculations either degenerate into a hollow species of rationalism, or they lead to a superficial game of wits that is played out with phantoms in which even they do not seriously believe.

From Plato to Hegel, the entire host of so-called philosophers can be divided into two camps: first, we have those half-sober, and therefore uncritical, phantom-mongers; and second, we have these arrogant hyper-rationalists, i.e., such fellows as are shallow enough to convince themselves that life is a rational phenomenon! (RR p. 346)

The Two Styles of Art. When we avert our gaze from the almost demonic primitive modes of art (Egyptian, Assyrian, Aztec, Peruvian, and primitive), we realize that for us there are really only two types of art: the Apollonian-Ancient and the Gothic-Germanic. The first signifies the road to the appearances, while the second marches down the road to actions. (RR p. 329)

Loss of Meaning. How will we ever be able to elicit the full content of words that we can no longer really comprehend, such as the “will” of Schopenhauer, the “absolute” and the “infinite” of Schelling, the “a priori” of Kant, and the “pneuma” of the Gnostics?! In the strictest sense, philosophy has as little chance of being translated out of its tongue and its time as poetry has. (RR p. 365)

The Faith in the Images. We have access to countless examples of the faith in the images as it existed during prehistory in the surviving emblematic forms of non-conceptual, symbolic thought. We are able to arrange in a chronological series a great range of evidence: from the sagas and faiths, from the fetishes and magical practices, from the soothsaying and the superstitions, from sacred customs and celebrations, and, in brief, from the entire heritage of prehistory, to demonstrate the fact that life-bound Spirit’s limitless creative variety — both in the degenerate and falling and in the healthy and perfect — is based upon the rule of the faith in images over the faith in the actuality of things; and this irrefutable fact enables us to understand, with a certitude that is beyond the reach of discursive consciousness, the following fundamental truths: the essential unity of the images with the active powers of the world in general; the essential unity of the images with each other according to the measure of their elementary similarities; the essential unity of specific images with their symbolic signs; and, finally, the essential unity of the image-receiving with the symbol-imparting, soul of man. (SW 2 pp. 1257–8)

Eternally Valid. The soulless lust for power of Rome was massively amplified by the surreptitious addition of the Jewish lust for power, and henceforth these two have magnified the empire of the papacy: The papacy is nothing but Judaized Caesarism. (SW 2 p. 1243)

The Body-Soul Unity. Just as the soul is the formative principle of the living body, so is the living body the phenomenon and revelation of the soul. (AC p. 304)

From Heroism to Modernity. The fate that befell the Indo-Europeans can immediately be comprehended when we look at the four “epic” peoples: the Indians, the Persians, the Greeks, and the Germans. In all of these cultures, the vital activity bifurcates into two forms of expression, i.e., the heroic and the poetic...Both were and are possible without the will to power, and the participation of these “epic” peoples in both modes of expression is recalled in the bloody battlefields filled with the shining deeds of heroic, self-sacrificing warriors, as well as in their artistic creations that are still bathed in the light of their poetic immortality.

But when the Indo-Europeans fell into the clutches of Spirit, heroism degenerated into rationalism and technology. The Anglo-Saxon peoples stood in the vanguard of this disastrous development. Its pinnacle is reached in today’s Americanism.

Even among the Semites there was a people whose essential soul reveals certain affinities with the soul of the Indo-European: the Arabs, who, in certain limited areas, can be said to stand in polar contrast to the Indo-European peoples. Just as one can compare the Viking essence to the surge of the storm-tormented North Sea, one can similarly compare the essence of the Islamic Arab to a desert storm. Who knows whether Spain could have functioned as the connecting link in that wondrous synthesis of Eastern and Western actuality that the great Friedrich II Hohenstaufen had in mind, had Spain not already tied herself to that revolution which Nietzsche called the victorious “slave revolt in morality,” which was brought about by the instilling of the Spirit of Yahwistic Judaism in all the downtrodden dregs of the Roman Empire? The Jew Saul — “St. Paul” — made the great advance when he made the world safe for his beloved “Spirit.” And the Spirit of Pauline Judaism is still around today, although it calls itself — Christendom. (SW 2 p. 1242)

Rome and Power. No one will dispute the greatness of the history of Rome. The inferiority of Rome to Greece in heroism and poetry can only be matched by Rome’s superiority in her unbridled will to power. (SW 2 pp. 1242–3)

The West I. We can only understand alien races when we take the Germanic nature as normative; this direction of apprehension cannot be reversed.

The Oriental soul manifests a sickly exaltation and has nothing whatever in common with the force of soul that radiates from the audacious and mild luster of Germanic eyes.

Even the Greek soul differs from the Germanic. The Greek soul is weaker, more southern, more hermaphroditic, and more plastic. The Germanic soul is bolder, more Nordic, more masculine, more wandering, more profound, and more cosmic. Beauty

has a more difficult birth in the Germanic realm than it has in the Greek, but the content housed in Germanic beauty is far more powerful. (RR p. 249)

The West II. A profound abyss yawns between the priestly races and the heroic ones; the noble races also pray, but only to their heroes. Demonic powers inhabit these gigantic warriors, who scorn the spiritual devotion of the Catholic saints. The Aryans who conquered ancient India sprang from a heroic, primordial race, whereas the sanctity of the Indian priests originated in a purely Asiatic, "peasant" spirituality. But every peasantry is obviously gentler than an adventurous aristocracy. (RR p. 251)

The Syrian Infection. Even before the advent of Christianity, the Romans had already succumbed to Stoicism, whose springs also arose in Syria. (RR p. 251)

The Western Nature. In the East, in the South, and also in the world of antiquity, color, light, "form," and vision rule the scene; in the western Germanic world, it is moderation, sound, and pleasing scents. The dense texture of actuality in its greatest breadth is also "Western." Its essence is heavier, harder, more metallic, and, in the work area, it is more pitiless, more formed, and more enduring. The hardness of the North is the hardness of metal, i.e., a supple hardness. The Southeast has conquered us, however; and we still have not given birth to our authentic essence. (RR p. 311)

On Masters. The master has the power; he doesn't have to seek it out. He binds and even alters the stream of power solely in the interests of life. (RR p. 293)

Symbolism. The unity of life is not individual, it is divine. It was only in later times that the gods first assumed the guise of individuals. This is made obvious in the allegorical interpretations concocted by an already partially mechanized mankind. The primordial microcosmic symbol is the swastika; animal symbols are also microcosmic. However, trees, monoliths, pyramids, sphinxes, and prehistoric gravesites are all macrocosmic. (RR p. 317)

Politics. Among the pagans, only the Romans were able to develop the grand style in politics, and Rome perished because Roman politics, like the politics of our own age, finally succumbed to the contagion of Judea. And Judea's politics is now the politics of the whole world. (RR p. 322)

Actualities. That there are for us two actualities, one of customary consciousness and one of the soul, is the philosophical expression of the cleft in our inner being, which entered the sphere of life with Plato and Christ. (RR p. 475)

In the "Year of Salvation." The most impudent Jewish attempt to blot out the prehistoric world succeeded when Christianity identified the birth year of its founder with the birth-year of time itself. (RR p. 349)

On Characterology [Charakterkunde]. Two basic modes of psychology have co-existed alongside each other for quite some time: one type of "psychology" devotes its energies to the investigation of the facts of consciousness; whereas the other school of thought investigates the nature of the whole personality; the latter discipline first received its designation as "Characterology" during the nineteenth century. There is a wealth of material to be discovered in the poets, sages, and moralists of the ages that has only been systematically worked over in recent years. We especially recall the pro-

nouncements of Democritus and those of the more important Greek Sophists, as well as the contributions of the later Stoics, most especially those of Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, and Epictetus. Then we have Theophrastus, a student and disciple of Aristotle, who, in his renowned “Ethical Characters,” presented a series of fragmentary analyses of thirty character-types; unfortunately, the acumen of Theophrastus is seriously impaired as a result of his attending to the siren-song of his consistency-mania. This work was translated into French in the seventeenth century by La Bruyere, who himself published an outstanding treatise entitled *Characters*. We also recall the French moralists and skeptics who flourished during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: Montaigne, Pascal, and, above all, de Rochefoucauld, the author of the dazzling *Maxims*. The problems of characterology first came into view in Germany during the intellectual Renaissance of our classical age. Goethe’s *Elective Affinities* and, above all, Jean Paul’s *Levana* both provide unsurpassed treasures of the greatest interest for the characterologist. Likewise, there were many useful characterological observations in the *Aphorisms* of Lichtenberg, and even the prominent epistemologist Immanuel Kant discussed the foundations of characterology in his *Anthropology*. The investigations of these students soon intersected with the physiognomical studies of Lavater, Camper, and Gall; the soil was thus well prepared for the biocentric psychology of the German Romantics. Towering above them all, is the recently re-discovered late Romantic physician Carl Gustav Carus, whose masterworks are the *Psyche: On the Developmental History of the Soul* and the *Symbolism of the Human Anatomy*. There are many worthwhile discoveries to be found as well in the works of Arthur Schopenhauer. From Schopenhauer the thread of tradition leads directly to the philosopher and pedagogue Julius Bahnsen, who brought out his two-volume treatise, the *Contributions to Characterology*, in 1867, in which the learned author first gives the illustrious child its proper name. After Bahnsen’s time, however, the thread of the characterological tradition was snapped.

Eventually, the pre-dominant natural-scientific, “experimental” psychology drove the science of character almost completely from the field. Works by French students, such as the *Characters* by Paulhan, and the *Temperament and Character* by Fouillee, remained without influence. One began to hear on all sides that a complete revolution in psychology was at hand.

At that time, it was customary to demand that psychology furnish the correct instructions to employers regarding the suitability of job-applicants for specific vocations. Under the pressure of this demand, a field of research was developed which devoted itself to the study of human aptitudes and “Psychotechnics” (Muensterberg, Stern, Meumann, and others). Thereupon characterology began to penetrate psychiatry. The results of the investigations undertaken in this area by neurologists, for the most part in close conjunction with “psychoanalysts,” are still somewhat murky.

But now, a powerful revolution really did break out, a revolution that had its origins in the psychological doctrines of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. Basing itself firmly upon these doctrines, there soon appeared — under the illustrious name that Bahnsen had first bestowed upon the science — the first modern, systematic

treatise on characterology, which was published by the author of these lines in 1910, under the title *The Principles of Characterology*. The doctrines propounded in this concise, but epoch-making work, for the first time established, as they will continue to determine, the future direction of characterology. (SW 4 pp. 708–9)

On Hysteria and Sanctity. Imitation is the common characteristic of all hysterical phenomena. When we read reports concerning the monks and nuns of the Middle Ages who were declared blessed, or saints (most especially if we read their own accounts!), we are amazed at the startling similarity of the ecstasies that are recounted, and at the grotesque lack of mythopoeic imagination that characterizes these stories. Thus, regarding the phenomenon of stigmatization, over and over again we encounter the following: the Christ appears, either in the guise of a child, or as the crucified adult, and he offers the choice of a floral crown or a crown of thorns; of course, the latter is chosen. The Christ then touches the region of the heart with a rod, a spear, or a beam of light (in order to mark the lateral wound). Later, he will grant the full stigmata, with its familiar five rays that emanate from the lateral wound, the hands, and the feet. The rays may be blood-red or they may be a dazzling white. The impression of the wounds will reach its high point on Good Friday. In brief, the same series of phantoms arrives on cue, and is repeated, over and over again, always in strictest obedience to the scriptural authorities established by the church.

Further, the types of phenomena that occur in eras that were stirred unto their very depths (which are merely the incubation periods of the mechanism of hysteria) throw light, not so much on this mechanism as on the condition, based on racial history, of its origins. These “saints” will to resemble their savior as closely as possible, just as they wish to enjoy all of his sufferings. Above all, they will desire to be tortured by him. But such instances of willing could never produce the internal image unless that, of which the willing is but a conscious symptom, had already occurred in the person’s vital stratum, i.e., as an internal cleavage, or schism, which thenceforth we can examine very conveniently in its conscious results. Why do the saints desire to suffer such torments and pains? Because they wish to punish the body, because they wish to mount an extreme resistance to its requirements, to its claims, and to its desires. Let us now consider the significance of these facts.

Every living being is a totality possessing two poles, body and soul: body the manifestation of soul, and soul the meaning of the manifested body. The movements (in part locomotor and in part formative) constitute expressions, urges, and intuitions of that which is expressed in them. The crucial experience of the body is sensual pleasure, the central experience of the soul the joy of exultant creativity. The pre-condition for the highest development of the body, as well as of the soul, can only be maintained in the equipoise of these two poles. To wage war against the body entails making war upon such joy, and to wage war against such joy also means to expel the soul and leave it homeless, to drain its creative enthusiasm, to dry up the springs of creativity. But why do these saints wish to wage war against the body? Why do they crave (at least unintentionally) that which is the inevitable consequence: to expel the soul, to extir-

pate creative exaltation, to paralyze creativity? It is because the soul was sundered by the a-cosmic power of Spirit (logos, pneuma, nous), whose very essence is will, the adversary and murderer of life. Either one understands this, and then the supernatural visions, the examples of demonic possession, the hysteria, and, finally, personality itself, are understood; or else one cannot understand all this, and nothing at all will result but additional confusion of speech by means of that Tower of Babel of emergency concepts that dire need constrains us to erect as a substitute for thought. A hundred attempts have been made to derive the repression of body and life from life itself, but all such attempts are more blind than would be the attempt to demonstrate of the flame that is extinguished by pouring water upon it that the flame has extinguished itself by transforming a part of itself into the water that is being utilized to extinguish it! (SW 4 pp. 333–4)

The Crucifixion of Soul and Body. The mankind of heathen temples and festivals, of Gothic cathedrals and shining twilights, of pomp and circumstance and organ-tones, is finished, yielding place to a generation that reveals itself in the Stock Exchange, radio, airplane, telephone, movies, factories, poison gas, precision instruments, and newspapers. The pilgrim's path has its stations, but all of them end up at Golgotha. Similarly, the story of Spirit in Europe has its crucial chapters, which announce themselves as follows: the war of body and soul, disembodiment of the soul, or condemnation of joy, or paralysis of creative force; extinction of the soul in the body, or the blinding of intuition, or the body as machine; and man as the instrument of the will to power, which replaces the soul with soul-mimicry, phantoms, and masks. (SW 4 p. 336)

The Blood-Glow and the Demonic Powers. The blood-glow ([Alfred] Schuler) is an uninterrupted, profoundly disturbing access of awe. A dark atmosphere throbs and ferments within hidden hovels. Wild, raucous cries blend with the crashing of storms. Being speaks in a demonic voice out of the murky twilight; but the glowing crimson of a winter evening is encircling the world, and a blazing fire directs its light upon the pursuing powers. The flame and smoke of the hearth fire shudder in the holy night before the savage force of the winds.

Blood-glow is Eros and child, is the golden unity of life, and through the eyes of the child, the blood-glow gazes far back into the golden distance (could that be the true significance of the mirror in the Corybantic ring?). In the blood-glow, the mysteries of the maternal universe are revealed. (RR p. 270)

On the Demonic Vision. Just as messages are transmitted between daemon and soul, so are daemon and soul intimately bound together with the daemoniac and primordial source of images, in the living, in a way that transcends the possibility of a purely verbal revelation, for at the moment when the visionary event overwhelms us, we experience, again and yet again, an ever-renewable, cyclical series of "world-beginnings."

We would like to draw the reader's attention to a particularly fiery and colorful strophe composed by Alfred Schuler. It is entitled "Corybantic Dithyramb" (from his "Cosmogony"):

What are you that is more than this my candle-wick,

Than my lamp that boils with its Balsamic oils.
 What are you more than my own gentle blossom,
 My mosaic of the hyacinths,
 Which glow beneath my footfall.
 For I am the light that nurtures you.
 I am the eye that feigns, at dead of night, a gleam for you.
 I am the pearl that shaped its globe within the shell.
 I am the rush that youthens our old world,
 For I am life...

The world stands in its shining, instantaneous presence there. In the distances of space as well as in the distances of time, everything has, now and forever, its bright light and its sense — even if not so swiftly apprehended within the images. (SW III pp. 426–7)

Schuler's Scholarship. As an archaeologist, Alfred Schuler, whom I met in 1893, was already in possession of an astonishing wealth of knowledge; he had devised, as it were, a religion of the Magna Mater; he had accumulated, through the most rigorous study of the entire literature of Imperial Rome, a massive amount of material relating to the "chthonic" cults; and he spent all of his time in this enthusiastic frame of mind, whilst he prepared his massive treatise on the swastika for publication (of course, he never finished this work!). Basically, Schuler added nothing that was completely new to the theories devised by Bachofen: but what an astounding fund of material was his! (LK GL p. 1072)

George and Schuler. I have occasionally overheard conversations dealing with the George "Circle"; and I have heard, of course, the story that relates how the name-giver conferred the title "Master" upon himself and the title "young men" upon his acolytes. I have nothing to say regarding the events that transpired in that "circle." But I must insist, in the most decisive terms, that I was the last person in the world to submit to such a "Master." One might even go so far as to say, with equal justice (or injustice!), that Stefan George belonged to the "Klages Circle!" What can be demonstrated conclusively (and with accompanying documents) is this: by pure chance, during the decade from 1894–1904, several scientists, artists, and writers congregated in Munich, who sought, by uniting their forces, to present a common front against the Spirit of the age. George was an occasional guest of this group of intellectuals. He seldom became involved in the endless (and often profound) discussions that transpired, but he was the only person present who could point to the works of his that had already been published; and he did actually seem eager to provide a focal point to us "new Spirits" when he established his renowned journal, the *Blaetter für die Kunst*. That is how I became involved with the man. But let there be no misunderstanding here: if any one person stood at the very center of things at that time, if there was indeed a master-spirit in our midst, one who could justly speak of his "following," it was Alfred Schuler. From him, and from him alone, did I receive the decisive impetus that determined forever the direction that I would follow in my metaphysical speculations. (AC p. 381)

The Mysticism of Alfred Schuler. The only true mystic whom I have ever encountered utterly scorned the idea of “making” anything out of his inspirations. Thus, the notes that Schuler has set down in the course of his fifty years, which comprise his so-called “aphorisms” and “fragments,” remain, for the most part, almost incomprehensible. Yet to the student of symbols these fragmentary remains speak in such an astounding manner as one seldom encounters even in the works of the great poets! (LK GL p. 698)

An Age Unworthy of Alfred Schuler. Bachofen successfully liberated the image of the primordial soul from the layers of varnish with which the millennia had covered the remains of prehistory, so that we were enabled to obtain some inkling as to the inexpressible beauty of that image. The mission of my own life is to provide the epistemological key with which to open up the eyes of man to the profundity and the truth of Bachofen’s discoveries. I was assisted in this mission by the great good fortune of my encounter with a contemporary thinker, Alfred Schuler, the student of the ancient “Mysteries,” whose investigations were based in part on the “chthonic” element studied by Bachofen, and in part on still deeper strata. Schuler was able to walk about like a native on the landscape of symbolic thought, and the most obvious demonstration of the authentic nature of his discoveries is surely revealed in the fact that hardly any of his contemporaries were even aware of the mere fact of their existence! (SW 3 pp. 496–7)

Alfred Schuler on the Blood. Schuler located the spring of every creative power in the blood, which he saw as a glowing substance whose potency could be renewed only by those who were capable of bringing cosmic rebirth to a degenerate age. (LK GL p. 182)

Alfred Schuler and Stefan George. Schuler would initiate his lectures with a reading of his most striking fragments; he would begin powerfully, but he would very quickly become seized by an ever-increasing pathos. One might almost say that he began to generate a magnetic field, that he seemed as if transfigured. George would stand behind his chair, becoming increasingly disturbed, until he could no longer conceal his agitation. He finally became extremely pale, and seemed as if he was about to lose his faculties. The psychical atmosphere radiated by Schuler did indeed become overpowering: no one could comprehend precisely whatever it was that took possession of Schuler, but out of that droning voice there suddenly erupted a volcanic flood of glowing lava, and out of the molten stream there arose purple images, unconscious, rapturous.

When the lecture ended, and how it ended, no one could say, but as the visitors began to disperse they were startled to find themselves holding some tattered fragments of a crown that Schuler had torn to pieces in order to bestow them on his guests as he said his farewells.

I then found myself alone with George on the nocturnal streets; he was clutching at my arm, saying: “That’s insanity! What have you done, taking me to such a place? It’s

madness, I tell you! It's unbearable! Take me to a restaurant where the commonplace bourgeois citizen is smoking his cigar and drinking his beer!"

And that's just what I did. (KGL pp. 359–60)

On Stefan George. His soul was essentially Empire; this fact accounts for the indirectness of his words, his "impuissance," and his French rigidity; a latter day epigone of the eighteenth century. His character was scheming, destitute, and treacherous: a blend of Catholicism and Renaissance. His character was the coffin that housed his soul. (RR p. 312)

Magna Mater. The womanly essence is simply the soul of space, just as the Magna Mater is the soul of the reestablishment of space in the center of time. (SW 2 p. 1350)

Man, Gods, and Cosmos. The most profound proposition of all natural law was crystallized in these words of the poet Pindar: "The race of men is one thing, and the race of gods is another; but both receive their life and their breath from the same mother." We broaden the scope of that proposition to state that animals, plants, stars, clouds, and winds are all divine, just as all of the creations that appear within the Cosmos are but leaves upon one stem, and limbs of the same symbiotic formation. (SW 2 p. 1352)

On Racial Consciousness and Community. It is affinity, and not the codification of property law, that moulds the heathen children of the world; the young are formed in the community established by the mother of the tribe, but the adults are formed in the community shaped by the Great Mother of the Cosmos. This affinity manifests itself in the selective breeding that is based upon racial consciousness; it is conquered through actual — or even symbolical — mongrelization of the blood. (SW 2 p. 1355)

Cosmos of Mind, and Cosmos of Life. The thought Cosmos is a mechanical confusion of things; the living Cosmos, on the other hand, to which our languages can only allude, cannot be conceptually grasped, for it only reveals itself in the instantaneous flash of its here and now appearance. (SW 2 p. 1367)

"Mother Right." Light may still be shed on the phenomenon of the so-called "gynocracy" of prehistory through the application of matriarchal thought to the symbols of water, tree, and moon. Inasmuch as the sensual images of the nocturnal-polar side of the world are at the same time those of the pole-connected "middle," the night must be elevated over the day, the darkness over the light, the below over the above, the fixed over the wandering, space over time, left over right, and so on. Within the human shape, the sensual image of woman-as-mother must be elevated over the poles of man-and-woman. (SW 2 p. 1374)

Life and Spirit. We have bestowed the name life upon the all-weaving power of primordial imagery, just as we have given the name Spirit to the hostile power that turns those primordial images into hollow phantoms. (SW 2 p. 1239)

Types of Criminality. There is a potential criminality, which is satisfied merely to peer at naked images of atrocities; and there is even — if one may apply to a strange fact an even stranger name — an apocryphal criminality that occurs in those who will not confess their criminal impulses even to themselves. Indeed, whoever closely

examines society swiftly discovers the existence of many associations and organizations that provide their clients with a gratuitous satisfaction of criminal impulses. But we must now abandon the soil of true criminality, which always lies in deed and will, and never in the hidden devilry of philosophy, for this question has now taken us beyond our theme, although it is connected with it. It often seems to the psychologist that every halting-station turns out to be a confrontation with the knots in the manifold, interwoven threads of his discourse! (AC p. 222)

Thought and the Driving Forces. For the benefit of those students who have not as yet achieved complete familiarity regarding the leading motives of characterological thought, we will here introduce a few remarks that will hopefully enable them to avoid certain misunderstandings.

When we say that the Spirit of a thinker is chiefly determined by a “general current” of human vitality, we are speaking of the inevitable part that his personal system of driving forces plays in this general current; one thing that we must do is to ascertain the degree of the dependence of his thought on his personal driving forces; another, is that we must ascertain the degree of his thought’s dependence on the side of his nature that is connected with vitality as such. In brief: the personal precondition of thought is not the same as the vital precondition of thought. (AC p. 386)

Hostage to Fortune. Doubts and misgivings should certainly be the thinker’s priorities; but if a philosopher persists in his doubts, he may place himself in a dangerous position: for a later generation may discover that what it values most in him is his — backwardness. (AC p. 3)

Socrates the Loathsome. We hear that Socrates was loathsome and impotent, and that he never allowed himself to become intoxicated; we understand thereby how the soil was prepared wherein the faith in the exaggerated worth of the ego could flourish. The rupture must be torn open in the blood before the norms that are hostile to the blood could arise in the Spirit...Socrates was a man without contradictions, and, in his eyes, no respect for good breeding could compete with the transcendent value of the rootless individual being. Socrates was a man of the mob, a man without a racial homeland. He was indifferent even to the cycles of the celestial spheres. To Socrates, the torrent, the star, and the cloud were irrelevant. (RR p. 425)

Primary and Secondary Feelings. We must distinguish between the primary feelings, which flow into the act of judgment, and the secondary, which spring out of that act. The primary feelings, as is self-evident, comprise any immediate motives, whether they are predominantly internal or whether they arise in the external world. The secondary, on the other hand, are reflexes of already extant feelings. (RR p. 368)

The Act of the Spirit. The spiritual act, flashing out at the stationary point in the swing of the pendulum, seizes the fact within the concept; but flashing out at the instant of the highest animation, the spiritual act seizes, at one and the same moment, object and subject; the bearer of experience and experience itself; the thing, but as habitation of the soul (Idol); and the soul, but as the form of being (Fravashi, “genius,” “idea”). Putting the matter somewhat paradoxically, the spiritual act seems to seize the

inconceivable, primordial image inasmuch as the image can allow its being conceived. (RR p. 365)

The Poet and the Images. The poet is the spiritual form of the ecstatic soul. He breaks through the person to become image. Through him speaks the actual character of the Cosmos. The road of degeneration leads from the poet to the metaphysician. The concept is the Caesar of the image, just as logic is the Papacy of the soul. (RR p. 322)

Stefan George. We see in Stefan George a poet divided against himself: pagan Eros alongside Christian charity. (LK GL p. 330)

Life, and Nothing But Life. Life is everything, and, in reality, what my writings record, and what they will always record, is the tree of life and its golden leaves. (LK GL p. 331)

On the Dreams of Friedrich Huch [From a Letter to Huch]. Three of your dreams I consider to be more or less “Cosmic” — the one that recounts the far-distant music of the Italian children; the one that deals with the staircase of death; and the one about the vertiginously distant whirling of the solar disc.

Music is a primordial experience, which emerges in manifold guises: but it is always accompanied by nagging, disturbing spectacles. In comparison with all of the ineluctably vanished things, the remainder of life begins to wear a desolate grimace: the pallid face of the specter. One awakens at the beginning to the distant sounds that betoken all of the deepest, most inexpressible experiences of love and beauty; then everything sinks once again into an unfathomable abyss. (LK GL p. 335)

The Certainties of Kant. We must reject as logically untenable Kant’s classification of judgments according to their degree of truth, judgments that have been founded in fact upon themselves; although Kant believes that he has comprehended, through the force of his convictions — which he characterizes as “apodictic” certainties — the conditions that validate cognition, he actually has his eye not on the actuality of space, but only on the being of space, space as the object of thought, or our so-called space-object. His incredibly stubborn advocacy of the “a priori” status of perceived space answers the question — or believes, at least, that it has done so — regarding the inviolable nature of the postulates of mathematics, and the Kantian concept of space stands from the outset in the service of Kant’s compelling need to provide sufficient grounds to validate the necessary truths of geometry. (SW 1 pp. 142–3)

Kant Condemned Out of his Own Mouth. Jakob Burckhardt has best accounted for that conjunction of greatness and comprehensiveness in Greek spirituality when he noted that without the art of conversation the development of the Greek spirit would have been inconceivable; he said that it was out of the Agora and the Symposium — those favored haunts of Athenian conversationalists — that philosophy itself sprang into being. Regarding this point, we must certainly reject as unjustified (although it is understandable when we consider its source!) Kant’s ridicule of ancient Greek thought as a mere “wordy babbling.” Without a doubt, a talent for creative thought was originally a function of the talent for lively conversation. (SW 6 p. 659)

Contra Kant. We are unable to determine how many other sagacious students share our opinion of Kant, but we can never proceed very far in our reading of the “Critique of Pure Reason” without being astonished that a thinker who devotes himself explicitly to the task of discovering the grounds that make cognition possible should convince himself that he has ascertained those grounds — in cognition itself! When Nietzsche, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, says that Kant responds to the question as to how cognition possible by telling us of a “faculty of a faculty,” that is only a more drastic expression of the very astonishment that we ourselves experience. (SW 1 p. 141)

Kant and Leibniz. Kant’s investigations give the false impression that he has established the grounds for the possibility of cognition, when what he has really done is to split cognition into two modes, one of which is merely “empirical,” while the other allegedly deals with universally valid and necessary truths. This shows us that Kant is merely spinning out the threads of the bungled fabric of Leibnizian thought, which also entails two classes of thought, viz., the class comprising truths of fact and that comprising truths of reason. (SW 1 p. 142)

Thing and Time. We have in the thing the inextensible point of connection for the understanding of the temporally fleeting manifold of images; and we have no difficulty in understanding this point as being, as it were, anchored in time. But while the mere temporal site remains where it is, so the thing demands the exact opposite, to be thought of as participating in a span of time, the extreme maximum of which may be as great as the duration of the universe, and the extreme minimum of which may be as brief as the duration of a flash of lightning; but the thing can never be contracted into a tangible point, for there is no “existence” in the mathematical point. (SW 1 p. 23)

Time and Duration. Too few thinkers have devoted their efforts to a successful clarification of the fact that we do not measure the approximate duration of a thing by means of time, but time by means of the duration of a thing. (SW 1 p. 25)

The Blindness of Faust the Capitalist. Without going into the whole question of the visionary symbolism of the second part of *Faust*, we should still draw attention to the disturbing fact that Faust, after a fruitless, storm-tossed life devoted to his own delight, immediately before his death expresses his belief that he experiences his “highest moment” in the consciousness of the praiseworthiness of his labors as a capitalist entrepreneur — and here the poet’s vision plunges straight into the abyss — but Faust is too arrogant to hear, at that very moment, the sound of the spade that is digging his own grave! (SW 1 p. 65)

Existence and Predicates. The thing is the original “entity” and the immediate paradigm and exemplar of the substantive in general; hence, the history of human thought provides countless instances which illustrate the misleading thing-status of such concepts as: process, fate, life, childhood, age, youth, morning, evening, spring, enmity, sin, and so on ad infinitum. Precisely herein lies the basis of the fact that in so many languages the utilization of the word “exists” [Sein] signifies the mere connection of the predicate-word with the affirmative statement. Every judgment regarding time

as well as every judgment regarding space is so constructed as to mislead us into the belief that there actually is a “time-thing,” and that there really exists a “space-thing!” (SW 1 pp. 24–5)

Soul and Spirit. The character of the soul is sometimes impulsive, and at other times it may be enthusiastically abandoned; so by contrast the character of Spirit appears in the light of an obstruction that realizes its potential in the intentional binding of a psychical emotion! Accordingly, an equilibrium between soul and Spirit can never be reached; and what may seem to us to be an example of an achieved and gracious balance between soul and Spirit in an outstanding personality, e.g., the poise of a Goethe, can be shown, under more rigorous scrutiny, to be merely a matter of compromise, an instance of artistic “style.” As such, this state can never be attained without a patent loss in psychical immediacy. (SW 1 p. 74)

Connections. The error of the “Panlogicians,” if we might just borrow their favorite expression for a moment, stems from the “equivocation” that confuses connection in general with a perceived connection. The Panlogicians have correctly stated the fact that only the spiritual act can establish connections; but they have overlooked the fact that there are two species of connections which can be established through comprehension: the conceptual connection of one point to another point; and the non-conceptual connection of point to happening. (SW 1 p. 85)

This is our Truth. There is a being from outside the world of space and time, called “Spirit” (logos, nous), which is capable of driving every critical nature into one and the same conceptual scheme, i.e., one that is based on unity, quantification, and measurement, and that forces critical individuals to observe the temporal actuality under the guise of a system of interconnected quantifiable points. An excessive emphasis upon factuality and upon the universally binding force of truth is from the outset the expression of the monotonous quality of the faculty of judgment in every nature who yields to this impulse and who possesses this capacity. (SW 1 p. 62)

Truth and Discovery. All truths are equally valuable — or equally valueless — if we value them merely because they are true. In other words, we possess no general yardstick that can accurately evaluate a truth, so long as we focus exclusively upon the finished product instead of upon the process whereby that truth came into existence. (SW 1 p. 122)

Different Modes of Thought Entirely. Such thinkers as Giordano Bruno and Carl Gustav Carus seldom augment the fund of knowledge that was acquired by such scholars as Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin. Conversely, rarely do we find the second pair adding to the knowledge of the first. (SW 1 p. 127)

Seekers After Truth. The alleged lack of bias in those who “search for truth” is a pious deception concocted by a superficial mentality that is overawed by the mere title of “science.” (SW 1 p. 130)

The Indivisible Union. We take this opportunity to explain why we arrange colors and seeing, sounds and hearing, and smells and smelling in polar contrast to each other. Everyone recognizes that we can never achieve a satisfactory philosophical demon-

stration when we are required to associate the following expressions: invisible colors, inaudible sounds, and “unsmellable” smells; it is thereby conceded that not only can there be no seeing without colors, no hearing without sounds, and no smelling without smells; but there are also no colors without visibility, no sounds without audibility, and no smells without a capacity to smell them. The appearance and the faculty that enables one to experience it thus occur in an indivisible union. (SW 1 p. 103)

Philosophical Arrogance. Ever since the discovery of the Platonic “Doctrine of the Ideas,” there has obviously never been a definitive settlement of the controversy between those who hold that the “universals” exist only in the thinking consciousness and those who maintain that they constitute the driving and formative powers of actuality itself. Modern thinkers have only picked up where the medieval scholastics left off. Today’s philosophers, who pride themselves on having solved the great riddle that split all the best philosophical heads in medieval Europe into the two great camps of “realists” and “nominalists,” are only fooling themselves. (SW 1 p. 109)

Man and Woman. We avert our gaze from the “emancipation” movement of modern times, to see that woman, throughout all of recorded history, is the bearer of the powers of life and soul, just as man is always the bearer of the powers of Spirit and productive activity; this holds true even today for the vast majority of men and women. (SW 6 p. 664)

Tears and Crying. It astonishes us that Darwin, whose chapter on weeping [in *The Expression of the Emotions*] provides the richest material to establish a conclusive demonstration of the detachability of the act of shedding tears from the act of crying, could not free himself, on speculative grounds, from a need to maintain the inseparability of the two phenomena. (SW 6 p. 667)

Vital and Mechanical Movements. Darwin, along with his predecessors and his disciples, basically recognizes only one species of movement, the mechanical, and he is involuntarily led by a compulsion to cancel out the vital movement and to put mechanical movement in its place. (SW 6 p. 199)

Expressive Movement. To every inner activity belongs its analogous movement; or, if one uses “movement” instead of activity: every inner movement entails its analogous outer movement. (SW 6 p. 681)

Physiognomical Interpretation. Lavater already understood the principle whereby we can evaluate mimicry physiognomically. Thus, whoever possesses the quality of an energetic will, often finds himself in a condition of nervous tension; he who is by nature fearful, will find himself, again and again, in a condition of anxiety; and the habitually short-tempered man will more often than not find himself in a condition of anger. (SW 6 p. 679)

Expressive Movements. To every inner condition there corresponds, as its expression, those bodily movements that portray that condition. (SW 6 p. 678)

The Science of Fact and the Science of Appearance. General logic, as it is understood today, reveals itself as a skeletal structure, within which an almost endless series of philosophical procedures find a place, and in which every logical proposition find its ap-

plication. That which had been inaugurated as a mere “methodology,” is now the most informative jumping-off point for differentiating between the intellectual technique employed by the practical man and that employed by the theoretical, the technique of the manual worker from that employed by the scholar, the musician’s technique from the mathematician’s, and so on. However, in our own field of research, that which we hold to be securely established...is the sharp distinction that must be drawn between two species of thought: the predominantly conceptual and the predominantly allusive modes, or the study of fact and the study of appearance. (SW 6 p. 656)

Psychology and Metaphysics. Some students renounce even the possibility of a significant conceptualization of the soul, and they assure us that we have immediate access only to the “phenomena of consciousness”; others refer to psychology as the science of “inner” (immediate) experience, from which viewpoint it is not any very great distance to today’s repeated revivals of the doctrine of “inner perception”; others remain encamped in the antiquated “Doctrine of the Soul [Seelenlehre],” notwithstanding the fact that they cannot provide a satisfactory explanation of the unique nature of that soul. And, once again, there are still others for whom psychology appears to constitute merely one branch of the neurology; and again, others, who, scenting in every one of these doctrines a false “naturalism,” promise to bestow upon us a novel and refined species of thought, sometimes of the “intuitive” variety, and at others of the “subjective” type, which we are told will enable us to avoid every stumbling-block that is placed on our path by erroneous preconceptions. All honor to the rigor of our investigators! But we think that here a great expense will be unprofitable due to their mindless hostility to the perpetually unavoidable metaphysics. Whichever of the renowned — or obscure — conceptual determinations that one adopts, one will find oneself in the midst of metaphysics, and one will become so much more seriously entangled in self-contradictory basic assumptions, the more one feels obliged to repudiate metaphysics.

Consider: The discussion of the “phenomena of consciousness” leads one directly to the question regarding the nature of consciousness, and then to the nature of the unconscious, and, before one realizes it, one is confronted with questions regarding monism, dualism, or even “psycho-physical parallelism”...But the believer in the soul, on the other hand, is already graced by the seal of “ontology,” and he already manifests as well the clearest antithesis to the materialism of the neurologists.

The odd thing about the speculations of our “intuitionists” and “subjectivists” is the fact that both types remain united in their habitual, albeit unconscious, Platonism...

No one has the right to discuss psychology unless and until he has become a metaphysician. (SW 1 pp. 5–6)

The Rage of Heracles. The Spirit, once it had liberated itself from servitude to life, proceeded autocratically, becoming the unchained force of destruction; the activity of thought becomes hereafter the tool of the will to power. During this perhaps Heraclitean phase, life becomes dependent upon Spirit, thought becomes dependent upon will, and the main purpose of mankind, without as well as within, is to enslave “nature,” so that man may celebrate the triumph of Spirit in the “miracles of technology.” Thus,

we realize that it was no accident when the first disciples of the rule of an alleged “world-principle,” the Stoics, chose Heracles as their exemplary hero. (SW 1 p. 753)

Scholar and Philosopher. The scholar feels the greatest affection for that which is certain; the philosopher, on the other hand, loves the hypothetical above all else. (SW 4 p. 26)

Abstraction and Expression. So-called abstract thought is the most introspective manifestation of affective life, i.e., it is the least likely to be converted into visible bodily movements. (SW 4 p. 26)

Burckhardt as Characterologist. Now and forever, Jakob Burckhardt’s greatest service was in applying — perhaps unintentionally — the characterological approach to the cultural historiography of diverse ages and nations. Therefore, for every characterologist, Burckhardt’s *History of Greek Civilization*, *The Culture of the Renaissance in Italy*, and *The Age of Constantine the Great*, are required reading. (SW 4 p. 479)

East and West. The extra-spatio-temporal power to which we have applied the name “Spirit” strives to kill the unity of life by severing the poles that bind body to soul; by binding itself to the body-pole in order to exorcise the soul, Spirit deprives the body of that soul. Here, however, a question arises: might not Spirit form an alliance with the soul, in order to cause the body to wither, thus disembodimenting the soul? Might it not be upon that path that we must locate the interpretation of actuality that ascribes different degrees of being to the character of (deceptive) appearances? With the affirmative answer we have probed the deepest reasons for the opposition of every species of Platonism to Chinese Taoism, and, what’s more, we have reached the very point at which the Asian style of approach to actuality diverges most sharply from that of the West. (SW 1 p. 339)

Soul and Mask. The entity that places so many obstacles before us as we attempt to devise a science of the soul is not — the soul, but the masquerade of the soul, which the will to power thrusts between the soul and the observer. Thus, the student who insists upon penetrating every mask in order to approach the soul’s true visage, has already proceeded far along the path to an authentic comprehension of characterology. (PEN p. 62)

What is Life? Although the natural scientific theory of life (“Biology”) places the problem of life in the forefront, science has certainly not been able to solve it. Biologists occupy themselves with two groups of entities, i.e., the living and the non-living, but they have come up with no answer as to whence the “living-ness” of the living entity originates. There are no sensual qualities through which the living may be conclusively distinguished from the non-living. All colors, sounds, tastes, scents, textures, formal configurations, and types of movement, can be found in both spheres. The first substantial solution to this problem was hit upon, centuries before the common era, by the Pythagorean physician Alcmaeon, who held that only the living being possesses the capacity to “move itself.” But even here, although we will concede that self-motility may well be an expressive indication of life, it is certainly not a characteristic quality of living things. (SW 3 pp. 250–1)

Things in Space and Time. Every thing, in every moment, has its place in space; and a thing may “exist” for a shorter, or a longer, duration in time. Every quality of a thing, since it participates in that thing (even when that quality is merely “mediated”), has, in turn, its necessary connection to space and time. Thus, whether it is a thing, or a quality, or a process, every conceivable “it-point” must be distinguished from the vitality of the happening in that it has that very character of a point; in addition, it has the character of a point-of-connection. (SW 1 p. 84)

The Type and the Instance. When we scrutinize the lives of the various individuals to whom Nietzsche applied the name “master-type” — in addition to [Mirabeau and Napoleon], mention must be made of Julius Caesar, Friedrich II Hohenstaufen, Cesare Borgia, and Frederick the Great — we can scarcely avoid the impression that this “master-type” is merely an ingenious and poetic day-dream, to which none of the aforesaid individuals bore even the remotest resemblance. (PEN p. 126)

The Ultimate Thule. The life of Nietzsche’s soul, in comparison with that of our Classical and Romantic writers, because of its unrealistic needs and the glittering filigree of its thought, stands at the border: one step beyond, and we are in a world of the hollow ornament, the side-show, the mask. (AC p. 375)

Nietzsche and “The Man of Feelings.” There can be no greater error than to confuse Nietzsche’s restless vibrancy with the temperamental ebullition of the “man of feelings,” to whom Nietzsche is the most extreme contrast that the mind can conceive. As one who is in his inmost core asocial, who stands wholly within his own...vital nature, the “affairs of the heart” only interest Nietzsche to the extent that he is their critic and judge. (AC p. 374)

The Elemental Vision. I marvel at the greatness of Nietzsche’s humanity...Nevertheless, regarding greatness as well as smallness, strength as well as weakness: life never reveals its secrets in such things...What Nietzsche has to say about such matters is great, viewed from the standpoint of humanity, but his words are certainly not a revelation of life. What I have always sought in life — and what I have also found — leads me to the following reflection: if only there still lived within my soul that primordial homeland of which I received such a spectacular vision in vanished years; if only there were still men upon the earth who possessed the power that could renew the mysteries of the cosmic night; if only there still were eyes that could penetrate to the ocean floor above which pulsates the surging of metallic billows. Such things as these are life to me. Such things allow me to plunge myself into the hot glow of the elemental forces. (RR p. 522)

On Nietzsche’s View of the Priestly Caste. Nietzsche sees the Jews as the race that has devised the most powerful and influential priestly caste in history...We will now provide a tentative explanation that might account for what seem to be peculiar discrepancies in his estimation of the Jews. He directs his gaze upon the depth, strength, endurance, absolutism, and relentlessness of the priestly will to power; upon its incomparable sagacity, cunning, and craftiness in the selection of mediators; and upon its ingenious flair for adaptation and re-interpretation: thus, he admires the priest and,

consequently, the Jew, as the consummate manifestations of the priestly caste. On the other hand, he faces the fact that the priestly will, which is based upon life-envy, is directed against life; this will infects life, poisons life, and causes life to degenerate: thus, Nietzsche becomes the passionate enemy of the priest and, again, of the Jew, as the most extreme embodiments of diseased life. We consider the admiration and the opposition to be two inseparably linked sides of one and the same fact, and we therefore conclude that neither the priestly embodiment nor the Jewish embodiment constitute a comprehensive representation of that which they both serve. Therefore, just as Nietzsche borrowed the name of a renowned god for his cult of Dionysus, so are we justified in borrowing the name of a hostile counterpart in speaking of the cult of Yahweh. There is no disputing the fact that Nietzsche was inflexible in his conviction that historical Christianity is the religion of St. Paul. And the religion of St. Paul is merely a particular version of the cult of Yahweh. (PEN pp. 152–3)

What German Literature Lacks. There is no German prose as yet...We still do not possess a creative writer whose deep feeling for the German language has enabled him to escape this dilemma. Goethe is “Rococo” — Jean Paul is downright old-fashioned — Hölderlin has the strongest rhythmic sense of the three, but he devoted himself primarily to poetry — and Stefan George is scarcely to be mentioned in this connection. Of all our great writers, only Nietzsche had sufficient talent to repair the omission, but even he spoiled his greatest achievement, the Zarathustra, by adulterating his own style (alas!) with the Germanic idioms of Luther’s Bible. In brief: we still await the creator of a German prose. (LK GL p. 341)

False and True in Nietzsche. The best, the deepest, and the truest of all the discoveries that Nietzsche has won for the philosophy of life comprise the fragments of a philosophy of “orgiastics.” Everything else is worthless. We must see this clearly, so that we can comprehend the motives behind his critique of the substrate-concept as well as the ultimate significance of his Heracliteanism. We must also perceive, through the breach that he opened up in the meters-thick cocoon that shielded delusion’s chimera, the road to new truths, and even to a whole new species of thought. However, Nietzsche himself could not set out upon that road, so that we must content ourselves by widening the breach that he opened. (PEN p. 168)

Formula. Every one of Nietzsche’s truths derives from the pagan side of his character; all of his errors reflect his Christian side. (PEN p. 180)

Dionysus Against the Spirit. Nietzsche does not see the “Dionysian” predominantly as the alleged counterpart to the “Apollonian”; rather, his viewpoint springs from a profound opposition to everything that is spiritual — and most of all to the disaster of consciousness. (PEN p. 166)

Nietzsche’s Marksmanship. Nietzsche’s judicial investigations into the phenomenon of “life-envy” hit the bull’s-eye time and time again, and his discoveries in this area would retain their fundamental significance even if his “master-type” should turn out in the end to be only a thrilling phantom. (PEN p. 127)

Friedrich Nietzsche: The World's "First Psychologist." There are two reasons why we must call Nietzsche the "first psychologist." The first is that he took upon himself, as his major mission, the task of illuminating the historical evolution of general value judgments; this enabled him to construct a propaedeutic for every possible science of the soul. The second was his utilization of this method to scrutinize particular value judgments in order to determine whether or not they constituted critical instantiations of the "will to power"; in such cases, Nietzsche could conclusively demonstrate the presence of self-deception. (PEN p. 65)

Nietzsche, Parmenides, and "Socratism." Nietzsche stated (in the volume of his literary remains entitled "The Will to Power"): "Parmenides said: 'one cannot think what is not'; we take hold of the other end of the stick, and say: what cannot be thought, must be a fiction." The remark is as profound as it is true, if, in fact, it is an expression of the utter inimitability of the condition of judgment and that of actuality; it may be deeply misleading, however, if the word "fiction" is being used here to demonstrate the impossibility of our ever ascertaining the truth. In fact, Nietzsche remained throughout his life bogged down in Socratism, which accounts for the fact that he never pressed through to a clearer distinction between truth and actuality. (SW 1 p. 118)

On Nietzsche's Handwriting. We have encountered no handwritten exemplar from the entire period extending from German Classicism to the turn of the twentieth century that bears the slightest resemblance to that of Nietzsche...There is something uniquely radiant, bright, shining like silk, something, as it were, ethereal; it manifests an obvious lack of warmth; this is a man who, although he is deeply rooted in the home, must rise to ever higher, ever colder heights (like the albatross in his poem of that name), one who has only the slightest connection with the profound subterranean depths, for he sees the world solely through the wide-ranging gaze of the Spirit. It is precisely in the downwards and the below that he can see only the "abyss." There is something in this script that is transparent, crystalline — the complete antithesis to the cloudy, the miasmal, the elastic, the gushing, the surging; there is something uncanonically hard, sharp, of a glass-like fragility, with a complete absence of the conciliatory — something utterly formed, complete, even, one might say, chiseled...Never before have we encountered an unstylized handwriting that manifested such sharpness and angularity, together with an utterly flawless distribution of the handwritten masses and a sequential organization that almost reminds one of a string of precious pearls! (AC pp. 344–375)

Nietzsche as Socratic Thinker. When we examine certain aspects of Nietzsche's theory of judgment-formation — especially with regard to his opposition to the very notion of the "substrate-concept" — we feel that the customary imputation of a passionate anti-Socratism to Nietzsche is well deserved. His own explicit diatribes in *The Birth of Tragedy* and *The Genealogy of Morals* seem to leave no room for doubt in this regard. Thus, how astonished we are when we encounter other aspects of his thought: for then we see Nietzsche falling into Socratism himself, and even into a rootless skepticism,

which he embodies in concepts that he often wields as the lethal weapons with which he seeks to destroy his own discoveries — even when this very procedure is plunging his entire philosophical enterprise into an all-embracing chaos of logical inconsistencies! (PEN p. 181)

A Negative Aspect of Nietzsche's Psychology. The human spirit — not the living organism — is conversant with anarchy: thus, this thinker who had hitherto served as the greatest breaker of chains in the history of mankind, in the end must logically join forces with all of the revolutionaries who went before. Thus, it is not the body — this eternal here and now, this sad and joyous event — that possesses the capacity to wish; on the contrary, it is Spirit, restlessly oscillating between time past and time to come, which participates in vitality, but this occurs solely through the mediation of the wish. So we find that Nietzsche consistently howls his rage against the man of the wish and his vampiric "ideals"; he brings to light, as none of his predecessors had ever succeeded in doing, the paradoxical analogy that subsists between the madness of purposefulness and the mummification of the past. The protest of life against the arrogance of consciousness he locates in the protest of the body against the "holy Spirit" within!...Nietzsche's works were born out of the innermost needs of his being and out of his, as it were, self-flagellation. Without a doubt, his productions are vulnerable to the grave accusation that they are redolent of personal biases that render them both dangerous and deceiving. (PEN p. 82)

The Wisdom of Lord Byron. Under the legend "Sorrow is Knowledge" [Gram ist Erkenntnis], Nietzsche cites the following verse of Lord Byron's:

Sorrow is knowledge: those who know the most
Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth,
The Tree of Knowledge is not that of life.

Now although these lines could hardly have been intended by their author for the purposes to which we will put them, the factual content of Byron's words entitles us to propose them as the master thesis of a pagan method of cognition, for they point an admonishing finger at the relationship of life to consciousness, and of experience to knowledge, and they perform this office from a perspective that recognizes the genuine processes that pose a threat to life. (PEN pp. 189–90)

Nietzsche: Philo-Semite and Germanophobe I. Nietzsche had so little of the "anti-Semite" in his nature that he can scarcely conceive of a more loathsome character than the: "anti-Semite!" Whoever takes the pains to examine Nietzsche's collected works in order to determine his actual opinion of the Jews — and of the Germans — cannot fail to arrive at the following conclusions: Nietzsche held the Jews in the highest possible esteem; he detests all "anti-Semites"; and he hated the Germans with a blind hatred...

Had Nietzsche lived into the era of the "World War," there can be no doubt as to whom he would have pledged his allegiance: he would certainly have sided with the mortal enemies of Germany! (PEN p. 152)

Eros and Daemon. Nietzsche's world is a world of egos, of characters, or, if you prefer, of great personalities; his is a Renaissance world. Nietzsche wished for great, profound,

truthful men (his “superman” is no longer merely a man!). Only rarely does he break out of this circle. In general, however, it remains a world of persons, a world whose depths harbor yearning always, but fulfillment never...Nietzsche understood neither Eros nor the demonic. We, on the other hand, can understand the one or the other; but only an omniscient thinker can understand them both. (RR p. 522)

Nietzsche: Philo-Semite and Germanophobe II. It is Nietzsche who informs us that the Jews who have bestowed the “most refined manners” upon Europe.

It is Nietzsche who informs us that the Jews are the great masters of the art of adaptation, the true geniuses of European drama.

It is Nietzsche who praises the Jews as the race that has the most reverence for their forefathers.

It is Nietzsche who finds in the “Old Testament” the best criteria for distinguishing the “great” from the “small.”

It is Nietzsche who holds that “In comparison with Luther’s Bible, all other books are mere ‘literature’.”

It is Nietzsche who insists that the Jews and the Romans are the two most spiritually virile nations in history.

It is Nietzsche who tells us that the Jews initiated the “grand style” in moral matters...

It is Nietzsche who informs us that the Jews are “the most ancient and best-bred of all the races.”

It is Nietzsche who urges the “noble officers of Prussia” to marry Jewesses in order to create “a new ruling caste for Europe.”

It is Nietzsche who calls the Bible “the most profound and most important” book in existence.

It is Nietzsche who tells us that the Jews have raised “the dream of ethical nobility to a higher plane than has any other people.”

It is Nietzsche who tells us that the ideas of the Jews are the means by which Europe has achieved its masterful position.

It is Nietzsche whose exaggerated regard for the writings of Heine betrays him into such statements as the following: “Heine’s style is far superior to anything that mere Germans” (!) can hope to achieve!

And similar reflections can be culled by the dozen from Nietzsche’s works! (PEN pp. 223–4)

Oasis of the Soul. Even in the midst of the nineteenth century, with its technology and its worship of hard facts, we must acclaim, as an oasis in the growing wasteland of “progress,” the dream-laden philosophy of life of the German Romantics and the militant religion of life of Friedrich Nietzsche! (SW 3 p. 364)

Nietzsche Unbound and Nietzsche in Chains. It can be demonstrated that Nietzsche — this greatest breaker of chains in the history of mankind — was himself a man in chains. While he advances the perfection to be achieved in the extra-personal fullness of ecstatic moments on one side, on the other he discovers — the “superman” and his

restless ascent to ever more wretched heights! What Nietzsche himself annihilates from the ground up: the enslavement of life to purposes and to the future, he restores on another plane, so that he finally appears to be intent upon annihilating himself in a veritable frenzy of “self-overcomings.” (SW 4 p. 707)

Nietzsche in a Nutshell. The following is without a doubt the most elegant formula whereby we can express Nietzsche’s true nature: he was the battlefield between the orgiastic celebrants, whom he was the first to identify and interpret, and the ascetic priestly caste, which he was, here again, the first to unmask for us...To employ the language of myth, Nietzsche was simply the field of battle whereon Dionysus and Yahweh waged their war. We know of no comparable example in all of world history. We have often encountered, and still do encounter, the antithesis: Dionysus vs. Socrates, or, more commonly, Dionysus vs. Yahweh. But that one and the same personality should be possessed by both Dionysus and Yahweh is the most terrible case that the mind can conceive. (PEN p. 210)

The Nietzschean Eruption. The author of these lines can well remember — as can the majority of his colleagues who came to maturity during those heady days of the 1890s, and with whom he has often discussed this matter — the explosive impact exerted upon all of us when we first succumbed to the sorcery of Nietzsche’s thought. The effect can only be compared to a raging typhoon, a massive earthquake, or a volcanic eruption...

At the very instant when we begin to read Nietzsche’s books, we feel as if we had been dragged into a magic coach that hurtles at dizzying velocity through infinite landscapes. We are plunged into the bowels of the earth, then we are dropped onto icy glaciers and mountain summits, and all the while the world is shining with a harsh and intense radiance, which is sometimes terrible and threatening, but which is always violent and overpowering. (PEN p. 11)

The Last, Dying Wave of Romanticism. The Romantics constituted the ultimate wave, because the very core of terrestrial life died when they died. Surely man has never experienced, nor has he ever suffered more rapturously, the convulsions of being than did the Romantics. Their horizon flamed in the fiery gloaming of farewell, a last, irrevocable severing of the ties.

Only a select few perceived this event. Fewer still understood its implications. Even Nietzsche confused that melancholy and overpowering radiance with the first flush of a new dawn.

I have indulged in such descriptions merely so that the reader might be able to see the reason why we refer to these last, great bearers of the radiance of earth as the dithyrambic bards of destruction. They were surrounded by ghouls and vampires, and their creative work was never really consummated.

The whole earth reeks as never before with the blood of the slaughtered, and the apelike masses now strut about with the precious spoils that they have plundered from the ravaged temple of life! (SW II p. 923)

Biology and Heuristic Expediency. Naturalists, as well as philosophers, repeatedly emphasize the fact that it is impossible to draw a hard and fast line between the animal realm and the plant realm, since there exists no unexceptionable criterion of distinction between the two. Those who would ponder the biological borderlands must content themselves by examining the preponderant “weight of the evidence” on a case-by-case basis. (SW 2 pp. 1081–2)

Duality and Polarity. The duality of subject and object rests upon the polarity of experiencing life and appearing event. (SW 3 p. 49)

Forms of Polarity. A relationship of polarity exists between positive and negative magnetism, between right hand and left, and between male and female in sexually dimorphous species. (SW 3 pp. 52–3)

G. F. Daumer I. G. F. Daumer never employed the term “Spirit” in our comprehensive and technical sense, for he restricted his meditations to the Spirit of Christianity and to such “Catholic” converts as “Protestantism” and the “secret societies.” Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that Daumer was certainly not what we would call a psychologist, we have no hesitation in seeing him as a profound culture-critic and as the indisputable forerunner of Nietzsche’s “Antichrist.” (SW 2 p. 902)

G. F. Daumer II. The Romantic writer Daumer published in 1847 a work entitled *The Mysteries of Christian Antiquity*; in this volume, Daumer, basing his theories in part upon records and traditions, and in part upon familiar symbols and customs, demonstrates conclusively that ancient Christianity was, in reality, a sect devoted to the appalling god Moloch, whose worshippers have maintained, through uninterrupted millennia, the practice of cultic cannibalism [kultischer Anthropophagie]. Daumer enriches his speculations by adducing profound observations of Bayle (whose meditations are still worthy of perusal even today), which might provide, all things considered, a literal basis for Nietzsche’s accusation: “Christianity is the metaphysics of the hangman.” Daumer’s book provides the student of the secret history of Christianity with the most dazzling wealth of material that we have ever encountered. (PEN p. 154)

Spirit, the Destroyer. As Spirit penetrates deeper and deeper into the life-cell, it transforms both body and soul. The changes are expressed in the physiognomy of the body as well as in the ascent of technology. In the arena of the soul the effects of Spirit lead immediately to alterations in the emotional life, which find expression in the dwindling of poetic and artistic creativity. In the end, Spirit can only express itself through the medium of “ideas.” (SW 2 913)

Spirit and History. Historical man is the battleground whereon two forces struggle for supremacy: actuality, which we call life, and an acosmic power, which we call Spirit. (SW 2 p. 912)

Experience and Judgment. The pole of experience corresponds to the pole of the phenomenal world; the pole of judgment corresponds to the pole of the objective world. AG p. 74)

Volition and Expression. The direction of volition is determined by the individual, but the expressive movement is determined by the species. (AG p. 72)

Expression and Symbol. The expressive movement is to the volitional movement as the living symbol is to the factual judgment: in brief, the expressive movement is the symbol of the action. (AG p. 72)

On Space. Perceived space is essentially different from mathematical space. Mathematical space is infinite; perceived space is finite. In mathematical space, the dimensions are interchangeable; this is not the case with perceived space. Thus, in perceived space, we find an actual over and an actual under; an actual before and an actual behind; and an actual left and an actual right. Mathematical space is colorless and silent; perceived space is filled with color and sound. Mathematical space is disembodied; perceived space is embodied. (AG pp. 117–8)

What is “Graphology?” The word “Graphology” certainly does not mean: “the science of writing.” Its real meaning is the doctrine that treats handwriting as one of the expressions of character; it comprises as well the scientific investigation of the ultimate origins of the writing movement. These are, obviously, rooted in the bodily constitution. Movements sometimes possess a psychical content; sometimes they are devoid of such content. Most of the so-called “reflex processes” — coughing, sneezing, blinking of the eyes, increased production of saliva while eating, the flexing of the skeletal structure while reaching down to touch the floor, and even in the trembling movement that we find so often in the elderly — are without psychical content. On the other hand, other actions — such as the grasping of a book, which no one doubts originates in the conscious fact of an act of will — do possess a psychical content. Now there exists no fact of consciousness “in- and for-itself,” but only as a condition of a living personality. Thus, in every volitional movement personality plays the key role. (SW 8 p. 703)

History of Graphology. Graphology has a “prehistory” as well as a history in the strict sense. The prehistory reaches as far back as the Renaissance. We can name dozens of students who shared the conviction that there was a characterological value in the analysis of handwriting. We point to Hocquart in France and Henze in Germany (Henze would later be active in Sweden) as noteworthy exponents of early graphology. This pre-history came to an end when the French researcher Michon published his renowned System of Graphology in 1875. In that treatise, the author — who was a profound student of man — set down the observations that he had made over a thirty-year period. He believed that he had discovered revealing correspondences between character-traits and handwritten exemplars.

The history of Graphology in the proper sense belongs exclusively to the German lands, and this development can best be examined in the three following works, all of which embody decisive advances over the previous efforts: Wilhelm Preyer’s *On the Psychology of Writing* (first issued in 1895; second edition brought out by Leopold Voss of Leipzig); Georg Meyer’s *The Scientific Foundations of Graphology* (first edition in 1901; subsequent editions published by Fischer of Jena); and, finally, my own *Handwriting and Character* (which made its first appearance in 1901; later editions were published by J. A. Barth of Leipzig). (SW 8 p. 803)

White Night. This night is harshly bright, like coldly ringing glass. An imperceptible flood seems to have seized everything that lives in its embrace, and even dead things stare, as with sallow gaze, into a dangerous domain. Massive dark-green cloud-waves roll throughout the heavens. Whitish breakers shine brightly above hidden reefs. Moonlight drips through the cracks and crevices. Signals swiftly sound and flash in the deep blue of the distance. A paler haze rises high above the towers of the great city. (RR p. 232)

On the Greatness of E. M. Arndt. Thanks to Arndt's renowned and passionate love of the German fatherland — in the noblest sense of that expression — he became the deadliest critic of the very century in which he had been born — i.e., the 18th. He established the fact that all of the defects, blunders, and weaknesses of that age had their source in its "rationalism," i.e., its cult of reason, in which Arndt saw the workings of Spirit, which separates itself from the soul, from the body, and, ultimately, "from the earth." Thenceforth, he scrutinized the entire history of western man from the same thematic perspective; he concluded that every defect, blunder, and weakness to be found in Europe's entire past derives from the destructive workings of the identical divisive force: Spirit. (SW 2 p. 902)

Thought and Symbol. One may well ask if there exists a fundamentally different species of cognition [from the logical sort], which, so to speak, utilizes its own concepts so as to enable us to hold fast to our living experience. There is indeed such a species of cognition, and we find it in the symbolic thought of prehistoric cultures. (SW 3 p. 332)

On Modern Thought. Today we are witnessing an unprecedented "de-naturing" of thought, and we should not deceive ourselves: it will ultimately end in the complete ignorance of a new dark age. (SW 3 p. 333)

The Decline of Thought. For about a century now the foreground of research into the human sciences has been occupied by psychology — literally, "the science of the soul" — which, in its turn, presupposes the existence of "biology" (literally, "the science of life"), since the concept of the soul can have no meaning in the absence of a living essence in which it may dwell. But when we look back at the achievements of the so-called "Romantic Philosophy," we must acknowledge that ever since the Romantic period, we have managed to entangle ourselves in all sorts of confusion in our utilization of basic concepts, so that philosophy now threatens to yield completely to systematic doubt ("skepticism"); it seems that we are about to renounce the very idea of knowledge itself! While man's adherence to the example of the mechanistic "world-view" has allowed him to pile up mountains of "facts," and while the engineering of his dazzling apparatus has enabled him to achieve the greatest precision in experimental research, he has long since forgotten just why he has need of all this extravagance! (SW 3 p. 332)

On Veils and Mysteries. Mysteries...neither desire to be, nor can they be, "unriddled." A mystery from which the veil that obscures it has been torn is, indeed, no longer a mystery at all. Those who respect the integrity of the concealing veil are those natures who prefer metaphysics to any form of "redemption." The actualization of a primordial

mystery transforms it into “cognition.” One should never inquire into the primal origins; but one can ask all sorts of questions about essences, such as the essence of light, the essence of science, or even, if you wish, the essence of the copula “and!” (SW 3 pp. 332–3)

Concept and Meaning. The concept, as it were, belongs to the meaning of the word. The concept is related to the meaning — if we might employ an analogy — as the minute crystal is related to the matrix-solution from which it has been precipitated at the moment when the crystal separates from the solution and its form is rigidly fixed. The concept can be defined, but the meaning-content of a word never. The concept thinks through the medium of the word; the meaning-content can only be experienced on the basis of a profound feeling for language. The concept can be permanently established; but the meaning-content only mocks those who would place it in shackles. (AG pp. 212–3)

On the “Actuality of the Images.” All primitive cultures have experienced that which the critical rigor of the Greeks also brought to consciousness: the enhancement of the actual. Since we tend to confuse actuality with being, it appears to us as nonsensical when we witness the whole of Greek philosophy endorsing the comparative series: actual, more actual, and most actual. We attempt at least to enter sympathetically into this idea of “enhancement,” and we must conclude, without further ado, that the most actual must be the most valuable. Thus, we view the ultimate determining ground of all gradations of value according to degrees of actuality...But the thought of the enhancement of the actual arises solely from the images (allegedly of the so-called external world, although we are in fact referring to images purely and simply, and therefore we include among these images the visions and phantoms of our dreams). Thus, the ultimate ground of all judgments regarding actuality resides in the images. (AG p. 151)

Time and Memory. Through untold millennia stretches the umbilical cord of primal memory; and just as a wine improves with age, so does primal memory send its smoke higher the longer it has slept in the chthonic urn. (LK GL p. 238)

The Elemental Vision. The elemental vision signals rebirth; within us, the element recalls its limitlessness amid the primordial flux, as element and flux devour themselves anew: the winds, the trees, and the stars now speak. Through immeasurably distant ages, death and birth greet the soul of man in the wavering blade of grass, and they hear the dark inner night of the blood of man in the falling rain, as it trickles through the leaves outside. (LK GL p. 239)

The Fire of Life. The past is the hearth-fire of life. Every profoundly living being is great only through its origins. (LK GL p. 239)

Time and Image. Only that which once occurred can embody itself in the image, and the gaze of the soul is by necessity directed backwards. Out of time’s abyss the consciousness of the past breaks into man as the flowering of the elemental powers. (LK GL p. 239)

The Fate of the Images. With every diminution of the elemental past, there is a concomitant decrease in the ability of consciousness to receive the images. Hence, there is a decline in the majesty, depth, and beauty of the images. (LK GL p. 239)

The Ancient Souls. The present escapes the danger of emptiness only when it is stirred by the primordial images of the past; the moment is only filled to the brim with life when the souls of olden times renew themselves within us. (LK GL p. 239)

The Soul and its Moments. Without a connection to the images of times past, the soul's moments would be utterly empty. (LK GL p. 239)

From a Letter Written During the First World War. In millions of hearts those ancient words are shining: love of the fatherland. Those words stand for an all-conquering faith, a faith that arouses within us those feelings that are the strongest and deepest ties that bind human society together. Nevertheless, we who — unhappily! — see through words to the facts behind them, know that the state has long since usurped the rightful place of the fatherland. We know as well that our victory in this war would only mean the victory of dams, factories, and the Jewish Press. That is the reality of the “German Fatherland!”...And what needs to be said today is this: the blood of our young men is being shed for the spirit of Judaism! (LK GL p. 616)

The Golem as Man of the Future. The Golem is bound up with the problem of vampirism, for the Golem is but a particular species of vampire...He is, in fact, the “man of the future!” He is that man — or non-man — over whom the machine will exercise complete domination. Already, the machine has liberated itself from man's control; it is no longer man's servant: in reality, man himself is now being enslaved by the machine. (LK GL p. 678)

Absolute Truth and Relative Truth. The phenomenon of individual partisanship has nothing whatsoever to do with the question as to the absolute or the relative nature of truth. I consider my fundamental discoveries to be not only absolutely true, but also to be completely demonstrable. I have discussed these matters with the shrewdest thinkers of my time, and yet I have never encountered among them — even among those who were explicitly hostile to my entire philosophical enterprise — anyone who was able to refute even a single judgment of mine. The meaning-content of our judgment is relative, but only as regards an individual's choice of the party to which he will give his allegiance. The duality of Spirit and life that I have established is as firmly grounded as any mathematical truth. The only thing that remains in dispute is whether it is more appropriate for an individual to adhere to the party of life or to the party of Spirit. One is free to opt for either party without fear of contradiction. On the other hand, one can certainly discern the presence of deception as soon as a member of the party of Spirit seeks to deny the existence of the essential disparity between Spirit and life. (LK GL p. 697)

From a Letter. What you have described as an inner “guide” [Führer] recalls to mind the fact that throughout the ancient world we repeatedly encounter the similar phenomenon of the “Doppelgänger” — among the Persians it was the “Fravashi;” among

the Greeks we find the “eidolon;” and among the Romans we have both the “genius” and the “numen.” (LK GL p. 698)

”Romantic” and “Classical.” With regard to the relationship between the “romantic” (or elemental) and the “classical” modes of life-feeling, we admit that the Goethean variety of “self-control” is certainly the most masterful that has been achieved in modern times; but it remains, after all, just that: mere self-control; and we may be sure that this Goethean attitude of Spirit will never enable us to reach the elemental reaches of the cosmic horizon of life. (LK GL p. 698)

Stewards of the World. The impulse to guard or protect the world [Weltgeborgenheit] is quite similar to our attachment to our family, to our race or nation, to our home-town, to our state, to our species, to our planet, and to our universe, in that the bonds in question constitute real connections and not merely spiritual relationships. Such true connections can only arise between one living being and another, for the connections are themselves the fundamental forms of all living being. In bygone days we expressed these perceptions through the medium of metaphysics, or, in the vernacular, through religion, so that what we now refer to as world-connection or world-protection binds the individual soul to the world-mystery...Every diminution of this sense of mystery ensures, among other things, that man’s activities, his vocation, his pleasures, and in the end his entire life, become devoid of mystery. This accounts for all of the shallowness, the triteness, and the banality of our age; and upon such foundations, the goal-obsessed Mammonism of today has erected its house! (LK GL pp. 1113–4)

Hellenism. Hellenic measure and Hellenic Eros are one and the same. (RR p. 304)

The Meaning of Dialectic. Philosophical dialectic thrives on the impulse to transcend conceptual thought. (RR p. 305)

On Repeating an Experience. Nothing ever recurs. Each experience is unique and unrepeatable. (RR p. 306)

Origin of Malice. Why is this man so quarrelsome and malicious? He feeds on his envy. (RR p. 307)

The Poles of Time. The past and the present — and not the past and the future — are the poles of time. (SW 3 p. 434)

On Eternity. Reality exists eternally, and time is the pulse-beat of eternity. (SW 3 p. 435)

Poetry as Living Form. Poetry is an ecstatic vital force. The life of the poet is an inner poetry. Poetic experience is the magical experience of language. (RR p. 243)

Soul and Destiny. Every soul bears from birth the color of its destiny. It has no need to think clearly about its fate, for it well understands the dream-images of creative ecstasy that shine before it. (RR p. 254)

Grounds for Love. We love only those with whom we share both revelry and grief. (RR p. 256)

Feeling and Life. The most emotional man is not necessarily the most alive. (RR p. 256)

The Element of Life. Purple and fiery is the living creative element: but it appears as flame in this one, heat in that. (RR p. 256)

The Pharaoh and the "One God." As an embodiment of the hostility of the allegedly monotheistic, but in actuality atheistic, attitude of thought towards the polytheistic vision, the history of religious beliefs provides one instance that, in its immediate, illustrative force, surpasses even the development of Jewish "monotheism." We allude to the attempt of the Egyptian monarch Amenhotep IV, who adopted the name Akhenaton, i.e., "the shining disc of the sun," to overturn the innumerable demonic cults of his people, and to replace them with the worship of the "one true godhead"...

These were the results: on the Pharaoh's side, a bitterly fanatical struggle against all the cultic sites of the polytheists...On the side of the people, whom he had sought to please with his "higher wisdom," a passionate and ever-increasing opposition, which, in just a few years, led to the annihilation of his work, the shattering of his great temples, the consigning of the emperor's teachings to the death of forgotten things, and the reestablishment of an unlimited polytheism, which was to last until the very end of the history of Pharaonic Egypt! (SW 2 p. 1266)

Hate and the Prophets. The victorious "monotheism" of the prophets of Israel achieved the astonishing trick of raising to the position of personal "lord" of the whole world," purely and simply their own boundless hatred towards the true divinity of this world. (SW 2 p. 1266)

On the English Philosophy of the "Tabula Rasa." If the chick that has only just left the egg immediately pecks at the grain, then without a doubt it has recognized the significance of the grain in serving to satisfy its hunger; similarly the duckling discovers its true element in the water into which — literally without reflection — it dives. The example is often cited of the species of wasp that brings to its larvae certain organisms that it has paralyzed, but not killed, with complicated stings, because they are destined later to serve as living food for its young. Thus the wasp appears to manifest the knowledge of a profoundly schooled anatomist, though, in fact, it cannot possibly have acquired such specialized knowledge. A horse, which has hitherto never encountered a beast of prey, is immediately seized by panic fear when it scents a lion and gallops away in wild flight: thus, the horse recognizes the significance of the scent of the lion, at least with reference to itself. These examples might be multiplied to infinity in order to demonstrate irrefutably the error of the English sensualists when they speak of the soul as of a "blank tablet": for, though the soul bring no impressions with it into the world, it does bring a disposition for the interpretation of the world. These dispositions are commonly referred to as "innate instincts." (SW 4 p. 254)

Inner and Outer. Of all of the profound utterances of Novalis, one of the deepest is the following: "The site of the soul is located at the point of connection between the outer world and the inner," and of all the errors that originate in the faith in the actuality of things, one of the most absurd has resulted in the lunatic attempt to locate the "site" of the soul within the anatomy. The contrast of symbolic depth and symbolic surface is justified; but the "road inward" (which is represented in Heraclitus as the

“road upward!”) is the road leading away from the appearances (“surfaces”) and into the depths wherein they appear, and certainly not from the natural exterior of the body to the matter with which it is filled. (SW 2 p. 1141)

Robbery as Good Business. Morality begins with the organizing of theft under the name of trade. Nietzsche may well have been on the right track when he located the source of the idea of justice in the sense of guilt. The recognition that “what is fitting to one is just to another,” presupposes an abstraction not only from the inner sentiments, for it also entails an even more fundamental abstraction, the one that establishes the great divide between egoism and racial instinct. It is at this point that man takes the first step beyond racial instinct and into the superstitious belief in “humanity.” (RR p. 398)

Images and Souls. Every one of my books harbors within it a key thesis; to my sorrow, not one of my readers seems to have been able to discover this secret. The reader may, in fact, be aware of the thesis, but he is somehow blind to the fact that it constitutes the key to the matter in hand!...The key to my book on the “cosmogonic Eros,” for instance, is this proposition: the primordial images are the phenomenal souls of the past. (LK GL p. 1076)

The Power of the Word. One hears a lot of talk about the poverty of language, and it is said that words are inadequate to express our deepest experiences; it is, perhaps, more accurate to speak of a poverty of experience, which in countless instances borrows only a semblance of significance from the display of words in which it clothes itself. Life, which has coagulated into speech, in ardor and wildness and in spiritual range leaves far behind the ultimate heights and depths in the life of the individual (apart from the dim feelings of earliest youth); and for this reason alone, it still possesses the power, once it is stirred, to transport the soul even now with an almost supernatural sorcery, carrying it into a whirlpool of more-than-human experience, unattainable otherwise: and a great poet leads us into an unknown magical kingdom, solely because he is blessed with the genius of language. (SW 4 p. 230)

Images are not Ideas. Neither the Romantics, with their startling concept of “cosmic consciousness,” nor Bachofen, nor Nietzsche, were able to reveal to me that which I would eventually discover for myself: that vision, feeling, and perception, are fundamental functions of the soul, and that these functions, strictly speaking, are analogous to the revelatory activity of the images...But the real danger that must be avoided here is the temptation to confuse these images with the Platonic or neo-Platonic “ideas.” (LK GL p. 1073)

Romantic Dialecticians. There is no greater idiocy than the belief that the true mystics and the true Romantics have murky minds. Precisely the opposite is the case. We find the most rigorous dialecticians, without exception, among the Romantics! (LK GL p. 1078)

Little Man Luther. Had the petit bourgeois Luther possessed even a fraction of the radiant understanding of the mystic Meister Eckhart, his “Protestantism” would have been less completely enslaved by the “letter of the law.” (LK GL p. 1078)

Imagination and the Sexes [From a Letter]. You have said that you are convinced that the soul of woman is dreamier and closer to the images than is the soul of man. In my view, this is completely erroneous. I ask you now to call to mind the truly significant individuals with whom you have come in contact during the course of your life. Ask yourself: all other things being equal, is it man or woman who possesses the larger endowment of imagination? I have been involved for many years with the characterological study of problems relating to the distinctions between the sexes, and I must say: even among the most outstanding women whom I have known, I found none who possesses a consequential power of imagination. Now someone might object that the psychology of women may well have altered since primitive times. I respond: yes, but men have undoubtedly changed to an even greater degree. If you ignore the so-called “emancipated” variety, you will certainly find that, in important matters, contemporary woman more closely resembles her ancestors than contemporary man resembles his forbears. The lack of imagination in women is obvious throughout recorded history, and one must doubt that the situation has changed since prehistoric times. In the whole of recorded history, there have been only two supremely gifted poetesses: Sappho and Annette von Droste-Hülshoff! (LK GL pp. 1076–7)

Mind Against Life. The awakening of self-consciousness is the declaration of war issued by a hostile god against life. Man is henceforth forever separated from star and storm. (RR p. 423)

”Know Thyself.” It is no harmless inscription that looms over the entrance to the shrine at Delphi: this inscription announces the onset of the faith in a transcendent world. Greek life allows itself to be guided by this faith; Pelasgian wisdom perishes at its approach. (RR p. 423)

Back to the Ardor of the Primal Soul. Burckhardt paved a road back to the immorality of the Renaissance, where at least part of his nature was content to remain; Bachofen, who belonged to Burckhardt’s generation, probed incomparably deeper, and he eventually penetrated all the way back to that chthonic substratum in which the pre-moralistic conception of the world, not merely of the Mediterranean peoples, but the whole of mankind, has its roots. Boecklin captured in the medium of color, and Conrad Ferdinand Meyer fixed in the medium of the word, the spectacle of a primordial world for which, in the end, Nietzsche, who was in large part a successor to these pivotal figures, discovered the symbol that would stand as the emblem of all such visions: he gave it the name of the god of masks, Dionysus. (LK GL p. 82)

Autobiographical Note. In my youth two essences, the human and the demonic, gathered strength, grew, and matured within me, and they developed without my being able to distinguish one from the other. It was a time of the darkest meditations...of unknowing blessedness, the time of my fullest and deepest experience. It was Peer Gynt before he was torn away from the ardent night of the maternal breast. (LK GL p. 24)

The Poet and the Gods. The poet expresses the last tragic flaring up in Western culture of the world of the gods against the “one god” of the Levant. (LK GL p. 51)

Myth and Symbol. To understand the convictions of a believer one must know the myth out of which they arose; to understand the myth, one must know the symbol that embodies it. To understand the symbol, however, one must know the unique experience that gave birth to it; that type of knowledge can never be mediated by critical judgment. (SW 3 p. 415)

Ibsen and the "Life-Lie." The young people of today can form no conception of the power of the influence that Ibsen's works had upon the young people of the 1890s. His impact was centered less upon his poetic side, which was only temporarily revealed in his *Peer Gynt*, than it was upon his outspoken battle against those ideological "life-lies," with which the furtive, atomized forces of the latter half of the nineteenth century so colorfully clothed themselves. (LK GL p. 72)

On Gestures. The philosophy of antiquity had already divided the expressive phenomena into two significant groups (*significatio* and *gestus scenicus*), and this distinction has recently been revived in our mime and pantomime. The simplest example of pantomime is the gesture of pointing. On the other hand, the majority of expressive movements belong not to the imitative, but to the reflexive or, one might say, retroactive processes. (AG p. 114)

A Warning. I could fill many notebooks with the most precise records of the plundering of my ideas. These acts of theft were certainly not unconscious, but rather blatantly intentional. Now should these burglars continue their activities, the day may come when I will no longer be content to scribble the names of the offenders in private notebooks. At such a time, I will openly publish these records, naming names and unmasking the vileness of the thieves' methods. Then everyone will be able to see with crystal clarity that this sort of robbery is not merely systematic, but it is also characteristic of the misdeeds of a certain racial element. What we're dealing with here is something far greater than the robbing of one individual. In fact what I have discovered might even be said to constitute a significant contribution to the history of the "culture of the modern age"; this tale might also serve as a revelation of the furtive procedures adopted by envious souls. Publication will certainly startle more than one or two of these clever connoisseurs! (SW 2 pp. 1535–6)

Benjamin Franklin. From Franklin's autobiography we learn that this man, who discovered and popularized the slogan "Time is money," in the course of his life established thirteen "virtues," the last of which, "humility," is relevant to his aforementioned proposition regarding time and money. All of his so-called virtues orbit around one particular virtue: thrift. One has to exercise thrift in one's eating, drinking, sexual intercourse, movements, words, tasks, feelings, time, etc. For Franklin, "virtue" means every quality and form of personal conduct that can serve to promote the Spirit of thrift and keep that Spirit before the eyes of one's fellow earthlings. Franklin represents the achievement of a type, viz., that of the *homme clos*, of the man whose personal character is covered over, in approximate accord with the following scheme: purpose = the accumulation of cash ("Mammon"); the mediator of that purpose: thrift, systematized upon a daily and even hourly basis = the methodical adjustment of all impulses,

inclinations, and wishes towards the sacred goal of profit. In other words: the first, second, and third precept is taking, whilst giving might be indulged in only to the extent that it will result in greater profits in the long run!

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Franklin's *The Road to Riches* had been translated into sixteen languages, including Chinese. For all of these reasons, we place Franklin at the head of the pack of early capitalists. As we can see from his notebooks, with their embarrassingly exact division of the working day (comprising both spoken and written efforts), he lays claim to just six hours for his own uses. That would be a scandalous waste of time from the standpoint of a representative of the later phase of "high" capitalism...And certainly Franklin's attitude towards Mammon shows us that he is merely a pathfinder for those who would one day reduce life to the level of a "prosperous" and "care-free" existence...

During the phase of high capitalism, man is finally to be converted into a mere economic function. (SW 5 p. 485)

Ancient Records. Among the remains of ancient peoples there are no documentary records of the inner life that can match speech for sheer strength and directness; but this document cannot evade the necessity for psychological interpretation. Consciousness has crystallized in innumerable shapes, and all that is required of the student is a clear eye in order for him to be able to "read" in buildings, ornaments, and images, the confirmation and the complement of the evidence that actions historically vouched-for can furnish regarding the characterology of their authors. There is available here such a mass of material as never yet was the property of any science, and we would already be in the certain possession of the vastest knowledge, if only our historians possessed that psychological amazement that raises, whenever we are faced with any kind of form, work, or type of activity, the right questions as to what might be the forces that have produced these things. For the first time, customs, sagas, and conceptions of gods, costumes, and household articles, languages and systems of writing, can, and must, be interrogated deliberately, without any preconceived notions as to their origins. These data are to be understood; and, being understood, they will aid us in the completion of our picture of man. (SW 4 236)

The Gates of Death. To my mind death is the ultimate fulfillment of life, and whether it is the song of a human voice or the storm-wind as it uproots the forest that opens the gates of death, it is all one to me. (RR p. 522)

Eros Cosmogonos. Eros is not just a fine, blind, animalistic sensuality; we must be more precise: Eros is sensuality at the very moment of its realization. He who is inhabited by Eros-Dionysus becomes a demon whilst he yet remains a man. Such a man sees through the shadow-body of things into the flaming night of the images. He himself is destiny; he himself incarnates a Medusean dread. The streams of earth, the storms of heaven, and the starry vault above are all within him, and his power reaches beyond the orbit of Saturn. (RR p. 523)

Towards a Pagan Metaphysics. A pagan metaphysical system would not be philosophy as one understands that word today, i.e., the hair-splitting rehashing of such

life-alien concepts as would be appropriate to the lecture hall; nor would it be characterized by that sort of factitious profundity that seeks to conceal its utter inability to solve the riddles of thought behind a veil of second-rate poetic fables. Neither should a genuine pagan metaphysics resemble that which passes for science in the modern world, for science, in spite of its outstanding achievements, is in danger of becoming the mere discovery in cognition of truths which may be necessary, but which are also, considered from the standpoint life, utterly unimportant. Before we can discover truths that go to the very roots, we must possess a greater fund of inwardness than can be discerned in those thinkers who, for at least the last five hundred years, have expended their energies exclusively within the realm of reason. (RR p. 373)

On the Will and its Suppression of the Emotions. The so-called capacity of the will constitutes a capacity for suppressing the emotions, or more briefly, a capacity for self-control; but we must also bear in mind that self-control at certain times serves to realize external events of volition, and at other times it operates for its own sake. The self-mastery that a "saint," a "Yogi," or any other ascetic requires, great as it undoubtedly is, nevertheless is still a very different matter from the self-control that a Napoleon needs on a thousand occasions in order to realize his plans for conquest. (SW 4 p. 228)

On the Panoramic Enormity of the Mountain Range. These rigid peaks of ice invite comparison with the deeds of a world-conqueror: harsh and inexorable, dreadful, radiating an iron, unfeeling lack of soul. The mountain range, from its bottommost stratum to its loftiest heights, has no soul.

How different is the sea: where the elemental soul lives. (LK GL p. 131)

A Philosopher (with a Doctorate in Chemistry) Reflects on Science. Every science has to achieve clarity regarding that which it must do, by pondering from the loftiest perspective that which it can do. That even now we cannot express chemical processes in terms of physical equations is transparently clear. But it is equally certain that at least 75% of all the discoveries of modern science are completely without significance. The annual publication of new compounds shows that in most cases the results of our research have not the slightest importance. It is merely mendacious to claim that these trivial discoveries constitute interim stages on the high road to truly significant syntheses. No one has even come close to convincing us of the truth of that point of view! We produce according to the yardstick of traditional and readily accessible methods a superabundance of material whose existence (or non-existence) has no scientific value whatsoever. (The results that have been exploited by technological concerns, of course, are divorced from the realm of true science.) Thus, we are led to the conclusion that for all of our active scientists (especially our "great" organic chemists of today) the authentic goals of true science have been utterly lost. (LK GL p. 147)

A Prophecy (From 1897). The culture of Europe is about to be devoured by Pan-Slavic barbarism; thereupon will follow a fight to the death between Slavic and Mongol hordes; ultimately, the crucial battle will be fought between the European continent and an ascendant America.

Fragments of our intuitive culture may be rescued, but in all likelihood such remnants will be scarcely more comprehensible to posterity than ancient Egypt is to us today. (LK GL p. 161)

Honoring the Dead. Nothing seems to have been regarded as of greater importance to the ancient Pelasgians, than the solemnity with which they conducted their funerary rites and the great care which they bestowed upon the mortal remains. The most overwhelming dramatic creation of the entire ancient world celebrates the heroic self-sacrifice of Antigone, who so tenderly obeyed her sacred duty when she buried her fallen brothers. This theme is certainly without peer, especially if we measure it against the “poetry” of our own days!

Originally, those ancient interments were probably within the house, perhaps beneath the hearth-fire. In later days, the remains were laid to rest in the very center of the village. Then, they were placed before the city walls or city gates; eventually the dead were buried somewhere in the marketplace, or in the Prytaneum, or in the plaza of the polis. Thus, at Olympia we find the grave of Pelops alongside the great altar that was dedicated to Zeus; and these burial-sites were always venerated as being the burial chambers of demons. (One example must suffice: the temple of Apollo at Delphi was constructed atop the crypt of the mother-goddess Python.)...

Tombs were always regarded as holy, for they were often no less than the “sacred grove” or the “blessed mountain” of so many peoples: the Manitou-stone of the Amerindians, the pagodas of the Chinese, and the stupas of the culture of the Indian sub-continent, are just a few examples of this phenomenon. The souls of the dead floated and soared above and around the gravestones, which were oftentimes carved in the likeness of a great serpent, who dwelt therein as the genius loci, the Agatho-demon, who endlessly dispenses blessings upon the house of the living.

The entire culture of the ancient Romans recalled their primordial roots when they honored their domestic ancestral spirits, the “Lares,” just as the Shintoists in Japan honor their own ancestors even now. The nations of antiquity, along with the so-called “primitive” cultures that have survived into our own times, all bestow homage upon the noble dead.

From this honoring of the dead there arose the Hellenic Agon, which is a sensual and visible commemoration of the endless cycle of coming to be and passing away. We must understand that these peoples were not filled with dread of ghosts from whom they assiduously sought to protect themselves; instead, we perceive the loving respect tendered by all of those now living as they, expressing a different form of love, enroll the newly deceased on the honor-roll that bears the names of the noble figures of the past. These customs are enshrined in cultic rites, some of which are immediately comprehensible, while others seems to signify certain profoundly significant mysteries: but all such rituals reveal that the celebrants regard the deceased as forever standing “within life!” (SW III pp. 443–4)

Matter and Image. The school of thought that portrays matter as the substratum that supports the world of perception is merely concocting a “thought-thing”

[Gedankending], and this false teaching was devised, of course, to advance Spirit's all-conquering impulse to subject physical movements to the rule of a quantifying formalism. Matter, considered as the habitation of the images (the very word "matter" betrays the fact), attempts to inhabit a dark hemisphere of actuality, a realm that, without the living light of phenomenal appearances, would be utterly unthinkable. (SW III p. 459)

The Perfected Ecstasy. In the rush of ecstasy, life seeks to liberate itself from the chains of Spirit. Perfection is achieved when the soul awakens, and the awakened soul is vision. What is revealed is the actuality of the primordial images. The primordial images are the phenomenally appearing souls of the past. (SW III p. 470)

Image and Thing. We formulate the following dualities: The image has presence only in the instant during which it is experienced. The thing is "established" once and for all.

The image passes away, just as experience passes away. The thing is rigidly fixed, enduring, standing always in life-alien enmity.

The image is only there in the experience as it is lived. The thing is an arbitrary percept available to anyone.

In the image I can summon to my recollection something from the vanished immemorial past; however, I cannot incorporate that memory in a spontaneous judgment. With regard to the thing, since it is now exactly what it is at any time, and in any space, I can always comprehend a thing, and by means of my critical judgment, I can arrive at identical reference points that are quite sufficient for general purposes.

The image, deeply connected to the stream of time, transforms itself, as it transforms everything that is esteemed by the living soul. The thing, since it is outside the realm of time, collapses, fittingly, into utter destruction.

The image is received by the soul. The thing runs aground through the critical activity of Spirit.

The image is independent of conscious reality. The thing is a concept in the world of consciousness, and exists solely for the inner life of a discrete person.

So: Whoever shatters his personal existence in order to embark on an attempt to experience true ecstasy will discover, in that very moment, that the world of facts has perished, and that there has arisen within him all the overwhelming force of a now-vibrant actuality. This actuality is the world of the images. The visionary soul is its inner pole, whilst the appearing actuality is its outer pole...

Recall the words of Novalis: "The outer world is only an inner one that has been raised to the condition of secrecy." (SW III pp. 416–7)

On Truth and Actuality. From time immemorial, the vexed question regarding a general criterion of truth has remained unanswerable, as any proposed solution would presuppose the validity of that which is in question. It is also unnecessary that we establish such a criterion, since there are numerous propositions, both factual and philosophical, that possess such inherently compelling force that we habitually refer to them as "immediately self-evident." Still, it is crucial that we understand that the

expressions “true” and “false” pertain only to our judgments. In a world wherein there existed no thinking consciousness, such predicates would be utterly devoid of meaning.

Even if all of the discrete sciences should decide to co-ordinate their efforts so as to achieve one universal science that would be based upon correct and incontrovertible judgments, there would still be two opposed camps within that one scientific discipline when it came to the question regarding the actuality-content of scientific judgments. The first group would explain as mere objects of thought that which the other camp would hold to be actuality itself; one group would see mere appearance in that which the other considered to be genuine substance. The one camp (which today constitutes the majority party) again falls into two sub-divisions, known as “idealists” and “materialists.” The school of idealists, whose founding father is Plato, insists that the ultimate realities are concepts (“ideas,” “representations”). The school of materialists, whose founding father is Democritus, hold that concepts are merely propositions that have been designed so as to correspond with objects. Above all, however, objects are objects of thought, which we comprehend with the aid of concepts: thus, both parties endorse the faith in the creative, or the formative, power of the (human) spirit, the idealist consciously, the materialist (for the most part) unconsciously. Therefore, we call the camp of the majority, comprising both the “idealist” and the “realist,” the logocentric school.

The minority party, the party of opposition, we call the biocentric school. Its representatives look upon the matters in question as follows: all the proper objects of thought, both those mediated by thought and those immediately given, arise out of the sphere of actuality, but they do not contain actuality; for actuality can only be experienced, never conceived. Likewise, an understanding of the actual is certainly possible, but this understanding can never be exhaustively explained or conceptualized. The science of actuality is the science of appearances; the science of appearances strives to achieve a profound comprehension of the content of experience. Its aim is the discovery of that which Goethe referred to as “primal phenomena,” in which the meaning of the world reveals itself...

Suppose that two individuals were successively to count the same one hundred dollars, and suppose also that one of the two had been born blind. Now these individuals’ perceived images of the marks would easily be distinguished from each other. However, that also holds true, if to a lesser degree, of the perceived images experienced by every living being; indeed, this also holds true of the perceived images in one and the same bearer of perception in different moments of his life. It follows that experiences can never be identically repeated.

In our judgments, we do not perceive reds or blues or colors as generalities; nor do we perceive sounds, tastes, and tactile sensations as generalities; nor do we perceive feelings of thirst or hunger, feelings of hope, yearning and expectation as generalities. What our judgments of the world do achieve in fact is this and this alone: we distinguish the multiform qualities, outer as well as inner, from each other. The qualities are thereby presupposed in the experiences. Our conceptions are derived from the qualities,

since the conceptions are abstracted from the vital experience that is received. Whoever regards the objects of thought as actuality, confuses the boundaries that divide the objects with that which has established those boundaries. Conceptual thought must yield place to referential thought. The science of appearances, or the science of actuality, is the science not of conscious thought, but of referential thought.

In the major work of the author of these lines, *Spirit as Adversary of the Soul*, we present the proof of our contention that the objects of thought, both in the “idealist” and the “materialist” incarnations, cannot render the appearances according to their true nature. In every idealist philosopher we have a demonstration that the idealist’s own principles render him incapable of distinguishing the world of perceptions from the world of representations. As a result, the idealist must perforce disavow the world of actuality; as a result, that world will always be found to play a miniscule role in the idealist’s system. In fact, the idealist treats the world of perception as if it were a product of spiritual activity, whereas this activity could not raise itself up as the antithetical counterpart to the world of perception unless it had based itself upon a previously-existent substratum of vital events.

However, our experiences have no connection with the being-concept, nor have they any true relationship to the kindred existence-concept. For our experiences transform themselves without interruption; to employ the phrase of Heraclitus, they transpire in an “eternal flux.” Actuality can neither be conceptualized nor quantified; only that being in which Spirit subdues actuality can be thus rigidly fixed in concept and quantity.

As soon as one is convinced that the substance of experienced life is outside the reach of Spirit, one is compelled to endorse the conviction that conceptualizing Spirit, which is only found in man, is a force that, in-itself and for-itself, does not belong to the cosmos. One can indeed marvel at the deeds that Spirit, employing our activity, has consummated in this world; but one can nevermore fall into the error of attributing creativity to Spirit. Spirit broadens the scope of man’s will to power until we come to realize that Spirit unmask itself as the will to annihilate nature. It is, thus, “utilitarian,” and this is the reason why the “truths” of the party of Spirit have seduced a greater number of disciples than can ever be found in the party of life. “Knowledge,” in the biocentric sense, is seen as an end in itself. Such knowledge is only sought by the chosen few, who regard every glimpse into the nature of actuality as more rewarding than the fruits of utilitarianism and the will to power. (SW III pp. 720–22)

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